



The President

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H.E. JUDr.Lucia ZITNANSKA, PhD.
Minister of Justice
Zupné námestie 13
SK-813 11 BRATISLAVA
SLOWAKEI

Re: Concerns about recent developments infringing the judiciary in Slovakia

Your Excellency,

the European Association of Judges (EAJ) is honoured to address you, expressing its distinguished respect in order to communicate its serious concerns about recent developments in Slovakia.

The European Association of Judges (EAJ), Regional Organization of the International Association of Judges (IAJ) is a union of national judges' associations from 38 European Countries, among them all the 27 member states of the European Union. It is independent from governments, political parties and other groups of influence on national or supranational level. The Slovakian member is the Zdrúzenie sudcov Slovenska (ZSS) Foremost goal of the EAJ is to strengthen and support the rule of law as well as judicial independence and impartiality, safeguard the interests of the judiciary as an essential requirement of the judicial function and guarantee of human rights and freedoms and safeguard the constitutional and moral standing of the judiciary. EAJ has observer status at the Council of Europe, the CCJE and the CEPEJ and other judicial committees.

EAJ carefully watches the developments of the judiciaries in Europe and within the European states. If observations rise concern or a national member association or one of the stakeholders in the respective country asks for assistance EAJ collects and studies the facts, draws conclusions and elaborates recommendations. This outcome then is shared with the

national authorities and sometimes in cases of particular interest with the competent institutions of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

The Slovakian Association of Judges (ZZS) informed the European Association of Judges about amendments of the Law on Judges concerning nomination and appointment of judicial officers, disciplinary procedures and salaries of judges. This information and other reports which EAJ got from several sources on the situation of the judiciary in Slovakia were discussed at the plenary meeting of EAJ in Malta on May 6th 2011.

Concerns arised that some developments in Slovakia are a step backwards and tend to weaken the judiciary. The balance of powers will be disturbed. The remedy to reinforce the trust in the judiciary and in the rule of law cannot be amendmends of the law which are in conflict with international standards, but should consist in means, which guarantee transparency in all procedures including all matters of administration of justice and which avoid and fight against misuse of existing legal provisions.

EAJ will analyse the legal changes in detail and observe further developments. If the Slovakian authorithies wish so, EAJ is prepared to enter into dialog . EAJ can share it´s long-standing experiences with problems in different judiciaries worldwide.

Yours respectfully

Gerhard Reissner