

WEBINAR SPOTLIGHT SERIES:

JUDICIARIES IN PERIL IN CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

November/December 2020



OVERVIEW

The CEELI Institute launches its new Spotlight Series of Webinars on the topic: 'Judiciaries in Peril in Central & Eastern Europe.' This series will shine a spotlight on pressing issues challenging the judiciary in key countries of the region, including Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Montenegro, and Hungary. Each session will explore the challenges faced in a particular country that undermine and imperil that nation's judiciary including:

- What are the circumstances underlying attacks on the judiciary?
- How do these threaten judicial independence?
- What are the latest trends relating to judicial independence?
- Are there any solutions or remedies?

SPOTLIGHT #1

TUESDAY
17 NOVEMBER 2020,
6PM CET
(60 MINUTES)

TOPIC:

JUDICIARY IN PERIL:
BULGARIA CASE STUDY

Our first session shines a spotlight on the judiciary in Bulgaria, outlining how that judiciary is in peril and the particular challenges facing it. The conversation will be led by, Judge Kalin Kalpakchiev, Head of the Bulgarian Judges Association, and Bilyana Wegertseder, Director of Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives (BILI Foundation).

The Spotlight session will be held via Zoom and available in Bulgarian and English.

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Submit questions for the Panel [here](#)

For further information contact
freda.grealy@ceeli.eu

SPEAKERS:



JUDGE KALIN KALPAKCHIEV,
Union of Bulgarian Judges,
President of the Board



BILYANA WERGERTSEDER,
Director of Bulgarian
Institute for Legal Initiatives
(BILI Foundation)

The judiciary in Bulgaria is subject to harassment, political attacks, and media smear campaigns. The protection of judicial independence and rule of law is further undermined by parliamentary amendments to legislation which have spurred controversy. While efforts at judicial reforms are ongoing, the judiciary continues to face institutional challenges, including parliamentary control over the structure of the Supreme Judicial Council, and a high level of political influence and interference with it. Other challenging issues include ineffective management of the court system, the never-ending introduction of e-justice, and thorny issues or judicial reorganization which might potentially lead to the closure of some courts.

SPOTLIGHT #2

TUESDAY
1 DECEMBER 2020,
6PM CET
(60 MINUTES)

TOPIC:

**JUDICIARY IN PERIL:
POLAND CASE STUDY**

This second webinar session spotlights the judiciary in Poland and outline the peril it faces. The conversation will be led by Krystian Markiewicz, President of Iustitia; Michał Wawrykiewicz, Wolne Sądy; and Małgorzata Szuleka, Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowiek.

The Spotlight session will be held via Zoom and available in Polish and English.

REGISTER [HERE](#)

Submit questions for the Panel [here](#)

For further information contact freda.grealy@ceeli.eu

SPEAKERS:



JUDGE
KRYSTIAN MARKIEWICZ,
Attorney at Law, President
of Iustitia (Polish Association
of Judges)



ATTORNEY AT LAW
MICHAŁ WAWRYKIEWICZ,
Wolne Sądys (Free Courts Initiative)



MAŁGORZATA SZULEKA,
Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowiek
(Helsinki Foundation for Human
Rights)

The term “judicial reform” as used in Poland has actually involved implementation of measures that undermine the independence of the judiciary. Many of the changes posed by the current ruling coalition, the Law and Justice Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), have been criticized as undemocratic and harmful to the fair administration of justice, raising considerations and concerns about the judiciary’s capabilities to function independently in the country. Prawo i Sprawiedliwość came to power in 2015. In the period which followed, the legislature and executive authorities have gained significant control over the functioning of the judicial system. They instituted a process of restricting the powers of the judicial self-government, asserted near total control over judicial appointments, and increased the administrative supervision of the Minister of Justice over the courts. These changes, coupled with adjustments made to disciplinary proceedings, have resulted in a growing number of disciplinary proceedings, which are perceived as a way to pressure the judiciary and interfere in court proceedings and rulings.

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CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPEAN JUDICIAL EXCHANGE NETWORK

The CEELI Institute’s Central and Eastern European Judicial Network, now in its eighth year, is comprised of some of the best and brightest rising judges from eighteen countries who gather regularly to share best practices on issues of judicial independence, integrity, accountability, and court management. As international in-person meetings are likely to be limited for some time to come, the Spotlight Series ensures that the Network can continue to meet its mandate to promote judicial independence, and improve judicial integrity and court efficiency in Central and Eastern Europe, despite the global lockdowns resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

