

The judiciary is a guarantor of the Rule of law. It is one of the three powers of any democratic State.

Judges ensure the right of everyone to a fair trial. Whether it is about civil rights and obligations, administrative cases or criminal charges.

There is no fair trial without the independence of the judge.

Judicial independence is not a privilege serving the personal interest of judges.

Judicial independence is provided for the Rule of law and the interest of any person asking for an impartial justice.

All institutions and authorities, whether national or international, must respect, protect and defend that independence.

As citizens we must not accept political interference or any pressure put on judges or courts. Whether it is a national court or an international or supranational court.

We might not agree with a certain decision. We shall always be open to discussion.

But putting pressure on judges, attacking them or even their families is not acceptable.

You might have noticed that the speakers did not mention some of the names of the judges we were talking about. There is a reason for this. We do not want to expose them to even more attacks and pressure. We are concerned about the possible reactions these judges might face, when we mention not only their cases but also their names.

This tells a lot. It is a sign, a very sad sign. It shows how far this has already gone. We need to stop this. We must defend the judges' independence.

Because maybe this time it is someone else's case, maybe you even agree with the criticism. But next time it might be you, it might be your case that is under

discussion. You want to have a fair trial, you do not want the judge to be under pressure when deciding your case.

It is in the interest of the whole society in any democratic state to defend the independence of the judiciary.

It is our obligation.

Because defending judges and their independence means defending democracy and defending human rights.