

## EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES

### STATEMENT

#### on the Remuneration of Judges and Court Staff

#### in Lithuania

1. At its meeting in Luxembourg on 22 May 2026, the European Association of Judges (EAJ) noted with concern the current situation in Lithuania regarding the remuneration of judges and court staff.
2. The EAJ brought this matter to the attention of the Lithuanian authorities as early as 2 June 2023<sup>1</sup>. However, the issue of remuneration of judges has not yet been satisfactorily resolved. Although salaries were increased on 1 July 2023, they have not been restored to the level they were at before the 2009 financial crisis, and legislative changes have also abolished the salary supplements previously paid to judges.
3. The EAJ has now been informed that the Act on the Determination of the Basic Amount of Civil Servants' Remuneration (Act No. XV-640 of 9 December 2025) increased remuneration by only 0.7%, which is three times less than the annual inflation rate<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the salaries of judges and court staff in Lithuania are, *de facto*, declining in value.
4. Moreover, the current legal framework determines the basic salary amount through national collective agreements, taking into account inflation, minimum wage levels, and "other economic, social and labour market factors." The law also permits suspension of salary increases in cases of economic deterioration, without clearly defined objective

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<sup>1</sup> EAJ Statement of 2.6.2023 respecting the Remuneration of Judges In Lithuania: <https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/EAJ-resolution-on-remuneration-of-judges-and-the-underfunding-of-courts-in-Lithuania-approved.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> According to the Central Bank of Lithuania, inflation rate in 2025 was 3,5% and this year expected to be 3,1%. Available at: <https://www.lb.lt/en/of-economic-analysis-and-projections>

thresholds and the previous guarantees prohibiting reduction of recalculated salaries have been removed. The inclusion of such broad and vague criteria leads to excessive political discretion in determining judges' salaries, particularly as judges are not involved in the collective bargaining process.

5. The EAJ points out that proper remuneration for judges is an essential element of an independent judiciary and the rule of law.<sup>3</sup> The remuneration of judges "should be commensurate with their profession and responsibilities, and be sufficient to shield them from inducements aimed at influencing their decisions."<sup>4</sup> This requirement is recognised also by several other standard setting documents.<sup>5</sup>
6. The EAJ emphasizes that any mechanism for determining judges' remuneration must be objective, foreseeable, stable, and transparent. This has also been reaffirmed by the European Court in case of Lithuania<sup>6</sup>. The Court has pointed out that budgetary restriction may occur in exceptional cases under strict conditions for their legitimacy<sup>7 8</sup>. The current law in Lithuania fails to meet these conditions due to its ambiguity.
7. The judiciary should be effectively involved in the process of adopting legislation on judges' salaries,<sup>9</sup> which was reportedly not the case with the recent amendments.
8. Providing sufficient funding for the judiciary is the task of the executive and legislative branches. Failing to do so will jeopardize the proper functioning of the rule of law. The EAJ has been informed that insufficient funding of the Lithuanian judiciary has already had an adverse impact: approximately 8,5% of judicial positions remain vacant, staff turnover is about 25%, courts face increased workload and judicial positions are less attractive. Concerns about the quality of work have also been expressed by the European Commission. In its Rule of Law Report (2025) the Commission found that despite the new arrangements salaries have not yet been raised in practice and the concern

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<sup>3</sup> EAJ Statement on material independence of judges paras 1 and 2: [https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/EAJ-Statement-on-material-independence-of-judges-Yerevan-2025\\_en.pdf](https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/EAJ-Statement-on-material-independence-of-judges-Yerevan-2025_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe: Recommendation CM/Rec (2010) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on judges: independence, efficiency and responsibilities para 54.

<sup>5</sup> CCJE Magna Carta of Judges, principle 7; CCJE Opinion No.1 para 61; Universal Charter of the Judge Article 8 et al.

<sup>6</sup> Judgment of the CJEU of 25 February 2025, joined cases C-146/23 and 374/23, para 56

<sup>7</sup> Same: para 65-76.

<sup>8</sup> See also EAJ Statement on material independence of judges para 19

<sup>9</sup> EAJ Statement on material independence of judges para 7 and 2

remains.<sup>10</sup> The EAJ reminds the Lithuanian authorities that the state is obliged adequately to provide the judiciary with the necessary resources<sup>11</sup>.

9. The EAJ accordingly notes -

- that the current remuneration of Lithuanian judges and court staff is inadequate,
- that the salaries of judges have not been granted adequate adjustment for inflation, which has led to a *de facto* reduction,
- that the legal provisions governing the reduction and suspension of salaries are insufficiently precise and consequently may be applied arbitrarily,

and therefore urges the Lithuanian government and its authorities

- to adjust the salaries of judges and court staff to an appropriate level,
- to promote the rapid introduction of objective and appropriate remuneration mechanisms for judges and judicial staff,
- to involve effectively the judges' associations in the elaboration of these necessary reform steps.

Adopted by the European Association of Judges at its plenary meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2026 in Luxembourg.

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<sup>10</sup> 2025 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Lithuania p 6. Available at: [8db3f59c-a364-4aca-aa3b-4223cb268f8d\\_en](#)

<sup>11</sup> Recommendation CM/Rec (2010) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on judges: independence, efficiency and responsibilities para 35 and 33.