

## New IT system links judiciary

### The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

#### PHARE 2000/CARDS

##### Country

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

##### Implementation period

November 2002-  
February 2005

##### Funding

€2 million

##### Results.

Installation and linking of a new software system in the judiciary.  
Delivery of technical hardware.  
Staff training in software applications.

##### Coordinators

Ministry of Justice

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##### Partners

European Agency for Reconstruction  
EC Delegation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

#### Courts system overburdened

A report commissioned by the EU in 2002 indicated that the annual caseload per judge in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was approximately 800, as compared to a maximum of 300 in the EU. Needless to say, the judiciary struggles to keep its courts system functioning under such a heavy workload and there is a considerable backlog of cases.

Slow and inefficient courts do not inspire public confidence in the judiciary either. So as part of a broader plan to ease the courts' burden and regenerate public trust in the rule of law, the European Agency for Reconstruction is coordinating the installation of a new IT system into the country's judiciary that will considerably accelerate the case management process. It will also serve to increase communication between courts, by enabling a more regular and timely flow of information between them.

#### Speeding up the case management process

The first phase of the project has already been completed and involved the installation of special software, called ICIS (Integrated Court Information System), in the Primary, Appellate and Supreme Court of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Written by local software companies, it enables users to archive legal cases, prepare and deliver verdicts, and register claims through computerised databases.

Since its installation, more software has been developed which is now being set up in the rest of the country's judicial network, namely the Public Prosecution Office, the Republic Court Council (in charge of the constitutional regulations related to court authority), the Prison Administration and the Courts. A large amount of technical hardware – computers and printers in particular - needed to support this new system has been bought and delivered by the EU too.

#### Training staff in new technology

In order to allow that the system will continue to operate more efficiently in future, the project is complementing the software rollout with the training of users, system administrators and other employees within the Courts on its use. Training is also being given on the financial aspects of the computerisation process to appropriate personnel.

### **A small idea that grew into a national network**

The project first took shape following a study by IT experts on the technology needs of the legal system. It was later expanded to include the idea of a fully 'connected' judiciary IT system, before being submitted by the Ministry of Justice to the European Agency for Reconstruction and accepted. According to feedback so far, the system and training are being well received, and the judiciary's efficiency gradually improved.