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PRESS RELEASE

Prosecutor General, Péter Polt's video message on the Activities of the Prosecution Service in 2019

This year, unlike before, the Prosecutor General gave a video report to his colleagues on last year's activities of the Prosecution Service of Hungary while also submitting the written report to the Hungarian Parliament (Hungarian National Assembly). Péter Polt emphasised that the Prosecution Service, which is committed to upholding the law and to work at a high-level, showed impressive achievements in 2019.

The Prosecutor General highlighted in his video message that 2019 was the first year when the *new Criminal Procedure Code (new CPC)*, which entered into force on the 1st of July in 2018, had to be applied through the whole year. The main objectives of the new CPC were to improve efficiency, to urge the application of diversion tools to increase the number of cases handled out of court and to apply legal institutions supporting the reparation of victims. The activities of the Prosecution Service of Hungary conformed to the new regulations and they met the requirements of lawful operation.

As for the main *structural change* within the Prosecution Service of Hungary, Péter Polt mentioned the integrated structure of the prosecutorial investigations introduced on the 1st of January in 2019. The Central Chief Prosecution Office of Investigation and the Regional Prosecution Offices of Investigation subordinated to it have the power to investigate crimes falling in the exclusive competence of prosecutorial investigation. At the same time, the Prosecution Office of Investigation of the Capital, Budapest, with territorial jurisdiction for the capital city, Budapest was established. The fight against corruption was a priority task for the Central Chief Prosecution Office of Investigation. The number of initiated cases on official bribery steadily increased despite the decline in the total number of registered corruption crimes.

Whereas the decreasing tendency experienced in the recent years relating to the number of registered crimes continued last year as well, *the files awaiting to be processed by the Prosecution Service increased significantly* as the legal tools introduced in the new CPC increased the workload of prosecutors.

The Prosecutor General also mentioned that the number of complaints submitted against the decisions of the prosecution offices decreased significantly.

The video message also addressed the issue that the Prosecution Service of Hungary put great emphasis last year as well on the swift and efficient completion of criminal procedures, as in 73.3 percent of cases *prosecutors brought the cases to court by proposing an expedited procedure*, prosecutors either requested a penalty order or a summary trial. This percentage even exceeded the significant results of 2018. The Prosecutor General specifically highlighted the significant rise in the number of penalty orders, which also reduced the workload of the courts.

The Prosecutor General also explained if the suspect admits committing the crime, the cooperation of the suspect with the authorities can determine the type of the indictment and the content of the indictment. Prosecutors filed indictments based on *agreements* made during the investigation in 91 cases. Prosecutors made a *motion in the indictment in 3,984 cases relating to the proportion and the period of the punishment or measure*, provided the defendants confessed to the commission of the crime at the preliminary session and did not request the trial to be carried out.

A final decision was reached by the first instance court during preliminary sessions with respect to 88 % of the defendants who admitted the commission of the crime. This was due to the effective activity of the prosecutors present at the preliminary sessions.

The Prosecutor General indicated that in some cases, it could still be perceived that case-law was mild, in such cases, the Prosecution Service of Hungary sought to enforce this statutory requirement by *appealing for aggravation*. In 2019, the effectiveness of prosecutorial appeals increased to 53.6%.

The 98.3 % *efficiency rate of indictment* was the highest rate of the last ten years.

From the rights and duties belonging to the Prosecutor General, Péter Polt referred to the *extraordinary legal remedy of motion for legality*. Last year 18 motions were filed – including the Hableány-case – and in most cases (13) the Curia shared the arguments made by the Prosecution Service.

Regarding the *tasks outside of criminal law*, the Prosecutor General highlighted that in 2019 the Prosecution Service of Hungary in order to *protect the interests of consumers*, mostly *initiated litigation proceedings* against real estate agencies, but it also stepped up likewise against tour operators, second-hand car dealers, a company selling property and an airline.

The Prosecution Service of Hungary *supervised the legality* of individual decisions made by administrative authorities and authorities dealing with minor offence cases. The Prosecution Service of Hungary also carried out inspections in child protection institutions and in small group homes. Prosecutors fully accomplished their warning duties related to endangered children and to the danger of violence among family members.

The workload in the field of *legality supervision of the enforcement of punishments* increased during last year, the number of complaints, requests and notifications received by prosecutors and the number of prosecutorial inspections also increased.

Regarding *international relations and activities*, the Prosecutor General emphasised that the Prosecution Service of Hungary paid particular attention to the further deepening of the relations with the neighbouring countries and the Member States of the European Union (EU).

Péter Polt underlined the cooperation between the Prosecution Service of Hungary and the European Anti-Fraud Office, *OLAF*. The mission of OLAF is to detect administrative irregularities affecting EU funds. As a result of its investigations, OLAF can make recommendations to the Member States' judicial authorities. In 2019, OLAF sent 3 judicial recommendations to the Prosecution Service of Hungary which were evaluated in the course of already ongoing criminal procedures. The Prosecution Service of Hungary between 2015 and 2019 filed indictments in 47% of the cases involving judicial recommendations from OLAF, which was a significantly higher percentage than the average in the EU (39%).

The Hungarian Desk of Eurojust (the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation seated in the Hague) dealt with 386 cases, which was higher than the average in the European Union, from which 250 cases were initiated by domestic authorities, while 136 requests were received from foreign countries.

In his video message the Prosecutor General emphasised that it is of paramount importance that two EU-organisations having actual insight into the functioning of the Prosecution Service of Hungary highly appreciated the fight of our organisation against crime.

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