



GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE JUDICIARY

I.- ACTION GUIDELINES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE JUDICIARY.

Since the beginning of its mandate, the General Council of the Judiciary has been aware of the need to carry out substantial reform of the justice system in order to be able to provide society with the effective judicial protection recognized by the Constitution as a fundamental right. This constitutional organ cannot remain on the sidelines.

Spanish society is more complex today than ever and therefore greater expectation is placed on public services. Social progress is possible only with accompanying legal certainty. For this reason, the Council, with complete respect for the jurisdictions and responsibilities of other State powers, must encourage dialogue with the government and autonomous communities with the aim of tackling comprehensive reform of the justice system, given the dissatisfaction of citizens and the individuals who serve and administer justice.

Our institutional commitment requires that the government organ of the judiciary diagnose all the structural deficiencies of the justice system and come up with proposals for improvement and modernization. As such, the Council believes the following priorities must be addressed:

1. Regarding the powers of the General Council of the Judiciary:

1.1 Selection and development of judges and magistrates. The goal here is improvement of the selection process and training of members of the legal profession.

1.2 Optimization of judicial activity. To this end, the work of the Inspection Service has been reoriented towards identifying problems and proposing solutions, with early detection of problems and immediate action within the affected judicial organs. This work should be based on reliable and up-to-date statistics, with real-time provision of data.

1.3 Status of the legal profession. It is necessary to continue the effort towards transparency and objectivity in the provision of posts and discretionary appointments, as well as promoting the balanced presence of men and women in positions of responsibility.

A programme for harmonizing social benefits with the enormous responsibility of judges and magistrates needs to be addressed, regulating, among other things, such important matters



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as reconciliation of work and family life, increased coverage for medical insurance and civil liability, a labour risk prevention system, improvement of retirement conditions and vacation regimes.

1.4 Enhancing and facilitating communication mechanisms of government organs with the Council. Through the implementation of new technologies.

2. In conjunction with Parliament, the Ministry of Justice and the autonomous communities:

2.1 General implementation of the new judicial office together with the necessary provision of human and material resources. The Council believes new organization and optimization of the resources of the justice system is required. This includes training staff in the areas of management and organization, creation of work buereaus for specialized temporary employees, promotion of professional incentives and general implementation of new technologies with compatible interconnected computer programmes.

2.2 Restructuring of the judicature and judicial demarcation. The current judicature and judicial demarcation design is obsolete. The allocation of workloads among judicial organs is very imbalanced, resulting in negative consequences for citizens and judges and magistrates as well. A judicial map should be drawn up adapted to the real needs of society in the 21st century.

2.3 Procedural legislative reforms. The Council stands behind the adaptation of rules of procedure currently in force to the new framework of the judicial office. It considers necessary reforms aimed at streamlining and rationalization of judicial procedures, especially in the criminal sphere, as well as legal reforms seeking alternative methods of dispute resolution.

2.4 Enhancing relations with autonomous communities. Strengthening relations with autonomous communities is a priority of this Council, given the important role they play in reform and improvement of the justice system. The Council will thus promote the development of what is set forth in the eighth point of the Modernization Pan regarding territorial organization of the State, with the aim of adapting the justice system to the new autonomous map, always guaranteeing the linguistic rights of the citizens of autonomous communities with their own official languages.

3. Regarding society: A justice system that is transparent and accessible to citizens.



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The Council has two approaches:

3.1 Enhancing the Citizen's Advice Service. On the one hand, the Citizen's Advice Service, through handling suggestions, complaints and claims, represents a real and practical means of connection with any citizen concerned about or involved in legal matters; while, on the other hand, increased training in citizen advice techniques for judges, prosecutors, court clerks, forensic doctors and staff will also be of great benefit.

3.2 A new communication policy design: Communications emanating from the General Council of the Judiciary will focus on underscoring the important role that judges and magistrates play in conveying to citizens the reality of the justice system. An active communication policy is therefore sought in order to make the judiciary transparent, accessible and understandable to citizens. All actions in this area will be carried out in accordance with the principles of transparency, veracity, quality, speed and disclosure.

II.-ACTIVITY OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE JUDICIARY DURING ITS FIRST MANDATE.

1.-Regarding the powers of the General Council of the Judiciary

A) STANDING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee, which is responsible for everyday management of the Council, held, in the first year of its mandate, 75 meetings and adopted 4,328 agreements.

The majority of these agreements, **64% percent of which were adopted by unanimous decision**, refers to matters related to enhancing measures aimed at judicial organs, service committees, appointments, promotions, licenses, permits and inspection service actions.

For one of these matters - forced transfer due to promotion - the criteria of freezing transfer requests that should have been expedited this year was adopted, given the process of parliamentary reform of the Judicial Power Organization Act, which foresaw the elimination of these transfers and has been in force since 5 November.

Also, regarding statutory laws of the legal profession (licenses and permits), and with the aim of granting legal security to requests made this year, criteria have been established and authorized which, without neglecting exceptional situations that might arise, permit standardized



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treatment of diverse situations, above all those that allow for a certain degree of discretion.

24% of the agreements of the Standing Committee are related to agreements signed with different entities and institutions and issues raised by citizens, associations and other public and private entities.

And, finally, 12% of the agreements deal with questions regarding appeals lodged against resolutions of the General Council of the Judiciary or internal government organs of courts and tribunals.

As for these appeals, an attempt has been made at standardization and streamlining of resolutions, establishing information channels regarding statistics and content of resolution proposals, including scrupulous respect for initiatives by rapporteurs and the organ responsible for hearing the appeals, that is, the plenary council.

B) QUALIFICATION COMMISSION

The Qualification Commission is the organ responsible for presenting proposals to the plenary regarding 1) appointments, 2) recognition of merit for knowledge of co-official languages and special civil law or regional law for filling vacancies, 3) designation of judges and magistrates to form part of qualifying tribunals, and 4) notifying members of the legal profession in regard to prizes, distinctions and awards.

- Appointments

a) Judicial positions

Regarding discretionary appointments, we are currently working on a regulatory project for provision of judicial positions which will be elevated to the Plenary with the drafting of this text.

In the meantime, we have adopted an initiative aimed at better informing the conviction of members regarding the suitability of candidates for filling vacant posts.

This initiative consists of inviting magistrates and aspiring magistrates to appear before said Commission (with the attendance of other members of the Council who wish to attend) in order to present their curriculum vitae and, where appropriate, the project or programme of action accompanying their requests.

In the intercessional period, the initiative has gained a foothold, refining itself and becoming part of the regulatory project. Specifically, in



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the first year of operation of this General Council of the Judiciary, the Commission has prepared:

- **40 proposals** for the provision of governing or mixed governing and jurisdictional posts (President of the National High Court, Presidencies of the High Courts of Justice, Presidencies of Chambers, Presidencies of Provincial Courts).

- **9 proposals** for posts with exclusive jurisdictional competence (Supreme Court Justices and Magistrates of the High Courts of Justice).

b) Technical positions in the General Council of the Judiciary

Regarding internal appointments of Council staff, we have generalized the celebration of previously unadministered examinations. There were 17 specific proposals for these appointments.

c) Reserve judges and replacement judges

Given the complexity and enormous activity involved in the General Council of the Judiciary and the governing chambers of the High Courts of Justice (they receive approximately 5,000 requests per day), the Reglamento de la Carrera Judicial (Judicial Profession Rules) has been modified in order to introduce the possibility of an annual extension for these appointments, with a maximum of two extensions and upon a suitability report from the governing chambers.

In the two existing procedures for the appointment of reserve judges and replacement judges (public competitive examination and emergency procedure) 36 judges emeritus, 317 reserve judges and 1,279 replacement judges have been appointed.

- Recognition of merits

Regarding knowledge of co-official languages or special civil or regional law, 180 requests from members of the legal profession (41 concerning knowledge of a language and 139 concerning special or regional law) and 25 requests from law students were examined on the basis of preferential merit for filling vacant posts.

- Legal profession prizes, distinctions and awards

Once again, the "Premio Rafael Martinez Emperador" contest was held. The corresponding proposals were sent to the Ministry of Justice for the concession of the Cross of San Raimundo de Penafort to several judges.



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C) DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

The main disciplinary activity can be broken down as follows:

2	prior information
,364	
1	informative proceedings
40	
3	disciplinary proceedings
2	

These figures alone shed light on the intense activity of the Council in this regard.

As for initiated proceedings, 15 cases were closed without penalties. In the 17 others, the following cases either involved imposing of a penalty or, where appropriate, were submitted to the plenary with proposals:

- 9 for gross misconduct, entailing suspension from duties without pay for between 1 and 18 months, forced transfer or a fine.
- 11 for major offences, entailing fines ranging from 300 to 6,000 euros.
- 2 warnings

In this period, the Third Chamber of the Supreme Court issued 220 rulings in regard to contentious-administrative appeals lodged against actions of the Committee, of which only 9 were positive, thus validating the actions of the Disciplinary Committee in this matter.

D) JUDICIAL INSPECTION

Due to its relation to the disciplinary activity of the Council, albeit much broader, we wish to call attention to the effort made in undertaking the reorganization and restructuring of the Inspection Service, emphasizing the following measures:

- The Head of the Department has been enhanced while the number and composition of Inspection Units have been reorganized, according first and foremost to two criteria: jurisdiction and territoriality. Territorial coordination for each autonomous community and another for each jurisdiction was also elaborated.



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- A new configuration is envisaged for the Reports Section with the aim of streamlining resolution of complaints and allegations and facilitating the flow of information by having Inspection Units process and resolve these matters themselves.
- A new Inspection Unit was created for monitoring adopted emergency plans, thereby strengthening coordination with the Commission on Modernization and Information.
- Procedures for the creation of the post of occupational risk prevention technician to assist in inspection activity in this area have been set into motion.

In regard to the visit programme to be implemented by the Inspection Service, the governing criteria for the selection of organs to be inspected are the specific situations of these bodies, with priority given to those with heavier workloads and greater pendency times.

The guidelines for carrying out inspections are presently being reviewed, with the aim of making inspection activity more efficient and standardized.

The Inspection and the Statistics Departments are working together to make remote inspections via computer possible.

The most important studies carried out by Inspection have been, on the one hand, measuring manageable workloads of courts and tribunals. Currently, the proposed model is under review.

On the other hand, specific studies have been prepared regarding the problem of the contentious-administrative and social affairs jurisdiction, as well as enforceable criminal courts. Lastly, a study on prevention of occupational risks in the activities of judges and magistrates as well as other judicial staff was completed.

E) COMMISSION ON EQUALITY

Regarding gender equality in the legal profession, the most noteworthy activities are a result of the momentum brought to the task by the Commission on Equality of the Council, a commission with legal status created by Judicial Power Organization Act 3/2007 regarding effective equality between men and women. These activities include:

- Implementing the transversality of the Commission on Equality in all the activity of the Council, thereby making effective the



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incorporation of the dimension of gender in each and every one of its actions.

- Approval of the document for the use of non-sexist language, disseminated to the presidencies of the High Courts and published on the Council's web page.

- Issuing reports on gender impact regarding regulatory modification of the legal profession and other judicial actions.

- Monitoring and promotion of the reconciliation of professional and family life.

- Encouragement in legislative matters regarding regulation of licenses and permits. The purpose of this is to increase to three years the reservation of places and calculation of seniority on personal grounds due to care for a minor child or relative and to eliminate forced promotions.

- Monitoring and analysis of data about the representation of women in the different categories of the legal profession and the policies of discretionary and governing responsibilities and management in the legal profession.

- Study of the opportunity of including a report on gender impact in Council proposals.

- Supervision and monitoring of educational courses in the area of gender equality.

- Creation of a database of teaching collaborators, for the purpose of encouraging the presence of women as directors or presenters of courses.

- Training proposals in the area of gender and content of the Equality Act aimed at staff serving the Council.

- Creation of an Equality website.

F) JUDICIAL SCHOOL

In the development of competences regarding selection and training of judicial staff, the three structural and activity areas of the Judicial School are: initial training, periodic training and selection.

Initial Training

This period entails the training of class 60 and 61 of the legal profession.



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- As a new feature, regarding the abovementioned educational plan, content related to crimes against the environment and domestic, gender and criminal violence has been enhanced.
- For the first time, periodic monitoring reports on apprentice judges exist, with the aim of introducing more rigour in supervised sessions.
- Another new pedagogical tool is the creation of the forum of supervised sessions on the extranet of the Judicial School, participation being mandatory. Its fundamental objective is open debate among apprentice judges, tutors and professors regarding civil and criminal matters that arise in the course of supervised sessions.
- In the area of external and institutional relations, the School has bolstered the Programa Aula IberoAmericana (Ibero-American Classroom Programme) and the activities of the European Judicial Training Network.

Periodic Training

- The concept of continuous training (meaning, an overall action) tends to part ways with traditional training concepts. Thus, the current Council, since its taking up office, has introduced the objective of creating a new model of periodic training in the legal profession.
- An example is the priority given to problems in interpretation, argumentation and legal ethics, along with the obligation of imparting specific training regarding equality, non-discrimination on the basis of gender and gender-based violence, as well as remote training in community law and languages.
- The requirement of high standards of quality in the training process, adapting training to the real needs of the legal profession, has deepened.
- The incorporation of other spheres of legal professionals (public prosecutors, lawyers, universities, notaries) into the training plans has been promoted, as we believe the didactic and practical contribution of other professionals enriches the stock-in-trade of jurisdictional activity.
- That management and delivery of papers be governed by objective and transparent criteria corresponding to strictly educational profiles, such as professional qualification and suitability, has also been taken up.
- Guaranteeing the reconciliation of professional and family life with other training activities is also sought, granting more flexibility in the holding and reissuing of courses.



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Selection

- Regarding the selection of judges, the competitive entry process for 135 new students in the Judicial School, corresponding to the 61st class, and 74 new students in the Centre for Judicial Studies, corresponding to 49th class, has concluded.

- Meanwhile, a new selection process for the provision of 20 student places in the Judicial School, for subsequent access to the legal profession as judges, and 150 student places in the Centre for Judicial Studies, for subsequent admission into the legal profession as prosecutors, has begun.

- Regarding this exam, new features include the reconfiguration of sittings for persons with disabilities and the waiving of the second exercise of the subsequent exam for persons who have exceeded the average mark of the exercise or the tribunal.

- As for promotion and specialization of magistrates, the procedure for specialization exams for commercial courts has been developed.

G) STUDIES AND REPORTS

The responsibility of drafting of regulatory initiatives and proposals that the General Council agrees to formulate corresponds to the Council, through its Commission on Studies and Reports, as does the preparation of reports which this organ is required to issue regarding draft bills and other general provisions.

The Commission is also responsible for elaborating regulatory projects to be approved by the General Council and for carrying out all legal studies relating to queries raised by judicial or governmental organs and other authorities or institutions. In addition, it is responsible for the preparation of report proposals of the General Council of the Judiciary regarding claims of financial responsibility resulting from abnormal functioning of the justice system.

Prepared reports

on draft bills or bills and other general provisions (16 state and 10
6 autonomous)

relating to regulatory proposals



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on the basis of queries raised by judicial or governmental organs and
5 other authorities and institutions; and

regarding financial responsibility due to abnormal functioning of the
98 justice system (half were favourable)

Noteworthy:

- Some of the reports on draft bills are:
- Report on rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and social inclusion.
- Reform of the Penal Code
- Report on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary abortions.
- Report on reforming procedural legislation for the implementation of a new judicial office.

Regulatory Projects:

- Reform project of Rule 1/2005 of 15 September on accessory aspects of judicial actions and instruction project regarding rules for the registration of matters in procedural management systems.
- Modification of Rule 1/1995 of 7 June on the legal profession regarding permits and licences for the purpose of legal alignment with public employees. (Plenary agreement of the General Council of the Judiciary of 23 December 2008).
- Modification of Rule 1/1995 on the legal profession regarding regulation of forced promotions.
- Rule regarding provision of discretionary appointment posts.

H) INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The activity of the Council, represented by its members and technical organs, or by judges and magistrates designated for this purpose, has been intense in the area of international relations, both within the institutions in which it is represented and in work groups in



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which it participates, not to mention in consultancies, conferences, meetings, summits, protocol visits and events of a judicial nature.

Noteworthy among these institutional activities is the participation of the Council in the Ibero-American Judicial Summit, in which it holds the seat of the permanent secretariat, and the Network of Councils of Justice, in which we form part of both the Executive Board and Steering Committee, as well as different work groups.

In regard to international legal assistance, worth noting are:

- Provision of an average of 25 monthly instances of assistance to other courts, criminal matters predominating over civil ones.
- Work on the European Judicial Network, the European Civil and Commercial Network and IberRed.
- Continuation of the work carried out by the Spanish Network for International Judicial Cooperation (REJUE), in which, notably, the interactive handbook for international legal assistance has been prepared and implemented.
- Launch of the Spanish Network of Experts in European Union Law (REDUE) as technical support for judges and magistrates in everything concerning this legal sphere.
- Evaluation of the efficiency of the assistance. Certain deficiencies were detected, especially in regard to the effectiveness of letters rogatory for money laundering and organized crime.
- Travel of examining magistrates for the implementation of letters rogatory and EUROJUST coordination meetings.

2.- Regarding the objective of collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and autonomous communities towards joint and coherent action for substantial reform of the justice system:

A) MODERNIZATION AND INFORMATION

- Modernization of the justice system:

- Designed on the basis of the priority lines of action of the Immediate Action Plan for enhancement of the justice system adopted by the new Council.



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- Development of measures of the plan through collaborative work with all participating parties: Ministry, autonomous communities, other organs of the Council, High Courts of Justice and senior judges.

- New judicial office:

- Participation in work groups made up of the Ministry and autonomous communities for its implementation.
- Rule regarding Standardization of General Common Procedural Services, whose duties include registration and allocation, communication events and judicial assistance.

- Judicial staff and demarcation:

Works and studies:

- Territorial grouping of courts for hearing matters regarding the family and capacity of persons.
- Specialization of criminal courts in the matter of violence against women, upon the initiative of the Observatory against Domestic and Gender-Based Violence.
- Regarding the creation of Territorial Appointment Judges, finally included in the new additional law regarding implementation of the new judicial office.

- Application of new technologies (e-justice)

- Generalized use of computer programmes and applications through regulatory reform of the accessory aspects of judicial actions and instruction regarding rules for registration of matters in procedural management systems.
- Cooperation agreement among the Ministry of Justice, the Council and the Prosecutor General's Office for the establishment of the Legal Plan for Safety and Interoperability within the justice system, to which autonomous communities can adhere.
- Improvement of the *Punto Neutro Judicial* (Judicial Neutral Point), increasing the catalogue of services offered by judicial organs.



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- Gradual implementation of the governing management system of the High Courts of Justice for digital processing of files, meetings and agreements of governing chambers.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the autonomous communities, work has been done on the implementation of alarms in the computer systems of courts with competence in the area of gender violence regarding procedural acts that affect the safety of victims.
- In the area of judicial statistics, work has been carried out within the National Commission on Judicial Statistics towards enhancing statistical tools in terms of standardization and provision of data in real time.

B) REINFORCEMENT MEASURES FOR JUDICIAL ORGANS

*** CONTENTIOUS-ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION**

Judicial statistics showed a marked increase in contentious-administrative appeals brought before the chambers of the High Courts of Justice. This increased workload necessitated an emergency plan unique to this jurisdiction, consisting in a reinforcement involving 50 magistrates.

Numerous meetings with the heads of the organs of this jurisdiction were held to identify deficiencies or anomalies and propose organizational measures for their rectification.

On the basis of these meetings, a series of conclusions has been reached aimed at the exchange of "good practices" in the management and competence of the chambers, regarding registration of matters, improvement of the management system and external collaboration with other central or autonomous administrations.

*** social affairs jurisdiction**

With the aim of alleviating as much as possible the effects that the economic and financial crisis are having on these organs, and with the dramatic increase in the number of cases lodged and the consequent negative repercussions on effective protection of the rights of workers, due to existing or possible delays, the Council approved a plan or extraordinary reinforcement measure for the social affairs jurisdiction, whose main lines of actions have been:



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- 57% of Social Affairs Tribunals in 11 autonomous communities, which is where the greatest pendency is concentrated, are affected.
- The reinforcement will take place with the appointment of 31 magistrates and replacement judges and secondments without relief from office.
- The reinforcement measure will have a duration of six months and will begin in some cases on 1 November and in others on 1 January.
- The purpose of the measure is the celebration of trials and passing of definitive resolutions in proceedings due to dismissal and, alternatively, could be made widespread in quantitative claims related to dismissals and other preferential matters regarding the interests of workers.

*** COMMERCIAL COURT**

The exponential increase in the number of commercial cases lodged in commercial courts and first instance courts with commercial jurisdiction resulted in the elaboration of a specific support plan for these bodies made up of a series of transversal measures and adapted to the different situations and problems. Worth noting are:

- the creation of new judicial units with exclusive and exclusionary competence in the commercial jurisdiction: by 1 January 2009, 40 commercial courts had been created and equipped, while 15 other organs were added over the course of the present year, envisaging the putting into service of 9 units between the months of April and July due to existing needs
- the creation of additional courts, through duplication of pre-existing judicial units, with judges, court clerks and staff
- the designation of reinforcement judges, secondment with or without relief from office or the replacement scheme
- the proposal to the administration with competence in the matter of staff reinforcement of the incorporation of new staff members and extensions of working hours
- creation of general common services for commercial courts



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- elaboration and implementation of protocols for processing and communications

The measures aforementioned affected 95% of the commercial courts and 50% of courts with shared competence (144 measures in less than year). The result was extremely positive, allowing for the offering of effective judicial protection despite the massive increase in the amount of work related to compulsory and voluntary examinations, both in regard to their number, their work-related and economic importance, and their impact.

In fact, the success of the abovementioned special reinforcement plan has given rise to the elaboration of a second plan, currently on the verge of completion, likely to be adopted in December.

Also, specialization in the commercial jurisdiction has been bolstered through two channels:

- yearly allocation of posts in order to guarantee adequate coverage of staff

- promotion of legislative reforms aimed at clarifying access to second instance

3.- In relation to society: transparent justice accessible to citizens

1.- INTRAJUDICIAL MEDIATION

While the Intrajudicial Mediation Project, in its two areas of work (criminal and civil), was already set into motion during the previous mandate, the Modernization Plan for the justice system, in its first phase, includes a reference to civil and criminal mediation as an effective tool for dispute resolution incorporated into the process itself. This concrete aspect of the Plan is within the context of substantive and procedural reforms which the Council has proposed with the aim of providing quicker solutions to justice.

Some of the measures are:

- Creation of a space for civil and criminal mediation on the extranet for judges and magistrates, as well as on the website open to the general public, with available information and materials, action protocols, judicial organs participating in the mediation programme, notices, conclusions of seminars and meetings, etc.



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- Launch of a database and system which compiles information about civil and criminal matters resulting from mediation by different courts.

- While at the end of the year we will have a general panorama of the movement of cases, as well as whether they concluded with an agreement or not, types of violations and the duration of procedures, we can say in advance that 133 courts are incorporated in the criminal mediation programme and 71 in the civil programme, and that the most progressive communities in this matter are Catalonia and the Basque Country.

- The signing of agreements with different territorial administrations for infrastructure and support of mediation services within their geographical area in order to facilitate use of this alternative tool for dispute resolution in judicial procedures is being promoted.

2.- OBSERVATORY AGAINST DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The main activities of the Observatory have been:

Report on the situation of material and human resources in courts of violence against women,

- Participation in the State Observatory on Violence against Women.

- Dissemination of statistical data about the activity of judicial organs with competence in this matter.

- Maintenance of a virtual forum for communication and exchange of criteria among heads of judicial organs.

- Meetings and work with a group of experts in this area for analysis of the sentences passed by jury courts and provincial courts with the aim of preparing the first study on the application of the comprehensive law by Spanish courts.

- Promotion of legislation in two areas:

- the creation of courts specializing in violence against women that group together two or more judicial districts



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- compulsory training in gender-based violence for individuals acceding to positions of leadership of these courts

3.- CITIZENS' ADVICE SERVICE

Since the beginning of this year, citizens have made 11,839 claims, complaints and suggestions.

Compared with previous years, current data indicates a decrease in the overall number of claims.

75% of the claims refer to the operation of courts and tribunals; 13% to disagreement with a judicial decision; 7% to matters alien to the justice system or unclassifiable; while the remaining 5% consist of requests for information, suggestions for improvement and gratitude for assistance received.

Among matters directly affecting the operation of courts and tribunals, almost half (46%) refer to Civil Registers.

Following the criteria of the Fundamental Rights of Citizens party to Legal Proceedings, the largest number of claims received correspond to the following rights:

- attentive justice system (44% of the claims)
- quicker, more technologically advanced justice system (43% of the complaints)
- right to a transparent justice system (8% of the claims)

Together, these three rights represent 95% of the claims that affect the content of the aforementioned " Fundamental Rights".

4.-COMMUNICATION

The communication policy of the Council is informed by transparency and outreach to society.

To this end, we have approved a Communications Framework Plan. The goal of the Plan is for Spanish citizens to view judicial reality and the work of judges and magistrates positively.



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The communications offices of the High Courts of Justice have been enhanced and the possibility of incorporating qualified trainees in the aforesaid offices agreed to with different press associations.

Work on designing the new website of the Council, a project promoted and developed by the Council's JUDICIAL DOCUMENT CENTRE, is in a very advanced stage.

In the coming months, a communications plan with the slogan, "La justicia, a tu servicio" ("Justice, at your service"), which will include diverse actions, will be implemented.

We cannot fail to point out that the budgetary scenario of all this activity undertaken by the Council in the first year of its mandate included, first and foremost, the redefinition of budgetary objectives for 2009, with the promotion of austere practices in their implementation.

In line with this, the budget proposal for 2010 has been prepared on the basis of the need of justifying budgetary allocations according to the objectives of each service, without relying on purely incremental criteria and without losing sight of the necessary austerity recommended by the current economic climate.

The implementation of the 2009 Budget, on 15 September, was 74%.

In this period, a total of 41 contracts have been awarded, for a total amount of nearly 7 million Euros.

Among them, the budgetary effort involved in launching a new application for judicial staff bears mentioning: the new legislation and case law database, designed and developed by CENDOJ, represents a valuable technical support tool in the service of jurisdictional tasks.

We believe the time for the justice system is now. While the Council is aware that deficiencies that have accumulated for decades cannot be rectified in a matter of years, it is nonetheless essential that the justice system be given the resources it needs to operate efficiently in the 21st century, allowing it to become a more transparent authority and one closer to citizens.