

# Closing Stage of the Supreme Court Competition - update as of Sept 14

14.09.2017

On September 14 the [High Council of Justice](#) started reviewing the shortlist of candidates to the new Supreme Court, which was offered by the High Qualification Commission of Judges. According to its schedule, the HCJ will complete a review by September 25, and then will proceed with voting.

Before consideration started, the HCJ members filed 52 appeals of recusal from consideration of specific cases. In total, the HCJ confirmed 4 and respectively rejected 48 such appeals. By doing this the HCJ stresses that a person who considers him/herself biased is wrong and apparently can be objective while considering the case. Consequently, it would be impossible to bring to justice HCJ members who do have conflict of interest.

Civil society organisations remind that [30 finalists out of 120](#) do not meet the integrity criteria. In order to be heard, civil society activists were forced to do a [direct action campaign](#) on September 13. 30 activists wore judges' robes and monster masks for their march, which began at the President's Administration, since it is the President who bears full political responsibility for the judicial reform, and proceeded to the Supreme Court building.

Ukraine's international partners voiced their concerns with the intermediate results of the competition. Thus, the [EU Delegation in Ukraine states](#) that: "...It is now for the High Council of Justice to ensure that only those candidates, whose integrity, independence and professional record are beyond doubt, are appointed as judges. If this high standard is applied, it may well happen that not all of the foreseen 120 positions will be filled this year, but the Supreme Court can already start its operations if at least 65 judges are appointed. **The appointment of even a few judges with tainted integrity risks compromising the credibility of the entire reform.** The creation of the new Supreme Court is a unique chance to rekindle public trust in the judiciary which Ukraine cannot afford to miss."

Earlier, the [U.S. Embassy in Ukraine also indicated](#) that: "A number of strong Supreme Court nominations, but integrity concerns of many nominees remain..."