

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **On the Occasion of One Year since the Beginning of the Implementation of the Brussels Agreement on Judiciary**

On the occasion of one year since the beginning of the implementation of the Agreement on Judiciary concluded within the Brussels Dialogue of Belgrade and Prishtina, the [Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights YUCOM](#) from Belgrade and the [Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture ACDC](#) from Mitrovica, invite the authorities in Belgrade and Prishtina to act responsibly regarding the implementation of undertaken obligations and introduce the implementation reporting.

Recalling that Agreement on Judiciary envisages the integration of Serbian judges, prosecutors and administrative staff into the Kosovo judiciary, including the provision and adaptation of the facilities needed for courts and prosecutors' offices. Serbian judges and prosecutors took an oath before the Kosovo institutions on October 24, 2017. In total, 40 judges and 13 prosecutors took an oath, thus formally integrating into the Kosovo judicial system, and the implementation of the Agreement started on November 6, 2017.

We are concerned that the Agreement drew full attention of Serbian and Kosovo authorities until the moment of the beginning of implementation, but since then there has been no official information on the implementation, neither from the Government of Serbia nor the Government of Kosovo. The public has been informed about the implementation of the Agreement and the real functioning of the integrated judiciary only through media reports.

For both Belgrade and Prishtina, the implementation of this Agreement represents an important step in meeting the benchmarks on their European path. The Action Plan for Chapter 23 as well as obligations under Chapter 35 foresee an active role of Serbia in ensuring implementation of the provisions related to judiciary, while Kosovo authorities are obliged to provide the ground for adequate functioning of the integrated judiciary under equal conditions as for other judicial institutions. Inadequate implementation of the Agreement will only further damage the citizens, as they still cannot exercise their right to a fair trial and adequate access to justice, which should be the primarily purpose of concluding the Agreement.

Civil society organizations engaged in monitoring the implementation of the Agreement have so far concluded that hand-over and resolution of cases led before Serbian courts has not been done. Another problem is perceived in inadequate translations and lack of translators in integrated courts, but also the lack of interns. Additionally, there is no continuity in recognizing decisions that have been brought before. In four municipalities in the north of Kosovo, notary services have not been organized at all, and another major problem is the lack of adequate technical equipment or other resources for the work of integrated judges and prosecutors.

The civil society of Serbia and Kosovo will closely monitor the implementation in the upcoming period and we urge for official Belgrade and Prishtina to introduce regular reporting on the implementation of the Agreement on Judiciary, but also for other set of agreements achieved under Brussels Dialogue.