**Rules on the Activity of the National Judicial Network for International Cooperation in Criminal Cases**

**in the Republic of Bulgaria**

**І. Main goal**

The National Judicial Network for international cooperation in criminal matters aims to assist the legal authorities in the effective preparation, sending and execution of requests for legal assistance, as well as cooperate with the contacts persons from the European Judicial Network and other similar institutions. The network acts in cooperation with the National Network of Prosecutors of the Republic of Bulgaria through the national contact persons of both networks.

**ІІ. Structure**

**1.** The judges in the National Network are appointed with a decision of the Supreme Judicial Council following a proposal from the International Relations Committee of the Supreme Judicial Council, for a period of 5 years, among judges from district and appeal courts with at least 8 years experience in the judiciary.

**2.** The judges of the National Network must not have any administered disciplinary sanction and must have recent attestation with an evaluation “Very Good”.

**3.** The National Network comprises up to three judges from each appeal region at the level of the appeal and district courts, and for the Sofia Appeal Region – up to five judges.

The judges should have proficiency in the English, German or French language, in view of the necessity to communicate with units in other member states.

**4.** The membership in the network is terminated with a motivated decision of the SJC following a proposal from the International Relations Committee of the SJC, in the following cases:

**а)** upon expiry of the term of office;

**b)** at the request of the member;

**c)** in the event of administering disciplinary sanction;

**d)** if unable to perform their duties.

**e)** in the event of a permanent failure to perform the duties resulting from these rules.

**5.** The SJC, following a proposal from the International Relations Committee, appoints a national contact person who must meet the following criteria:

**а)** to have sufficient knowledge of the English, German or French language which allows to freely communicate in speech and writing;

**b)** to have international legal cooperation experience.

**6.** The SJCis responsible for the functioning of the network, as well as for the network’s cooperation with EUROJUST and all institutions, organisations and structures, national and international, which function in the area of international legal assistance.

The SJC, through the International Relations Committee, carries out methodological supervision on the network’s activities. When organizing trainings in International and European law, the SJC extends participation invitations to all professional organisations, as well as NGOs, members of the Civil Council to the SJC, if they have sufficient expertise on the subject.

**ІІІ. Functions of All Members**

**1.** The members of the network assist the national contact persons who are part of the European Judicial Network or other international networks for legal assistance, as well as the national judges when carrying out international legal cooperation.

**2.** The cooperation comprises the tasks to inform, consult, coordinate when necessary and perform other activities to assist in the judicial cooperation on international matters in compliance with the jurisdiction of the respective judicial authorities.

Such assistance has to be given at the request of each national judge, prosecutor, investigator or central national authority with competence as per the International and European legislation.

**3.** The network members also execute the following functions:

**а)** organisation and participation in trainings in the area of international cooperation in criminal matters, especially ones in the region where they work;

**b)** performing studies about the novelties, practices and developments in the area of cooperation in criminal matters, their promotion as well as the mechanisms for their circulation.

**c)** The SJC, through International Relations Committee or the national contact person can assign to the network members additional tasks whenever a necessity has arisen for giving information, making study, performing training or other activities related to international cooperation in criminal matters.

**4.** The network members have to maintain an updated contacts database (emails, other correspondence addresses and mobile phone numbers) which has to be shared with the SJC. The judge who is the contact person is given an office email address.

**5.** Each network member functions on the territory of the respective appeal court.

**6.** Once per year should be organized an Annual meeting of the network members. They can convene general meetings during the year. The network members can participate as lecturers in different training forums in the area of international cooperation in criminal matters.

**7.** After taking part in the periodical meetings of the contact persons of the European Judicial Network in criminal matters, the contact person sends a report to the International Relations Committee of the SJC and to the SJC, which is published on the webpage of the Council – in the International Cooperation section – European Judicial Network in criminal matters, thus providing publicity of the contact units activity.

The network members prepare and submit to the SJC an annual report on their activity within the boundaries of the respective appeal court. The report has to contain information on the participation in the various forms of international cooperation and information about the type, range and number of activities of the rendered assistance.

**8.** The list of addresses is published on the SJC webpage in the International Cooperation section – European Judicial Network (EJN) and is announced to all contact points.

**9.** When the SJC receives materials pertaining to the National Judicial Network Activity, a copy is sent to the contact persons engaged in the respective matter.

**10.** Through the International Relations Directorate, the SJC enhance information exchange between the members of the national network and the national contact person.

**11.** The national contact persons, as well as the other members of the network, are commissioned for participation in events on international cooperation by decision of the SJC.

**ІV. Selection Procedure**

1. The applicants submit an application form to the SJC which contains their explicit willingness to participate in the selection competition. With the application, the following should be enclosed:

- a curriculum vitae;

- professional reference about the applicant;

- copies of documents certifying the knowledge and the experience in the area of international legal assistance in criminal matters;

- copies of the certificates of proficiency in the English, German or French language. As sufficient proof of language proficiency the following diplomas and certificates are deemed acceptable: secondary education diploma from a comprehensive secondary school with intensive teaching of the respective language; B2 level certificate of the Common European Frameworkof Reference for Languages; Diplôme d'études en langue française /DELF/, Cambridge Advanced English /CAE/ or Deutsch es Sprachdiplom;

- motivation letter;

- other documents at the discretion of the applicant.

2. The announcement for the competition is published on the official wеbpage of the SJC (http://www.vss.justice.bg) and contains the number and type of positions and organs of the judiciary to which they pertain; the required documents and the deadline for their submittance; the program for which the competition is held; the date, hour and venue of the competition. After publishing the announcement, the applicants submit in person or through a proxy the application per clause 2 herewith with the enclosed documents within he appointed deadline in the administrative department of the SJC (Sofia 1000, 12 *Exarch Yosif* St.).

3. The competition is carried out in stages as follows:

**а)** selection of applicants whose documents meet the criteria;

**b)** interview with the applicants who have qualified for the second stage, on their motivation letter and the experience given in the reference;

**c)** announcement of the selected applicants.

4. The International Relations Committee of the SJC (hereinunder called the Committee for shortness) reviews the applications and selects the applicants who meet the criteria on the basis of the submitted documents appointed in clause 2 herewith, of which a Report is constituted. Applicants who have failed to comply with the criteria, are given 3 days to correct the irregularities in the documents.

After the ruling of the Committee on the admittance of the newly submitted documents, the lists become final and are published on the official webpage of the SJC.

5. The Committee interviews the applicants who have qualified for the second stage, on their motivation letter and the experience given in the reference.

6. After the interviews, the Committee compiles an alphabetical list of names of the approved applicants, which is published on the web page of the SJC.

7. For the selection of the national contact person, the International Relations Committee prepares and submits to the SJC a motivated proposal.

**V. Additional Provisions**

**1.** (Amended with resolution of the SJC on Report №13 / 19/03/2015, clause 71). By the end of April 2015, the International Legal Cooperation Committee of the SJC shall select the new members of the Network and in a meeting of the SJC it shall make a proposal for approval of the national contact persons.

**2**. These Rules abrogate the Rules for the Organisation and Activity of the National Judicial Network in criminal matters, approved with a decision of the SJC, Minutes Report №20 of the meeting carried out on 13/06/2007.