

ON THE NECESSITY OF INITIATING CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS. EXTRA-PROCEDURAL EFFECTS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the specific procedural moments at which the prosecutor orders the initiation of criminal proceedings, taking into account the practice of criminal prosecution, and taking into account the definition of the legal action as an indispensable condition for the court to exercise its jurisdiction. The timing of the initiation of criminal proceedings can be understood by recognizing the procedural necessity of the indictment, a requirement which completes the set of conditions laid down in the law of criminal procedure for the initiation of criminal proceedings. It should also be noted that the effects of initiating criminal proceedings in certain circumstances go beyond the criminal proceedings, as the indictment is the basis for other provisions, with important temporary consequences in certain professions, such as temporary relocation, suspension of the decision on the application for a service pension or payment of a service pension, suspension from office.

Keywords: *criminal proceedings, prosecutor, prosecution, legal action, indictment, temporary removal, suspension.*

1. Specifically, when and why is criminal action initiated?

Regarding the initiation of criminal action, the current Code of Criminal Procedure (hereinafter, C. pr. pen.) does not provide detailed regulations. We mention the provisions of art. 14 para. (2) C. pr. pen., according to which *criminal action is initiated by the indictment act provided by law*¹. Furthermore, according to art. 15 C. pr. pen., *criminal action is initiated (...) when there is evidence that reasonably suggests that a person has committed a crime and there are no cases that prevent the initiation...*

With the same intention of ensuring the normative framework for the provision of initiating criminal action, the legislator provided, in art. 7 para. (1) C. pr. pen., that criminal action is initiated obligatorily, ex officio, by the prosecutor *when there is evidence that suggests the commission of a crime and there is no legal cause to prevent it*, respectively in art. 309 para. (1) C. pr. pen., according to which criminal action is initiated *by the prosecutor, by prosecutorial order, during the criminal investigation, when it is found that there is evidence that a person has committed a crime and there is none of the impediments provided in art. 16 para. (1).*

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¹ The discussed norm reproduces the content of art. 9 para. (2) of the previous Code of Criminal Procedure, which came into force on January 1, 1969.

After the entry into force of the current Code of Criminal Procedure, we highlighted the non-uniform regulation of the initiation of criminal action². Thus, with reference to the relevance of the evidence administered in the file, each legal text proposes different premises. From the content of art. 15 C. pr. pen. it results that the evidence must be able to lead to the formulation of a *reasonable assumption* that a person has committed the crime, while in art. 309 para. (1) C. pr. pen. it is specified that the evidence administered must show that a person has committed the crime, the legislator abandoning the expression “reasonable assumption.” This formulation is also present in the content of art. 7 para. (1) C. pr. pen.

Regarding the *in personam* character, among the 3 norms under analysis, art. 7 para. (1) C. pr. pen. differs by omitting references to the commission of the crime by a known, determined person. Of course, in the vast majority of cases, when there is evidence that suggests the commission of a crime, it is assumed that the act was committed by a person, even if that person has not been identified. For example, the discovery of a corpse with stab wounds allows the hypothesis of a human action, the crime being obviously committed by a

certain person. However, the differentiation noted is that in art. 15 C. pr. pen., respectively art. 309 para. (1) C. pr. pen., the reference is made to the commission of the crime by a determined person, whose identity is known to the criminal investigation bodies.

Beyond these discrepancies, the above-mentioned procedural criminal provisions allow us to formulate, in agreement with opinions expressed in the specialized literature³, the following conclusions: the provision for initiating criminal action is carried out by the prosecutor, during the criminal investigation, through an indictment act (prosecutorial order), when it is assessed that there is evidence in the criminal investigation file that a determined person has committed a crime and if there is none of the impediments provided in art. 16 para. (1) C. pr. pen.

As an exceptional situation, by adopting a procedure established in Romanian legislation since the first modern Code of Criminal Procedure⁴, criminal action can also be initiated during the trial phase, exclusively by the prosecutor. Thus, according to art. 360 C. pr. pen., if a criminal act is committed during the hearing, if the

² I. Neagu, M. Damaschin, *Tratat de procedură penală. Partea generală*, Universul Juridic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014, pp. 260-261.

³ See, in this regard, Gr. Gr. Theodoru, *Tratat de drept procesual penal, 3rd edition*, Hamangiu Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, p. 171; Gh. Mateuț, *Procedură penală. Partea generală*, Universul Juridic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019, p. 129; A. Crișu, *Drept procesual penal, 2nd edition*, Hamangiu Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011, pp. 137-138; A.-V. Iugan, *Procedură penală. Partea generală*, C.H. Beck Publishing House, Bucharest, 2023, pp. 143-144. Similarly, in a different formulation, V. Dongoroz, in V. Dongoroz, S. Kahane, G. Antoniu, C. Bulai, N. Iliescu, R. Stănoiu, *Explicații teoretice ale Codului de procedură penală român. Partea generală, vol. V, 2nd edition*, Romanian Academy Publishing House, All Beck Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 63-64.

⁴ According to art. 177 of the Code of Criminal Procedure from December 2, 1864 (respectively art. 517-519), “If a correctional offense is committed in the place and during the hearing, the president will make a report about the incident, will listen to the accused and the witnesses, and the court will apply, without leaving the place, the penalties prescribed by law. This provision will apply to correctional offenses committed in the place and time of the hearings of the courts of appeal, and even the hearings of the courts when judging civil cases, the convicted person having the right to appeal against that sentence.” The procedure for finding audience offenses was also regulated in the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1936 (art. 628-629), respectively the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1968 (art. 299).

prosecutor participates in the trial, they can declare that they are starting the criminal investigation and initiating criminal action⁵. In the doctrine, for this hypothesis, it is mentioned that the initiation of criminal action is done by the prosecutor's verbal declaration, a manifestation of will recorded in the hearing minutes.

Under these conditions, during teaching activities, I have noted the difficulties in understanding "criminal action," an eminently abstract concept derived from "legal action," which in turn generates difficulties in assimilation. However, during the criminal investigation, when exactly is criminal action initiated? And why? For which, adopting a pragmatic definition of legal action, namely "the necessary condition for a court to exercise its jurisdictional duties⁶," I considered a supplementary requirement pertinent, namely *the necessity of initiating criminal action*⁷. Thus, the prosecutor's provision for initiating criminal action must be based on evidence that shows that a determined person has committed a crime and there is no impediment to the indictment act and, equally important, it must be necessary for the exercise of jurisdictional duties by a court.

Next, we will try to illustrate with concrete practical hypotheses the cumulative fulfilment of these requirements of the indictment act.

In a first hypothetical case, not very common in criminal investigation practice but relevant for the purpose of this study, let's assume that the criminal investigation is conducted against a suspect without criminal action being initiated. Without representing an expressly regulated hypothesis by law, compared to the previous Code of Criminal Procedure⁸, conducting the criminal investigation without criminal action being initiated is perfectly possible. The issuance by the prosecutor of the provision to continue the criminal investigation signifies the existence in the case file of evidence for the accusation showing the commission of the crime by the suspect and the absence of any of the impediments provided in art. 16 C. pr. pen. However, criminal action is not initiated for various reasons (for example, the prosecutor considers that no preventive measure against the perpetrator is necessary). At the end of the criminal investigation, if it is found that the perpetrator should be sent to trial, we will be in the presence of the fourth condition, *the necessity of initiating criminal action*, determined by the indictment. We consider that the person sent to trial must obligatorily have the procedural status of the accused. In other words, the necessity of the indictment act derives from the above definition of criminal action, the court being unable to exercise its jurisdictional duties, consisting mainly of resolving the criminal action, in the absence of the indictment

⁵ The procedure is exceptional, having a low incidence of application in the practice of the criminal process. Much more frequent is the application by the prosecutor of the provisions of art. 292 C. pr. pen. Thus, for example, in the case of finding the commission of an audience offense consisting of false testimony, the prosecutor will declare that they are acting ex officio, requesting the court to forward the hearing minutes and the witness's statement to the competent prosecutor's office.

⁶ R. Merle, A. Vitu, *Traité de droit criminel*, Cujas Publishing House, Paris, p. 651 *apud* I. Neagu, *Tratat de procedură penală*, Pro Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 159.

⁷ M. Damaschin, *Drept procesual penal. Partea generală*, Universul Juridic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, pp. 143-148.

⁸ We mention §1 "Investigation without initiating criminal action" (art. 255-257) from Section VII, "Termination of the criminal investigation," Chapter IV, "Conducting the criminal investigation," Title I, "Criminal investigation" from the Special Part of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1968.

provision. Therefore, the anticipation of the moment of indictment and, implicitly, the beginning of the trial function, determines the cumulative fulfillment of the 4 indispensable conditions for initiating criminal action at the end of the criminal investigation phase.

In a second hypothesis, we will assume that the criminal investigation bodies have been notified of the commission of a serious crime (for example, murder), without information about the perpetrator's identity (the so-called AN files, "with an unknown author"). Immediately after the notification, respectively the provision to start the criminal investigation, significant evidence for the accusation will be administered, from which a very probable commission of the murder will result. At the same procedural moment, it can be reasonably assumed that there are no impediments regarding the initiation or exercise of criminal action. At the same time, given the seriousness of the crime, the discovery of the perpetrator's identity would be followed by the initiation of the preventive deprivation of liberty procedure, in which the judge of rights and freedoms would be called to exercise their jurisdictional duties to take a preventive measure. Therefore, even at the beginning of the criminal investigation, the administered evidence has the ability to lead to the finding of the existence of three requirements for initiating criminal action, namely the commission of a crime, the absence of impediments provided in art. 16 C. pr. pen., and the necessity of initiating criminal action. However, the condition regarding the establishment of the perpetrator's identity is missing, which prevents the issuance of the prosecutorial order for initiating criminal action. In these circumstances, criminal action can be initiated later, during the criminal investigation, at the moment of discovering the perpetrator's identity.

In a third hypothetical situation, we will assume that following the flagrant commission of a serious crime, the criminal investigation bodies manage to gather evidence showing the commission of the crime by a certain person, without being able to retain the existence of any of the cases provided in art. 16 C. pr. pen. In this scenario (which can be placed even at the beginning of the criminal investigation or at a considerable distance in time, in which case the criminal investigation will have been conducted in rem, only regarding a certain reported act), it will be found that the condition of the necessity of initiating criminal action is met, as the practice of the criminal investigation bodies in these cases is characterized by the need to take preventive measures against the accused. And, for the judge of rights and freedoms to exercise the attributes subsumed under the function *jurisdictio*, analysing the opportunity of preventive arrest or house arrest (or judicial control), a prior initiation of criminal action by the prosecutor is necessary.

Of course, there are procedural criminal regulations, which we consider derogatory from those presented above, which, during the criminal investigation, allow the judge to exercise jurisdictional duties in the absence of criminal action. As in other certain cases, the indictment represents a prerequisite for the prosecutor to issue certain procedural acts. Thus, in exemplifying the first situation, the judge of rights and freedoms is not conditioned by the initiation of criminal action to order technical surveillance or to authorize the conduct of home, computer searches, etc. Practically, in these cases, the Romanian legislator offers the judge, in exercising the function of disposition over rights and freedoms, the possibility to decide on the restriction of certain fundamental rights and freedoms without a criminal accusation

being formulated against the presumed perpetrator of the crime⁹. Of course, these regulations are justified by the imperative of finding the truth in the criminal process, this objective having precedence over fundamental procedural rights, such as the right to defence or even the presumption of innocence. Also, in exemplifying contrary hypotheses, sometimes criminal action is a necessary prerequisite for the prosecutor to order judicial control or judicial control on bail. Thus, if the administered evidence leads to the conclusion of placing the perpetrator under judicial control, the fourth condition presented in this study, *the necessity of initiating criminal action so that the court (in a broad sense) can exercise its jurisdiction, becomes the necessity of initiating criminal action so that the prosecutor can decide on certain fundamental rights and freedoms of the person.*

For these reasons, we consider that a pragmatic understanding of the provision for initiating criminal action during the criminal investigation involves considering the necessary character of the indictment act, either for the continuation of the criminal process with the trial phase or for the judge to exercise the function of disposition over the fundamental rights and freedoms of the person during the criminal investigation phase.

2. Extra-procedural consequences of initiating criminal action

2.1. Preliminary remarks

In the criminal procedural plan, the initiation of criminal action by the

prosecutor allows for the criminal liability of the accused and represents, at the same time, an official notification of the accused regarding the criminal charge brought against them. As we have seen above, the initiation of criminal action creates the necessary procedural framework for the preliminary chamber judge/court to exercise the three specific judicial functions, namely, the function of disposition over the fundamental rights and freedoms of the person during the criminal investigation phase, the function of verifying the legality of sending or not sending to trial, and the function of judgment.

However, there are also extra-procedural effects of initiating criminal action. Without analysing the provisions of Law no. 290/2004 regarding the criminal record¹⁰ (a normative act that regulates the provisional notation in the criminal record organized at police structures of the provision for initiating criminal action against individuals or legal entities in all criminal cases), we will present the consequences of the indictment act in specific situations of committing crimes by persons with certain qualities, as follows: public officials, police officers, prison police officers, and magistrates (judges and prosecutors).

⁹ Both the provision to continue the criminal investigation against the suspect and the provision to initiate criminal action can be considered practical ways in which the criminal investigation bodies formulate the criminal accusation against the perpetrator.

¹⁰ Republished in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 777 of November 13, 2009.

2.2. Status of public officials

In the first version of the Public Officials Statute, adopted in 1999¹¹, according to art. 79, suspension from office could be ordered in the event of initiating criminal proceedings against the public official for crimes committed during service or in connection with the duties of the public office they hold or for other crimes that make them incompatible with the public office they hold. We can observe that suspension from office operated for the simple provision of initiating criminal proceedings, a procedural act inferior to the indictment act in terms of the standard of proof.

Subsequently, in 2003, following the amendment of the Public Officials Statute by Law no. 161¹², suspension from office of the public official operated in the case of initiating criminal action for committing one of the crimes provided by law (crimes against humanity, against the state or authority, service-related crimes, crimes that obstruct justice, forgery, or corruption offenses), according to art. 74 para. (2). At this point in the regulation, the indictment act of the public official directly affected their career. Upon republication in 2004¹³, a new amendment to the regime of automatic suspension of the public official's service relationships occurred, applicable, among other things, in the event of preventive arrest, abandoning the effect of automatic suspension for the hypothesis of initiating

criminal action. In 2013¹⁴, two new hypotheses of suspension of service relationships were introduced, namely placing the public official under house arrest and sending to trial for committing a crime against humanity, against the state or authority, service-related crimes, crimes that obstruct justice, forgery, or corruption offenses, etc. Additionally, the public official's statute was supplemented with a new regulation, consisting of the mandatory temporary transfer of the public official in the event of initiating criminal action against them, provided that it is found that the accused could influence the criminal investigation.

In the current form of the Public Officials Statute¹⁵, the institution of the temporary transfer of the public official has been maintained, under the conditions of art. 501 para. (3): "from the moment of initiating criminal action, if the public official can influence the investigation, the person with the authority to appoint to the public office is obliged to order the temporary transfer of the public official within the authority or public institution or within another non-legal entity structure of the authority or public institution. The measure is ordered for the entire duration during which the public official can influence the investigation." If, after the initiation of criminal action, the public official is preventively arrested, placed under house arrest, or under judicial control (if obligations have been imposed that prevent them from performing their

¹¹ Adopted by Law no. 188 of December 8, 1999, regarding the Statute of Public Officials, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 600 of December 8, 1999.

¹² Law no. 161 of April 19, 2003, regarding some measures to ensure transparency in the exercise of public dignities, public functions, and in the business environment, preventing and sanctioning corruption, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 279 of April 21, 2003.

¹³ Official Gazette of Romania no. 251 of March 22, 2004.

¹⁴ See Law no. 255/2013 for the implementation of Law no. 135/2010 regarding the Code of Criminal Procedure and for the amendment and completion of some normative acts containing criminal procedural provisions, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 515 of August 14, 2013.

¹⁵ Adopted by Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57 of July 3, 2019, regarding the Administrative Code, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 555 of July 5, 2019.

duties), the service relationships are automatically suspended, according to art. 513 para. (1) letter e) of the Public Officials Statute. The same scenario is regulated for the hypothesis of sending the public official to trial, but only for certain crimes¹⁶.

2.3. Status of the Police Officer

In the initial version of the Police Officer Statute, adopted in 2002¹⁷, a specific institution was regulated, *the availability*, characterized by the partial suspension of service duties, which became applicable in the case of the provisions of art. 65 para. (2), “during the criminal investigation and trial” of the police officer. *Suspension from office*, a distinct institution, became applicable exclusively in the hypothesis of ordering preventive arrest (a provision that presupposed the prior initiation of criminal action).

In 2003, following the amendments made by Government Emergency Ordinance no. 89¹⁸, the provision for initiating criminal action against a police officer for committing a crime against peace and humanity, against the state or authority, service-related crimes, crimes that obstruct justice, forgery, or corruption offenses or any other intentional crime that made them incompatible with the exercise of the police officer’s function determined their suspension from office. Thus, the indictment of a police officer under these conditions

generated significant extra-procedural effects, during the suspension, the police officer could no longer benefit from any of the rights provided in the Statute, being obliged to hand over their weapon, badge, and insignia.

In 2013, a new legislative amendment intervened, the indictment of the police officer generating their availability. Thus, as a consequence of the amendments made by Law no. 255, art. 65 para. (2) of the Police Officer Statute acquired the following content: “The police officer against whom criminal action has been initiated is made available, except in cases where criminal action has been initiated for a culpable offense and it is considered that this does not affect the prestige of the profession”¹⁹.

Currently, following Government Emergency Ordinance no. 21/2016²⁰, the initiation of criminal action against a police officer, except in cases where criminal action has been initiated for a culpable offense not committed in connection with the service, generates the effect of making the police officer available, according to art. 27²¹ para. (2) of the Police Officer Statute. During the availability period, the police officer performs tasks and duties established in writing by the unit head, which do not impede the proper conduct of the criminal

¹⁶ Crimes against humanity, against the state or authority, corruption or service-related crimes, crimes that obstruct justice, forgery offenses, or intentional crimes that would make the public official incompatible with the exercise of the public function, except in cases of rehabilitation, post-conviction amnesty, or decriminalization of the act.

¹⁷ Law no. 360 of June 6, 2002, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 440 of June 24, 2002.

¹⁸ Published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 440 of June 24, 2002.

¹⁹ Regarding the phrase “crimes that harm the prestige of the profession,” we mention the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, which found this provision unconstitutional, leading to its removal from legislation (see C.C.R., dec. no. 225/2017, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 468 of June 22, 2017).

²⁰ Published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 459 of June 21, 2016.

²¹ Adopted by Law no. 146 of July 22, 2019, regarding the status of border police officers, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 631 of July 30, 2019.

process, according to art. 27²² para. (2) and (2) of the Police Officer Statute. Regarding the suspension of the police officer, this measure is ordered, among other things, in the case of preventive arrest, house arrest, or judicial control or judicial control on bail, if the prohibition of exercising the profession has been ordered, procedural hypotheses that involve the prior indictment of the police officer (art. 27²³ of the Police Officer Statute). In conclusion, the initiation of criminal action against a police officer determines their availability under the law, while the initiation of criminal action, followed by the taking of preventive measures, leads to the automatic suspension of the police officer.

2.4. Status of the Prison Police Officer

Similarly to the Police Officer Statute, the initiation of criminal action against a prison police officer determines their availability, in which case they perform only those tasks and duties established in writing by the unit head and benefit from the monetary rights corresponding to their professional rank, at the base level, and other rights provided by law [art. 128 para. (2) of the Prison Police Officer Statute²⁴]. If the indictment provision is followed by preventive arrest, house arrest, or judicial control (if the accused has been imposed the obligation not to exercise the profession or other measures that prevent the exercise of

professional duties), the prison police officer is suspended from office.

2.5. Status of Judges and Prosecutors

The legal framework dedicated to the career of magistrates has been noted from the beginning (after 1989) for establishing strict rules applicable in the hypothesis of indicting judges and prosecutors. In this regard, according to art. 76 para. (2) of Law no. 92/1992 for judicial organization²⁵, “when criminal action is initiated against a magistrate, they will be suspended from office until the final decision.” The legal provision, in force until 2004, accompanied the indictment act with particularly harmful professional consequences for the magistrate in question (cessation of salary rights, loss of seniority in the judiciary), suspension from office could be maintained for a significant period.

Through the Statute of Judges and Prosecutors adopted in 2004²⁶, the hypothesis of suspension from office in the case of initiating criminal action was maintained, without distinctions between the different crimes that could be imputed to the judge or prosecutor magistrate or the form of guilt with which these acts would have been committed, until 2013. Thus, following the amendments made by Law no. 255, the effect of suspension from office following the initiation of criminal action was abandoned, other legal hypotheses being

²² See Law no. 303/2004 regarding the status of magistrates (name changed in 2005 to “status of judges and prosecutors”), published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 576 of June 29, 2004.

²³ The regulation was also included in the Statute of Clerks and other categories of personnel holding specialized positions within the courts, the prosecutor’s offices attached to them, and the National Institute of Forensic Expertise (Law no. 11/2024, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 26 of January 12, 2024).

²⁴ Adopted by Law no. 146 of July 22, 2019, regarding the status of border police officers, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 631 of July 30, 2019.

²⁵ Law no. 92/1992 for judicial organization was published in Official Gazette of Romania no. 197 of August 4, 1992.

²⁶ See Law no. 303/2004 regarding the status of magistrates (name changed in 2005 to “status of judges and prosecutors”), published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 576 of June 29, 2004.

regulated (sending to criminal trial or ordering a preventive deprivation of liberty measure or placing under judicial control accompanied by the obligation not to exercise the profession in which the act was committed).

This professional regime is maintained through the current statute of judges and prosecutors, adopted in 2022²⁷, the initiation of criminal action no longer having direct and immediate consequences on the magistrate's career. However, it should be noted that the indictment act of a magistrate still generates extra-procedural effects. Thus, according to art. 214 para. (2) related to para. (1) of the Statute of Judges and Prosecutors, the initiation of criminal action for a corruption offense, an offense assimilated to corruption offenses, a service-related offense, or an offense related to these or an offense against the administration of justice automatically attracts either the suspension of the resolution of the service pension request or the suspension of the payment of the service pension²⁸.

At the end of this study, we also mention the possible effects of initiating criminal action against defendants who hold the status of members of the Competition Council. In this regard, according to art. 15 para. (10) of Law no. 21/1996²⁹, from the date of initiating criminal action, the members of the Competition Council can be suspended from office by Parliament.

5. Summary Conclusions

The idea of this study arose from the pedagogical difficulties of explaining

criminal action (an abstract concept, difficult to understand, susceptible to existing in a virtual manner without the need for a criminal file, but also effectively during the criminal process). By reviewing the concrete procedural moments in which the prosecutor orders the initiation of criminal action, considering the practice of criminal investigation and, essentially (in the authors' opinion), taking into account the definition of legal action as an indispensable condition for the court to exercise its jurisdiction, we consider that the moment of initiating criminal action can be understood by recognizing the procedural necessity of the indictment act, a requirement that completes the set of conditions provided in the criminal procedural law for initiating criminal action. Additionally, we have found that the effects of initiating criminal action exceed, in certain circumstances, the framework of the criminal process, the indictment provision representing the basis for other provisions, having significant temporary consequences within certain professions: the temporary transfer of the public official, the availability of the police officer, respectively the prison police officer, the suspension of the resolution of the service pension request, or the suspension of the payment of the service pension for judges, prosecutors, clerks, or other categories of personnel holding specialized positions within the courts, the prosecutor's offices attached to them, and the National Institute of Forensic Expertise, respectively the possibility of suspending the members of the Competition Council from office.

²⁷ See Law no. 303/2022 regarding the status of judges and prosecutors, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 1102 of November 16, 2022.

²⁸ The regulation was also included in the Statute of Clerks and other categories of personnel holding specialized positions within the courts, the prosecutor's offices attached to them, and the National Institute of Forensic Expertise (Law no. 11/2024, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 26 of January 12, 2024).

²⁹ Law no. 21/1996 of competition was republished in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 153 of February 29, 2016.

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