

Annex III.1

INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT N.7

Name of the beneficiary	Supreme Judicial Council
Registration number - BULSTAT	121513231
Name of the project partner/s	Council of Europe
Country in which the partner is registered	F-67075 Strasbourg, France
Project title	Support to the Supreme Judicial Council related to capacity building and improving the efficiency of the judiciary
Thematic area	BG 14 “Judicial capacity-building and cooperation”
Number of the project implementation agreement	93-00-41/20.02.2013
Total value of the project (in EUR)	785000 €
Reporting period	01.01.2015 – 30.04.2015

I. Qualitative information

Results of the project implementation

I.1. Project objectives	
<p>Please indicate the main and specific project objective/s and explain what the progress of their achievement is.</p> <p>Please focus on the results of the actions (i.e. benefits to the target groups from the relevant activities).</p> <p>Provide details of the changes achieved as a result of project activities implemented during the reporting</p>	<p>The main objective of the project is to improve the management of the judicial system and quality of the justice in accordance with the Strategy to Continue the Judicial Reform in the Conditions of Bulgaria’s Full European Union Membership.</p> <p>The specific project objectives are:</p> <p>Objective 1: An effective e-summoning system introduced according to the provisions of the Electronic Management Act.</p>

<p>period.</p>	<p>Untimely service of summons is the main reason for delayed court proceedings in Bulgaria. Besides taking time and financial resources, this enables corruption developments (false communications, belated serve dates, "lost" communications). Based on general statistics, total annual costs for all courts of justice for summoning and sending communications amount to some BGN 10 million.</p> <p>At present only the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC) and the Electronic Management Act provide for the summoning and serving of communications to be effected electronically as well and the efforts of the Supreme Judicial Council have been directed at introducing e-summoning and serving of electronic communications only in civil proceedings due to absent legal possibility in the penal and administrative processes.</p> <p>By its decision in minutes No. 13, item 27 of 14 April 2011 the SJC adopted Draft Indicative Rules for serving communications and summons via e-mail in accordance with the terms and procedure of Article 42, paragraph 4 and following of the CPC.</p> <p>The need of implementing e-summoning in the penal and administrative processes, in turn, requires a profound study of the experience and good practices in EU Member States, as well as a comparative analysis of the Bulgarian and international legislation in this field, whereby a proposal for legislative modifications in the Criminal Procedure Code and Administrative Procedure Code will be initiated.</p> <p>In addition, in the context of this Outcome, a functionality is to be implemented in the existing case file management programmes, allowing sending of e-summons by the programmes themselves (at present the courts in the Republic of Bulgaria use 4 systems for case file management, which are compatible) by means of delivery and installation of hardware (a server and disk database) and basic software.</p> <p>Fine-tuning and elaboration of the legal framework in regard to e-summoning and building of relevant technological infrastructure will help accelerate</p>
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	<p>the legal process, reduce litigation costs, increase efficiency and access to justice and will create, in the long run, prerequisites for a reliable, efficient and transparent work of the judiciary in Bulgaria.</p> <p>Objective 2: The capacity of the members of the Bulgarian judiciary to comply with and implement the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and its case law increased and Objective 3 A network of judges specialised in human rights.</p> <p>These outcomes of the Supreme Judicial Council's project primarily aim at strengthening the competency of judges and better knowledge of the work of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, in particular. Since 1998, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has received about 4000 applications lodged against the Republic of Bulgaria. Most of these applications are complaints of similar kind and several major groups can be identified: applications including complaints of slow judiciary on criminal and commercial cases; complaints of violation of the rights during detention; complaints concerning establishments for deprivation of liberty in violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights; complaints concerning cases of police brutality, their inefficient investigation and punishment of offenders; complaints concerning restitution of farm lands and complaints under the Restitution of Ownership of Nationalised Immovable Properties Act, complaints against so-called "pension cap".</p> <p>The workload of the European Court of Human Rights and the insufficient capacity of its Registry prompted a significant backlog of applications. The backlog is the main reason for the practice adopted by the Court for prioritising applications on a systematic problem in the relevant state, which generates many complaints of the same kind, the outcome being so-called pilot decisions, aiming to highlight the problem and the parameters for its solving, inducing the state to respond with adequate measures.</p>
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	<p>In the case of the Republic of Bulgaria, there is no systematic violation of human rights. The problem rather stems from the lack of mechanism for identification and elimination of the grounds for the complaints at a national level. It is necessary to build channels for exchange of current information about the work of the European Court of Human Rights, setting up a network of judges who will monitor such information and to whom their colleagues could refer to on issues relating to the Court's operation and current legal practice.</p> <p>A practice which has yielded good outcomes in this respect is the placement of national judges to the European Court of Human Rights. Such seconded judges perform the duties of legal secretaries at the Registrar, supporting the Court in the examination of applications. These judges are not bound by the sending country and do not represent the claimants or the countries.</p> <p>For the purpose of improving the capacity of Bulgarian judges the project and these Outcomes envisage secondment of Bulgarian judges to the European Court of Human Rights. These will include judges at regional, district and appellate court levels, with excellent command of English or French (command of the two languages is an advantage). According to the project proposal, the period of secondment had to be up to one year and during that period was envisaged that the seconded judge preserves the salary he/she is entitled to. The difference in the standard of living was envisaged to be at the expense of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.</p> <p>By signing Additional Agreement No 4 on 05.08.2014 between SJC and PO, the Bulgarian judges supporting the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg are not seconded on a business trip but sent under a contract concluded between each of them and the SJC as Principal.</p> <p>At the same time, an internal network for exchange of information will be created and contact details will be published on the website of the SJC for communication with judges seconded</p>
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	<p>in Strasbourg and a forum with restricted access to magistrates will be created.</p> <p>Objective 4: A mechanism for quality assessment of the workload in the judicial system both at the individual level and the institutional level focusing on qualitative indicators and benchmarks developed</p> <p>In pursuance of Article 30, sub-paragraph 13 of the Judiciary Act the Administration of the Supreme Judicial Council demands and summarizes, on a semi-annual basis, information from the courts, the Prosecutor Office and the National Investigative Service regarding their activity. At present there are approved detailed statistical forms for the courts, according to the amendments to the CPC and the Criminal Procedure Code, which are published on the website of the Supreme Judicial Council and are permanently available for use by the courts.</p> <p>In June 2011 the Commission for analysis and reporting of the workload of the judiciary to the SJC approved a draft Methodology for periodic reporting and management of the workload of the judicial authorities and sent it to them for expert opinions on the draft. The received opinions were summarized by the experts of the Commission, discussed and adopted at its meeting held on 16 June 2011, which also adopted criteria for reporting of the workload of the judicial authorities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workload by case flow; - overall workload of the respective region; - workload of the respective judicial authority; - workload of the respective magistrate; - comparability between the former and the latter; - workload by number of completed cases. <p>The Commission made a decision on its final aim: to report the workload of individual units of judicial authorities by levels. A working group was set up to work at different levels – regional, district, appellate, administrative courts, the prosecutor office and the investigative service. The</p>
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	<p>Commission assigned the working group to draw up a framework of draft rules for reporting of the workload of relevant judicial authorities by levels and submit them for deliberation at a meeting of the Commission in the beginning of February 2012. The rationale behind the rules is the opinion that the most truthful and neutral indicator for assessing the workload of judicial authorities should be the average required time for examination and resolving a particular group of cases, determined on the basis of procedural laws and procedural actions performed on the respective groups of cases.</p> <p>The information and criteria included in the workload assessment are mainly quantitative indicators, and no possibility exists for qualitative assessment of the workload of magistrate authorities and court employees.</p> <p>The main recommendation reflected the opinion that qualitative indicators should be introduced in the design of the workload assessment system, and the measures for its regulation should include introduction of qualitative indicators in addition to the statistical data, as a basis of its preparation. Assessment of the legal and factual complexity of the specific case can be included here, as well as introduction of further indicators aimed at individualization of the workload assessment of every magistrate based on uniform criteria.</p> <p>Foreseen project outcomes:</p> <p><i>Outcomes vis-a-vis Objective 1: An effective e-summoning system introduced according to the provisions of the Electronic Management Act.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best practice Manual for e-summoning encompassing the experience of EU and EEA Member States developed; - <i>completed</i> - A framework proposal for legislation amendments aimed at introducing e-summoning in the penal and administrative processes developed; - <i>completed (reported in Interim progress report N. 6)</i> - A comparative analysis of the legislation as regards e-summoning developed; - <i>completed</i> - Increased capacity of representatives of the
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	<p>judiciary – magistrates and court employees; - <i>will be completed through the Best Practices Manual on e-summoning</i></p> <p>- A round table for presenting the outcomes of Activity 1 and Activity 2 conducted; - <i>completed</i></p> <p><i>In compliance with Activity 2, Objective 1 on the 23 and 24 of February 2015 the Supreme Judicial Council organized a Round Table to present the Comparative Study of the experience and good practices in CE Member States and to present proposals for legislative amendments in this area.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Comparative study of the experience and good practices in CE Member States and the existing legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria in the area of electronic summoning.</i> <p><i>Martin Petkov, key expert within the project presented a comparative study of the experience and good practices in the CE member states and the existing Bulgarian legislation in the area of e-summoning, upgraded with the information presented by the experts from Spain and Slovenia during the seminar on e-summoning that took place in December 2014. The study summarises information on 14 European countries at different stages of implementation of the e-summoning system. In 100% of the cases examined the electronic summoning is applied in civil proceedings and almost everywhere limited in criminal proceedings. There are no obstacles to its implementation in administrative proceedings, as is the case of Lithuania, Slovakia, Estonia. "The potential good practices that Bulgaria could follow are in Italy and Slovenia, Portugal and Spain, Lithuania and Estonia", summed up the expert.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Proposals for legislative changes in the area of electronic summoning The main emphasis during the round table was on the proposals for legislative amendments to the procedural laws regarding e-summoning. The proposed amendments were developed based on an analysis of the effective legislation and their aim is to refine the regulatory framework governing e-summoning by ensuring its effectiveness and efficiency.</i> <p><i>Specific proposals for legislative amendments were put forward by Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, an expert under the project. The proposals include</i></p>
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	<p><i>amendments and addenda to the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Administrative Procedure Code. They enshrine essential principles such as the voluntary nature of e-summoning, technological neutrality and convenience for citizens. The proposed amendments were discussed by representatives of the judiciary, the executive branch and the legislature, the bar, and the second day of the event was attended by Mr Yavor Haytov, Vice-President of the National Assembly and member of the Legal Affairs Committee. Experts from the Council of Europe also expressed their opinion on the issue.</i></p> <p><i>After the round table, "BCO" LTD („Българска консултантска организация" ЕООД) - a contractor in public procurement "Development of a comparative study of the experience and good practices in CE Member States and the existing legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria in the area of electronic summoning and elaboration of a proposal for legislative changes" - prepared and submitted a detailed report on the organisation of the round table and the comments on proposed legislative amendments discussed during the event. The proposals made during the round table were analysed in detail, and as a result, the proposals for legislative amendments were refined. They were brought to the attention of the Legal Affairs Committee of the SJC which in Minutes No 10 at its meeting held on 10 March 2015 expressed a positive opinion on the draft proposals for legislative amendments to the Administrative Procedure Code, Civil Procedure Code and Criminal Procedure Code in conjunction with refining the regulatory framework for e-summoning.</i></p> <p><i>Given the fact that the Supreme Judicial Council has no legislative initiative, to implement the SJC decision under Minutes No 17/2 April 2015, the proposed amendments to the procedural laws were sent to the Minister of Justice (letter Reg. No 04-00-099/15 of 8 April 2015).</i></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A final draft of a proposal for legislation changes drafted; - <i>completed</i> - Increased information exchange amongst all stakeholders. – is being successfully implemented through a seminar (in implementation of Activity 1, Objective 1) and a round table (Activity 2, Objective 1) and the information and publicity activities under Objective 1 of the project. In this respect, apart from the press releases published before and after the events, in early April 2015 the specialised edition Legal World published an interview with Prof.Georgi Dimitrov - a key expert of the contractor in Activity 2, Objective 1 of the project (The interview is available at the following address: http://www.legalworld.bg/43657.vss-razrabotka-zakonodatelni-promeni-v-oblastta-na-elektronno-prizovavane.html) - Hardware (a server and disk database) and basic software delivered and installed for upgrade of existing case file management systems, adding functionality for sending of e-summons by the programmes themselves - Documentation was drawn up for an open procedure with subject matter 'Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, development, integration and deployment of application software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons' <p>During the reporting period, the analysis carried out covered the opportunities and methods to achieve functional connectivity of the e-summoning software with that used by the bodies of the judiciary in their document management systems, the methods of authentication of the receipt of e-mails by the recipient, the need for technical security of the software and an analysis of the compliance of the e-summoning software with the effective regulation and preparation of proposals for legislative amendments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms of reference were prepared for the two lots of the public procurement: 'Delivery and
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	<p>installation of hardware and basic software, development, integration and deployment of application software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons'. The lots are:</p> <p>Lot 1:</p> <p>'Delivery and installation of hardware (a server and disk database)' and</p> <p>Lot 2:</p> <p>'Development, deployment and integration of application software and delivery of basic software.'</p> <p>The programme operator performed ex-ante control over the public procurement documentation, the decision and the notice as it is yet to be opened.</p> <p>- Sustainability and applicability of the established statutory possibility for electronic sending of summons and communications.– SJC has no legislative initiative and could not table in parliament the proposals for legislative amendments developed under the project. As long as the effective procedural laws govern - while in a rather general way - the service of e-summons, the judicial bodies have internal rules governing the matter in question. The Best Practices Manual drawn up under the project will be sent to the authorities with a view to subsequent refinement of existing internal rules.</p> <p><i>Outcomes vis-à-vis Objective 2: The capacity of the members of the Bulgarian judiciary to comply with and implement the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and its case law increased and vis-à-vis Objective 3: A network of judges specialised in human rights.</i></p> <p>- selection of 9 judges for secondment to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg; –</p> <p>- selection was carried out and Bulgarian judges</p>
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	<p>were sent to the ECtHR Registry in Strasbourg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Methodology for selection and evaluation of applicants developed; - <i>completed and reported in previous Interim progress report.</i> - 9 judges seconded to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for a term of 12 months; – <i>the activity implementation continues successfully</i> <p><i>By signing an Additional Agreement No 4 on 05.08.2014 this indicator was amended as follows: “9 Bulgarian judges supporting the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for a term of up to 12 months”.</i></p> <p><i>In November 2014 another six Bulgarian judges (Galya Goranova Valkova, Galya Dimitrova Ruseva, Georgi Hristov Ivanov, Ivaylo Yosifov Ivanov, Chavdar Dimitrov Dimitrov and Vasil Lyubomirov Panayotov) went to Strasbourg, Republic of France, to support the work of the Registry of the ECtHR for a period of 8 months. The reports received by the current moment, prepared by the bulgarin judges and certified by their direct superiors at the ECtHR Registry provide evidence of the successful performance of the tasks assigned to them and their excellent work. - Internal professional network created for exchange of information amongst Bulgarian magistrates concerning the functioning and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights; – The internal network for exchange of information amongst Bulgarian magistrates concerning the functioning and the practice of the ECtHR is to be built gradually in the course of the implementation of the activities under Objective 2 and Objective 3 and after the judges sent to the ECHR have gained practical experience.</i></p> <p><i>The first step towards the setting up of such network has been taken by publishing on the SJC website on 13 December 2013 the contact details of the three judges seconded to the ECHR for the purpose of contact in relation to questions about the functioning and practice of the ECHR. (Activity reported in previous Interim Progress Reports).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-line forum created for exchange of information between judges and magistrates; – <i>It is</i>
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	<p><i>to be created in the course of the implementation of the activities under Objective 2 and Objective 3 and after the judges sent to the Registry of the ECtHR have gained practical experience. The basic steps to create and provide technical maintenance of the forum with restricted access to magistrates have been developed and planned. Civil contracts with experts from the Information Systems Department at the SJC have been signed on the 11 of December 2014 for the creation of the forum within the website of the SJC, its testing and training of the magistrates who will be its moderators. The forum is under preparation and it is expected to be presented at the round table under Activity 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 round table organized for presenting the created network for exchange of information on activity 3; – <i>The round table will be held after the creation of the information exchange network under Activity 3 of Objective 2 and Objective 3 and the activity is planned to take place in June 2015.</i> - Increased information level of the public and the judicial parties concerned. – <i>The achievement of this result may be reported after the implementation of the activities under Objective 2 and Objective 3.</i> <p>Outcomes vis-à-vis Objective 4: A mechanism for quality assessment of the workload in the judicial system both at the individual level and the institutional level focusing on qualitative indicators and benchmarks developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working visit to CE made – <i>The result has been achieved successfully with the working visit to the Council of Europe in the period 16-18 October 2013. (activity reported in the Third interim Progress Report and Annual Progress Report for 2013)</i> - analysis made of the practice and approaches to assessing the workload of magistrates based on qualitative indicators adopted by individual EU Member States and identification of EU or EEA Member State for holding a working meeting on activity 2; – <i>The result has been achieved successfully with the preparation of an Analysis of the Practice and Approaches to Assessing the Workload of Magistrates Adopted by Council of Europe Member States, approved by an SJC</i>
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	<p><i>decision under minutes No. 46/21 November 2013. (activity reported in the Third Interim Progress Report and Annual Progress Report for 2013)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working groups on activity 2 set up; – <i>Achieved. In the working groups, which sessions took place in Sofia and the Hague, Netherlands, participated representatives of the Bulgarian judiciary and experts from the SJC who are directly involved in the ongoing study of the workload of magistrates. (activity reported in previos interim progress reports)</i> - joint working groups held, including Bulgarian magistrates and representatives of the Council of Europe, the Kingdom of Norway and well experienced EU Member States with good practices in this field; – <i>The result has been achieved.</i> <p><i>The first working meeting took place in the period 16-18 December 2013 in Sofia, at the premises of the National Institute of Justice (activity reported in Third Interim Progress Report and Annual Progress Report for 2013).</i></p> <p><i>During the previos reporting period was organized and held the second working meeting on workload within the framework of Activity 2, Objective 4 “Holding joint working groups of Bulgarian magistrates and representatives of the Council of Europe, the Kingdom of Norway and EU Member States with rich experience and good practices in this area” in the form of a working visit to the Council for the Judiciary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, held on the 14-15 of July 2014. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has been identified as a country with rich experience on the basis of the Analysis made within Activity 1, Objective 4. (activity reported in Interim Progress Report N.5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - applicable qualitative indicators defined; – <i>This result will be achieved after finalizing the empirical study on the workload of magistrates.</i> - precise criteria for qualitative assessment of the workload of magistrates designed; – <i>In progress.</i> <p><i>This result will be achieved after finalizing the actual study on workload of magistrates.</i></p> <p><i>There has been conducted a survey at pilot courts in order to determine the suitability of the</i></p>
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	<p><i>instruments (questionnaires and statistical forms) to be used in the actual study of the workload of the magistrates. (Reported in the Fourth Interim Progress Report).</i></p> <p><i>On the 15 of April 2014 in Sofia, at the premises of the SJC, was held a meeting with representatives of the judiciary, during which were presented the major results of the pilot empirical study conducted in the period December 2013 – January 2014 (reported in Interim Progress Report N.5)</i></p> <p><i>On 17 June 2014 took place an open public session of the SJC's Standing Committee for Analysis and Reporting of the Workload of the Organs of the Judiciary during which the external experts, engaged under the project to provide the technical and practical performance of the study on workload of judges, presented the demo-version of the electronic web-based questionnaires though which shall be carried out the study itself and the results shall be processed. To the presentation were invited all members of the SJC, members of the Civic Council to the SJC, magistrates and the media in order to inform widely on the way in which the study on workload of judges will be carried out with the objective to determine the weight of the different types of cases.</i></p> <p><i>After presenting the demo-version, by Decision of the SJC under Minutes N.23/05.06.2014 started the actual study on workload which should include all judges from the regional, district, appellate and administrative courts.(activity reported in Interim Progress Report N.5)</i></p> <p><i>In March 2015, the technical and statistical processing of information received from the empirical study of the workload of courts started. Afterwards, focus groups of judges and Bulgarian experts under the project, with the potential involvement of a Council of Europe expert, will proceed with the definition of quality indicators and benchmarks.</i></p> <p><i>- optimized Methodology for periodic reporting and management of the workload of judicial authorities including qualitative indicators; – This result will be achieved after the completion of Activity 3 under Objective 4 planned for June 2015.</i></p>
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	<p>- Development and implementation of software – an interactive map of judiciary regions in Bulgaria (an activity included by Additional Agreement No 1). –</p> <p><i>On 23 December 2014 a contract was concluded with company “Q5a” OOD („Кюнема” ООД) for the development of an IT system – Interactive map of judiciary regions in the Republic of Bulgaria. The term for implementation of this contract was 3 months. In March 2015, a meeting was held with the contractor to present the results up to that point in time. The participants agreed to extend the deadline for contract execution until 30 April 2015 in order to finalise the final version of the product. By a handover report of 30 April 2015, the product made on time and as required by the contracting authority was accepted without objections. The interactive map will be presented at the forthcoming round table under Activity 4 Objective 2 and Objective 3.</i></p>
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I.2. Activities

Please provide information for each project activity implemented during the reporting period
(please copy the next section as many times as needed)

Activity № 1, Objective 1: Study visit and Comparative study of the experience and good practices in CE Member States and the existing legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria in the area of electronic summoning. (report-analysis) and initiating proposal for legislative changes:

a) Planned

Summarize the activity under the project.

For the implementation of this activity one study visit to the Council of Europe is envisaged with the participation of experts from the SJC and the CE, aimed at studying the good practices in e-summoning in EU and EEA Member States, as well as providing assistance in selecting a country with a similar to the Bulgarian judiciary system with which contacts will be established and experts will be invited for sharing their experience (at a workshop) (e.g. Estonia). The study visit will serve as a basis for making a comparative analysis of the legislation in this field and a practical use of the legal possibilities. The analysis, in turn, will

	<p>identify the impediments in the existing Bulgarian legal framework and will create the framework of the proposal for legislative amendments.</p> <p>After completing the study visit, a Manual of good practices will be drawn up, which will be used by judicial employees and magistrates.</p>
<p>b) Implemented / In progress</p> <p>Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p>Implemented.</p> <p>During the reporting period the last part of the activity was fulfilled (the other were reported on in previous progress reports) - drafting of a Best Practices Manual on e-summoning. The preparation of the document was commissioned by contract No 45-04-004/10.03.2015 to Martin Petkov - external expert. The contract duration is two months. The ANALYSIS OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF E-SUMMONING and the BEST PRACTICES MANUAL ON E-SUMMONING were presented to the contracting entity and accepted without objections in May 2015 and will be annexed to the next interim progress report.</p>
<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p>
<p>d) Attached documents</p> <p>List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

Activity № 2, Objective 1: Round table for introducing the Comparative study, the Proposals for legislation changes to the magistrates:

<p>a) Planned</p> <p>Summarize the activity under the project</p>	<p>Participants in the round table will be representatives of the judiciary, the executive and the legislature, experts from the CE, the bar, journalists, the NGO sector, stakeholders. The outcomes of Activity 1 and Activity 2 on this component will be presented and the draft</p>
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	proposal for legislative changes will be discussed at the round table. The result of the round table will be the design of a final version of a proposal for legislative changes.
b) Implemented / In progress Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.	<p><i>Implemented.</i></p> <p>To implement Activity 2, Objective 1 on 23 and 24 February 2015 the Supreme Judicial Council organised a round table to present the comparative study of the experience and good practices of CE Member States and the effective legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of e-summoning and the proposals for legislative amendments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comparative study of the experience and best practices in CE Member States and the effective legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of e-summoning <p>Martin Petkov, key project expert, presented a comparative study of the experience and best practices in CE Member States and the effective legislation in our country in the field of e-summoning updated by the information presented by experts from Spain and Slovenia during the seminar in December 2014. The study summarizes information on 14 European countries which are at various stages of implementation of the system. In 100% of the cases examined e-summoning is applied in civil proceedings and almost everywhere it is limited in criminal proceedings. There are no obstacles to its implementation in administrative proceedings, as is the case of Lithuania, Slovakia, Estonia. "The potential good practices that Bulgaria could follow are in Italy and Slovenia, Portugal and Spain, Lithuania and Estonia", summed up the expert.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for legislative changes in the area of e-summoning <p>The main emphasis during the round table was on the proposals for legislative amendments to the procedural laws regarding e-summons. The proposed amendments were developed based on an analysis of the effective legislation and their aim is to refine the regulatory framework governing e-summoning by ensuring its effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <p>Specific proposals of legislative amendments were made by Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, an expert under the</p>

	<p>project. The proposals include amendments and addenda to the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Administrative Procedure Code. They enshrine essential principles such as the voluntary nature of e-summoning, technological neutrality and convenience for citizens. The proposed amendments were discussed by representatives of the judiciary, the executive branch and the legislature, the bar, and the second day of the event was attended by Mr Yavor Haytov, Vice-President of the National Assembly and member of the Legal Affairs Committee. Experts from the Council of Europe also expressed their opinion on the issue. The opinions were reflected in the final version of the proposals for the Civil Procedure Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Administrative Procedure Code.</p> <p>After the round table, "BCO" LTD („Българска консултантска организация" ЕООД) - a contractor in public procurement "Development of a comparative study of the experience and good practices in CE Member States and the existing legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria in the area of electronic summoning and elaboration of a proposal for legislative changes" - prepared and submitted a detailed report on the organisation of the round table and the comments on proposed legislative amendments discussed during the event. The proposals made during the round table were analysed in detail, and as a result, the proposals for legislative amendments were refined. They were brought to the attention of the Legal Affairs Committee of the SJC which by report No 10 at its meeting held on 10 March 2015 expressed a positive opinion on the draft proposals for legislative amendments to the Administrative Procedure Code, the Civil Procedure Code and the Criminal Procedure Code in conjunction with refining the regulatory framework for e-summoning.</p> <p>Given the fact that the Supreme Judicial Council has no legislative initiative, to implement the SJC decision under Minutes No 17/2 April 2015 the proposed amendments to the procedural laws were sent to the Minister of Justice (letter Reg. No 04-00-099/15 of 8 April 2015).</p>
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c) Changes Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action? If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)
d) Attached documents List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES Annex 1: List of participants in the round table (Activity 2, Objective 1) Annex 2: Agenda of the round table (Activity 2, Objective 1) Annex 3: Presentations and proposals for legislative amendments presented at the round table (Activity 2, Objective 1)

Activity № 3, Objective 1: Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons by the programmes themselves.	
a) Planned Summarize the activity under the project	This activity aims to ensure compliance with the requirements for information security, the e-mails to be sent by office email whose servicing mail server (at present provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications), in case of a potential dispute as to the validity of summoning, will provide opportunity for using the recordings in the log files as electronic evidence. The possibility to procure a server, software and disk database will contribute to the sustainability of the existing e-summoning system in the context of the CPC.
b) Implemented / In progress Please describe the activity	<i>In progress.</i> <i>Documentation was drawn up for an open</i>

<p>implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p><i>procedure with subject matter 'Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, development, integration and deployment of application software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons'.</i></p> <p><i>During the reporting period, the analysis carried out covered the opportunities and methods to achieve functional connectivity of the e-summoning software with that used by the bodies of the judiciary in their document management systems, the methods of authentication of the receipt of e-mails by the recipient, the need for technical security of the software and an analysis of the compliance of the e-summoning software with the effective regulation and preparation of proposals for legislative amendments.</i></p> <p><i>- Terms of reference were prepared for the two lots of the public procurement: 'Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, development, integration and deployment of application software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons'. The lots are:</i></p> <p><i>Lot 1:</i></p> <p><i>'Delivery and installation of hardware (a server and disk database)' and</i></p> <p><i>Lot 2:</i></p> <p><i>'Development, deployment and integration of application software and delivery of basic software.'</i></p> <p><i>The programme operator performed ex-ante control over the public procurement documentation, the decision and the notice as it is yet to be opened.</i></p>
<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p> <p><i>In view of the successful and effective implementation of the activity, Addendum No 5 introduced changes to the project's budget in terms of the funds allocated for its implementation.</i></p>

the project.	
d) Attached documents List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES Annex 4: Additional Agreement No 5

Activity № 1, Objective 2 and Objective 3: Gathering of applications, evaluation and ranking of judges:	
a) Planned Summarize the activity under the project	An advertisement is to be published on the website of the SJC for selection of appropriate applicants for secondment to the Court of Rights in Strasbourg. A methodology for selection and evaluation of the candidates will be designed, setting out the requirements for professional experience, qualification and competences. The activity aims to select highly qualified professionals with high language proficiency, to be seconded to work at the European Court of Human Rights and who will participate in the creation of an internal network for information exchange amongst judges in Bulgaria on human rights related issues.
b) Implemented / In progress Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.	Implemented successfully. <i>As reported in Interim Progress Report N.5, the difficulties related to sending Bulgarian judges to the Registry of the ECtHR, described in Interim Progress Report No 4 were overcome by the signed additional agreement to the grant contract signed between the SJC and the Programme Operator (Additional Agreement No 4). In this relation, the Methodology to Select and Evaluate Candidates for Internships at the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights, setting out the criteria for selection of candidates, the conditions for sending and the status of the judges sent on internship (approved by minutes No 38/11.08.2014 of the SJC) was amended and a new selection procedure was held. The deadline for submitting applications was 12 September 2014 and after that the candidates admitted to final selection by the ECtHR were sent to the Registry of the ECtHR for final selection. As a result of the final selection made by the Registry of the ECtHR, in November 2014 six Bulgarian judges went to Strasbourg to support the work of the Registry for a period of 8</i>

	<p><i>months based on civil contracts concluded between them and the SJC.</i></p> <p>The project management team still stands on the opinion that the expenditures made for daily allowances at a double amount for the first group seconded Bulgarian judges are lawful and should be verified.</p>
<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p> <p>On the 05.08.2014 was concluded Additional Agreement N. 4 to the Grant Contract, by means of which is changed the status of the judges who are sent, the financial conditions and the duration of the internship at the ECtHR Registry. By means of the same Additional Agreement is extended the implementation period of the activities under Objectives 2 and 3. (reported in Interim Progress Report N.5)</p>
<p>d) Attached documents</p> <p>List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

<p>Activity № 2, Objective 2 and Objective 3: Secondment of judges to work at the European Court of Human Rights:</p>	
<p>a) Planned</p> <p>Summarize the activity under the project</p>	<p>Within the project, 9 Bulgarian judges will be seconded, who will be the core of an internal network for information exchange amongst judges in Bulgaria on issues relating to the work of the European Court of Human Rights and most often lodged applications against our country. Every judge will stay there for a maximum term of up to 12 months.</p> <p>The first 3 candidates will start work at the European Court of Human Rights in the first months of the project launch. The duration of their training will be about 3 months and after that they will be able to fulfil their duties independently as legal secretaries at the Registrar of the ECtHR. The next 3 judges will start work in six months.</p> <p>After the conclusion of Additional Agreement N.4 the text describing the activity is changed, as</p>

	<p>follows:</p> <p><i>“The second and third group of three Bulgarian judges sent to Strasbourg pursuant to Activity 2 vis-à-vis Objective 2 and Objective 3 of the project will support the work of the Registry of the ECtHR on the basis of a contract where the SJC as project promoter of the project “Support to the Supreme Judicial Council related to capacity building and improving the efficiency of the judiciary” will be Principal. The duration of the contract will be 8 months during which each one of the judges will receive monthly remuneration in an amount of 5000 € covered from item 6.3 of the project budget. The social security contributions payable by the Principal according to the existing Bulgarian legislation will be paid from the same item. The Principal will also pay the social security contributions and taxes payable by the Contractor by making deductions from the specified remuneration in accordance with the provisions of the existing legislation. The Contractor will be obligated to make a medical insurance for the whole duration of the discharge of his obligations in the host organisation. The judges will be on unpaid leave during the implementation of the contract.”</i></p>
<p>b) Implemented / In progress</p> <p>Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p>In progress.</p> <p><i>In 2014 the internship of the first three judges sent to the Registry of the ECtHR within the project was completed successfully.</i></p> <p><i>In November 2014 another six Bulgarian judges (Galya Goranova Valkova, Galya Dimitrova Ruseva, Georgi Hristov Ivanov, Ivaylo Yosifov Ivanov, Chavdar Dimitrov Dimitrov and Vasil Lyubomirov Panayotov) went to Strasbourg, Republic of France, to support the work of the Registry of the ECtHR for a period of 8 months.</i></p> <p><i>The reports received by the current moment, prepared by the bulgarin judges and certified by their direct superiors at the ECtHR Registry provide evidence of the successful performance of the tasks assigned to them and their excellent work.</i></p>
c) Changes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

<p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p> <p>After the conclusion of Additional Agreement N.4 the text describing the activity is changed, as follows:</p> <p><i>“The second and third group of three Bulgarian judges sent to Strasbourg pursuant to Activity 2 vis-à-vis Objective 2 and Objective 3 of the project will support the work of the Registry of the ECtHR on the basis of a contract where the SJC as project promoter of the project “Support to the Supreme Judicial Council related to capacity building and improving the efficiency of the judiciary” will be Principal. The duration of the contract will be 8 months during which each one of the judges will receive monthly remuneration in an amount of 5000 € covered from item 6.3 of the project budget. The social security contributions payable by the Principal according to the existing Bulgarian legislation will be paid from the same item. The Principal will also pay the social security contributions and taxes payable by the Contractor by making deductions from the specified remuneration in accordance with the provisions of the existing legislation. The Contractor will be obligated to make a medical insurance for the whole duration of the discharge of his obligations in the host organisation. The judges will be on unpaid leave during the implementation of the contract.”</i></p>
<p>d) Attached documents</p> <p>List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

Activity № 3, Objective 2 and Objective 3: Establishing an internal network for information exchange amongst judges in Bulgaria	
<p>a) Planned</p> <p>Summarize the activity under the project</p>	<p>An internal network for information exchange is to be set up and contact details will be published on the website of the SJC for communication with the Strasbourg seconded judges and a forum with restricted access to magistrates is to be created. The aim is for these judges to be the addressees of questions concerning the Court’s functioning and its practice.</p> <p>The information exchange network will continue</p>

	<p>to operate after the completion of the project and at least two workshops per annum will be organized, aimed at magistrate training. This will help provide value added to the judiciary and will ensure sustainability of the outcomes on this component after its completion. To achieve sustainability after the completion of this project component, the judges participating in the internal network will become trainers and will share their experience with other Bulgarian judges and jointly with the National Institute of Justice training modules for magistrates will be developed.</p>
<p>b) Implemented / In progress</p> <p>Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p><i>In progress.</i></p> <p><i>The internal network for exchange of information amongst Bulgarian magistrates concerning the functioning and the practice of the ECtHR is to be built gradually in the course of the implementation of the activities under Objective 2 and Objective 3 and after the judges seconded to the ECtHR have gained practical experience.</i></p> <p><i>The first step towards the setting up of such network has been taken by publishing on the SJC website on 13 December 2013 the contact details of the three judges seconded to the ECtHR for the purpose of contact in relation to questions about the functioning and practice of the ECtHR. (Activity reported in previous Interim Progress Reports).</i></p> <p><i>The forum for exchange of information between judges and magistrates is to be created in the course of the implementation of the activities under Objective 2 and Objective 3 and after the judges seconded to the ECtHR have gained practical experience. The basic steps to create and provide technical maintenance of the restricted access forum for magistrates have been developed and planned. On the 11 of December 2014 were signed civil contracts with experts from the Information Systems Department at the SJC for the creation of the forum within the website of the SJC, its testing and training of the magistrates who will be its moderators. The forum is under preparation and it is expected to be presented at the round table under Activity 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3.</i></p>

<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p>
<p>d) Attached documents</p> <p>List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

<p>Activity № 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3: A round table for presenting the established information exchange network under activity 3.</p>	
<p>a) Planned</p> <p>Summarize the activity under the project</p>	<p>Participants in the round table will be representatives of the judiciary, the executive and the legislature, a judge from the European Court of Human Rights, the bar, journalists, the NGO sector, stakeholders, at which the results of Activity 3 are to be presented.</p> <p>The round table will result in better knowledge of the judiciary by the public and the participants concerned.</p>
<p>b) Implemented / In progress</p> <p>Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p>Planned for June 2015.</p>
<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p> <p>On the 05.08.2014 was concluded Additional Agreement N. 4 to the Grant Contract, by means of which is changed the status of the judges who are sent, the financial conditions and the duration of the internship at the ECtHR Registry. By means of the same Additional Agreement is extended the implementation period of the activities under Objectives 2 and 3. (reported in Interim Progress Report N.5)</p>

d) Attached documents List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> YES

Activity № 1, Objective 4: Analysis of the practice and approaches to assessment of the workload of magistrates based on qualitative indicators adopted by individual EU Member States and exchange of expertise with more experienced countries in this area.	
a) Planned Summarize the activity under the project	During the implementation of this activity the expertise of professionals from the Council of Europe is to be used by organizing a working visit with the participation of representatives of the judiciary on the spot to the CE. During the working visit good practices and approaches of different EU and EEA Member States will be discussed in terms of quality assessment of the workload of magistrates. The working visit will provide a basis for analysis aimed to identify the countries applying qualitative indicators of the workload of magistrates. Based on the analysis, working groups on Activity 2 will be set up.
b) Implemented / In progress Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.	<i>Implemented and reported in Third Interim Progress Report on the project and in the Annual Progress Report for 2013.</i>
c) Changes Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action? If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)
d) Attached documents List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> YES

Activity № 2, Objective 4: Holding joint working groups of Bulgarian magistrates and representatives of the Council of Europe, the Kingdom of Norway and EU Member States with rich experience and good practices in this area.	
<p>a) Planned</p> <p>Summarize the activity under the project</p>	<p>A criterion for the selection of these countries would be selection and appointment of judiciary staff similar to the Bulgarian system and will be part of the analysis under activity 1.</p> <p>One working group in EU or EEA Member State is to be held on this activity, aimed to study good practices in assessing the workload of magistrates and one working meeting is to be held in Bulgaria with the participation of experts from the CE, experts from the country where the working visit is made, experts from Norway and representatives of the Bulgarian judiciary.</p> <p>The working groups should define the applicable qualitative indicators which would be appropriate in designing a mechanism for qualitative assessment of the workload in the judiciary both at the individual level and at the institutional level.</p> <p>The activity will create conditions for developing the mechanism under activity 3.</p>
<p>b) Implemented / In progress</p> <p>Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p>Successfully implemented.</p> <p><i>(reorted in previous Interim Progress Reports)</i></p>
<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p> <p>By means of Additional Agreement N.2 was updated the timetable for the implementation of the project activities, and the period for the implementation of Objective 4 was extended from August 2014 to March 2015.</p>
<p>d) Attached documents</p> <p>List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

Activity № 3, Objective 4: Designing precise criteria for qualitative assessment of the workload of magistrates and optimized Methodology for periodic monitoring and management of the workload of the judiciary including qualitative indicators.	
<p>a) Planned</p> <p>Summarize the activity under the project</p>	<p>This activity aims at designing a methodology for assessment and planning of the workload of judicial authorities and individual magistrates by introducing precise criteria for qualitative assessment of the workload of magistrates. These criteria should be based on the factual and legal complexity of the cases by applying pre-set ratios, the average required time for examination and resolving of a particular group of cases, determined on the basis of procedural laws and procedural actions performed on the respective groups of cases, as well as on the qualification of magistrates.</p>
<p>b) Implemented / In progress</p> <p>Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p>In progress.</p> <p><i>There has been conducted a survey at pilot courts in order to determine the suitability of the instruments (questionnaires and statistical forms) to be used in the actual study of the workload of the magistrates. (Reported in the Fourth Interim Progress Report).</i></p> <p><i>On the 15 of April 2014 in Sofia, at the premises of the SJC, was held a meeting with representatives of the judiciary, during which were presented the major results of the pilot empirical study conducted in the period December 2013 – January 2014 (reported in Interim Progress Report N.5).</i></p> <p><i>On 17 June 2014 took place an open public session of the SJC's Standing Committee for Analysis and Reporting of the Workload of the Organs of the Judiciary during which the external experts, engaged under the project to provide the technical and practical performance of the study on workload of the judges, presented the demo-version of the electronic web-based questionnaires through which shall be carried out the study itself and the results shall be processed. At the presentation were invited all members of the SJC, members of the Civic Council to the SJC, magistrates and the media in order to inform</i></p>

	<p><i>widely on the way in which the study on workload of judges will be carried out with the objective to determine the weight of the different types of cases.</i></p> <p><i>After presenting the demo-version, by Decision of the SJC under Minutes N.23/05.06.2014 started the actual study on workload which shall include all judges of the regional, district, appellate and administrative courts (reported in Interim Progress Report N.5).</i></p> <p><i>At the end of November 2014 approximately 58% participation in the study was reached.</i></p> <p><i>The number of judges from administrative and regional courts having completed the questionnaire is sufficient to accept statistical completion of the study in these courts.</i></p> <p><i>In March 2015, the technical and statistical processing of information received from the empirical study of the workload of courts started. Afterwards, focus groups of judges and Bulgarian experts under the project, with the potential involvement of a Council of Europe expert, will proceed with the definition of quality indicators and benchmarks.</i></p>
<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)</p>
<p>d) Attached documents</p> <p>List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

Activity № 4, Objective 4: Elaboration and implementation of a software product – an interactive map of the judicial regions in Bulgaria

a) Planned	This activity envisages elaboration and implementation of a software product, which will
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Summarize the activity under the project	provide a brand new perspective on the data regarding the number, movement, and workload of the magistrates through use of spatial presentation. It will reflect the geographic specifics of the relevant area, the population numbers, the demographic trends, access to justice and other factors, while the up-to-date information about these will create opportunities to more accurately and properly redistribute the magistrates' staff numbers and optimize SJC's staffing policy. The final outcome would be to achieve progress in surmounting the problem relating to the uneven workload of the judiciary authorities.
b) Implemented / In progress Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.	Implemented. On 23 December 2014 a contract was concluded with company "Q5a" OOD („Кюпета" ООД) for the development of an IT system – Interactive map of judiciary regions in the Republic of Bulgaria. The term for implementation of this contract was 3 months. In March 2015, a meeting was held with the contractor to present the results up to that point in time. The participants agreed to extend the deadline for contract execution until 30 April 2015 in order to finalise the final version of the product. By a handover report of 30 April 2015, the product made on time and as required by the contracting authority was accepted without objections. The interactive map will be presented at the forthcoming round table under Activity 4 Objective 2 and Objective 3.
c) Changes Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action? If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> YES (Please describe)
d) Attached documents List of attached documents related to	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

the implemented activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
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Public procurement procedures (Preparation of tender documents)	
a) Planned Summarize the activity under the project	<p>The following activities are to be awarded to external contractors subject to compliance with the Public Procurement Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparative study of the expertise and good practices of CE Member States and the effective legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of e-summoning (report-analysis) and elaborating a draft proposal for legislation changes – the selection of the contractor will be in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 4, sub-paragraph 2 of the Public Procurement Act (PPA); - Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, needed for the modernisation of the existing case file management systems aimed at sending e-summons by the programmes themselves – the selection of the contractor will be effected in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 4, sub-paragraph 2 of the PPA; - Audit – the public procurement procedure for conducting audit of the project will be awarded in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 5, sub-paragraph 2 of the PPA; - Information and publicity activities – the public procurement procedure for the information and publicity activities will be awarded in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 5, sub-paragraph 2 of the PPA; - Interpretation services – the public procurement procedure for interpretation services for the purposes of the project will be awarded in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 5, sub-paragraph 2 of the PPA;

<p>b) Implemented / In progress</p> <p>Please describe the activity implemented or if it is ongoing describe the stage of implementation and results/ outputs achieved so far.</p>	<p><i>In progress.</i></p> <p><i>The following activities were implemented in the reporting period):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation was drawn up for an open procedure with subject matter 'Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, development, integration and deployment of application software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons' <p>During the reporting period, the analysis carried out covered the opportunities and methods to achieve functional connectivity of the e-summoning software with that used by the bodies of the judiciary in their document management systems, the methods of authentication of the receipt of e-mails by the recipient, the need for technical security of the software and an analysis of the compliance of the e-summoning software with the effective regulation and preparation of proposals for legislative amendments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms of reference were prepared for the two lots of the public procurement: 'Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, development, integration and deployment of application software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons'. The lots are: <p>Lot 1:</p> <p>'Delivery and installation of hardware (a server and disk database)' and</p> <p>Lot 2:</p> <p>'Development, deployment and integration of application software and delivery of basic software.'</p> <p>The programme operator performed ex-ante control over the public procurement documentation, the decision and the notice as it is yet to be opened.</p>
<p>c) Changes</p> <p>Are there changes to the preliminary plan for the implementation of the action?</p> <p>If yes, please specify exactly what the discrepancies are and justify why they</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Please describe)</p>

were needed. Describe what is the impact of the change on the progress of the project.	
d) Attached documents List of attached documents related to the implemented activity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes

I.3. Partners

Partners contribution

Please, describe the partners' contribution to project implementation so far.

If for some reason the partners' role in project implementation has changed, please describe why it occurred and what caused it?

Pursuant to Cl. 16 of Predefined Project No 2, an integral part of the Grant Financial Aid Agreement under the Project entitled „*Support to the Supreme Judicial Council related to Capacity Building and Improving the Efficiency of the Judiciary*”, Council of Europe's role is as follows:

1. Provides overall advice on the implementation of the project;
2. Contributes to the planning and organisation of the objectives;
3. Organises the participation of Council of Europe experts in activities;
4. Organises the placement of Bulgarian judges at the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights;
5. Provides legal opinions;
6. Provides background information on European standards and counterparts;
7. Organises study visits.

As at the current stage of project implementation the partner's role has not been modified. The Council of Europe provides efficient assistance and is actively involved in the implementation of the activities under Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4, which are either in progress or already completed.

I.4. Identified difficulties during the implementation

Please describe the difficulties identified at this stage of the project (if applicable), what is

your strategy for dealing with the identified problems.

No difficulties have been identified during the reporting period.

II. Quantitative information

Please, provide quantitative information for each project result/ output.

Activities and results

Please, provide information for each completed project activity at the time of submission of the interim report. *(please copy the next section as many times as needed)*

Activity № 1, Objective 1: Study visit and Comparative study of the experience and good practices in CE Member States and the existing legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria in the area of electronic summoning (report-analysis) and initiating proposal for legislative changes:

a) Result/output

Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number

- Study visit to the CE;
 - A comparative analysis of the legislation as regards electronic summoning;
 - Best practice Manual for e-summoning encompassing the experience of EU and EEA Member States developed;
 - A framework proposal for legislation amendments aimed at introducing e-summoning in the penal and administrative processes developed;
- developed;

b) Indicator for achieved results

Indicate measurable parameter

- Study visit to the CE - target value 1 - completed
- A comparative analysis of the legislation as regards electronic summoning - target value 1 – completed
- Best Practice Manual for e-summoning encompassing the experience of EU and EEA Member States developed - target value 1 – **implemented, to be presented in the next interim progress report.**
- A framework proposal for legislation amendments aimed at introducing e-summoning in the penal and administrative processes developed - target value 1 – completed

c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	<i>- Project progress reports</i> <i>- SJC's website</i>
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	Target group: representatives of the Bulgarian judiciary – magistrates and judicial employees
Activity № 2, Objective 1: Round table for introducing the Comparative study, the Proposals for legislation changes to the magistrates	
a) Result/output Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	<i>- A round table for presenting the outcomes of Activity 1 and Activity 2 conducted;</i> <i>- A final draft of a proposal for legislation changes drafted;</i> <i>- Increased information exchange amongst all stakeholders;</i>
b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter	<i>- A round table for presenting the outcomes of Activity 1 and Activity 2 conducted – target value 1 – completed</i> <i>- A final draft of a proposal for legislation changes drafted - target value 1 – completed</i> <i>- Increased information exchange amongst all stakeholders – can not be subject of quantitative measurement</i>
c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	<i>- Project progress reports</i> <i>- SJC's website</i>
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	Target group: all Bulgarian magistrates and other stakeholders

Activity № 3, Objective 1: Delivery and installation of hardware and basic software, needed for the upgrade of the existing case file management systems with the purpose of sending electronic summons by the programmes themselves:	
a) Result/output Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	<i>- Hardware (a server and disk database) and basic software delivered and installed for upgrade of existing case file management systems, adding functionality for sending of e-summons by the programmes themselves</i> <i>- Sustainability and applicability of the established statutory possibility for electronic</i>

	sending of summons and communications.
b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter	- Hardware (a server and disk database) and basic software delivered and installed for upgrade of existing case file management systems, adding functionality for sending of e-summons by the programmes themselves - target value hardware ((a server and disk database)) and software – forthcoming implementation - Sustainability and applicability of the established statutory possibility for electronic sending of summons and communications – can not be subject of quantitative measurement
c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	- <i>Project progress reports</i>
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	Target group: all Bulgarian magistrates and other stakeholders

Activity № 1, Objectives 2 and 3: Gathering of applications, evaluation and ranking of judges	
a) Result/output Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	- <i>Publication on SJC's website of calls for selection of the first, second, and third groups of Bulgarian judges to be seconded for internship at the ECHR Registry (as recommended by ECHR, selection of the second and third groups is to take place simultaneously).</i> - <i>Elaborated and approved by means of a SJC Decision under Minutes N.16/25.04.2013 – a Methodology for selection of applicants for internship at the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights. A modified version of the Methodology was approved by means of a SJC Decision under Minutes N.50 /12.12.2013. On 11.08.2014 with Decision of the SJC under Minutes N.38/11.08.2014 the Methodology has been amended in relation to the changed conditions for conducting the internship.</i>

	<p><i>- The first group of three judges has been ranked, and during preparation of this report the said first group of three judges has already returned from their internship at the ECHR Registry.</i></p> <p><i>- Carried out a second ranking of applications for the second and the third groups to be sent for internships at the Registry of the ECHR</i></p>
<p>b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter</p>	<p><i>- Published selection call – achieved</i></p> <p><i>- Elaborated selection methodology – The last Methodology for selection was changed and approved by a SJC Decision under Minutes N.38/11.08.2014.</i></p> <p><i>- Ranking of 9 judges to be seconded for internship to ECHR Registry – achieved: The first three judges have successfully completed their internships at the Registry of the ECHR, ranked and sent for an internship at the Registry of the ECtHR the next 6 Bulgarian judges (second and third groups).</i></p>
<p>c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?</p>	<p><i>- Project progress reports</i></p> <p><i>- SJC's website</i></p>
<p>d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result</p>	<p><i>Target group: all Bulgarian judges with at least 3 years of working experience at regional, district, or appellate court level.</i></p>

Activity № 2, Objectives 2 and 3: Secondment of judges to work at the European Court of Human Rights.

<p>a) Result/ product Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number</p>	<p><i>9 Bulgarian judges seconded to the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for a term of up to 12 months maximum; – By signing Additional Agreement No 4 on 05.08.2014 the Bulgarian judges supporting the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg are no longer seconded on business trip but sent under a contract concluded between each of them and the SJC</i></p>
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	<p><i>as Principal.</i></p> <p><i>In November 2014 another six Bulgarian judges (Galya Goranova Valkova, Galya Dimitrova Ruseva, Georgi Hristov Ivanov, Ivaylo Yosifov Ivanov, Chavdar Dimitrov Dimitrov and Vasil Lyubomirov Panayotov) went to Strasbourg, Republic of France, to support the work of the Registry of the ECtHR for a period of 8 months.</i></p>
<p>b) Indicator for achieved results</p> <p>Indicate measurable parameter</p>	<p><i>9 Bulgarian judges seconded to the European Court of Human Rights - By signing Additional Agreement No 4 on 05.08.2014 the Bulgarian judges supporting the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg are no longer seconded on business trip but sent under a contract concluded between each of them and the SJC as Principal. – target value 9 (degree of implementation of the indicator 3)</i></p>
<p>c) Information for checking the indicator</p> <p>Where can be found information for the indicator?</p>	<p><i>- Project progress reports</i></p> <p><i>- Monthly reports by the seconded judges</i></p>
<p>d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result</p>	<p><i>Target group: 9 Bulgarian judges with at least 3 years of job experience at regional, district, or appellate court level.</i></p>

Activity № 3, Objective 2 and 3: Establishing an internal network for information exchange amongst judges in Bulgaria.

<p>a) Result/ product</p> <p>Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number</p>	<p>The setting up of an internal network for information exchange is under way, the purpose being that the seconded judges would serve as addressees of incoming questions from their colleagues concerning ECHR functioning and practices.</p>
<p>b) Indicator for achieved results</p> <p>Indicate measurable parameter</p>	<p><i>1. Publication of the contact details of the judges seconded to Strasbourg on SJC's website – the contact details of the first group of 3 judges seconded to the ECHR have been published (indicator implementation degree - 1/3)</i></p>

	<i>2. Setting up of a limited access forum for magistrates – target value 1 – due to be implemented during 2015</i>
c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	- SJC's website - Project progress reports
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	Target group: <i>all Bulgarian magistrates</i>

Activity № 4, Objective 2 and 3: A round table for presenting the established information exchange network under activity 3:	
a) Result/ product Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	- 1 round table organized for presenting the created network for exchange of information on activity 3; - Increased information level of the public and the judicial parties concerned.
b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter	- 1 round table organized for presenting the created network for exchange of information on activity 3; - planned to be implemented in June 2015. - Increased information level of the public and the judicial parties concerned. – to be implemented; can not be subject of quantitative measurement
c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	- the web site of the SJC - Project progress reports
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	Target group: <i>all Bulgarian magistrates</i>

Activity № 1, Objective 4: Analysis of the practice and approaches to assessment of the workload of magistrates based on qualitative indicators adopted by individual EU Member States and exchange of expertise with more experienced countries in this area.	
a) Result/ product Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	- <i>Completed: 1 working visit to the CE</i> - <i>Completed Analysis of the practices and approaches in assessing the magistrates' workload in terms of quality indicators, as adopted by the Council of Europe member-</i>

	<i>states, and identification of one EU or EEA member-state to host a working meeting under Activity 2 – 1</i> <i>- setting up of working groups under Activity 2; – 2</i>
b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter	<i>- Working visit to CE carried out – target value 1 (completed)</i> <i>- Completed Analysis of the practices and approaches in assessing the magistrates' workload in terms of quality indicators – target value 1 (completed)</i> <i>- Setting up of working groups under Activity 2; - target value 2 (completed)</i>
c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	<i>- Project progress reports</i>
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	<i>Target group: Bulgarian magistrates</i>

Activity № 2, Objective 4: Holding joint working groups of Bulgarian magistrates and representatives of the Council of Europe, the Kingdom of Norway and EU Member States with rich experience and good practices in this area.

a) Result/ product Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	<i>- Conduct of one joint working group in Bulgaria and one joint working group in a EU or EEA member-state, where to study best practices in the evaluation of magistrates' workload, the groups comprise Bulgarian magistrates and representatives of the Council of Europe, Kingdom of Norway, and EU member states with extensive experience and good practices in this area – target value 2</i>
b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter	<i>Joint working groups – target value 2 (completed) –The first joint working group met during the period December 16-18, 2013 in Bulgaria, and the second working group met in the Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands, in the period 14-15 of July 2014.</i>
c) Information for checking the indicator	<i>- Project progress reports</i>

Where can be found information for the indicator?	
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	<i>Target group: Bulgarian magistrates and representatives of the Council of Europe, Kingdom of Norway, and EU member states with extensive experience and good practices in this area.</i>

Activity № 3, Objective 4: Designing precise criteria for qualitative assessment of the workload of magistrates at the SJC and optimized Methodology for periodic monitoring and management of the workload of the judiciary including qualitative indicators	
a) Result/ product Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - applicable qualitative indicators defined; - precise criteria for qualitative assessment of the workload of magistrates designed; - optimized Methodology for periodic reporting and management of the workload of judicial authorities including qualitative indicators;
b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - applicable qualitative indicators defined - <i>can not be subject of quantitative measurement</i> - precise criteria for qualitative assessment of the workload of magistrates designed – <i>can not be subject of quantitative measurement</i> - optimized Methodology for periodic reporting and management of the workload of judicial authorities including qualitative indicators - <i>target value 1 – to be implemented</i>
c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	- <i>Project progress reports</i>
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	<i>Target group: all Bulgarian magistrates and SJC members</i>

Activity № 4, Objective 4: Elaboration and implementation of a software product – an interactive map of the judicial regions in Bulgaria

a) Result/ product Description of the result/ output and quantity/ number	Functioning software product – an interactive map of the judicial regions in the Republic of Bulgaria
b) Indicator for achieved results Indicate measurable parameter	Elaborated and implemented functioning interactive map of the judicial regions in the Republic of Bulgaria, containing information on the number, movement and workload of the magistrates by judiciary authorities, demographic, economic and other indicators – target value 1 – to be implemented
c) Information for checking the indicator Where can be found information for the indicator?	- <i>Project progress reports</i>
d) Number of target group representatives benefiting from the result	Target group: <i>all Bulgarian magistrates and SJC members</i>

III. Declaration and attached documents

Declaration	
Name, surname, forename	Ruslana Christova Valcheva
Position	Project coordinator
Name of beneficiary	Supreme Judicial Council
With this letter I declare that the information provided in the Interim Narrative Report and the attached documents is complete and accurate. I declare that I am informed that I may be contacted to clarify the details of this report, including for providing additional information.	
Date and signature	

List of attached documents*:

Annex 1: List of participants in the round table (Activity 2, Objective 1)

Annex 2: Agenda of the round table (Activity 2, Objective 1)

Annex 3: Presentations and proposals for legislative amendments presented at the round table
(Activity 2, Objective 1)

Annex 4: Additional Agreement No 5.

*** The above-listed attachments will be presented in English upon request.**