

**The Prosecutor General's Report
on the Activities of the Prosecution Service
in 2023**
(extract)



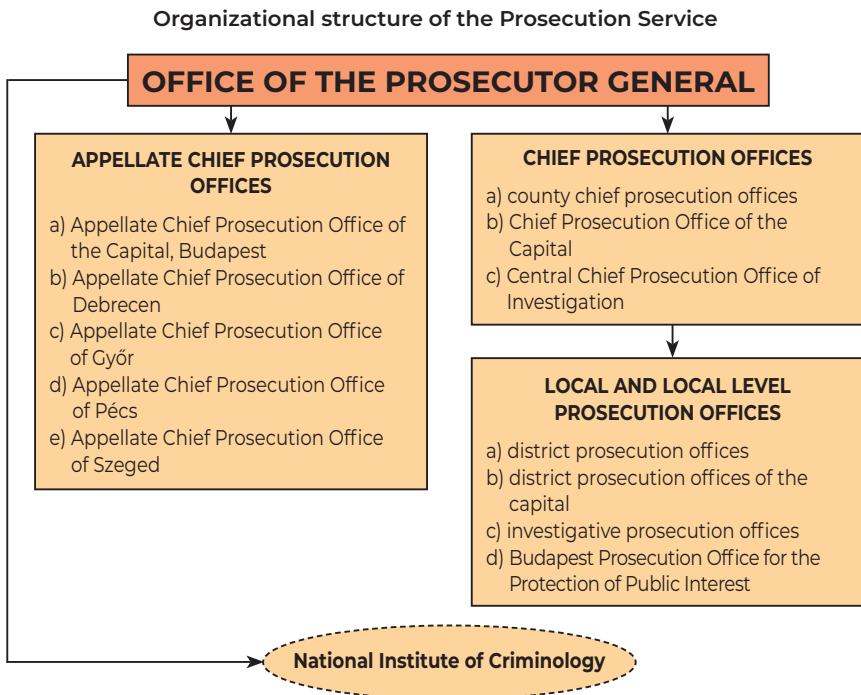
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1. The Prosecution Service

The bases of the operation of the Prosecution Service are primarily contained by the Fundamental Law of Hungary as well as by cardinal acts concerning the Prosecution Service, more specifically by Act CLXIII of 2011 on the Prosecution Service (hereinafter referred to as the Prosecution Service Act/PSA) and Act CLXIV of 2011 on the Status of the Prosecutor General, Prosecutors and Other Prosecution Employees and the Prosecution Career (hereinafter referred to as the Prosecutorial Employment and Career Act/ PECA).

The organizational structure of the Prosecution Service in the reporting period is shown in the following figure:



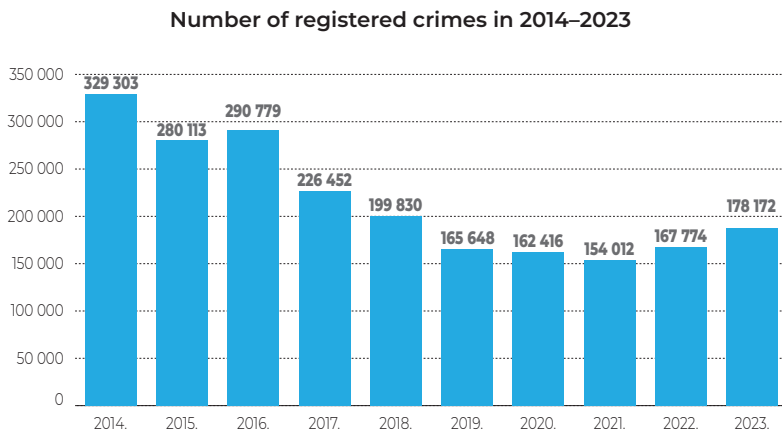
2. Activities of the Prosecution Service in the field of criminal law

Supervision and direction of investigations and investigations conducted by the Prosecution Service

Main statistics on criminality

The number of incoming and outgoing case files in the field of criminal law continuously decreased from 2014 to 2017. However, in the period following the entry into force of Act XC of 2017 on the Criminal Procedure Code (hereinafter referred to as CPC) on 1 July 2018, especially in 2019, the number of incoming and outgoing cases increased by hundreds of thousands.

The almost continuous decline in the number of registered crimes since 2014 stopped in 2022, and their number increased by 8.9% and further grew in 2023 by 6.2%. The following diagram displays the changes of the last ten years:



However, the number of registered perpetrators decreased compared to 2022, with 80,633 perpetrators registered in 2023.

The following tables include information about the main data of certain crimes:

Number of certain registered crimes between 2021–2023

Crimes	2021.	2022.	2023.
Completed intentional homicide	72	89	70
Attempted homicide	62	98	83
Theft	40 852	46 833	49 127
Fraud	12 755	16 747	19 704
Robbery	543	534	536
Infringement of copyright and certain rights related to copyright	128	169	147
Offences against traffic regulations	17 663	20 570	19 116
Driving under the influence of alcohol	11 450	11 339	10 666
Causing a road accident through negligence	2 361	3 044	2 646
Trafficking in human beings	635	1 705	1 634
Assault on a public official and on a person entrusted with public functions and assault on a person aiding a public official or a person entrusted with public functions	670	904	756
Crimes against the judicial system	1 791	16 86	1 714
Public nuisance	8 313	8 812	8 709
Crimes related to official documents	13 808	11 124	12 755
Drug abuse crimes	7 004	7 453	6 619
Corruption crimes	6 219	1 003	2 000
Bribery of public officials	5 976	650	249
Economic bribery	119	126	792
Counterfeiting currency	230	254	316
Forgery of stamps	13	23	6
Crimes in connection with cash-substitute payment instruments	1 728	2 147	3 620
Budget fraud	1 175	1 189	1 041
Fraudulent bankruptcy	122	143	120
Money laundering	358	542	768
Breach of information system or data	1 140	1 737	1 601
Compromising or defrauding the integrity of the computer protection system or device	15	14	481
Environmental offences	25	35	27
Damaging the natural environment	71	97	230
Violation of waste management regulations	515	914	910
Military offences	242	197	190

Actions recorded in relation to the initiated procedures in 2021–2023

Crimes	2021.	2022.	2023.
Homicide, voluntary manslaughter	233	252	220
Theft	47 323	51 663	60 260
Fraud	17 152	21 246	23 375
Robbery	581	563	637
Infringement of copyright and certain rights related to copyright	304	210	249
Offences against traffic regulations	19 506	19 631	18 592
Driving under the influence of alcohol	11 239	10 779	9 536
Causing a road accident through negligence	2 660	2 755	2 693
Trafficking in human beings	1 177	2 007	1 247
Assault on a public official and on a person entrusted with public functions and assault on a person aiding a public official or a person entrusted with public functions	797	1 128	874
Crimes against the judicial system	4 289	4 428	4 322
Public nuisance	10 392	10 638	10 296
Crimes related to official documents	7 529	6 828	6 198
Drug abuse crimes	7 798	6 496	6 548
Corruption crimes	358	374	464
Bribery of public officials	173	176	212
Economic bribery	103	134	181
Counterfeiting currency	263	283	336
Forgery of stamps	9	6	7
Crimes in connection with cash-substitute payment instruments	1 750	1 964	3 842
Budget fraud	1 815	2 457	1 737
Fraudulent bankruptcy	607	841	1 139
Money laundering	725	531	577
Breach of information system or data	1 433	1 860	1 971
Compromising or defrauding the integrity of the computer protection system or device	35	27	13
Environmental offences	159	103	106
Damaging the natural environment	187	231	295
Violation of waste management regulations	1 369	1 815	1 577
Military offences	251	265	213

Given the different methodologies and dates of data recording, the data of the two subsystems are not comparable. Therefore, conclusions that a certain number of offences occurred in a given year cannot be drawn from the recorded crime data.

The changing pattern of crime is illustrated by the fact that fraud continues to show an upward trend. This applies both to the number of offences registered and to the number of proceedings initiated (the former relates to the closure of proceedings by the prosecution or investigating authority, the latter to the opening of proceedings). Another important factor in this context is that the methods of committing fraud have changed over the last decade (and especially over the last few years). The role of online space has also become increasingly important for these offences and has become the medium of perpetration for a significant percentage of fraud offences. This finding is supported by the fact that the number of proceedings initiated in 2023 for offences involving breaches of information systems or data has increased further compared to the previous year. It is also important to underline that the number of cases of circumvention of technical measures to protect information systems (essentially so-called “phishing” offences) showed a dramatic increase of more than 30 times the number of offences registered. The effective detection and proof of cybercrime also requires the continuous development of IT skills, which is one of the areas where the continuous professional training mentioned above should be given the highest priority.

The number of registered cases of budget fraud and the number of prosecutions initiated for this offence also decreased compared to 2022. The improved statistics do not mean, however, that the Prosecution Service’s workload in the year under review was lower than in previous years in relation to the prosecution of budget fraud offences. Prosecuting budget fraud, which involves several Member States and is typically organised in criminal networks, and which involves hundreds of millions or sometimes billions of euros in financial losses, usually involves complex and time-consuming procedural steps. These include the combined and creative use of disguised instruments, the extensive use of

international judicial cooperation tools, but also a wide range of measures to detect and divert the wealth derived from crime.

In the context of budget fraud, and wealth-generating crime in general, it should be noted that crime can only be tackled effectively if the wealth generated by the crime can be seized from the perpetrators. The Prosecution Service pays particular attention to achieving this objective, and the importance of this is consistently drawn to the attention of the investigating authority in the context of its management powers. A motion for confiscation of assets is brought before the courts in all cases where the legal conditions for this are met.

The number of recorded money laundering offences has continued to rise steeply, with the number of offences increasing year on year over the last two years, with the current year's figure more than double of the figure for two years before. A significant part of the increase in crime is due to the growing prevalence of crimes committed online, as the acquisition and legalisation of wealth from fraudulent transactions on the Internet is usually linked to banking operations that involve money laundering.

Protecting natural assets is an increasingly important challenge both internationally and for individual countries. In this context, it is also worth pointing out that this is typically an area that requires a complex approach to the management of infringements. Accordingly, there is a constant exchange of information and cooperation between the public and criminal law branches of the Prosecution Service, with a view to finding the most effective means of eradicating infringements in all cases. Statistics show that, among the crimes against the environment and nature, the number of crimes against the environment decreased by 22.9%, while the number of crimes against nature increased significantly by 137.1% in 2023 compared to the previous year.

The starting point for the analysis of anti-corruption activities is the idea that the Prosecution Service – and the judiciary in general – does not primarily prevent the commission of criminal

conduct, but rather prosecutes the perpetrators of criminal acts. Consequently, the Prosecution Service can be assessed in terms of its effectiveness in dealing with the perpetrators of the corruption offences committed. It is important to emphasise that the assessment of the Prosecution Service's activities should be based on the actual corruption situation in the country and not on a subjective perception of corruption.

Eurobarometer, the European Commission's opinion polling organisation, has published a special report on the perception of corruption in Europe in 2023. According to the 534th Corruption Perceptions Survey, 88% of respondents in Hungary consider corruption to be a widespread problem in Hungary, while only 22% of respondents said yes to the question whether corruption affects them in their daily life. Even more importantly, when asked if they had personally experienced corruption in the last 12 months, only 9% of respondents said yes. These data clearly show that subjective (not fact-based) perceptions paint a significantly worse picture of the corruption situation in Hungary than objective experiences. However, in the framework of the rule of law, criminal prosecution can only be based on facts and not on subjective feelings.

Looking at the statistical indicators of corruption offences in criminal law, it can be concluded that in 2023 the number of registered bribes of public officials decreased significantly, while the number of registered economic bribes showed a sharp increase. The number of corruption offences recorded in initiated criminal proceedings continued to increase in 2023. The main driver of the overall increase continued to be the increase in the number of prosecutions for economic bribery, but in contrast to the previous year, the increase in the number of prosecutions for administrative corruption offences was also a key factor in 2023.

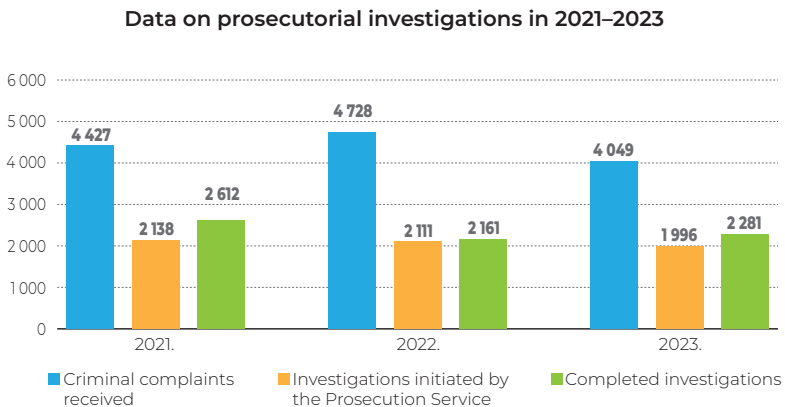
As in previous years, the most appropriate measure to characterise the corruption situation in Hungary is the number of registered corruption offenders over a 5-year period. This data series filters out the distorting effects of the classification system

of the criminal law (even the persistent corrupt behaviour of a single offender causes an increase in the number of registered offences by orders of magnitude). The trend line formed by the data series deviates very slightly from the horizontal level, which shows that there is no general increase or decrease behind the volatile values over a 5-year period, and the statistics show that the corruption situation in Hungary is relatively stable.

Prosecutorial investigations

The CPC introduced several important novelties, however, the provisions stating that the Prosecution Service may investigate any case itself and the investigation of specific crimes fall into its exclusive competence have not fundamentally changed.

The following diagram shows the changes in some essential data on prosecutorial investigations:



It is a priority task for the Central Chief Prosecution Office of Investigation to deal with the fight against corruption as the investigation of corruption crimes regarding officials falls within the competence of the Prosecution Service.

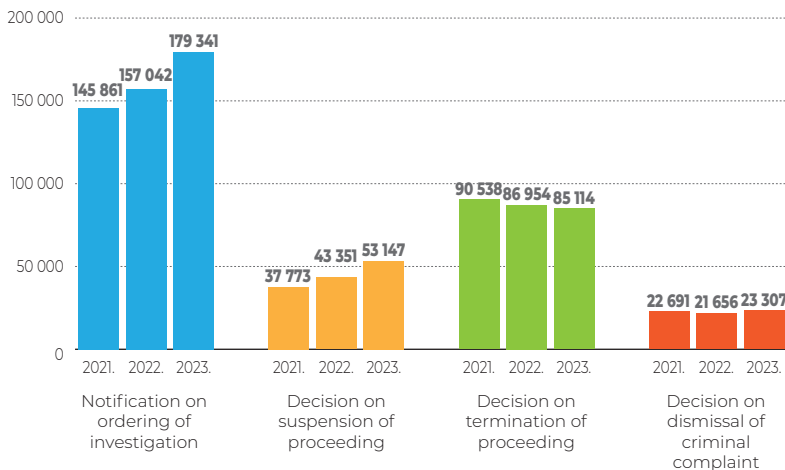
Supervision and direction of investigations

Powers of the Prosecution Service in the criminal procedure changed with the entry into force of the CPC on 1 July 2018 depending on whether the investigation is in its initial detection stage (detection) or is already conducted against a reasonably suspected person (examination).

The divided investigation system has also changed the relationship between the Prosecution Service and the investigating authority. Detection can be characterized by the entire independence of the investigating authority under prosecutorial supervision of legality, whereas the examination phase of the investigation controlled by the Prosecution Service aims at making a decision on the indictment against a specific person or on other prosecutorial measures, as well as at the collection of the necessary evidence for this purpose.

The following diagram presents the number of decisions received from investigating authorities:

The number of decisions received from investigating authorities in 2021–2023

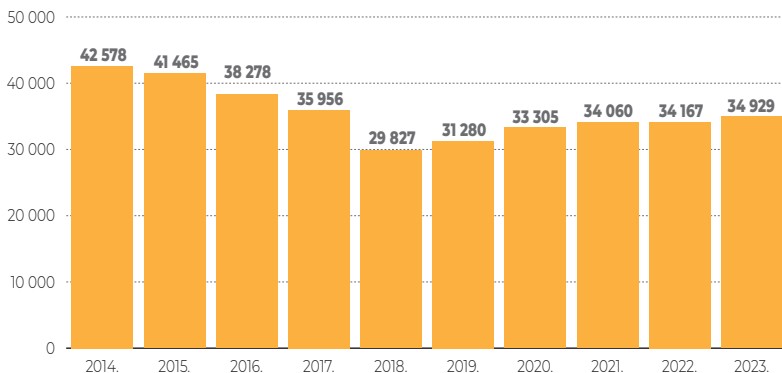


In 2023, the Prosecution Service received 340,909 decisions (2022: 309,003), of which 161,640 decisions were reviewed on the merits, including the ex officio review of suspicions by the investigating authority, which represents an increase of 6.3% compared to the 152,024 decisions reviewed in 2022.

According to the rules of handling complaints, the Prosecution Service is entitled to decide on the complaint if the decision was made by the investigating authority, and the superior prosecution office is entitled to decide on the complaint if the decision was made by the Prosecution Service. Complaints are one-level tools for legal redress; generally, there is no possibility for further legal remedy against them.

The evolution of the number of complaints against decisions and suspicions of investigating authorities is shown in the following diagram:

Number of complaints submitted against decisions and casting of suspicions by the investigating authorities in 2014–2023



Last year, the number of complaints submitted against decisions and casting of suspicions by the investigating authorities showed a minimal increase.

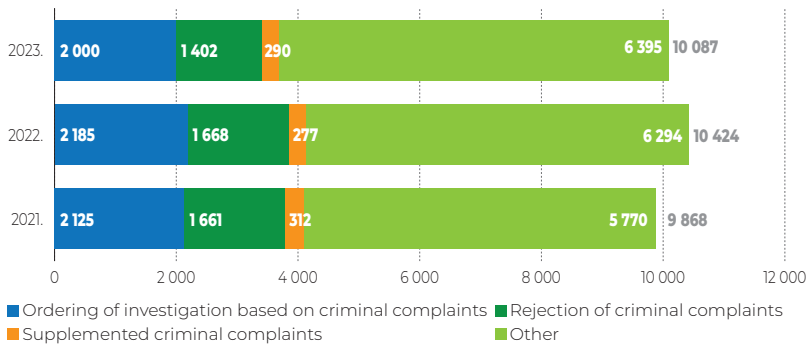
The Prosecution Service accepted 3,128 complaints, it rejected 26,665 complaints, whereas it took other measures with respect to the remaining part of the complaints.

Complaints may be also submitted against decisions taken by the Prosecution Service during its procedure before an indictment.

Out of the complaints lodged against own decisions and decisions of lower level prosecution offices, 303 complaints were accepted, 2,494 complaints were rejected and with regard to the remaining part of the complaints other measures were taken in 2023.

The following diagram illustrates decisions on criminal complaints submitted to the Prosecution Service:

Criminal complaints submitted to the Prosecution Service and decisions made on them in 2021–2023

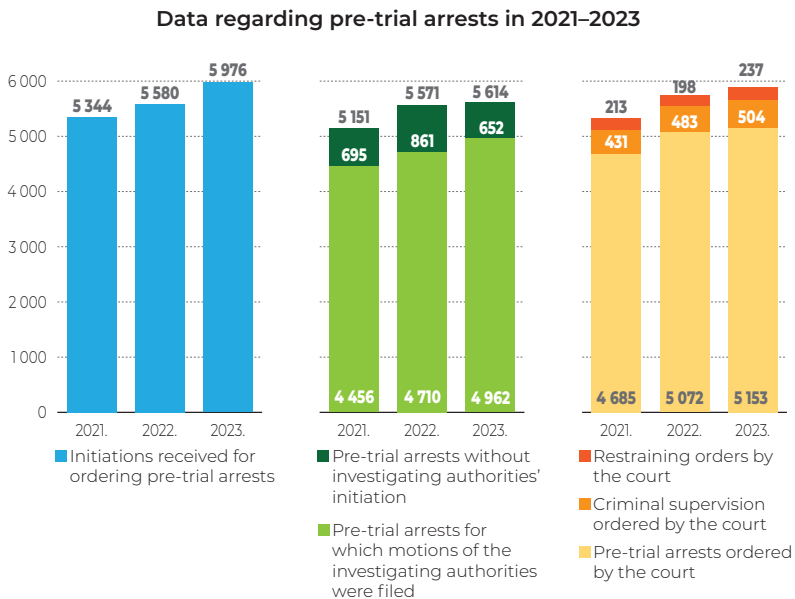


In 2023, the number of supplemented criminal complaints increased by 4.7%.

The CPC lays emphasis on the gradual approach with regard to the regime of coercive measures involving the deprivation or limitation of liberty. It is a statutory provision that the application

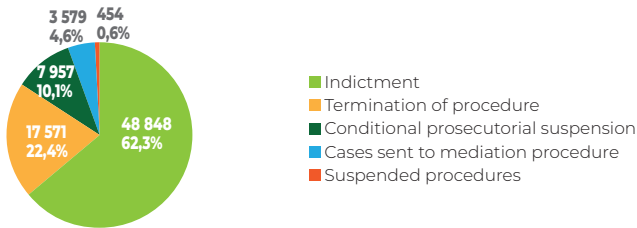
and execution of a coercive measure shall comply with the principle of necessity and proportionality. The possibility of using a bail has widened significantly, indicating that the law intends to reduce the number of pre-trial arrests to a minimum, and it intends to limit pre-trial arrests to the most necessary cases.

Generally, the investigating authority initiates to the Prosecution Service that a prosecutorial motion for pre-trial arrest should be filed. The following diagram illustrates the follow-up measures of such initiations:



In 2023, there were 78,409 (2022: 79,400, 2021: 76,911) prosecutorial decisions concerning cases that were examined as to whether being appropriate for indictment. The results of these are shown by the following diagram:

Prosecutorial decisions on cases examined as to whether being appropriate for indictment in 2023



Indictments were of the following types: The Prosecution Service filed indictments in accordance with the general rules in 3,204 cases (6.6% of all indictments), arraignments were conducted in 1,924 cases, and it filed a motion for a penal order in 33,216 cases. Indictments based on agreements were filed in 83 cases, which is roughly the same as the previous year (2022: 85).

The Prosecution Service also has the possibility to file a motion in the indictment for the term or duration of the punishment or penal measure in case the accused confesses to the commission of the crime during the preliminary session. Last year, there were 10,162 cases where the Prosecution Service filed such an indictment, which led to a 14.2% growth (2022: 8,901) compared to the previous year. And if we consider that the number of these motions was only 6,253 in 2021, we can clearly see a rising trend.

Arraignment (speedy trial) is aimed at closing cases which are suitable for being decided in this way in a short time. Arraignment can be applied in cases which are easy to decide or to prove, when the defendant makes a confession or was caught in the act of committing the crime.

Simplifying and significantly accelerating the procedure as well as decreasing the workload are the purposes to be served, when the court – upon the motion of the Prosecution Service or ex officio – decides about the punishment or imposes criminal measures without hearing the defendant or without conducting the procedure. The procedure aiming at a penal order can even be applied if the defendant did not confess to the commission of the crime during the investigation.

In 2023, arraignments were conducted in a slightly higher proportion than in the previous years. 3.9% of the total number of indictments (2022: 2.5%, 2021: 2.5%) resulted in arraignment.

In contrast, the motions for penal order filed by the Prosecution Service dropped to 68% of all indictments (in 2022: 70.3%; in 2021: 74.5%).

Mediation is a conflict resolution procedure that can be applied to avoid infliction of sanctions for a minor offence. Its purpose is to reach an agreement between the defendant and the victim, which contains reparation and resolves their conflict. Such an agreement also facilitates the defendant's future law-abiding behaviour.

In 2023, the Prosecution Service suspended the criminal proceedings and referred the case to mediation in case of 5,048 motions (in 2022: 5,067, in 2021: 4,790), whereas in case of 4,518 motions it rejected the suspension of the proceedings (in 2022: 4,588; in 2021: 4,506). Considering the success of the proceedings, the Prosecution Service terminated the proceedings against 2,834 defendants.

Further options to avoid court procedures include the following: termination of the procedure (investigation) by application of reprimand, conditional prosecutorial suspension of the procedure.

In 2023, the Prosecution Service applied conditional prosecutorial suspension against 9,102 persons (in 2022: 9,749, in 2021: 9,892).

After applying this legal tool, procedures were terminated against 7,048 persons.

Prosecutors' activity in criminal courts

No significant difficulties arose in the year under review in connection with the application of the provisions of the CPC relating to the judicial phase of proceedings, which entered into force on 1 July 2018, in the light of the experience gained in previous years and the legislative amendments that settled the legal issues. The year 2023 was no longer affected by the emergency caused by the coronavirus pandemic, so that the special provisions on criminal proceedings, which significantly extended the possibility of carrying out judicial procedural acts without the personal participation of the participants in the criminal proceedings during the pandemic, were not applicable.

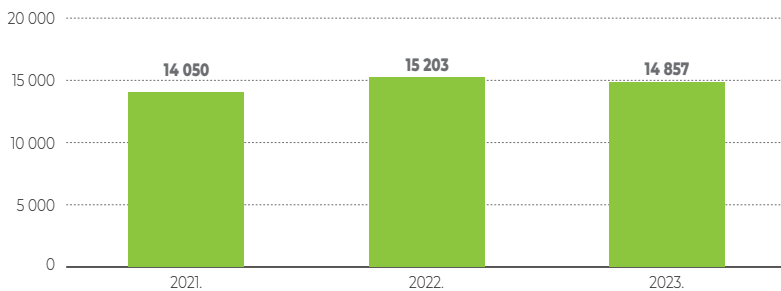
Compared to 2022, the number of cases finally decided by the court decreased by 2.7% and the number of defendants affected with a final decision decreased by 4.6%. After a slight increase over the previous two years, these figures are no longer close to the pre-pandemic figures for 2019 and the years before. Compared to 2014, the number of defendants affected with final decisions has decreased by 36.5%. This is linked to the fact that the number of registered offences, despite two years of steady increase, is still below the figures for the years 2014 to 2018, resulting in fewer cases and fewer charges being prosecuted.

In 2023, the mandatory preparatory session for cases to be heard in court continued to be of paramount importance for the Prosecution Service's activities in criminal court. The Prosecution Service continued to make extensive use of the possibility to make a motion for the specific type and degree of penalty in cases where the accused pleads guilty at the preparatory session. The number of defendants convicted by the court at the preparatory session after having accepted their guilty pleas increased by 9% compared to 2022. This is the highest figure since the introduction of this legal instrument on 1 July 2018. Consequently, the number

of defendants in respect of whom the decision of the preparatory session has become final has also increased compared to 2022. The percentage of defendants with this type of completion reached 19.5% of the number of defendants with a final decision at first instance, which is also the highest figure ever. It can therefore be concluded that the number of defendants who no longer had to be tried in court following their acceptance of a guilty plea has continued to increase, thus significantly reducing the length of criminal proceedings.

In 2023, the number of cases tried at first instance decreased by 2.3%, in line with the reduction in the number of defendants charged in the ordinary procedure.

Number of cases concerned by first instance trial in 2021–2023



The number of cases completed at second instance decreased by 3.2% compared to the previous year: in 2022 it was 8,100, while in 2021 it was 7,842. The number of public hearings and trials held by second instance courts with participation of prosecutors also decreased slightly: by 1.8%.

According to provisions of the CPC, in many cases, the direction and content of appeals submitted by the Prosecution Service essentially determine the extent of the review, and thereby the limits of the second instance court's procedure as well, which thus requires particular care from the prosecutor representing the case. In this regard, the provision which does not allow for the later

extension of appeals resulting in limited reviews is of paramount importance. From the efficiency rate of indictments it can be concluded that, compared to the previous years, prosecutors handling cases at first-instance performed high-quality work in 2023 as well, and they paid special attention to lodging appeals.

The CPC provides for the possibility for the second instance court to establish the criminal liability of an accused acquitted at first instance on the basis of different facts. Whenever prosecutors who acted on behalf of prosecution offices at courts of second instance considered it possible to apply this provision, they tried to submit their motions in compliance with this provision, reducing the number of cases where the first instance court's conclusive decision had to be quashed.

The number of third instance procedures in 2022 was also small, moreover it showed a decrease of 27.2% compared to the previous year.

On the whole, it can be concluded, that in 2023, the workload of the Prosecution Service in relation to trials did not show a significant change compared to the previous year: a decrease could be seen with regard to first, second and third instance trials as well.

Taking into account figures of the past ten years, the two most important legal instruments – in terms of their occurrence – to accelerate judicial proceedings are still the arraignment and penal order procedures. When choosing the right form of procedure to have a timely completion of procedures and to assert the state's power to prosecute effectively, in 2023, the Prosecution Service did not have to take into account the particular circumstances caused by the pandemic. While the interim procedural rules which had widened the range of cases in which the court could deliver a decision in these two separate proceedings were no longer in force, there was no significant change in the combined number and proportion of these cases.

In 2023, arraignment, as a type of special procedure was conducted with regard to 92.8% of the accused persons, and in case of 75.1% of the accused persons the decision of the first instance court became final.

In 2023, the trend towards penal order procedures became more and more dominant, both as far as the number of adjudicated cases and their ratio compared to the number of accused persons whose cases were adjudicated with final decisions are concerned. Not taking the number of accused persons affected by arraignments into consideration, the court issued a penal order with regard to 63.9% of the indicted defendants, and in case of 83.5% of these defendants, the penal order also became final.

In 2023, courts delivered their judgements at preparatory sessions by accepting the guilty plea confessions of 11,394 defendants. This – excluding the number of defendants affected by arraignments and penal orders – means 45% of the indicted defendants. If we compare this with the number of accused persons affected by penal order procedures, it can be found that the Prosecution Service chose the appropriate forms of procedure in the reporting year as well.

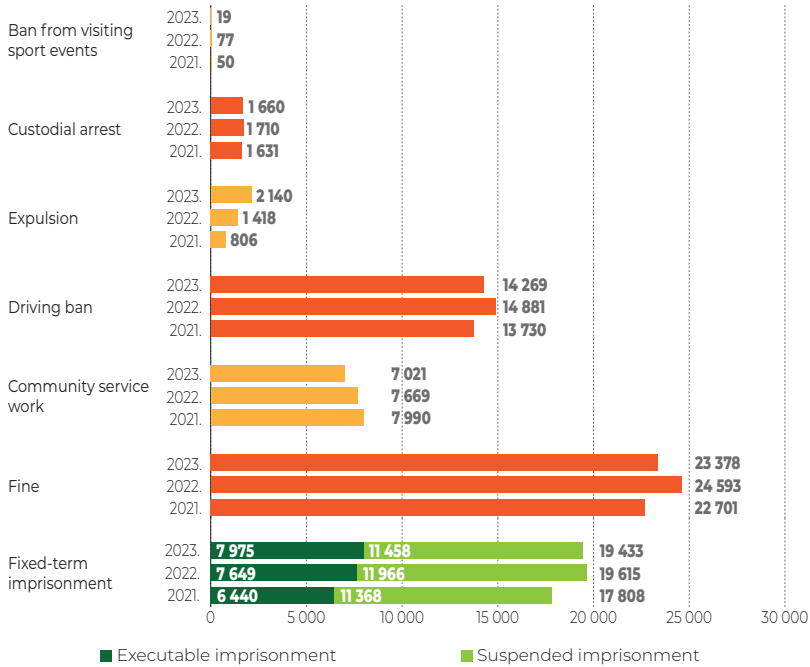
In 2023, the number of accused persons against whom criminal punishments or measures were imposed was 55,077.

The rising trend of the proportion of punishments within the criminal sanctions continued, and from 89.2% reached in 2022, it rose to 89.3%.

The number of defendants sentenced to life imprisonment decreased from 19, which was the number in the previous year, to 13.

The number of defendants subject to different punishments – without the number of defendants sentenced to life imprisonment – is shown by the following diagram:

Number of defendants subject to different punishments in 2021–2023



As in previous years, fine continued to be the most commonly imposed punishment in 2023. This punishment type affected 47.5% of the finally convicted offenders, which shows a 0.5% decrease compared to 2022. Compared to the number of finally convicted offenders, the rate of imprisonment sentences increased by 1.2% and reached 39.5%. The proportion of custodial arrests basically remained the same and affected 3.4% of the convicts. This suggests that tightening sentencing practices, which were experienced in the previous years, remained unchanged overall.

The ratio of community service work imposed in the reporting year continued to decrease by 0.7%. This type of punishment was imposed on 14.3% of the convicts.

The proportion (29%) of finally imposed driving ban sentences remained essentially unchanged.

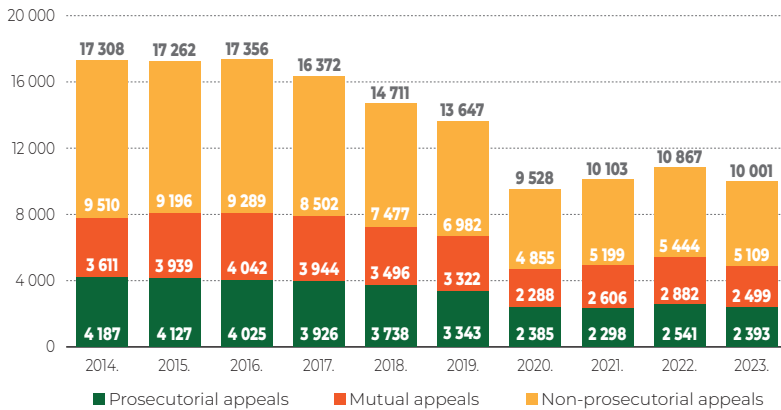
The significant increase in the number of defendants who were banned from practicing a profession or were sentenced to expulsion, as seen in the previous years, became even stronger in 2023. The increase in the number of defendants who were banned from practicing a profession was by 2.4% higher compared to the previous year. The primary reason for this is that a mandatory ban from practicing a profession was continued to be used consistently in the sentencing practice of the courts for perpetrators of crimes against sexual freedom and morality. Compared to 2021, the number of defendants sentenced to expulsion also grew significantly, in a two-year term by 165.5%. This can be explained by a further increase in the number defendants convicted for trafficking in human beings. As of 1 January 2021, the Hungarian Criminal Code made it mandatory to impose expulsion on the non-Hungarian perpetrators of that crime.

The punishment of ban from visiting sport events was still used in a very small number of the cases, and it only affected 0.04% of the defendants whose sentence was final.

The number of accused persons whom the court put on probation continued to decrease in 2023. The ratio of probations decreased to 9.6% even compared to all criminal sanctions. It can still be concluded, however, that among the criminal measures imposed instead of punishments, probation remained the most frequently used criminal measure. This is connected to the fact that the sentencing practice of courts continued to tighten and this did not change in 2023, either.

The number of appeals filed against decisions on the merit of first instance courts are shown by the following diagram:

The number of appeals filed against decisions on the merit of first instance courts in 2014–2023



Compared to 2022, the number of appeals lodged against conclusive decisions of the first instance courts decreased by 8% in the reporting year. In 2023, appeals were filed with regard to 53.9% of the defendants affected by conclusive decisions of first instance courts, where the court decisions were not passed in procedures aimed at ending a case with a penal order. This figure is by 0.9% lower compared to the previous year.

With the decreasing number of final decisions on the merits, the number of appeals against final decisions also decreased to a similar extent. The rate of prosecutorial appeals roughly corresponded to the data of the previous years. In the reporting year, prosecutorial appeals or appeals also lodged by prosecutors accounted for 48.9% of the appeals lodged in cases of defendants affected by conclusive decisions of the first instance courts (2022: 49.9%, 2021: 48.5%, 2020: 49%).

In 2023, the success rate of prosecutorial appeals improved slightly to 54.1% from the 51% of the previous year. However, it could still be perceived that the sentencing practice is sometimes soft and lenient, and the legal provision prescribing that for the calculation of the length of imprisonment the statutory medium-term punishment should be taken into consideration was not properly enforced, either.

In order to have the lenient sentencing practice changed and to ensure the strict enforcement of the law the Prosecution Service appealed for the aggravation of the imposed sentences. This was the most common reason for prosecutorial appeals, accounting for 89.3% of defendants who were subject to prosecutorial appeals. Compared to the previous year, the success rate of prosecutorial appeals for the aggravation of sentences upheld by second-instance prosecutors grew from 27.3% to 28%. At the same time, the number of prosecutorial appeals upheld for the judgement being unfounded decreased to 139 in the reporting year, and their success rate declined slightly to 38.9% compared to the previous year.

In 2023, we filed appeals for the acquittal of the defendants in 8 cases, for the mitigation of the punishments imposed on the defendants in 31 cases.

Although in 2021 there was a 0.1% decrease in the continuous increase of the efficiency rate of the indictment, an increase of the same proportion could be seen in the past two years, reaching again the highest rate of the past 10 years (99.2%). In addition, in the case of 49,708 defendants, 88.5% of the accused were found criminally responsible by the court in all respects in accordance with the indictment or the prosecutor's final sentencing recommendation.

The number of defendants affected by appeals lodged against decisions of courts of second instance decreased to 162, within which the number of defendants affected by prosecutorial appeals was 98.

In 2023, the Prosecution Service also paid special attention to priority criminal cases and cases of high interest to the public pending before criminal courts. We thoroughly and on an item-by-item basis examined procedures in this respect and generally those procedures that ended with final judgements of acquittal or with the termination of procedures, and we drew the necessary conclusions. Random samples were taken of other cases which had been concluded in a manner that undermined the efficiency rate of indictment. Based on the results of the examinations, specific or general measures were taken. Consultations were offered to appellate chief prosecution offices and chief prosecution offices in ongoing cases. Assistance was offered to them before the conclusion of the proceedings in resolving any substantive or procedural issues that may have arisen as a result of changes in the law during the reporting year. All these measures contributed to the maintenance of a high efficiency rate of indictment.

Prosecutors' activities relating to criminal cases of juvenile offenders

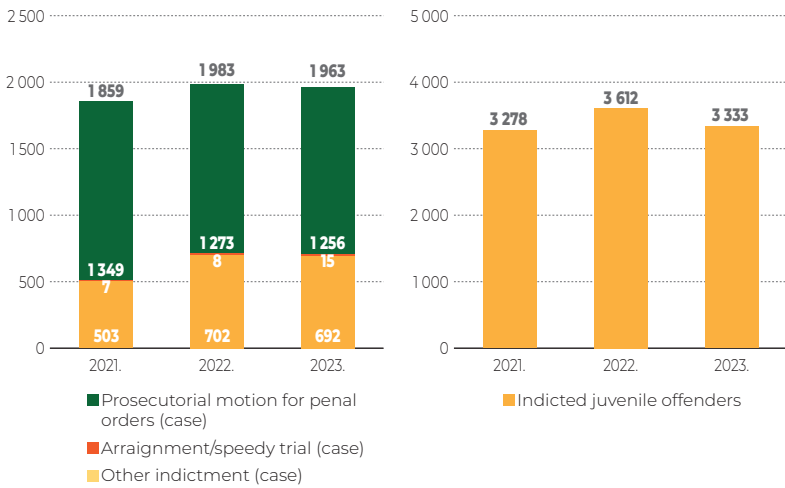
In 2023, the number of criminal offenders was 153,143, and 8,836 of them were registered as juvenile offenders over the age of fourteen.

In 2023, the number of minors registered as perpetrators of criminal offences was 2,523.

Cases closed by using accelerated forms of procedure (speedy trial, penal order) accounted for 64.7% of all indictments in 2023, which rate was very similar to the 64.6% of the previous year.

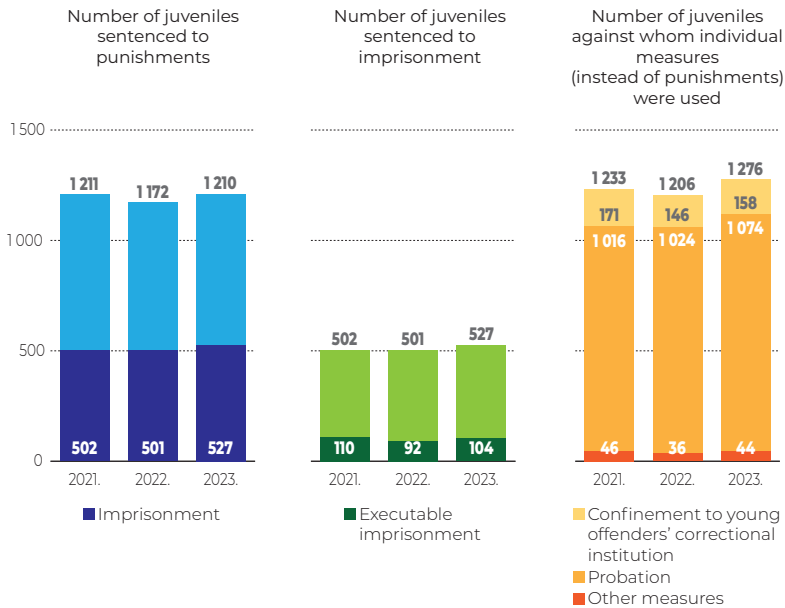
The number of cases resulting in indictments and the number of indicted juvenile offenders are shown in the following diagram:

Data on the indictments brought within the activities of juvenile prosecutors in 2021–2023



In 2023, 43.6% of juvenile offenders who received main punishments were sentenced to imprisonment. Probation continued to be the most common measure used as a substitute for punishment (2023: 84.2%, 2022: 84.9%, 2021: 82.4%), while the proportion of juveniles sentenced to correctional institution education remained almost unchanged compared to 2022 (2023: 12.4%, 2022: 12.1%, 2021: 13.9%). The data are illustrated in the following graph:

Key data on punishments and criminal measures against juvenile delinquents in 2021–2023



In the year under review, the court accepted the confessions of 669 (2022: 495) juvenile defendants at the preparatory session, of whom 622 (93%) [2022: 442 (89.3%)] were the subject of a final decision, with 554 (2022: 403) of them having already been declared final at the preparatory session.

In the reporting year, the Prosecution Service filed an appeal against the first instance decision in respect of 135 defendants, which was upheld by second instance prosecutors in respect of 126 defendants, and which led to a decision in the second instance proceedings in respect of 67.5% of the defendants (85 defendants). Third instance proceedings were held in respect of 2 juvenile defendants.

The prosecution success rate in juvenile specialised cases was 99.6%, similar to previous years (2022: 99.6%, 2021: 99.2%).

Guidelines facilitating the uniform application of law in the criminal section

In the course of the application of criminal law, it is essential that prosecutorial organs represent the same position on contentious issues. In 2023, too, the Office of the Prosecutor General supported the law enforcement activities of the Prosecution Service by conducting work plan examinations and issuing guidelines regularly.

In the year under review, the Office of the Prosecutor General issued guidelines on, inter alia:

- the rules for the transmission of documents in the case of electronic communication;
- on the application of the new Chapter CV/A of the CPC, “Procedure in the case of a major offence relating to the exercise of public authority or the management of public property”;
- in the case of a foreign national suspect, on the notification of the consular officer of his/her State;
- the appointment of a guardian ad litem prior to the disqualification of the legal representative;

- on the right of contact and consultation of the detained suspect and his/her lawyer;
- in relation to arresting the juvenile and his/her interrogation in the detention facility or his/her surrender to the investigative body;
- the interpretation of the legal definition of the offence of child pornography and questions of cumulative prosecution;
- on the correct legal assessment of the victim's state of incapacity in the context of child abuse;
- on aspects of the distinction between budgetary fraud committed on excise goods and money laundering;
- on the determination of the status of the victim in bankruptcy offences, the possibility of pursuing a civil claim and acting as a substitute private prosecutor;
- in the case of a trademark obtained by the commission of a criminal offence, on the reparation of the victim's damage to property;
- on the aspects of justification of agreements in criminal cases of budgetary fraud;
- on the correct interpretation of human smuggling and forced labour;
- in the context of the disclosure of agreements establishing joint investigation teams;
- on aspects of extended confiscation in the case of criminal organisations;
- in the context of confiscation and extended confiscation;
- on the measures to be taken by prosecutors to prevent the length of criminal proceedings in the judicial phase from being prolonged;
- on the consideration of motions for aggregated sentencing;
- on measures relating to the waste which is the object of criminal proceedings initiated for waste management offences.

3. Prosecutors' activities outside the field of criminal law

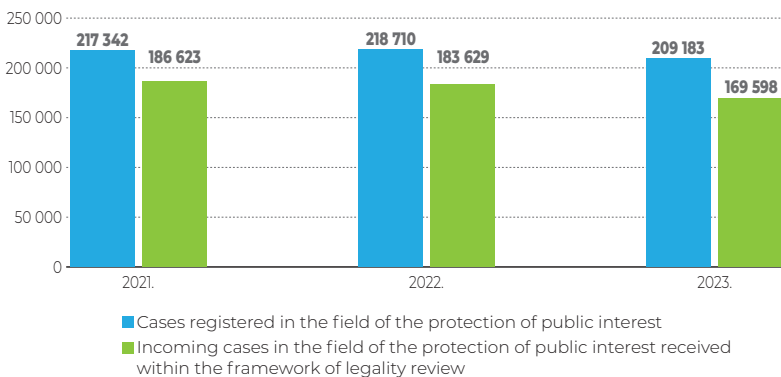
Prosecutors' activities in the field of the protection of public interest

In 2023, the conditions and framework for the provision of public interest protection services were not affected by a comprehensive legislative change. However, the mid-year amendment of the Consumer Protection Act has resulted in a significant change, which allows for the filing of representative actions to protect the collective interests of consumers as a new legal protection instrument from 25 June 2023.

Statistical indicators and tendencies of cases in the field of the protection of public interest

After an upward trend in previous years, the number of cases registered in 2023 fell slightly by 4.4% compared to the previous year. The following graph shows the evolution of the main caseload figures in the field of the protection of public interest.

Caseload data in the field of the protection of public interest in 2021–2023



The decline in the number of legality review cases, which accounted for 81% of arrivals, continued in 2023, at 7.6%, above the decline in the total number of cases. By contrast, the number of private law cases, which account for a smaller but growing share of the caseload – 19% in 2023 – increased by 12.8% compared with the previous year. The increase in the number of private prosecutions was accompanied by an 11.7% increase in the number of measures on the merits used by the Prosecution Service. The number of court document analyses of private law court cases increased by 24.6% compared to the previous year, and the number of participation on court hearings increased by 8.9%. In 2023, the number of cases received from courts increased by 13% compared to the previous year (2023: 4,943, 2022: 4,372), while the number of requests for prosecutorial measures decreased by 18% (2023: 2,351, 2022: 2,868).

Experiences of legality review procedures

In 2023, the number of administrative applications continued to decrease, as a result of which prosecutors carried out a review of the legality of administrative procedures and decisions at the request of the persons interested in the procedure in 812 cases, which was 12% less than in the previous year. The vast majority of the requests were rejected for lack of competence or in the absence of a breach of the law. In 35 cases, the prosecutor issued a reminder for serious infringements of the law detected as a result of the legality checks carried out on the basis of the requests. The reminders were successful and the authorities amended or withdrew the decisions which were in breach of the law. In several cases, prosecutors submitted a signal on minor infringements.

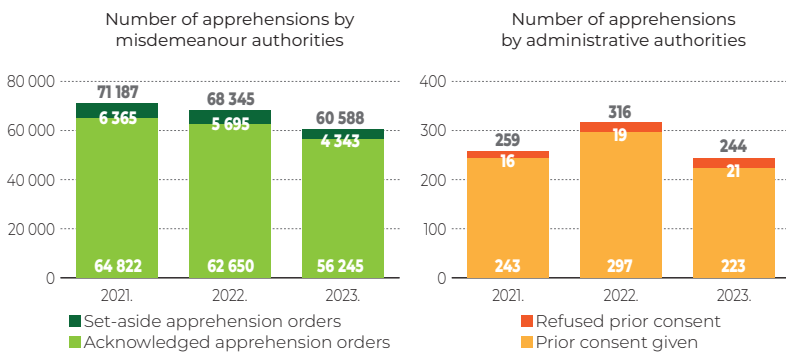
In environmental, nature protection and animal welfare cases, the number of priority actions in the field of legality review increased dynamically by more than 43% compared to the previous year (2023: 763, 2022: 533). Prosecutors submitted 38 notifications for minor infringements, just like in the previous year, but initiated proceedings of environmental authorities 380 times, which is more than 36% higher than the previous year (2022: 279). Against unfounded administrative decisions,

reminders with the aim to avoid court procedure were issued in 16 cases, successfully in all cases. In addition, due to activities that endanger the environment or damage nature, the prosecutor submitted – successful – counterclaims in a total of 7 cases. Due to acts that seriously endanger or damage environmental values (violation of waste management regulations, animal cruelty, damage to nature) – increasing the number of actions from the previous year by about 71% – prosecutors initiated prosecutions (2023: 270, 2022: 158), including 267 criminal proceedings, and in 3 cases infringement proceedings. Overall, the number of substantive measures increased by more than two and a half times compared to the 280 substantive measures in 2021.

In the field of consumer protection, prosecutors exercised their powers of review over the legality of the protection of consumers' rights in 2023 by issuing 13 reminders and 50 signals, initiating 1 administrative law suit action, 143 administrative proceedings and 7 criminal proceedings.

The following figure illustrates the indicators of legality review prosecutorial activities of a guarantee nature, related to decisions ordering apprehension orders:

Number of apprehensions issued by misdemeanour and administrative authorities in 2021–2023



Compared to the previous year, the number of requests for consent received in cases involving summons by apprehensions that were carried out by administrative authorities decreased by 22.8% in 2023. The proportion of refused consents was 8.6%, which was higher than in the previous year.

In 2023, a significant number of administrative summons in misdemeanour cases were also sent to the Prosecution Service for legality review, but the number of such summons decreased by 11% compared to the previous year. In 2023, 7.2% of the cases required the annulment of a summons by apprehensions in misdemeanour cases, either because of an unlawful enforcement procedure or because of an ill accusation, which is proportionally a slight decrease compared to the previous year.

The decrease in the number of decisions terminating misdemeanour proceedings was reduced to 7.2% compared to previous years (2023: 70,269, 2022: 75,738). The decrease in the number of decisions received also had a negative impact on the number of prosecutorial measures, but the internal rates did not change significantly compared to the previous year. More than half of the measures (841) were minor infringement signals which did not affect the merits of the decision. In 27% of the measures (407), prosecutors issued a prosecutorial reminder for the the continuation of the proceedings or the issuance of a new decision in accordance with the law in order to remedy a serious breach of the law. 16% of the measures (246) were aimed at initiating other proceedings, typically criminal proceedings.

The number of complaints filed in misdemeanour cases decreased slightly by 3.9% compared to the previous year (2023: 926, 2022: 964). In 237 cases, the decision was annulled, which concerned 26% of the cases, and in 11 cases the prosecutor found that the authority had violated the law.

In 2023, the number of cases in which an application for a retrial before the competent court was made in 2023 was 18% lower than in the previous year (2023: 1,296, 2022: 1,579).

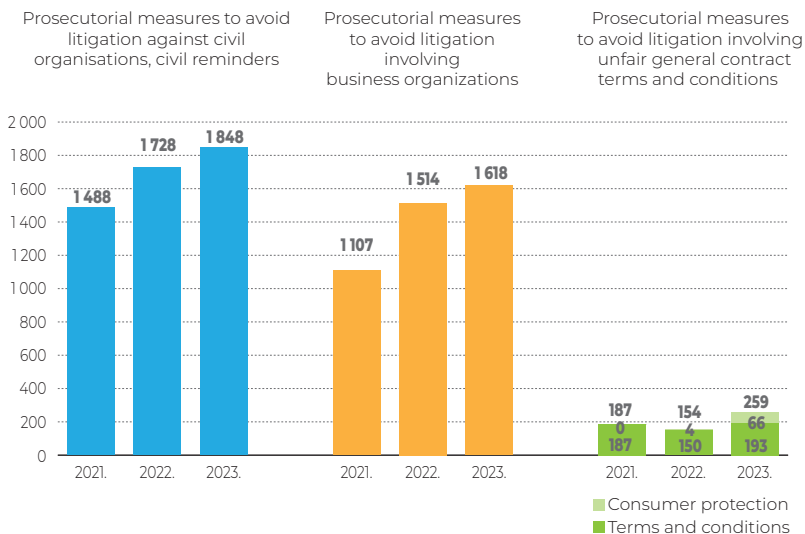
Prosecutorial activities relating to integrity screenings

In 2023, Chief Prosecution Offices assigned to exercise such competence, approved 988 decisions ordering integrity screenings. Based on the conducted investigations, the National Protection Service filed criminal reports in 17 cases. In 2023, there were by 31% more denunciations (2022: 13) than in the previous year, whereas the number of investigations was almost the same (2022: 949). 9 of the 17 denounced persons were protected police officers, 2 were government officials, 1 was a penitentiary officer and 5 persons were in the medical service.

Prosecutors' participation in court proceedings

In all cases in which, as a contributor to the administration of justice, prosecutors are entitled to apply to the courts by virtue of the law, before the court proceedings – if the legal conditions are met – they take measures to avoid litigation or issue a reminder in order that the violation of the law is eliminated voluntarily. The businesses, NGOs and individual enterprises contacted are motivated to engage in voluntary compliance. The evolution of the number of prosecutorial measures filed in 2021–2023 with the aim to avoid litigation is illustrated in the following graph:

Prosecutorial measures aimed to avoid litigation, civil reminders in 2021–2023



In 2023, the exercise of powers related to NGOs resulted in almost 7% more non-litigious prosecutorial measures and civil injunctions compared to the previous year. The number of non-litigious prosecutorial means in company law also increased by about 7% compared to 2022. The number of injunctions for unfairness in general contract terms increased by around 29% compared to the previous year. There was also a high number of prosecutors' use of the non-litigious injunction to avoid a representative action, introduced by a mid-year change in the law. Thus, overall, the number of consumer protection related non-litigious prosecutorial measures increased dynamically by around 68% compared to the previous year.

In 2023, the number of civil actions brought by prosecutors decreased significantly by 26% compared to the previous year (326 in 2023, 440 in 2022), mainly due to successful reminders and non-litigious measures. In 2023, prosecutors also initiated 1,361 non-litigation proceedings concerning NGOs, which is almost the same number as in 2022.

Prosecutors, in the exercise of their statutory powers in relation to personal status, brought 13 actions for the guardianship of defendants on the grounds of lack of capacity to conduct their affairs and 2 successful actions in matrimonial proceedings. Prosecutors were successful in further 4 actions for the termination of parental rights. In 2023, prosecutors initiated orders for compulsory institutional treatment in 47 cases, subject to the existence of statutory conditions. The number of prosecutors' actions in judicial proceedings for restraining orders for violence between relatives increased by 21.7% in 2023 compared to the previous year (2023: 2,272, 2022: 1,867).

The number of prosecutorial requests for company law enforcement proceedings increased by 9.3% in 2023 (2023: 1,032, 2022: 944), in several cases following unsuccessful prosecutorial injunctions.

In 2023, the number of prosecutorial actions under the mandate of the laws on environment, animal and nature protection was almost 24% higher than in the previous year, predominantly for animal cruelty and to a lesser extent for compensation for damage to nature and protected organisms. Overall, the number of actions filed doubled compared to 2021 (2023: 52, 2022: 42, 2021: 26).

In 2023, the number of actions brought by prosecutors in company law cases was by 12.5% lower than in the previous year (2023: 154, 2022: 176). However, the combined number of actions brought by prosecutors in company law cases, such as actions, applications for legality review of company law, notifications and non-litigious injunctions, has been increasing steadily year by year, and in 2023 it exceeded the number of actions in the previous year by 6.5% (2023: 2,804, 2022: 2,634, 2021: 2,388).

The volume of actions for unfairness of general contractual terms and conditions increased by 10% in 2023 (2023: 22, 2022: 20). In 2023, the new prosecutor's powers already included the filing of representative actions against businesses that disagreed with the non-litigious injunction. In 2023, prosecutors brought 6 actions in connection with the public interest in the authenticity of the land register.

Prosecutorial activity relating to child and juvenile protection outside the field of criminal law

Prosecutors consistently fulfilled their signalling obligations in relation to child endangerment and the risk of violence between relatives. The number of initiatives for protection proceedings submitted to the guardianship authorities is the same as in 2022 (2023: 332, 2022: 331). In connection with the increase in the number of civil non-litigious cases for preventive injunctions, the number of notices of the risk of violence between relatives due to the involvement of a minor child increased by 20.5% (2023: 1,978, 2022: 1,642).

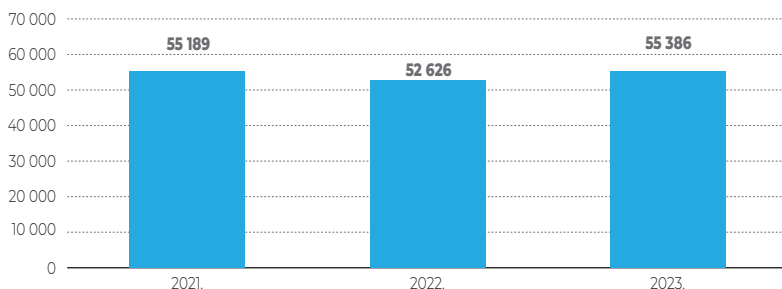
In 2023, within their powers to monitor the legality of child protection institutions, prosecutors carried out inspections in child protection institutions providing specialized care, in children's homes and foster homes providing temporary accommodation for children. The number of measures taken in the course of inspections into the legality of the operation of child protection institutions more than doubled (187 in 2023, 91 in 2022).

Prosecutors submitted 206 reminders for substantive breaches of the law detected in the decisions of the authorities concerning minors and 793 signals for minor breaches of the law. Compared with the previous year, the number of reminders increased by 15.7% and the number of signals by 15.9%. In cases involving minors, 485 prosecutions were initiated.

Legality supervision of the enforcement of punishments

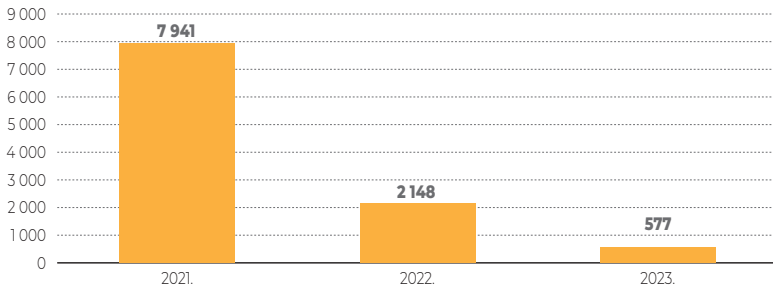
The change in the workload in the field of legality supervision of the enforcement of punishments and the protection of human rights (supervision of the enforcement of punishments) is well reflected by the change in the number of registered cases. The following diagram illustrates that the number of cases registered last year is by 5.2% less than the number of cases registered in 2022.

Changes in the number of cases registered in the field of legality supervision of the enforcement of punishments and the protection of human rights in 2021–2023



The rate of increase in 2023 compared to the year before is the result of changes in the opposite direction. The impact of government measures to stabilise prison saturation and prevent recurrence of over-congestion has also been reflected in a reduction in the number of compensation procedures for housing conditions that violate fundamental rights. The evolution of the number of first instance penitentiary court decisions on the merits of compensation claims is shown in the following graph:

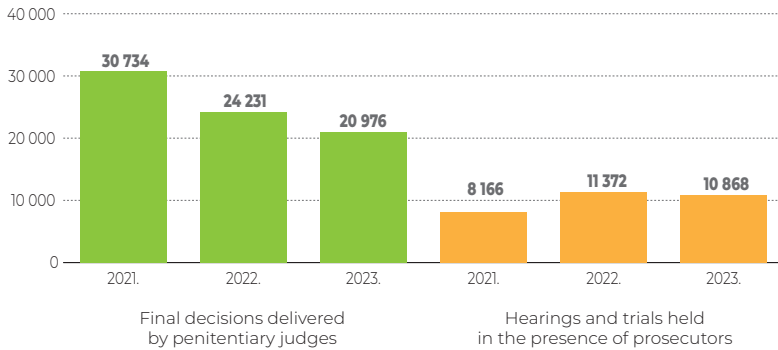
The number of judicial decisions passed in compensation matters by penitentiary judges at first instance in 2021-2023



An opposite trend (18.8% increase) is observed for complaints, requests and notifications received by prosecutors (2023: 9,648, 2022: 8,119). The proportion of prosecutorial decisions upholding these (2023: 11.9%, 2022: 10%, 2021: 7.4%) showed a slight increase again last year, which, together with the change observed in 2022, indicates a negative trend.

Participation in the proceedings of penitentiary judges represents a significant part of the work of prosecutors specialized in this field. The evolution of the number of final decisions in the proceedings of penitentiary judges and the number of hearings and trials with prosecutorial participation is illustrated in the following graph:

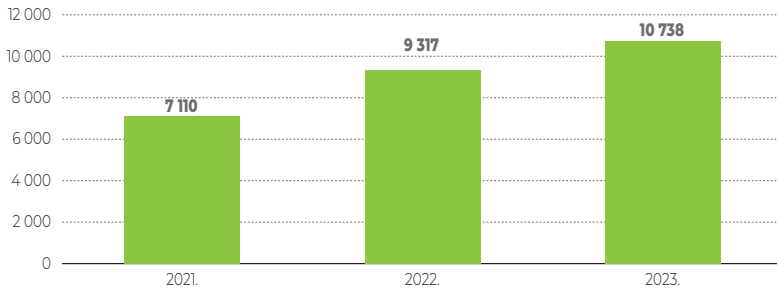
The number of final decisions delivered by penitentiary judges in their proceedings, the number of hearings and trials held with prosecutors' participation in 2021–2023



The decrease in the number of final court decisions passed in penitentiary judges' proceedings since 2020 can be attributed to the continuous decrease in the number of compensation procedures due to prison accommodation conditions violating fundamental rights. In the light of the 13.4% decrease in 2022, the 4.4% decrease compared to the previous year in the number of trials and hearings with the participation of prosecutors in 2023, indicates a continued active prosecutorial involvement.

In a state governed by the rule of law, the cessation of infringements of personal freedom requires immediate action. This is ensured by the powers of investigation and action of the penitentiary supervisory prosecutors, which were exercised with persistent consistency in 2023. The evolution of the number of investigations is shown in the following graph:

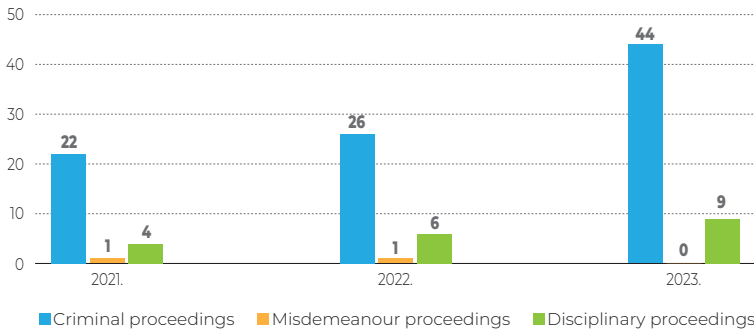
Number of prosecutorial supervisions regarding penitentiary institutions in 2021–2023



There is a strong correlation between the low number of supervisions performed in 2021 and the health protection measures introduced in the field of penitentiary supervisions during the coronavirus epidemic. The majority of the supervisions carried out by the penitentiary supervisory prosecutors involve on-site inspections, and therefore during the pandemic, in order to prevent the further spread of the epidemic, inspections were mostly suspended in some places of detention (detention rooms, guarded accommodations), and in other places of detention (penitentiary, police detention) inspections were carried out less frequently than otherwise required (once a month instead of twice a month) during certain periods, or their inspections were carried out solely on the basis of documents obtained from the body under examination. In 2022, the epidemiological situation allowed for significant relaxations, so that from 1 June 2022, all restrictions on the number of on-site inspections were lifted. As a result, the number of inspections carried out in 2022 increased by 31% compared to the previous year. 2023 was the first year after the pandemic in which the health restrictions imposed during the pandemic were no longer in force. Given this, it is not surprising that the number of inspections carried out by penitentiary supervisory prosecutors increased by a further 15.3% last year compared to the previous year.

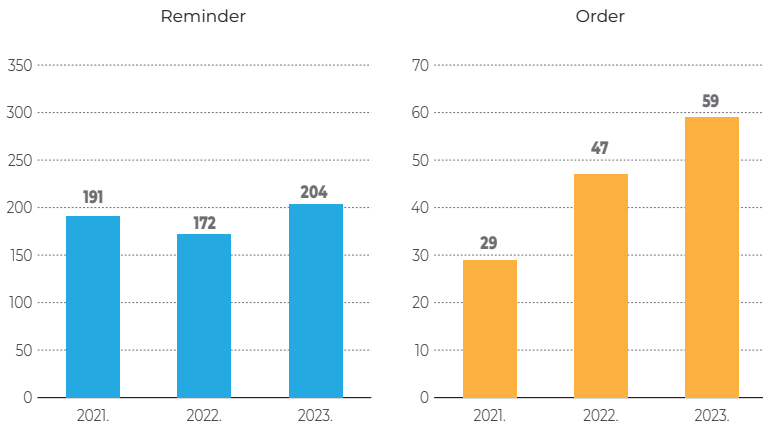
The change in the number of prosecutions initiated as a result of prosecutorial inspections is shown in the following graph:

Number of proceedings initiated on the basis of prosecutor's inspections of prison supervision in 2021–2023



Of these figures, the increase in the number of criminal proceedings initiated by penitentiary supervisory prosecutors is noteworthy, with a 69% increase compared to 2022.

The number of prosecution reminders and orders in 2021–2023



There was a significant increase in the number of reminders and orders last year compared to the previous year (18.6% and 25.5% respectively). This suggests that the perceived activity of penitentiary supervisory prosecutors in this area has increased in 2023.

The continuous monitoring of the legality of the treatment of prisoners has long been a priority for prosecutors in this field. As in previous years, the national survey carried out in 2023 found that, as in previous years, the legal provisions ensuring the lawfulness of the treatment of detainees were generally implemented by the detention services and that the way in which they were implemented was typically in line with the expectations set out in international legal standards and recommendations.

Penitentiary supervisory prosecutors took all the necessary measures to remedy the shortcomings detected in the detention facilities and used the legal means at their disposal to help eliminate the detected shortcomings and prevent them in the future.

In 2023, the Office of the Prosecutor General ordered an inspection of the legality of the national practice of using handcuffs during police arrests. The main objective of the inspection was to determine whether the police officers in charge of the case comply with the legal provisions on the use of handcuffs as a means of coercion during arrests. The inspection also aimed at promoting the legality of the relevant law enforcement practice by prosecutorial means.

The results of the inspection carried out justified its initiation, as a number of breaches of the law resulting in prosecutorial action were discovered in connection with the cases examined in detail by the Chief Prosecution Offices. The inspection records show that the most frequent legality problem was the lack of police reports on the use of coercive means, while the choice of the method of handcuffing was generally lawful in the cases examined by the Chief Prosecution Offices.

The data of the inspection show that the Chief Prosecution Offices in all cases took the necessary legal and professional measures to eliminate the identified illegal practices and to prevent future recurrence of such violations.

The Office of the Prosecutor General continued to promote the lawful functioning of the penitentiary system in 2023 through the opinions it gave to the National Prison Services Headquarters (BVOP). For example, we took a position on the ordering of security segregation, the order of sending and receiving parcels in penitentiary institutions and the frequency of contact between prisoners and their representative.

4. The Prosecutor General's activity

Activity related to Parliament

In 2023, the Prosecutor General continued to fulfil exhaustively his constitutional obligations towards the Parliament.

In 2023, 148 written questions, 1 immediate question and 1 oral question were put to the Prosecutor General by Members of Parliament.

The Prosecutor General submitted the parliamentary report on the activities of the Prosecution Service in 2022 on 26 September 2023 (B/5010). The Committee on Justice discussed the report on 14 November 2023 and submitted a proposal for a resolution on its adoption (H/6059).

Exercising certain powers of the Prosecutor General

According to the Criminal Procedure Code, the Prosecutor General has the exclusive right to seek legal remedy at the Curia for the sake of legality against unlawful final and conclusive decisions, or against unlawful final and non-conclusive decisions of the court, which cannot be challenged by other extraordinary legal

remedies. In 2023, this occurred in 13 cases in the field of criminal law. The Curia shared the arguments explained in all remedy petitions.

The most important tool to standardize judicial practice are the uniformity decisions adopted by the Curia, which are binding for lower courts. In the field of criminal law, in 2023, the Prosecutor General initiated a law uniformity decision in 3 cases. In 2023, the Curia ruled on two further preliminary ruling motions in criminal matters initiated by non-prosecutors, in relation to which the Prosecutor General made a statement.

In 2023, the Prosecutor General submitted a motion for preliminary ruling aiming a uniformity decision to the Curia in one case in the field of the supervision of the enforcement of punishments.

In the reporting year, the Prosecutor General made written statements in 12 uniformity proceedings in the field of the protection of public interest.

In 2023, the Prosecutor General filed a motion to suspend the immunity of one Member of Parliament for the purpose of criminal proceedings, following which the Parliament suspended the immunity of the person involved by a decision taken in 2024. In the same case, the Prosecutor General also submitted a motion to the President of the European Parliament to waive the immunity of a Hungarian Member of the European Parliament. By decision of 11 April 2024, the European Parliament decided not to waive the MEP's immunity. In 2023, the Prosecutor General waived the immunity of one prosecutor. On the grounds of diplomatic immunity, the Prosecutor General made a motion to waive the immunity of one foreign person with diplomatic status in 2023. The sending country did not waive the immunity of the person concerned, and as there is no criminal cooperation agreement in force with the sending country, the Central Chief Prosecution Office of Investigation terminated the criminal proceedings.

In the past year, the police sent a total of 12 requests for waiver of immunity for misconduct, of which 11 cases were completed by the end of the year and 1 case was completed in 2024.

In the year under review, the number of draft laws sent to the Prosecutor General for his opinion increased compared to the previous year, with around half a hundred. The Prosecutor General and the heads of the Prosecution Offices, in their delegated powers, commented on nearly a third of the drafts sent by the ministries.

The Prosecutor General has the statutory right to issue normative instructions regulating the organisation and functioning of the bodies under his leadership, management and supervision, as well as their activities, and to issue circulars to assist the functioning of the Prosecution Service, its professional activities and cooperation between the branches. In 2023, the Prosecutor General signed 17 Decrees and 5 Circulars.

International activities of the Prosecutor General

Following the programmes in the online space in previous years, the Prosecutor General's international activities in 2023 returned to face-to-face events, and meetings organised in the framework of bilateral relations and top-level representation at international events evolved accordingly.

Dr. Péter Polt, continuing the working relationship established with his German counterpart several years earlier, received the Federal Prosecutor General Peter Frank in February, with whom he reviewed the current trends in the working relationship between the prosecution services of the two countries and the activities of the Hungarian central judicial authorities in criminal matters.

In the spirit of deepening relations with the neighbouring countries, the Serbian Prosecutor General visited Hungary on 26–27 June. During the meeting, in addition to discussing regional relations in the border region, actual high-level bilateral issues were also discussed.

The newly elected Egyptian Attorney General, Mr. Mohamed Shawky Ayad visited Hungary between 7–10 November as a return visit to the Egyptian-Hungarian Attorney General meeting held in Cairo in March 2018.

Continuing the tradition of good relations with the Vietnamese Prosecutor General's Office, the Prosecutor General paid an official visit to Vietnam from 31 October to 4 November.

On the occasion of the Prosecution Service's Day celebrations on 9 June, the Hungarian Prosecutor General awarded the Pro Cooperation Memorial Medal to Dr. Franz Plöchl, Prosecutor General of the Republic of Austria, for the establishment of good working relations between the Hungarian and Austrian prosecution services across the border and for maintaining excellent and high quality professional cooperation at the highest level over many years.

The Prosecutor General received the Chinese Deputy Prosecutor General in Hungary between 26–28 September.

The Prosecutor General participated in the following events promoting cooperation at European and regional levels in 2023:

The 14th annual meeting of the Network of Prosecutor Generals operating at the Supreme Courts of the Member States of the European Union was hosted by the Prosecutor General's Office of Malta in 2023. At the conference, the Prosecutor General Dr. Péter Polt gave a presentation on the future of the Network. At the General Assembly, the Hungarian Prosecutor General was unanimously elected as Vice President of the Network, which also means that the 2025 Conference and General Assembly will be held in Hungary, where the Hungarian Prosecutor General will host the conference as the annual President of the Network.

The Prosecutor Generals of the Visegrad Group met in the Czech Republic on 23–24 May to discuss national and international responses to the current challenges in the fight

against cybercrime and the criminal law protection of cultural property. Their cooperation on these two issues was set out in a joint declaration.

The Consultative Forum of the Prosecutor Generals of the European Union Member States was held in The Hague in October, chaired by the Prosecutors General of Sweden and Spain, who held the EU presidencies in 2023. In a session on the criminal law protection of the environment, the Prosecutor General, Dr. Péter Polt, gave his views on the possibilities of promoting cross-border investigations, improving the effectiveness of prosecution of offences that seriously endanger or damage the environment and the need for international cooperation in relation to these offences.

The Hungarian Prosecutor General, due to his inability, was deputized by his representative to attend the 18th plenary session of the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE) in Strasbourg in October. At the plenary session, the CCPE adopted and issued Opinion No.18 on the Councils of Prosecutors and their representative bodies.

During 2023, the Prosecutor General also held formal discussions with high-level non-prosecutor professional partners:

Protocol visits and bilateral meetings with

- Mr. Yacov Hadas-Handelsman, Ambassador of the State of Israel in Budapest, in January,
- Mr. Guillermo Vazquez Moreno, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba in Budapest in February,
- Ms. Nguyen Thi Bich Thao, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Budapest in March,
- Mr. Paul Fox, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Budapest in April,
- Mr. David Pressman, Ambassador of the United States of America in Budapest in April, and
- the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the People's Republic of China in July.

On 28 February, the Prosecutor General received Mr Scott Donovan, Director of the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA). During the meeting, the training activities of the ILEA were presented and training topics of relevance to the Hungarian prosecution service were discussed.

5. International activities of the Prosecution Service

International relations

The international activities of the Prosecution Service were also affected by the economic constraints following the epidemic situation, therefore the prosecutors participated in the international trainings, exchange programmes, coordination meetings and contact point meetings planned for 2023 in a hybrid format, typically online, while the rest of the events were held in person.

During the reporting period, the regular working meetings organised in the framework of neighbouring cross-border cooperation did not take place, and all the border meetings with other neighbour country prosecutors' offices were postponed indefinitely.

The Prosecution Service of Hungary has links with a number of European and international judicial training institutions, including the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) European Law Enforcement Training Agency (CEPOL), the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA), the Council of Europe's Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) and the European Law Academy (ERA).

In most cases, prosecutors attended various types of judicial training organised and funded by the EJTN.

The EJTN's one-week exchange programme for prosecutors abroad included visits to Portugal, Germany, Slovenia and Lithuania.

In the framework of the so-called long-term exchange programme, two prosecutors spent four months of their traineeship at Eurojust in The Hague.

Prosecutors participated in judicial training methodology courses and management trainings, as well as EJTN seminars organised online and in person on the following topics: anti-corruption and asset recovery, environmental law, criminal procedural safeguards, trafficking in human beings, economic crime, artificial intelligence, cybercrime and electronic evidence.

For more than 15 years, the EJTN has organised the THEMIS competition for trainee prosecutors, in which trainees from EJTN member countries compete in the fields of European criminal and civil law cooperation, European family law cases and judicial ethics. In the European criminal cooperation section, a team of three trainee prosecutors won a special prize, resulting in the publication of their paper in the EJTN's annual scientific volume, the Themis Annual Journal.

CEPOL's seminars on trafficking in human beings, cybercrimes, human trafficking, among others, were conducted in person, each with the participation of a prosecutor from Hungary.

The Prosecution Service is responsible for cases related to OLAF investigations.

In 2023, OLAF made a total of two judicial recommendations to the Prosecution Service, based on the results of its administrative investigation. One of these recommendations resulted in the opening of a new criminal investigation, the other was used and evaluated in an ongoing domestic investigation. In 2023, OLAF did not issue any alerts in its ongoing investigations on

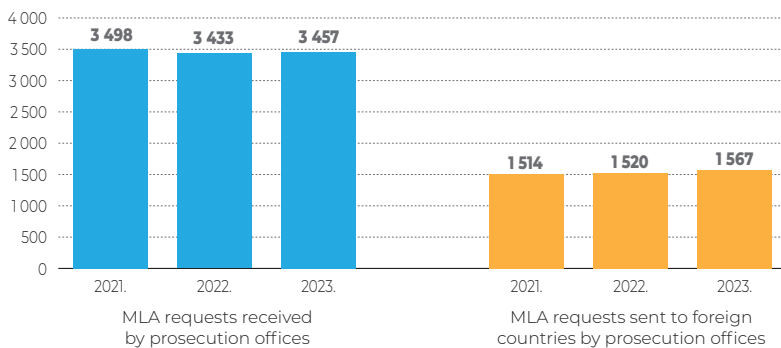
suspicious of criminal offences that could be established before the administrative investigation was closed.

Of the cases opened on the basis of OLAF recommendations, two resulted in issuing indictments in 2023. In one case, the Central District Court of Pest issued a penal order as charged without a trial in 2023, against which the defendants requested a trial, and the case continued in court. Three criminal cases were discontinued in 2023, of which one was followed by three OLAF recommendations, so the discontinued cases effectively concern five OLAF recommendations.

Mutual legal assistance cases

Due to the fight against transnational organized crime and other adverse global phenomena international cooperation between judicial authorities, including prosecution services, also remained intensive last year, similarly to the previous years. This is illustrated by the following diagram:

The number of MLA requests in criminal matters received by prosecution offices and sent to foreign countries in 2021–2023



The Office of the Prosecutor General acts as the central judicial authority for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters. In 2023, it

decided to forward legal assistance requests to non-EU countries in 50 cases, while it received 601 requests for legal assistance from foreign judicial authorities.

The area of international cooperation of judicial authorities referred to the competence of the Prosecutor General is the taking over of criminal proceedings in progress in a foreign state, and the transfer of domestic criminal proceedings to a foreign state. In 109 cases, we took over the criminal proceedings from foreign authorities, while in 58 cases we transferred the criminal proceedings to foreign authorities.

In 2023, the Prosecutor General filed a criminal complaint with a foreign state in 4 cases (2022: 5, 2021: 9) for a crime committed abroad by a foreign citizen, the suspicion of which was supported by data obtained in domestic criminal proceedings.

The number of foreign national perpetrators of crimes in 2023 was 8,003.

In 2023, the number of victims of crimes with foreign nationality was 3,086. The crimes committed against foreigners in Hungary continued to be predominantly crimes against property.

In 2023, the number of requests received by the Prosecutor General as the central authority designated for legal assistance in misdemeanour proceedings increased by nearly 28.5% compared to the previous year (2023: 1,697, 2022: 1,321).

Similarly to previous years, the 1,657 inquiries from foreign authorities constituted 98% of the caseload.

The Hungarian authorities requested international assistance in investigating 34 cases and serving 6 decisions, which means a 31% decrease compared to the previous year, but is in line with the figure for 2021.

Activities of the Eurojust National Member for Hungary

Eurojust is the agency for criminal judicial cooperation between Member States, operating from The Hague. Hungary is represented by a deputy head of department prosecutor as a national member at the headquarters of the organisation. The operational activities of the Hungarian national member are supported by a national prosecutor, who is temporarily seconded to the EU administrative staff (SNE), as a national expert in The Hague on a six-monthly rotational basis.

In 2023, Eurojust dealt with 14% more pending cases than in the previous year, totalling 13,164 (2022: 11,544), supporting judicial requests from 27 Member States as well as from the liaison prosecutors of 11 third countries, including the USA, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and the United Kingdom. Within this total, the number of new requests for judicial cooperation registered by the College was 5,710 (2022: 5,227), showing an increase of 9% in one year.

In 2023, the Hungarian national desk dealt with 8.5% of all Eurojust cases (13,164), altogether 1,119 (2022: 1,026) new and pending cases. These included 625 domestic and 494 foreign cases.

Of the 311 new requests received from domestic judicial authorities, 289 (2022: 252) cases were registered by the College of Eurojust, accounting for 5% of the 5,710 new cases. This ranked Hungary as the 6th Member State with the highest number of newly opened cases.

Hungary was requested by foreign judicial authorities in 171 (2022: 171) registered cases, making Hungary the 12th most requested Member State.

In cases of serious and organised crime involving more than one Member States, in particular those requiring coordination due to conflicts of jurisdiction, a total of 60 (2022: 56) smart form notifications subject to automatic match-finding, as required by Article 21 of the Eurojust Regulation, were received from Hungarian prosecutors. Compared to other Member States, Hungary continues to lead the way in regularly complying with this EU requirement.

In the year under review, Eurojust organised 577 (2022: 528) bilateral or multilateral coordination meetings, 26 of which were attended by Hungarian prosecutors and investigators.

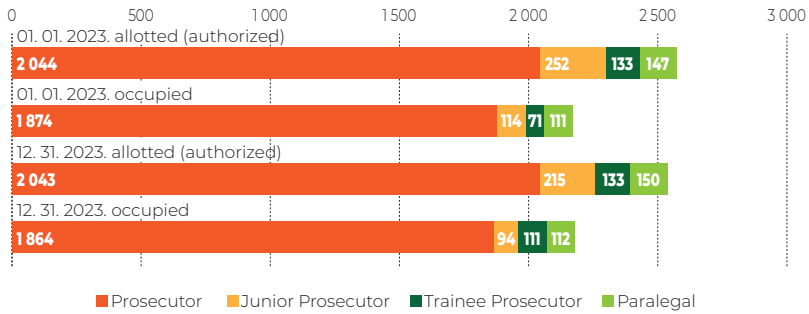
One of Eurojust's core mandate is to support Joint Investigation Teams (JITs), facilitate the involvement of third States, cover cooperation and certain criminal procedural costs on the basis of financial applications. Of the 194 JITs supported by Eurojust in 2023, 94 (2022: 78) were newly established, of which 5 were established with Hungarian participation. 7 of the 13 ongoing joint investigation teams with Hungarian participation received financial support opportunity from Eurojust in the amount of €209,141, in 14 installments. In 2023, 3 joint investigation team cooperations were successfully completed by the Hungarian authorities.

6. Personnel of the Prosecution Service

Personnel situation

On 1 January 2023, there were 4,765.25 job positions allotted (authorized) by the Prosecutor General to the Prosecution Service, which changed to 4745,25 by the end of the year. In the reporting year, the number of positions for prosecutors, junior prosecutors, trainee prosecutors and paralegals changed as follows:

The allotted and occupied job positions for prosecutors, junior and trainee prosecutors and paralegals in 2023



The number of prosecutor positions divided among the various structural units of the Prosecution Service was 2,017 in 2023. At the end of 2023, the number of centrally reserved, non-allotted prosecutor positions was 26.

At the end of the reporting year, there were 153 vacant prosecutor positions divided among the structural units.

In 2023, the number of junior prosecutor's posts decreased from 252 to 215 due to the conversion of 35 junior prosecutor job titles to prosecution official ones and 2 junior prosecutor job titles into 1 district prosecutor title. The number of trainee prosecutor's posts remained 133 in 2023.

In 2023, 43 prosecutors, 22 junior prosecutors and 59 trainee prosecutors were appointed (in 2022, 53 prosecutors, 22 junior prosecutors and 2 trainee prosecutors were appointed).

The number of disciplinary proceedings decreased compared to the previous year; in 2023, 12 disciplinary proceedings were initiated, which cannot be considered significant in relation to the number of employees of the prosecutor's organization (17 proceedings were initiated in 2022 and 22 in 2021).

Continuous training of employees of the Prosecution Service

Based on the experience of previous years, in order to increase the number of participants and reduce costs, the further training courses were partly organized online. Nearly 3,200 people took part in the trainings and further trainings lasting more than 70 days, of which about 45 days were face-to-face education with the participation of more than 510 people.

In the reporting year, we educated trainee prosecutors in 1 three-day and the junior prosecutors in 1 four-day online courses in the Hungarian Training Centre for Prosecutors.

25 centrally organized trainings were offered for prosecutors and 10 for prosecutorial officials and clerks. The advanced trainings targeting prosecutors with higher management positions took place in the management training and the consultation meeting organized for deputy chief prosecutors heading the criminal law and administrative law branches. One- and two-day-long centrally organized courses and practical trainings were attended, inter alia, by recently appointed prosecutors, head-of-section and subordinate criminal trial prosecutors, prosecutors prosecuting cases in first instance courts, prosecutors specialised in juvenile criminal cases, prosecutors handling traffic offence cases, prosecutors supervising the legality of the enforcement of punishments and the protection of human rights, prosecutors working in the field of the protection of public interest and prosecutors heading the IT area as well as prosecutors in the field of media relations.

We held thematic trainings in support of prosecutorial tasks related to the fight against human trafficking and money laundering, asset recovery, integrity screenings, and the treatment of persons subject to proceedings and its legal safeguards. In the network of prosecutors dealing with cybercrime, the prosecutors assigned to each county prosecution office received a two-day training, and the IT members received a one-day training.

Prosecutors working in the field of the protection of public interest discussed the main current affairs of the public interest protection field, regulatory changes affecting the area of economic law and the principles of renewed consumer protection in small group online meetings.

According to the financial possibilities of the organization, we continued to support postgraduate studies and legal foreign language training. New study contracts were concluded with 21 prosecutorial employees including 14 prosecutors, 1 trainee prosecutor, 3 prosecutorial officials as well as 3 clerks, who obliged themselves to pursue studies.

7. Communication activity of the Prosecution Service

In 2023, the communication activity of the Prosecution Service continued to perform exceptionally well.

In the reporting year altogether 13,404 press statements, interviews, press releases and proactive information were issued by the different units. Last year, we specifically focused on further improving the quality of the communication of the Prosecution Service.

Last year, the Office of the Prosecutor General carried out one comprehensive and two smaller developments.

The comprehensive development was aimed at anonymizing prosecutorial decisions. As part of this, we developed a system that works in offline mode, which can be run on the assigned workstations of each Prosecution Service unit, and saves a significant amount of working hours.

The amendment to the Act on Consumer Protection that entered into force on June 25 last year required the provision of information on the so-called representative actions. In view of this,

the website of the Prosecution Service was expanded with a new consumer protection subpage.

In addition, within the statistics sub-page of the Prosecution Service' website, we created the possibility for statistical data requests – in addition to the previous data requests in Word and pdf formats – to be submitted directly via the website.

Last year, in addition to three video messages from the Prosecutor General, we also published an interview with the deputy Prosecutor General in the field of criminal law about an old criminal case, the first armed bank robbery in Hungary.

In 2023, the production of image films presenting the organizational units continued.

In addition, we launched a new educational series entitled “Simply, Legally”, in which we covered various topics related to the field of the protection of public interest, which also help to navigate everyday life.

The website of the Prosecution Service was accessed 7,434,714 times in 2023. More than 46,000 people saw the most popular video of the announcement uploaded to the website.

Last year, the number of followers on the Facebook page of the Prosecution Service increased dynamically. The total reach was 2.5 million. The most viewed recording was seen by 507,000 people. On this platform, our educational content, which covered the issues of online fraud, responsible fan behaviour and crimes that can be committed with drones, reached many people.

Our YouTube channel reached 3.2 million views last year. We published 248 videos on this platform, most of which were related to press releases, while 38 were self-made films. 340,000 people clicked on the most popular video, but we also published 5 more recordings related to criminal news, which produced over a hundred thousand views.

The Office of the Prosecutor General issued guidelines on the use of videos and photographs related to cases. In addition, the Prosecutor General's new decree on the procedure for providing information to the public also helps with successful communication.

The communicators of the Prosecution Service continued to maintain a stable, well-functioning working relationship with the press colleagues of partner agencies and the media.

8. Information technology and statistical activity of the Prosecution Service

Information technology of the Prosecution Service

In 2023 too, special emphasis was placed on the continuous, fast and reliable exchange of information and the effective IT support of the statutory activity and daily work processes of prosecution offices despite the budgetary austerity.

The Prosecution Service operates a nationwide data transmission network covering all locations. The National Info-Communications Service Company Ltd. (Nemzeti Infokommunikációs Szolgáltató Zrt.) provides the integrated data and central internet services necessary for this, the ownership and operation rights of the network devices important from the point of view of data protection and security are held by the Prosecution Service. We constantly develop this network in order to ensure the appropriate standard of electronic case management and internal IT services, as well as the smooth electronic communication with partner organisations. As a continuation of the previously carried out tests and preparatory work, we continued the consolidation of the servers of district prosecution offices with an increase in bandwidth in 2023.

In 2023, every prosecutorial structural unit had the opportunity to query the registration systems operated by the Ministry of the

Interior, the National Prison Services Headquarters, the Ministry of Justice, the National Police Headquarters and IdomSoft Informatikai Zrt., to handle recordings made during criminal proceedings and stored in the Central Media Library, to use of the Central Criminal Evidence System, the ePostbook, and to access the second generation of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) as well as the Customer Document Access System of the National Office for Judiciary. This was further expanded with the prosecutorial application providing access to the European Commission's e-Evidence system on 17 April 2023.

By the use of the Electronic Case Management System (hereinafter referred to as eÜR), continuous electronic case management and electronic contact keeping with cooperating authorities and bodies were ensured within the Prosecution Service in compliance with Act CCXXII of 2015 on the general rules on electronic case management and trust services, the procedural and other relevant laws.

In 2023, the rate of consignments (document files) received by the Prosecution Service – through the eÜR – was by 12% higher (2023: 2,040,181, 2022: 1,821,589, 2021: 1,749,942, 2020: 1,630,885), and the rate of document files sent to partner authorities was by 15.7% higher (2023: 1,443,053, 2022: 1,247,326, 2021: 1,167,978, 2020: 1,058,493) than in the previous year.

The Office of the Prosecutor General operates a system capable of analysing the database containing the data of offenders in criminal proceedings (created by processing the case management data of the Prosecution Service), and detecting correlations within the database. The outstanding importance of this is shown by the fact that in 2023, a total of 247,938 data requests were complied with (2022: 245,429), 64.5% of which came from legally authorized military- and civilian national security services. The Prosecution Service also provides an electronic query option for this system, so that those entitled can access the data faster.

In 2023, the Prosecution Service continued to be a key participant in the national electronic archives project of the Hungarian National Archives, and it continuously provided data from its database processing case management data of the prosecutorial activity of the field of criminal law. In addition, this relationship was supplemented with the Metropolitan Archives.

In 2023, the Prosecution Service continued to perform its statutory duty of providing public interest data electronically. In addition to the requirements set forth in the context of the freedom of information, it published information, statistics and consolidated notices that were found to be most relevant to the public.

Statistics of the Prosecution Service

The Prosecution Service carries out its official statistical activity as a member of the Official Statistical Service in accordance with Act CLV of 2016 on Official Statistics. The statistical data collections of the Prosecution Service are part of the Government's National Statistical Data Collection Program (OSAP).

By collecting and disclosing data originating from its data collection activity, the Prosecution Service provides a realistic and objective picture about crimes, prosecutors' activity in criminal courts, as well as about the case management data regarding prosecutors' activity in and outside the field of criminal law.

The Prosecution Service is actively involved in the generation and development of statistics. The representative of the Office of the Prosecutor General is a member of the National Statistical Coordination Board, and delegates of the Prosecution Service take part in the activity of the Board's thematic working committees.

The Standard Criminal Statistics of Investigation Authorities and Prosecutors (ENyÜBS) is a joint data collection system of the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Interior.

The Prosecution Service participates in this system both as a data custodian and as a data provider.

9. Financial conditions of the operation of the Prosecution Service

In 2023, significant emphasis was placed on ensuring daily operations, which necessitated the introduction of extraordinary measures due to the changed economic environment. The significant increase in inflation and energy service prices caused a simultaneous jump in material expenditures, which was primarily compensated by the reduction of investment expenses.

The appropriation available at the chapter level for the performance of the professional tasks of the Prosecution Service last year decreased by HUF 1,061.2 million compared to the original appropriation for 2022, primarily due to the reduction of the social contribution tax for 2022. In the course of the reporting year, the revised appropriations for expenditure rose by 4.7% as a result of the various changes in appropriations.

The sum used for personal allowances (HUF 47,727.3 million) guaranteed that payments prosecutorial employees are entitled to by virtue of law and provided for by the Prosecutorial Employment and Career Act (PECA), as well as payments falling under the category of external personnel allowance were sufficiently covered.

The property expenditures (HUF 6,510.3 million), for the reasons indicated, was by HUF 644 million more than in the previous year. Operating costs, continuous maintenance and minor repair of buildings and equipment were carried out in a higher amount compared to the previous year.

Compared to the previous year, higher costs were incurred for operating costs, for the continuous maintenance and repair of buildings and equipment and development expenses. Compared

to the previous year, we made HUF 154.1 million more VAT payments for ongoing investments subject to the presently valid reverse VAT.

35.5% of the property expenditures was spent on service expenses (rental fees, repair, etc.), 8.3% on the acquisition of professional and operational materials, 14.1% on the operation of the computer network of the Prosecution Service, 21.9% on utility services, 0.3% on official missions, 0.9% on other non-personnel expenses, and 19% on VAT-related expenses and payments. Considering the level of the energy price increase in 2023, the Office of the Prosecutor General received a one-time supplementary appropriation of HUF 1,485.5 million.

In 2023, the chapter had HUF 2,799.6 million available for capital expenditure (investments, renovations, other capital expenditure combined), which was revised to HUF 2,887.5 million due to changes in appropriations (residual value from the previous year) during the year.

In 2023, we supported access to housing for prosecution employees by providing HUF 117 million in interest-free employer loans. In total, 36 people received an average of HUF 3.3 million.

The net value of property and related rights increased by HUF 1,258.9 million and the net value of machinery, equipment, furniture and vehicles increased by HUF 99.0 million. The balance sheet value of intangible assets increased by HUF 286.1 million and the value of incomplete investments decreased by HUF 1,341.5 million.

In 2023, the Office of the Prosecutor General continued to carry out measures necessary for prudent management, and continuously monitored and analysed the liquidity of the chief prosecution offices. In addition to providing the basic personal and material conditions for the performance of the professional tasks, the budgetary chapter also paid special attention to creating the conditions of continuous operation and liquidity.

10. Scientific activity of the prosecution employees and the National Institute of Criminology

Prosecutors have been respected participants of the domestic and international community of scientific legal experts for years, their articles, studies and essays are regularly published, and they are also authors of handbooks, university textbooks and other publications used in higher education. In the reporting year 29 prosecutors, junior prosecutors and 15 other prosecutorial employees had academic titles, 3 of them obtained a habilitation degree. 44 prosecutors, junior prosecutors, trainee prosecutors and prosecutorial officials are Ph.D. students at various universities. Approximately 90 prosecutors, prosecutorial officials and researchers are lecturers and examiners at faculties of universities of law and various higher educational institutes and postgraduate programs. Almost 80 prosecutors are on the board of examiners of the mandatory professional legal exams (bar exams).

As the scientific and research institute of the Prosecution Service, the National Institute of Criminology (OKRI) carries out comprehensive researches on the causes of crime, the ways of crime prevention, and on the characteristics, current theoretical and practical issues of criminality and law enforcement.

The results and outcomes of researches of the National Institute of Criminology are used in the codification and law interpretation activity of the Prosecution Service, they enrich the theoretical achievements of criminal sciences, and they are also used in higher education and postgraduate studies.

In 2023, 22 research programs were carried out. Researchers of the National Institute of Criminology authored 84 publications, out of which 4 were published in foreign languages. They held altogether 81 lectures and presentations at various conferences and other professional events, out of which 10 were delivered in foreign languages, furthermore, the researchers participated in 12 international events in-person, online or in a hybrid way.