## INFORMATISATION OF THE JUDICIARY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Project "Consolidation and Further Development of the Judicial Information and Communication System" is funded by the European Union



# 2004 2015

#### FOREWORD BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH JUDICIAL AND PROSECUTORIAL COUNCIL OF BIH

## Milan Tegeltija

The President of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH

n times of perpetual technological advancements, we often forget the demands of the informatisation process of the judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina as initiated by the HJPC BiH over a decade ago. Ever since its establishment, the Council has approached the process strategically and thanks to such approach and the continued support of its donors who have recognised the potential of the informatisation process, today the BiH judiciary has an advanced IT system which has not only changed the form rather also the methodology and the way judges and prosecutors operate. The path we have taken over the last decade has been long and arduous. The traditional manual method used to process cases, one that hadn't changed significantly throughout the 20th century has given way, and thanks to available ICT resources we have transformed the way the judiciary operates allowing us to measure the performance efficiency of judicial institutions and the manner in which resources are managed within the judiciary.

Our achievements throughout our journey do not afford us the right to stop and rest. Ongoing technological developments and the ever growing demands of the citizens for quality service both motivate and require us to be permanently involved in informatisation efforts.

The partnership between the HJPC BiH and the European Union i.e. the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina was and continues to be vital to the realisation of our goals in the area of informatisation, though also in other areas of significance for judicial reform. The fact that the European Union has recognised our vision for the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with their support throughout the many years of its realisation, speaks in favour of our efforts towards ensuring an independent, accountable and professional judiciary.

Therefore, we have decided to present the results of this multiple-year process for the informatisation of the judiciary, seeing as it has helped make our judiciary more efficient, transparent and accessible, all with the aim of achieving efficient access to justice for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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#### THE ROLE OF THE HJPC BIH SECRETARIAT IN THE INFORMATISATION OF THE JUDICIARY

## Admir Suljagić Director of the Secretariat of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH

he importance of the judicial information system is immense for the unhindered operations of the courts and prosecutors offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the application of new methods aimed at improving performance is reliant on the proper functioning of the judicial information system.

The very maintenance of the judicial information system that regularly services 5,500 users is, in itself, a demanding and vital task that is successfully carried out by the HJPC BiH Secretariat.



Even with the demands of this endeavour that continues to gather pace, throughout the years we have continued developing the system to ensure its sustainability and functionality for the next decade.

Today, the judicial information system provides the framework for evaluating and monitoring performance within the judiciary and represents an irreplaceable tool in managing effects and achieving a greater level of efficiency for the judiciary. The increasing importance of the IT system in the day-to-day dealings of judges and prosecutors and its uniqueness in ensuring



quality service to the citizens makes any easing off on our part unacceptable.

In completing the first development phase of the IT system, back in 2011, we were faced with the fact that the judicial information system had to be improved so as to continue providing the appropriate support for the judges, prosecutors and other employees in the judiciary.

Through the efforts of the HJPC BiH Secretariat, and in particular its ICT Department, funds were secured to upgrade the infrastructure of the judicial information system through the IPA 2009 and 2010 projects financed by the European Union, as well as with the budget of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In continuing this process, with the support of the European Union we have started the next phase in the development of the judicial information system and it's upgrading, thus ensuring its future through the application of advanced technology and innovative, visionary solutions.

The "Consolidation and Further Development of the Judicial Information and Communication System" Project is developing next generation elements for the judicial information system – Case Management Systems for the courts and prosecutors offices (CMS/TCMS). The introduction of the second generation system and new information-related tools have allowed the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina to step into the future where judicial services are tailor-made for the citizens.

Based on its technological solutions, the judicial information system of Bosnia and Herzegovina can serve as an example for information systems providing support for the judiciaries of developed European countries, while it has by-and-large been developed thanks to the skill and efforts of local personnel and companies. The bulk of the information and software solutions that are incorporated in the judicial information system were developed by programmers and IT companies.

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This way, in developing the judicial information system, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH also strengthens the local ICT sector. References acquired by the local companies in implementing ICT projects for the BiH judiciary allow them to compete and offer their expertise and solutions throughout the world in countries undertaking judicial reform projects and introducing informationcommunication technology.

The judicial information system and the innovative solutions that have been incorporated have delivered positive effects that go beyond judicial frameworks, opening up new opportunities for progress and the fulfillment of EU accession requirements.

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#### WHY INFORMATISATION?

n 2003, it became evident that manual case processing in the courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina could not be improved to the extent required by the judiciary, which is why the application of information-communication technology was accepted as the foundation for ensuring quality-based, contemporary court services capable of addressing citizen needs.

Prior to the introduction and application of information-communication technology in the judiciary, cases were processed manually using old registers



and hand-written daily orders. Courts and prosecutors offices had few computers that were generally used as modern typewriters. There was no IT reporting system and even the simplest reporting processes on pending cases were long and onerous.



The establishment of a single informationcommunication system to ensure support for the efficient delivery of justice for all citizens in BiH imposed itself as a response to the problems faced by the judicial institutions in BiH at the beginning of the 21st century, a time when information technology had already become a part of the everyday lives of the citizens of Europe and BiH. Accordingly, with the support of the Government of Norway, in 2003, the Independent Judicial Commission began drafting an ICT Strategy for the Judiciary of BiH. The strategy was completed in April, 2004 and handed over to the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH immediately upon its inception, in June of the same year.

Based on its competences for conducting, coordinating and overseeing the application of information technology in the courts and prosecutors offices, the HJPC BiH has, since its establishment and to this day, assiduously worked on developing and improving the judicial information system in the day-to-day operations of the courts and prosecutors offices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on its competences for conducting, coordinating and overseeing the application of information technology in the courts and prosecutors offices, the HJPC BiH has, since its establishment and to this day, assiduously worked on developing and improving the judicial information system.



## The Pillars of the Informatisation Process

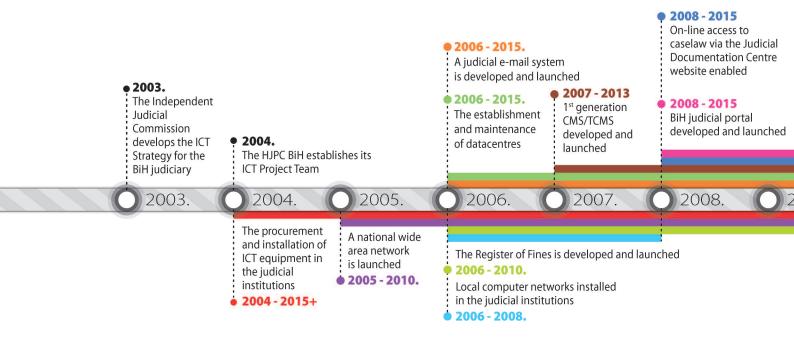
n accordance with the adopted ICT Strategy, the HJPC BiH appointed a project team tasked with implementing a judicial informatisation project, after which the process began for the establishment of the informationcommunication infrastructure for the judiciary which would ultimately serve as the basis for developing the judicial information system. This was subsequently followed by the introduction of a range of IT services in the judiciary, as well as the development of the most important element of the judicial informationcommunication system – the Case Management System – CMS.

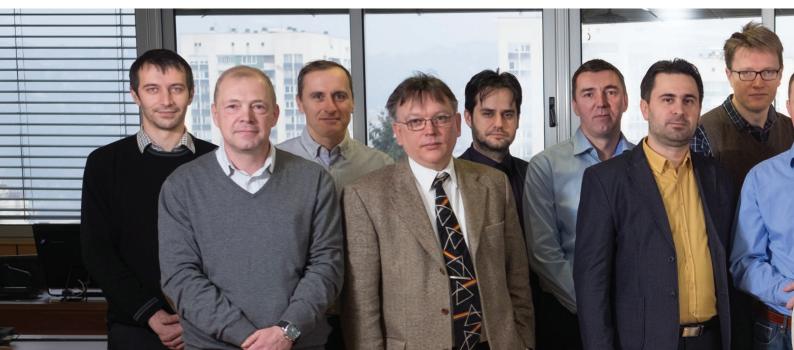
Since its inception, the HJPC BiH has been developing the judicial information system which facilitates performance efficiency of the judiciary and coherently ensures access to justice for all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In taking a strategic approach and introducing information solutions for the judiciary, the

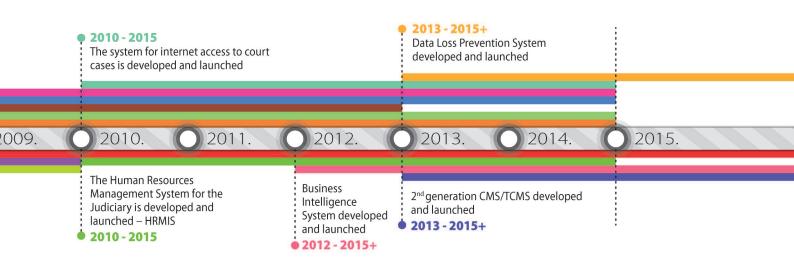


High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH has, together with the continued cooperation with the heads of the judicial institutions and the permanent engagement of over one hundred IT personnel in the BiH judiciary, established a sophisticated IT system that rests on three key elements: a carefully designed and implemented informationcommunication infrastructure, modern software solutions tailored to the specific needs of the judiciary and human resources that provide relevance to the whole system and ensure its smooth functioning. One of the key pillars of the judicial information system are the IT experts of the ICT Department of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH Secretariat as well as the IT personnel and lawyers who were a part of the team throughout the various phases in the development of the judicial information system. Together with over one hundred IT staff who provide support to the work of the judges, prosecutors and other staff in the judiciary, they all form one of the three main pillars on which the judicial information system rests.











#### HOW INFORMATION SOLUTIONS IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE JUDICIARY IN BIH

## Efficiency

he most important achievement of the judicial informatisation process is the launch of the case management systems for the courts and prosecutors offices – better known as the CMS/TCMS systems.

The development of the CMS by the HJPC BiH, as a case management system for the courts began in 2007 after the pilot version was developed within the USAID FILE Project and then handed over to the HJPC. Between 2007 & 2009, the system was developed to allow for the full automation of work processes involving cases in the courts, and by the end of 2009 was introduced in all courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Parallel to the system being implemented in the courts, a prosecutors office version was also worked on, i.e. TCMS, which was tested in 2008 and then launched for all prosecutors offices by year-end 2010.

The advantages and benefits of introducing CMS/TCMS in the courts and prosecutors offices are numerous with some of the most important being:

- Initiating a case based on a complaint and assignment of the case to a judge is reduced from two weeks to a number of seconds;
- Assignment of a case to a judge or prosecutor is carried out automatically, thus ensuring transparency and impartiality of the process;
- Instead of old paper registers, cases are kept electronically.

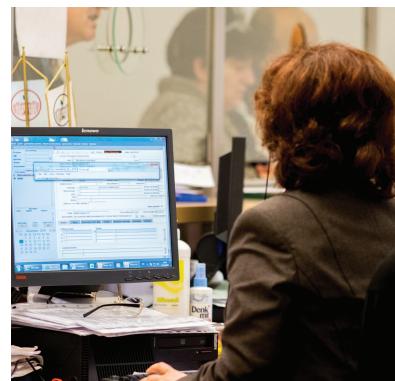
The system was developed to allow for the full automation of work processes involving cases in the courts.

## **Zijad Kadrić** judge of the Appellate Court of the Brcko District BiH & member of the HJPC BiH

"Prior to the introduction of the CMS into the judiciary, cases were managed manually using register logs and hand-written court orders. The collection of data and the drafting of even the simplest of reports on the number of pending or completed cases required much work and effort. Typewriters were replaced by computers and IT systems. With the introduction of the CMS these processes improved drastically. All steps in the processing of a case – from registration to storing – were automated and documented."









"The introduction of the Case Management System in the courts (CMS) has facilitated work efforts and enabled greater quality in organising work not only for judges but also for all other court employees. The workday starts by signing in with the CMS after which we immediately gain access to the data we need including access to the complete set of e-files of a case. Features that allow for simple and quick access to information on deadlines and tasks in various cases without having to physically pull a case from the archives and the ability to generate and extract various statistical data facilitate easier planning and the better use of our time at work for everyone. Therefore, the introduction of the system in the courts, together with the expected need for its continued development and upgrading its functionalities, represents something without which it wouldn't be possible to achieve qualitybased, efficient and cost-effective organisation of work processes in the courts at a time when informatisation is a must, not only for the judicial system rather also for most other major national and societal systems, in general."

Features of the CMS/TCMS system:

- Apart from having a physical casefile, the CMS/TCMS creates and keeps a fully electronic version that allows for immediate access to all documents of the file, thus facilitating quicker and more efficient work by judges and prosecutors as well as allowing access to a case via the internet for the parties to the proceedings.
- Immediate electronic transfer of data between the prosecutors offices and the courts, thus eliminating the need

for double entry of like information and reducing the risk of errors when entering data;

- Reports that in the past required the review of a range of paper registers and the listing of cases now require only a few clicks of a mouse;
- Electronic data exchange between police and prosecutors office records is enabled;
- Drafting backlog reduction plans is enabled along with their effective monitoring.



## **Marin Zadrić** President of the Municipal Court in Mostar

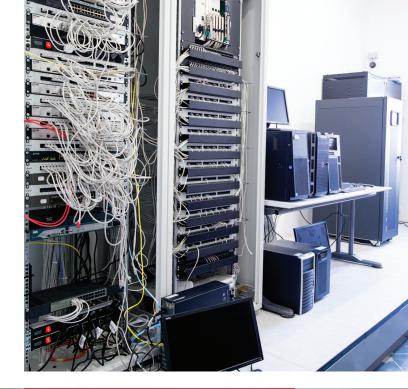
"I believe the Case Management System (CMS) to be an exceptional tool, one that facilitates and expedites a judge's work in general as well as case processing. The CMS allows judges and legal associates to quickly review the status of a case which, in turn, allows for quicker action in processing cases while the parties can, at the same time, promptly gain information on the state of their case.

Viewed from the perspective of a court president, the CMS is an indispensable tool that makes it possible to monitor the performance of each and every judge and legal associate, and the court in general. You can generate a range of reports, statistical and management-related (e.g. no. of pending cases in the court, implementation of backlog reduction plans, various case flows and influxes etc.), thus allowing for a quick response to any change or demand linked to the organisation of work processes which has a positive effect of the performance efficiency of the court."

In response to the ever-growing needs of the citizens and that of the judicial community, the limitations of the 1st generation of the system are being addressed in the development of the 2nd generation CMS/TCMS.

Apart from overcoming a range of technical limitations, the next generation system will ensure a safer, quicker and better adapted platform to deal with the growing needs of the judiciary. Together with all of the features and functionalities of the 1st generation system, the next generation CMS/TCMS will enable:

- Digital case filing;
- Efficient issuance of police/court clearance certificates as well as other certificates issued by the courts;
- Registration and management of evidence in complex cases;
- Identifying and preventing delays in processing court cases;
- Quicker, multifaceted and more efficient reporting.



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## **Sead Imamović** President of the Municipal Court in Gorazde

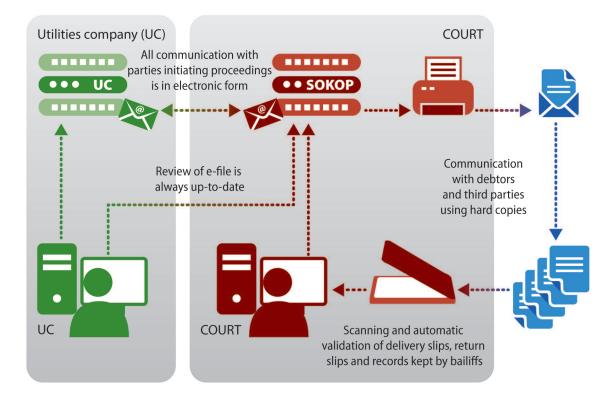
"Digitalised files represent a completely new dimension in the informatisation of the courts. The long-term storage of cases requires more space, shelves and involves greater technical security measures, whereas digital storage requires no new space or resources to secure the cases that are filed. By implementing the digital filing system, space that was used for keeping files for the long-term can now be used to improve court capacities and increase efficiency in the judicial institutions. At the same time, access to digital case files has become quicker and easier and no longer requires time to physically search through archives and move cases. Now, the process of moving cases to the archives entails delivering a couple of DVDs instead of organising the transportation of large amounts of documents"



Apart from the CMS/TCMS to automatically process cases, the BiH judiciary also has a System for processing utilities cases and small claims – SOKOP-Mal. This system facilitates the electronic filing and processing of small claims before first instance courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The system is used by the courts as well as the judgment creditors i.e. utilities companies.

#### SOKOP - Mal enables:

- Comprehensive electronic communication between those initiating proceedings and the courts based on digital certificates which reduces paper waste, as well as postal and delivery expenses.
- Reduced spacing needs for archiving cases;
- Grouping and the automated processing of all cases involving the same debtor;
- Users to gain full insight of all cases pending before the courts.



## Informatisation in the Service of the Citizens -Transparency, Accountability and Quality



he judicial informatisation process was primarily motivated towards increased efficiency and ensuring equal access to justice for all citizens. Aware of the importance of ensuring prompt and adequate disclosure on the performance of the judiciary to the citizens, in 2007, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH initiated the process for the development of a judicial web portal for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today, this portal serves as a central access point for information on the judiciary, merging 91 official websites of the courts and prosecutors offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the websites of the Judicial Documentation Centre and the professional associations of the judiciary.

In order to draw the judicial portal and its websites closer to the citizens and adapt it to their needs and that of court service users, during the past years a range of portal functionalities have been developed:

• Daily updates for court hearings;

- Searchable web directories for the judicial institutions, court expert witnesses, certified court interpreters and attorneys;
- Access to court cases via the internet;
- Polls;
- A media corner;
- A court fee calculator;
- Judicial forum.

The BiH judicial portal centralises these services and at the same time serves as an important communications channel



between the public and the judiciary focused on bringing judicial services closer to the citizens and making them more accessible. Apart from this, the BiH judicial portal also includes the website and decisions database of the HJPC BiH Judicial Documentation Centre which represents a vital resource in achieving caselaw consistency in BiH.

The database represents the result of many years of effort by the HJPC BiH to establish mechanisms for consistency in court actions throughout the country, which is key to ensuring legal certainty.

The database holds decisions rendered by the Court of BiH, the Constitutional Court of BiH, the entity supreme courts and the Appellate Court of the Brcko District as well as all lower instance decisions preceding the higher instance decisions. In December 2015, the database had 11,015 court decisions and this figure continues to grow.

Apart from its users within the judiciary, the database of the Judicial Documentation Centre has been open to the general public since 2014 and any interested party can use the database facilities for an appropriate fee.

#### Goran Nezirović

judge of the Supreme Court of the Federation of BiH and member of the HJPC BiH

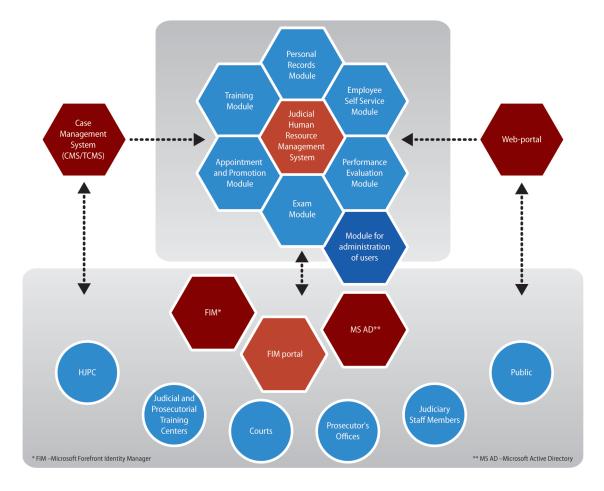
"Every judge must keep themselves informed on caselaw positions since this represents the first precondition for its consist application when passing court decisions. This is particularly important in applying new concepts or concepts that are vaguely regulated with the law seeing as caselaw helps judges in forming their own opinions and conscientiously accepting certain legal argumentation or ultimately deviating from it with the appropriate reasoning. Acquiring information in this manner is precisely a feature of the searchable court decision database of the Judicial Documentation Centre and it needs to be supplemented regularly with new decisions so that it can respond to the needs of the judiciary."

he informatisation process of the judiciary remolded the way courts and prosecutors offices throughout the country operated, revolutionising the way the judiciary communicates, however processes dealing with human resource management had yet to receive appropriate support. In recognising the issue, in 2011, the HJPC BiH initiated a project for the development of a Human **Resources Management Information** System for the BiH judiciary – HRMIS. When developing the system, the intention was to standardise data collection processes concerning judges, prosecutors and other employees within the judiciary and allow for the simpler generation of complete and reliable statistical reports aimed at

improving decision-making processes involving human resource management within the judiciary.

The HRMIS consists of a range of functional modules designed to ensure

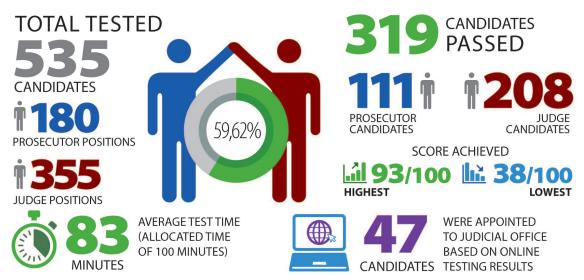
support in the management of human resources for the judiciary: from applying for a competition, election, appointment, promotion through to monitoring training efforts for judicial office holders.



The HRMIS exam module provides full support for test procedures applied by the HJPC BiH within the process for election to judicial office.

The module allows for the application of standardised tests using equal terms and criteria for all candidates. The application of the system has reduced the human factor to a minimum when designing a test (from a pool containing 3,441 questions) as well as when scoring results. The ability to test a large number of candidates all at once contributes towards greater efficiency in the appointment procedure while the automatic generation of test results upon completion by a candidate provides them with insight into their result which greatly contributes towards the transparency of the procedure.

Accordingly, in September 2014, the HJPC BiH introduced entrance exams for judicial office positions thus improving objectivity, effectiveness and transparency of the appointment process. Written tests were also introduced for candidates from outside of the judiciary, who apply for higher judicial positions while the introduction of structured interviews has improved the procedure for determining candidate competence.



**Obren Bužanin** judge of the Supreme Court of Republika Srpska

"The introduction of entrance exams and written tests for candidates who do not hold judicial office has ensured the highest standards in the application of international principles requiring that judge and prosecutor appointment procedures are clear, objective and transparent. These principles are also applied for promotions in that promotions for judges and prosecutors are based on performance evaluations. This way, Bosnia and Herzegovina has joined other countries that have provided the highest levels of objectivity and transparency in their appointment procedures for judicial office."



"I believe that entrance exams have improved the appointment process and, in particular, the objectivity of the process. These types of tests represent the best method to test a candidate's knowledge and their understanding of legal matters vital for holding judicial office. The computer application used for the test is very simple and allows for testing candidates with minimum IT literacy. At the same time, the application gives the candidates the opportunity to perform multiple checks of their answers while a particular benefit is the ability to immediately see your score. Also, the scoring system is absolutely transparent with all participants being in the same position, with no one knowing who's who as the tests are carried out by using a coded login; no one knows where a candidate comes from and all candidates have the same time and terms when taking the test. Let me underline that it is very important that every candidate, upon completion of the test, can access their score seeing as this means that there is no possibility of any outside influence i.e. to "fix" test scores."

mplementation of the case management system in the courts and prosecutors offices has introduced major changes to the way the judiciary



## Aida Bajraktarević newly appointed prosecutor of the Cantonal Prosecutors Office of the Sarajevo Canton

operates. Apart from fully automating case processing in the courts and prosecutors offices, the CMS also plays an invaluable role in ensuring transparency in the operations of the judiciary. By automatically assigning cases based on various specialisation factors and judge caseloads, and recording all actions taken in the course of a case, the CMS guarantees full transparency at work and calls for full accountability of the judges and prosecutors regarding their actions in processing a case.



## **Katica Jozak-Mađar** President of the Cantonal Court in Novi Travnik

"The CMS has fully automated case assignment for judges. Prior to the CMS, this was carried out by the court president while the decisions behind the process lacked the transparency to ensure public confidence in the impartiality of the court. The CMS also allows for automated case assignments to ex officio defence attorneys whereby ensuring full impartiality of a judge when selecting a defence counsel in the event that a suspect or an accused doesn't pick a defence counsel from the list. The application of objective criteria for case assignment within the CMS is one of the more important mechanisms in preventing corruption also providing a positive effect regarding confidence in the performance of the judiciary."



"The experiences of the Office of the Disciplinary Counsel of the HJPC BiH throughout the years in the use of the CMS for the courts and prosecutors offices show that these systems have improved work processes and facilitated the more efficient and rational utilisation of human and material resources by the ODC and the judicial institutions when reviewing court and prosecutor cases, and also providing accurate information and data as necessary for disciplinary investigations."



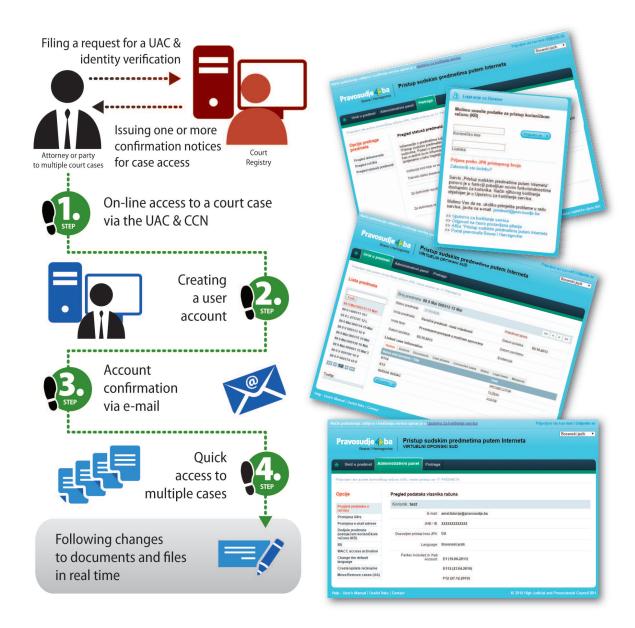
#### Easier Access to Justice

mong the more important goals in the informatisation of the judiciary, particular prominence is given to drawing the judiciary closer to all court service users and adapting the way services are provided to the users. In its attempts to aid citizens who are parties to proceedings held before the courts throughout the country, in 2009, the HJPC BiH recognised web development as an appropriate means for easier, quicker and cheaper information disclosure during a court case. As a result of these endeavours, the service - "Internet Access to Court Cases" was developed and made available to the citizens. This web service made it possible for parties to proceedings and their legal representatives to access information via the internet regarding court cases for which they have the right of access in accordance with the law, excluding criminal cases. Through the service, parties have the ability to access court cases to which they are participants from any device with internet access and at any given time. The right of access to a case is

made possible by filing a request with the respective court whether personally or via postal services. At the request of the party, the court will then issue a confirmation notice with the court case number (CCN) and the Unique Access Code (UAC) allowing a party to log in and access the data of the court case.

The service users can create a user account, and use it to group all the cases for which they have right of access, which is convenient for people with multiple cases before the courts.





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The Directory for judicial institutions, attorneys, certified court interpreters and expert witnesses: ensures the availability of contact information as required by citizens in their attempts to access justice.

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**Court fee calculator:** court service users can easily and quickly gain information on court fees for various court services.

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Naziv suda : Sud Bosne i	
Predsjednik suda : Medži	da Kreso
Zamjenik predsjednika su	ada :
Sekretar suda : Jević Vet	nida
Adresa : Kraljice Jelene 8	8,71000 Sarajevo
Teleton : 033 707 100 - ce	ntrala
Telefon : 033 707 301 - pr	edsjednik suda
Telefon : 033 707 307 - se	kzelar suda
Telefon : 033 707 165 - Ur	red za informisanje javnosti (PIOS)
Telefaks : 033 707 224 - L	Jred za informisanje javnosti (PIOS)
Telefaks : 033 707 321 - p	nijemna kancelarija
Telefaks : 033 707 320 - p	redsjednik suda
Elektronska pošta : plos@sudbih.gov.ba	
Web stranica : www.sudbih.gov.ba	
Radno vrijeme : 08:00-16	00
informiranje javnosti. Svi p mogu obrašti predsjednici bili nabisani na jednom od	sjednica Sudia prima unagojeći dopovorene pozijeki s medijima, upovorene preko Sučbe za opočekci Sudia Birla e za vrejeme trakajna mođnoj vremeno zavljanja na portimor. Straka se Sudia Birlajeklozma, predstavkama, priložbama i upišma u pisano formi. Podnosci bi tebali i jačka nanoda Bioreli Hercegovina, se trekaju bir zavrajni i radživana in vedenime podste- ke u sporu, datum dostave Sudiu). Da bir Vam bilo odpovoreno, potektino je da svi dokumenti e adresu politikora.
Obavijesti o stanju predm	keša : Informacije o stanju predmeta se mogu dobili u Službi za informiranje javnosti suglasno vanja i dostupnosti informacija što su pod kontrolom Suda BiH.
Osoba za odnose s javnoš	iću : Ured za informisanje javnosti (PIOS)
Kontakt telefon za odnose	s javnošču : 033 707 164
Kontakt e-mail za odnose : pios@sudbih.gov.ba	s javnošću :
nkovi   Pomoć za korištenje   Mapa stranice	© 2010 Visoko sudsko i tužilačko

**Trial schedules:** provides parties with access to information on the timing and status of hearings set before the courts in BiH.

## Sadudin Zaklan attorney from Mostar

"The user service for access to cases of my clients via the internet is something that I have been using since its inception, allowing me to follow hundreds of cases. The ability to review cases from my office has reduced the need for me to travel to the courts meaning that both I and others have more time for other activities. The establishment of the system has assuredly made the work of the court registry staff easier, as well as the demanding operations of registries, in general."

ccess to justice is an all-encompassing concept and implies a range of options that must be guaranteed for citizens. In terms of the transitional environment present in Bosnia and Herzegovina this asserts the duty of the state and its judiciary to efficiently process as many cases of war crimes as possible which is often difficult due to inaccessible witnesses and insufficient funds for traveling and testifying in person. In its attempts to identify a systemic solution to the issue, the HJPC BiH implemented a video conferencing system for the BiH judiciary through the project financed by the European Union. The establishment of the system made it possible to question witnesses from afar via video link during trials. The video conferencing system was initially linked to 28 institutions within the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina while in 2014, the system was expanded to include an additional seven prosecutors offices. In 2015, the technical set-up allowed for establishing links with judicial institutions abroad thus enabling witnesses to give testimony from abroad in cases that are processed before the courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, all in accordance with



current laws on procedures for international legal aid.

The current video conferencing system in BiH has been launched in 35 judicial institutions and allows for the following actions to be taken within court proceedings:

• Witnesses located in one city to testify at a trial held before a court in another city in BiH;

- Testimony from protected witnesses given from separate premises or from another court;
- Witness testimony from abroad at a trial held before a court in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Witness testimony from Bosnia and Herzegovina at a trial held before a court abroad.

## Sanel Pajević

Cantonal prosecutor of the Cantonal Prosecutors Office of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton



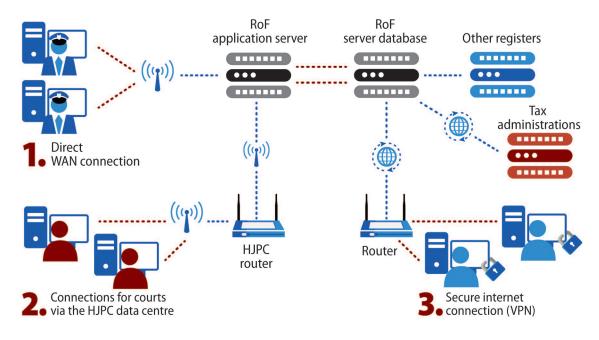
"Thanks to the video conferencing system of the judiciary, we can now provide witness testimony from abroad at trials. During the processing of a war crimes case before the Cantonal Court in Mostar we were able to hear from two witnesses residing in Sweden, for the prosecution, who testified via video link from the courtroom of the District Court of Linköping. This way major savings were made regarding the court proceedings and the hearing didn't have to be postponed. At the same time, we also have plans to question witnesses via video link as part of the investigation phase, seeing as the Cantonal Prosecutors Office of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton is part of the video conferencing system."

### Cooperation

ourts and prosecutors offices regularly communicate and exchange information through the CMS/TCMS systems, though the need for greater efficiency in the performance of day-to-day tasks extends beyond judicial boundaries. In responding to the needs of the courts and prosecutors offices, the HJPC BiH has recognised this need at the early stage of the informatisation process which coincided with the minor offence reform.

The collection of fines for minor offences such as traffic violations long represented

a problem for BiH. Collection was poor, while due to the many fines and their respective small amounts the possibility to enforce collection though the courts was not an efficient option. As a consequence, the court system was flooded with numerous minor offence cases. Recognising the potential of the informatisation process for resolving the problem, together with the support of its donors, in 2005, the HJPC BiH started development on a database to register all fines. The Register of Fines and Minor Offence Records (RoF) became the centralised system used by institutions with powers to impose fines (generally – police and inspectorates) to record fines for violations committed by citizens and legal entities. If the fines are not settled within the legal deadlines, the system prevents the offenders from accessing certain services such as the renewal of drivers licences and/or car registration. Due to the specific way the Register of Fines works it is called a "passive enforcement system" and in most cases



eliminates the need to actively process offenders while the consequences to non-payment encourage the voluntary payment of monies owed. After the development of the Register of Fines, the HJPC BiH handed over its management and maintenance to the Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange in 2009. The system continues to be used daily by numerous institutions including the courts, police, inspection authorities, tax administrations as well as many other



institutions that issue minor offence orders. In fulfilling the conditions for visa liberalisation as placed before Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Union, in cooperation with the Agency for the Coordination of Police Authorities in BiH and other law enforcement agencies on all levels in BiH, with the support of the European Union, the HJPC BiH established a data exchange service between the Case Management System of the Prosecutors Offices (TCMS) and the police records.





"Apart from the fact that the introduction of the case management system in the prosecutors offices has improved the working practices of the prosecutors, the establishment of common integrated databases for suspects within the TCMS has made it possible to simply search and establish whether someone has previously been suspected or charged with a crime. Together with the data that is available with the TCMS, through the exchange of data with the police authorities, we can easily obtain information that is vital for efficient investigations including information on past criminal history, vehicle and person searches, weapon registration, denied or extended visas as well as identity checks."

## Mahmut Švraka

Chief Republic Prosecutor of the Republic Prosecutors Office and a member of the HJPC BiH

n considering the benefits of the exchange of data between judicial institutions and other institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the HJPC BiH continues with the development of the Case Management System and other information resources so that the exchange of information between judicial registers and other records becomes a daily activity aimed at improving judicial services and the more efficient access to justice for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## THE VISION FOR AN E-JUDICIARY IN BIH

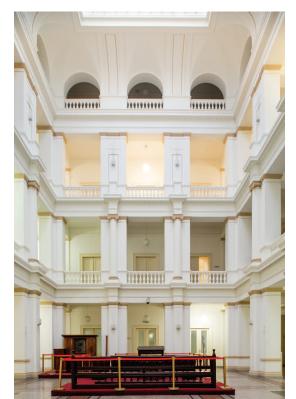
I of the activities undertaken by the HJPC BiH in the field of informatisation have been designed and implemented as part of a comprehensive vision for the development of the judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The vision for a judiciary adapted to meet citizen needs and that of the commercial sector serves as an important element in assembling a



modern, efficient and accountable judiciary for the European Bosnia and Herzegovina of tomorrow.

The vision for the informatisation of the judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- Parties to proceedings file documents with the courts electronically;
- Courts electronically deliver writs to parties to proceedings;
- Daily electronic exchange of data between judicial databases and the many registers maintained by the institutions on various government levels in BiH;





• Full digitalisation of evidence and archives in the judiciary.

In striving to achieve the vision, every day we are faced with constraints which we attempt to turn into opportunities for further development of the information system and strengthening the judiciary. Apart from limitations in available resources that primarily affect our ability to execute capital projects and maintain the information system, the HJPC BiH must strengthen the ICT Department of the Secretariat, as it is the driving force behind the comprehensive judicial informatisation process. Apart from that, the key prerequisite for implementing the range of activities required to achieve the



vision for the development and informatisation of the judiciary lies in the comprehensive application of the Law on Digital Signatures on all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In dealing with all of the challenges, in 2014, the HJPC BiH began a new phase in the development of the judicial information system. The development process for the next generation CMS/TCMS was completed, thus further improving work processes in the judiciary and accordingly contributing towards improved efficiency in the day-to-day operations of the courts and prosecutors offices within a safe and befitting technological environment.

Upon completion of the development of the 2nd generation CMS/TCMS, towards the end of 2015, we saw its launch in all iudicial institutions. Some of the more important functionalities are: an electronic archiving module, electronic evidence recording and police/court clearance certificates which will encompass all courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as a Criminal Assets Register. Also, the HJPC BiH is working on the introduction of a business intelligence system which, together with the new CMS will serve as support for the change management process of the judiciary from its current reactive model to a new proactive approach. The introduction of new information solutions will make available a whole range of tools to support management-level decision making.

Seeing as the benefits of the business intelligence system extend beyond the judiciary, thanks to its introduction the ministries of justice will also be able to access the latest statistical data through the judicial web portal.

Together with these advancements, the HJPC BiH is also looking to apply contemporary IT solutions to help in preventing unauthorised and unintentional disclosure of sensitive data in electronic form. Strengthening security and data protection represents an important element in the process for establishing a data exchange mechanism with the registers outside of the judiciary, which is essential to the future functioning of the BiH judiciary.

All of the afore described activities aim to improve the performance of the judiciary, ensure better, more qualitative service to the citizens, in particular e-services such as applying for court issued certificates, information on predictable costs of proceedings and for e-communications with the judiciary.





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