

Conference of Chief Justices of Central and Eastern Europe North Macedonia | June 22-23, 2026

Conference Agenda

Day 1: Sunday, June 21, 2026

- **10:00 - 15:00** | Arrival of Delegates & Check-in at Skopje Marriott Hotel
- **19:00 - 22:00** | Welcome Cocktail Reception at Hotel

Day 2: Monday, June 22, 2026

- **08:30 - 09:00** | Registration of Participants
- **09:00 - 09:45** | Opening Remarks

Mr. Afrim Fidani, President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia
Mr. Aleksandar Kambovski, President of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia

Mr. David Campbell, Senior District Judge, Chair of the International Judicial Relations Committee, USA

Mr. Robert R. Strang, Executive Director of CEELI Institute

Mr. Grzegorz Borkowski, EU Support for Rule of Law Project

- **09:45 - 10:15** | Group Photo & Meet and Greet (coffee break)
- **10:15 - 12:15** | First Session: Public Confidence in the Judiciary

- Moderator/ speaker 1: Afrim Fidani, President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia
- Moderator/speaker 2: David Campbell, Senior District Judge, Chair of the International Judicial Relations Committee, United States of America
- ▶ What is the current level of public trust in the judiciary in your country and what measures have your courts undertaken towards improving the situation?
- ▶ What steps are being taken to enhance transparency in judicial proceedings and to promote exemplary judicial conduct? Are court decisions easily accessible to the public? In what format?
- ▶ How has digital transformation (e-justice systems, online hearings, publication of decisions) affected transparency and trust?
- ▶ What actions by judges have you seen that have undercut public confidence in the judiciary and also what actions by judges can lead to increasing the level of public trust in the judiciary?
- ▶ Which other stakeholders or groups (community leaders, legal professionals, media organizations, educational institutions, civil society organizations) in your country can contribute to increasing public trust in the judiciary, and what actions have been taken to engage them?

■ **12:15 - 13:30 | Lunch**

■ **13:30 - 15:00 | Second Session: Judicial Independence**

- Moderator/ speaker 1: Petr Angyalossy, President of the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic
- Moderator/speaker 2: Valentina Pavlicic, President of the Supreme Court of Montenegro
- ▶ What are the most significant current challenges to judicial independence in your country and what measures are you taking to strengthen and safeguard judicial independence? How does public perception impact judicial independence?
- ▶ How do you ensure institutional independence from the other branches of government? To what extent is the judiciary financially independent from the executive branch, including control over budget planning, allocation of resources, and financial management?
- ▶ How effective are judicial councils or similar bodies in protecting the judiciary from external influence?
- ▶ How do you strike a balance between judicial independence and accountability? Safeguards against arbitrary removal or transfer of judges?
- ▶ What has been your experience with judicial vetting processes? What lessons have been learned?

■ **15:00 - 15:30 | Coffee Break**

■ **15:30 - 17:00 | Third Session: Domestic reception of law from European Courts (Court of Justice of the European Union and European Court of Human Rights)**

- Moderator/ speaker 1: Mirjana Lazarova Trajkovska PhD, President of the Case Law Department of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia and former ECHR judge
- Moderator/speaker 2: Marjeta Švab Širok, Vice President of Supreme Court of Slovenia
- ▶ What impact do European-level jurisprudential frameworks have on the work of your national courts? How do you ensure consistent application across different levels of the judiciary?
- ▶ How should a Supreme Court balance respect for national sovereignty with the obligation to comply with international and European legal standards?
- ▶ Can you identify areas of law most influenced by European jurisprudence? Can you provide specific examples of decisions from European or international courts that have influenced domestic law or judicial practice in your country?
- ▶ Discuss a sensitive issue (e.g., migration, freedom of expression) where European rulings had strong domestic impact.
- ▶ How do the citizens of your country feel about following European judicial guidance?

■ **17:00 - 19:00 | Free time**

■ **19:00 - 21:00 | Official Dinner & Cultural Evening**

Day 3: Tuesday, June 23, 2026

■ **08:30 - 09:00 | Registration of Participants**

■ **09:00 - 10:30 | Fourth Session: Current and coming uses of AI in judicial proceedings and court administration**

- Moderator/ speaker 1: Dr hab. Małgorzata Manowska – First President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Poland
- Moderator/speaker 2: Minka Kreho, Acting President of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ▶ Are you using or planning to use AI in automating your court procedures? If so, how?
- ▶ Is AI being used in drafting court decisions?
- ▶ Is AI useful in terms of reducing trial-court backlogs and delays?
- ▶ Do you have restrictions on attorney use of AI in preparing submission to the courts?
- ▶ How can AI be used to increase access to justice by the citizens of your country, especially self-represented litigants?
- ▶ Are you revising evidence rules to deal with “deep fakes” and other AI-generated evidence?

■ **10:30 - 11:00 | Coffee Break**

■ **11:00 - 12:30 | Fifth Session: Judicial speech on issues of public concern**

- Moderator/ speaker 1: Mimi Furnadjieva, Deputy President of the Supreme Court of Cassation of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Moderator/speaker 2: Lia Savonea - President of the High Court of Cassation and Justice of Romania
- ▶ When issues affecting the judiciary become part of public debate, what role should courts—and particularly Chief Justices—play in responding publicly?
- ▶ How can courts communicate on issues of public concern while safeguarding judicial impartiality and avoiding the perception that judges are entering political debates?
- ▶ When judicial decisions are publicly criticized or misrepresented, what is the most appropriate institutional response from courts?
- ▶ How do judges respond to public criticism or high-profile cases? Are there appropriate boundaries for public speech by judges on issues of public concern?
- ▶ Do your courts have communication strategies, spokespersons, or protocols for addressing sensitive public issues? What has worked well and what challenges remain?
- ▶ If you could recommend one practical step Supreme Courts/courts in the CEE region could take to improve how they communicate on issues of public concern, what would it be?

■ **12:30 - 13:00 | Closing remarks**

■ **13:00 - 14:30 | Lunch**

■ **14:30 - 15:00 | Preparation time**

■ **15:00 - 18:00 | Social event**

■ **20:00 - 22:00 | Dinner**

Day 4: Wednesday, June 24, 2026

■ **Morning | Departure of Participants**