

MAPPING THE STATE OF PLAY  
**OF DIGITALISATION  
OF JUSTICE**  
IN THE WESTERN BALKANS



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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report has been developed as from the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in the framework of the RCC-led Western Balkans Working Group on Justice (WB WGJ).<sup>1</sup> Since 2014, RCC is working with the Ministries of Justice of WB through the Working Group on Justice to further rule of law in the region. In this framework, the 14th meeting of the WB WGJ that took place in Skopje on 16 July 2021 discussed the importance of digitalisation for the modernisation of the judiciary and the necessary steps to speed up this process. Based on these discussions, the WB WGJ identified the need to map the state of play of digitalisation of justice in the Western Balkans, and identify potential areas for harmonised exchange of electronic data and documents among judicial systems of the region. As a follow-up to the discussions, RCC commissioned the preparation of this report.

The report has two principal objectives: (1) to identify and assess digital solutions and availability of digital options in the justice systems of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia; and (2) to identify potential options for a regionally harmonised exchange of electronic data and documents among the judicial systems of the Western Balkans (WB).

The report has been produced by Svetozara Petkova and Simone Ginzburg. Initial data collection was conducted by Tatjana Sofijanić (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), Alban Ruli (Albania), Vigan Rogova (Kosovo\*) and Veton Palloshi (North Macedonia).

The authors wish to thank the members of the Western Balkans Working Group on Justice and the representatives of Judicial Councils, Prosecutorial Councils, Ministries of Justice, lawyers, notaries, and bailiffs from across the Western Balkans for the information they provided to develop this report.



<sup>1</sup> [https://www.rcc.int/working\\_groups/41/western-balkans-working-group-on-justice](https://www.rcc.int/working_groups/41/western-balkans-working-group-on-justice)

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<i>AECS</i>	Administration for Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions (Montenegro)
<i>AI</i>	Artificial intelligence
<i>ALB<sup>2</sup></i>	Albania
<i>BiH</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<i>CEPEJ</i>	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
<i>CMIS</i>	Case Management and Information System
<i>CMS</i>	Case Management System
<i>EC</i>	European Commission
<i>ECRIS</i>	European Criminal Records Information System
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>HJPC</i>	High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council
<i>ICT</i>	Information and communication technology
<i>JIS</i>	Judicial Information System
<i>KJC</i>	Kosovo* Judicial Council
<i>KPC</i>	Kosovo* Prosecutorial Council
<i>MKD</i>	North Macedonia
<i>MNE</i>	Montenegro
<i>MoJ</i>	Ministry of Justice
<i>RCC</i>	Regional Cooperation Council
<i>SRB</i>	Serbia
<i>WB</i>	Western Balkans
<i>WGJ</i>	Working Group on Justice



<sup>2</sup> The alpha-3 ISO codes as per the ISO 3166 international standard have been used for brevity in graphs and tables throughout the report.

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# *I. Introduction*

In the face of constantly increasing demand for justice, judicial systems are under continuous pressure to provide better, quicker, and more efficient services to citizens and organisations. The ability to do so is critical to furthering jurisdictions' rule of law, and their economic competitiveness. In the digital age, governmental institutions are expected to keep in line with the ways of doing business and communicating which are now the standard in business transactions and in personal communications, i.e. by extensively using information and communication technology (ICT). Justice services are part and parcel of the effort to digitalise government services. At the same time, the administration of justice is subject to strict rules, which are aimed at creating procedural guarantees for fair trial. Therefore, e-services can only be introduced in the justice sector following legislative amendments and in adherence to the high-level safety and data protection standards. For these reasons, digitalisation of justice frequently lags behind the digitalisation in other sectors of government.

The jurisdictions of the Western Balkans have varied levels of digitisation of their judiciaries. While across the board judicial authorities have case management systems, the possibilities for digital interactions between them and citizens and businesses are still limited. Electronic filing and electronic service of process are available in few cases but efforts are underway for their introduction. Access to electronic casefiles and other information on the work of the judiciary are improving throughout the region. Overall, this is a time of accelerated digital transformation for judicial systems in the Western Balkans.

A mapping of the existing digital solutions in the judiciaries of the region can help participating jurisdictions self-assess their level of progress in the digital transformation of the Western Balkans while making sure that they have a clear understanding of deficiencies in their legislation and infrastructure that need to be addressed in order to implement e-justice solutions. Such stock-taking of existing solutions is also instrumental for proposing concrete steps towards digital judicial exchanges at the regional level. Furthermore, it may facilitate exchange of experiences related to the introduction of new legislation or e-Justice tools in the region.

## II. Methodology

This report is modelled, to the extent possible, on the 2020 working document prepared by the staff of the European Commission (EC) Mapping the State of Play of Digitalisation of Justice aiming to assess the level of digitalisation of the justice sector in the European Union (EU)<sup>3</sup> (hereinafter referred to as the EC Mapping Exercise). The aforementioned model allows comparability between the state of digitisation of EU member states and WB jurisdictions across the various assessment categories and in respect of various judicial functions (courts, prosecution services, lawyers, notaries, bailiffs). Furthermore, much of the comparative information in the EC Mapping Exercise is presented by means of figures, assigning scores to different levels of digitalisation. For the purposes of comparison, this report utilises the same types of figures and the same scoring rules. To facilitate readers, the titles of figures in this report contain a reference to the respective figure(s) in the EC Mapping Exercise, if applicable.

However, there are also important deviations from the EC Mapping Exercise. First, to improve readability, this report has modified the order of presentation of digital solutions. Thus, it starts by introducing the governance of ICT for justice in the jurisdictions of the region. It then proceeds to presenting digital tools used by justice authorities, including case management systems, opportunities for remote work and digital exchanges of data amongst authorities. Then, the report explores possibilities for online access to justice and examines topics such as online filing, electronic service of process, online access to casefiles, admissibility of evidence in digital format and options for checking and paying court fees online. The report proceeds to examining possibilities for distance communication by videoconferencing. Once the digital solutions pertaining to working with the courts and prosecution services are examined, this mapping exercise seeks to identify the opportunities for online access to judicial information for general public, including access to legal texts, educational materials and published court judgments. Finally, the report takes stock of the options for digital work that are available to legal professionals (lawyers, notaries and bailiffs).

Second, in some cases, figures presented in the EC Mapping Exercise reflect answers to questions that are specific only to EU member states.<sup>4</sup> Such figures are excluded from this report. Furthermore, when a certain digital solution is not present anywhere in the Western Balkans, this report presents the status quo only with a narrative, without illustrating it with a figure. Finally, certain questions in the EC Mapping Exercise, which presented the information collected in different pre-existing surveys, are largely duplicative. In order to present the results in a more concise manner, such questions have been excluded from this report.



<sup>3</sup> The document has been prepared by the Commission staff to accompany the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Digitalisation of justice in the European Union: A toolbox of opportunities (December 7, 2020). It is available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/swd\\_digitalisation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/swd_digitalisation_en.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> These were, for example, questions related to digital exchanges between EU member states in the framework of certain EU agencies or the degree of digitalisation of cross-border procedures regulated by EU instruments, such as the European payment order.

In line with the two tasks of this research, namely (1) to map digital solutions in the justice systems of the Western Balkans; and (2) to identify options for exchange of electronic data and documents among the judicial systems of the Western Balkans, the development of this report was organised in two activities.

The first activity entailed mapping digital justice in the region and was conducted in several stages. First, the team identified all the questions that needed to be answered in order to collect and visualise data which is compatible with and comparable to the EC Mapping Exercise. Second, the team conducted desk research and data collection, which covered legislative texts from the jurisdictions concerned, reports and internet resources. Annex 2 to this report comprises useful internet resources pertaining to each of the examined judiciaries. In the course of desk research, the team relied on extensive communication with local legal experts who could point to available data and written materials. The goal was not only to collect data needed for assigning numerical scores to the questions but also to obtain a global picture of the current state of digitalisation and projects thereof. The desk research and data collection allowed the project team to filter the questions and identify those which needed to be addressed to the representatives of local institutions.

Upon completion of the desk research, with support from RCC, the team contacted local institutions to identify appropriate interlocutors for holding interviews to verify the collected data. Following the identification of appropriate interlocutors, the team conducted one-to-one interviews with representatives of Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils and Ministries of Justices. The list of interviewees is attached as Annex 1 to this report. In conjunction with the interviewing process, the team distributed online surveys<sup>5</sup> to various stakeholders, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, notaries, and bailiffs. Notwithstanding the fact that the invitation to fill out the survey was sent to all professional chambers in the region and to all interviewed stakeholders, a total of 14 responses were submitted<sup>6</sup>. The data verification process was concluded with three workshops, concerning digitisation in the work of courts, prosecutors and other legal professions, respectively. The names of the participants are also listed in Annex 1 to this report. The findings from this research are presented in Chapter III of this report.

The second task entailed identifying needs and opportunities for regionally harmonised exchanges of judicial data and documents. This activity was conducted simultaneously with the first one. Specifically, the team added to the questionnaire queries related to the electronic data exchanges that are currently available within each jurisdiction. Furthermore, the interviews, online surveys and workshops included dedicated sections on needs and opportunities for regional data exchanges. The findings from this research are presented in Chapter IV of this report.



<sup>5</sup> The online surveys were tailored to different legal professions (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, notaries and bailiffs) and made available in all languages of the region. They were designed and distributed via the LimeSurvey platform.

<sup>6</sup> The responses came from four notaries (from Albania, Kosovo\*, Montenegro and North Macedonia), four bailiffs (Montenegro, two from North Macedonia and Serbia), three judges (Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia), one prosecutor (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and two IT managers (Kosovo\* and Montenegro).





**Table 1: Governance of ICT in Justice Sector**

	ICT for courts	ICT for prosecution	Coordination
<b>ALB</b>	High Judicial Council	General Prosecution Office	Centre for ICT in the Judiciary
<b>BiH</b>	High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council	MoJ Strategic Plans	
<b>Kosovo*</b>	Kosovo* Judicial Council (KJC)	Kosovo* Prosecutorial Council (KPC)	KJC and KPC joint Steering Board for CMIS
<b>MNE</b>	Judicial Council	Prosecutorial Council	MoJ (ICT Strategy)
<b>MKD</b>	Supreme Court	Public Prosecutor's Office	ICT Coordination Council for the Judiciary
<b>SRB</b>	Ministry of Justice		

Source: own compilation of the information collected.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the central-level MoJ is responsible for the strategic coordination in the justice sector, while the HJPC is in charge of the development of ICT both for courts and prosecution services.

In Kosovo\* the judicial and prosecutorial councils developed a joint CMIS Project and established a joint User Working Group and Steering Board.<sup>10</sup>

A good practice worth noting is the recent introduction of coordination bodies to ensure a common strategic approach and favour interoperability. In 2019, North Macedonia established the ICT Coordination Council for the Judiciary, which proposes, creates, implements and provides ICT solutions that aim to increase the efficiency and transparency of the judicial system, as well as centralisation of the information systems in order to provide prompt, automated and uninterrupted access to data and interoperability<sup>11</sup>.

Similarly, in 2021, Albania established the Centre for IT in the Judiciary to set the standards and policies for the effective operation of information processing technology and data systems (hardware and software) for the justice system. The Centre does not have direct access to the ICT systems of justice.<sup>12</sup>

10 Source: National Audit Agency report on CMIS (June 2021) [https://www.zka-rks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SMIL\\_2021\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.zka-rks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SMIL_2021_Eng.pdf)

11 The Council is composed of 11 members appointed by the Minister of Justice from the courts, public prosecutor's offices, the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Justice and the academic community. The current chairperson is a judge, the president of the innovative Kavadarci court.

12 The governing board of the Centre is also composed of 11 members, including six representatives delegated by their institutions (the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, the Ministry of Justice, the High Justice Inspector and the School of Magistrates) and 5 users of the systems in various courts, prosecutor's offices and special anti-corruption bodies. As its representative, who ex-officio presides the Board, the High Judicial Council has delegated its own President – which gives a measure of importance they attach to this body.

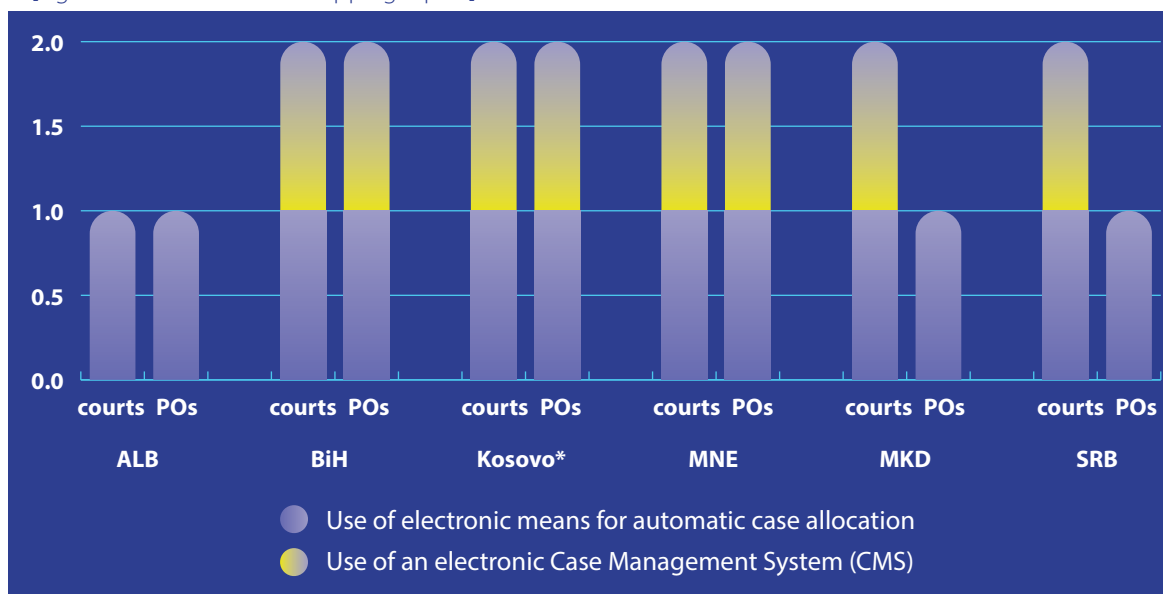
## 2. Digital tools used by judicial authorities

### 2.1. Case management systems (CMS) of judicial authorities

Judiciaries are digitalised across the region. All courts use case management systems. The trend is towards the transition to a single centralised web-based system, which allows streamlining maintenance of the software and production of consolidated statistical reports.

North Macedonia has a single Case Management System (CMS, the Automated Court Case Management Information System – ACCMIS, introduced in 2002) which is deployed in each court rather than at a single central location. Similarly, the CMS in Montenegro (PRIS) is installed in each court, but it is now considered outdated. Work is underway to replace it with a new centralised system for all courts<sup>13</sup> which will be the judiciary component of the JIS. Bosnia and Herzegovina was the first in the region to introduce a centralised CMS in 2006 and is now updating it regularly. In addition to the CMS, Bosnia and Herzegovina has a separate system for electronic submission and group handling of utility claims – SOKOP-Mal.<sup>14</sup> Albania has different systems operating in parallel,<sup>15</sup> but HJC took the strategic decision to replace them with a new CMS including e-communication.<sup>16</sup> Several

**Figure 1**  
**Availability of electronic tools for courts and prosecution services**  
 [Figure 23 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
 0 = No, 0.5 = Yes, in some courts/prosecution offices, 1 = Yes, in all courts/prosecution offices



13 Including the misdemeanours courts, which are currently using a separate system.

14 SOKOP Mal enables the processing of 1) enforcement cases initiated on the basis of authentic documents and 2) small claims lawsuits, with an indication that a default judgment is requested in case the defendant does not answer the claim.

15 Two CMS operate in Albania – ARK/IT at the Tirana District Court and at the Specialised Criminal Court, and ICMS – at all other courts.

16 See High Judicial Council's [Strategic Plan for the Judiciary in Albania](#), 2019 – 2020. In December 2021 the Centre for IT for the Judiciary adopted a Road Map for the introduction of a new Case Management and Information System for all courts of Albania.

case management systems are also currently operational in Serbia, but the Ministry of Justice is working on a new, single system, which should replace them<sup>17</sup>. Kosovo\* has almost completed<sup>18</sup> the deployment of new centralised CMSs, one for all courts and one for prosecutor's offices. Notably, they have been developed in parallel, together with a third system for the Police, and they have been designed to allow sharing of data and documents between these institutions, setting the basis for maintenance of fully electronic casefiles starting from the first ring of the criminal justice chain.

The infrastructure is somewhat less developed in prosecution services across the region. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\* and Montenegro have prosecutorial CMSs; Serbia has installed it only in some prosecution services but a new system is being developed for all; in North Macedonia, prosecution services use decentralised case management systems; and in Albania prosecutors still do not have such a system and see its establishment as one of their highest priorities.

Furthermore, all courts in the region use electronic means for case allocation based on objective criteria. The case allocation systems in almost all cases<sup>19</sup> incorporate a random element which has to be balanced with a fair distribution of workload among judges. This is not a trivial task, and each system has developed its own algorithm to implement it. Kosovo\* has developed a particularly sophisticated one, which aims to ensure the workload balance only in the long run (on a yearly basis) and taking into account the size of the office.<sup>20</sup> As regards automatic assignment of prosecutorial cases, it is not available in North Macedonia and Serbia and is present elsewhere in the region,<sup>21</sup> including in Albania where there is no prosecutorial CMS and an information system has been developed exclusively for the purpose of allocating cases to prosecutors. The topic of case allocation has been a sensitive one in the region due to risks for abuse. A high-level judge in North Macedonia and a high-level prosecutor in Bosnia and Herzegovina were sanctioned for tampering with the case allocation systems.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.2. Possibility for judicial authorities to carry out their duties remotely

The ability of judicial authorities to work remotely is an important factor in evaluating their resilience in times of crisis. This was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The extended and repeated lockdowns, quarantines, and other forms of restrictions on the movement of people meant that judges, prosecutors, and court clerks were frequently limited in their ability to operate at the premises of judicial authorities. Under such circumstances, ability for home-based work proved crucial in ensuring the continued functioning of judicial authorities.



17 Contractors have been selected and started working in September 2021.

18 Only the Supreme Court and the State Prosecutor's Office are missing and should join soon.

19 The exception is the allocation of cases to prosecutors in Montenegro, which follows a strictly sequential allocation in alphabetical order.

20 For a description: [https://www.iaca.ws/assets/The\\_Court\\_Administrator/Court%20Administrator\\_Volume%207\\_Spring%202020.pdf](https://www.iaca.ws/assets/The_Court_Administrator/Court%20Administrator_Volume%207_Spring%202020.pdf)

21 Information obtained from interviews and workshops.

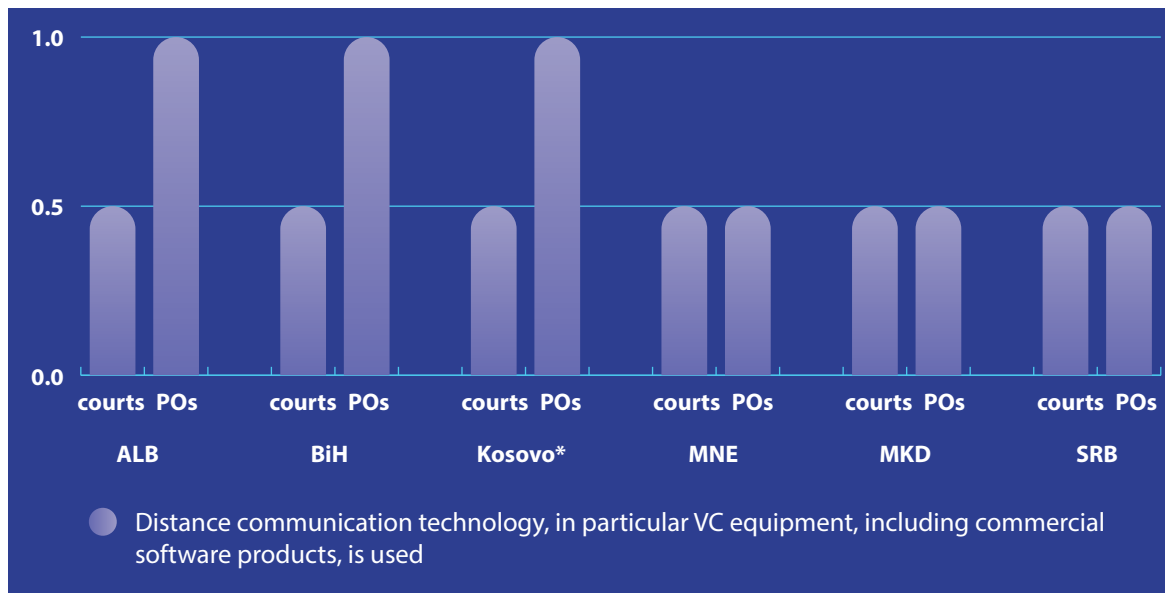
22 See <https://ba.n1info.com/english/news/dismissal-of-bih-chief-prosecutor-gordana-tadic-confirmed/> for the Bosnia and Herzegovina case and <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/en/tri-i-pol-godini-kazna-zatvor-za-vladimir-panchevski/> for the North Macedonia case.

The optimal solution for remote work would be to allow justice professionals to log on to their respective case management system (CMS) securely and remotely and perform their duties from a location of their choosing. Unfortunately, none of the CMSs that operate in the region allows such remote login. Therefore, opportunities for remote work are very limited. To work remotely from home, judges and prosecutors currently need to take home the paper casefiles or copies thereof or, where the system allows it, download the entire casefile or parts of it on a digital carrier and use it on their personal device or send it to their personal email. The latter options are far from secure.

Some case management systems (e.g. the one in Bosnia and Herzegovina) contain the entire casefile in digital form whereas in other systems (e.g. the one in Serbia) the casefiles are not completely digitalised and some documents, for example, evidence may be available only on paper. Furthermore, while the CMS of Bosnia and Herzegovina allows download of the entire casefile<sup>23</sup>, the CMS of Kosovo\*, although it comprises completely digitalised casefiles, allows users to only download separate documents one by one.<sup>24</sup> Such download of documents from the CMS was regulated by the HJPC in Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of the pandemic, while it is still discouraged in Serbia due to security concerns. The situation in prosecution services is similar to that of courts, the difference being that in Albania the prosecution services still do not have a CMS.

Another factor that is important to the resilience of justice systems in times of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic is the use of videoconferencing. The availability of such possibilities can allow courts and prosecution authorities to function without having physical contact with parties, witness-

**Figure 2**  
**Possibility to securely work remotely (telework) for courts and prosecution offices**  
 [Figure 1 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
 0 = No, 0.5 = Yes, in some courts/prosecution offices, 1 = Yes, in all courts/prosecution offices



23 See Panzardi, Roberto O.; Osmanovic-Pasic, Zuhra; Sipka, Olga; Petkova, Svetozara; Prostran, Sonja; Babovic, Branka; Sofijanic, Tatjana; Berhamovic, Esmir, [Improving Commercial Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Face of COVID-19 Crisis: Phase One Analysis](#) - Crisis Impact Assessment and Options for Rapid Improvements (English). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, page 12

24 Information on Kosovo\* obtained in an interview with representative of Judicial Council.

es, and other participants in proceedings. This form of distance communication may be used for conducting court hearings, pre-trial hearings, trainings and other types of meetings.

As illustrated in **Figure 2**, throughout the region videoconferencing equipment is available at least in some courts and prosecution services. All prosecutor's offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo\* are equipped with it, mainly due to the fact that they are fewer in number than courts. This equipment may be used for distance meetings and exchanges, and also for video-hearings, where the law allows it. Additionally, some training centres provide distance trainings by means of videoconferences. Still, videoconferences are mostly used by way of exception and are not available across the board. A more detailed look at videoconferencing possibilities is provided in section 4 below.

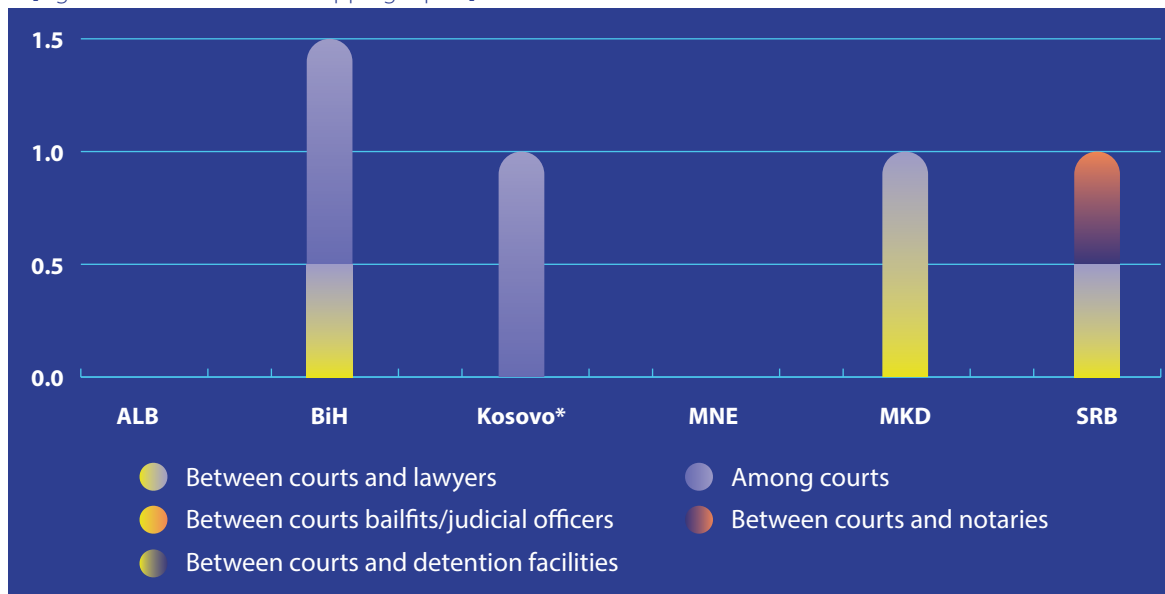
## 2.3. Digital exchanges

### 2.3.1. Digital exchanges with courts

Even though judicial authorities in the region have CMSs at their disposal, there is more to be desired in terms of digitalisation. The real game change occurs when institutions switch to procedures which are digital by default. The possibilities for digital exchange of data and documents between courts, as well as between courts and other justice sector professionals are currently very limited (see **Figure 3**). However, the trend, also in the Western Balkans, is clearly pointing in that direction, and in a few years the situation is expected to be quite different.

**Figure 3**  
**Availability of tools for secure electronic communication for courts**

[Figure 24 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
0 = Nowhere, 0.5 = In some cases, 1 = In all cases

There are several types of digital exchanges of data and documents that are relevant to the work of justice authorities. First, these are internal exchanges among various judicial authorities. For example, digital exchanges between courts are relevant when a court case has to be transferred between

the different court tiers during the proceedings, or between same-tier courts because of lack of jurisdiction. Currently such exchanges occur only via the physical transfer of paper files, the exception being Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo\* whose CMSs allow also for electronic transfer of case-files between courts. In these two jurisdictions, paper files are also sent; however, once the paper documents have been received, the transfer of electronic data and document can take place, with no need to scan or enter data again.<sup>25</sup>

Second, digital exchanges include interactions between courts and legal professions which, by delegation, perform some functions assigned to them by the state. These are notaries and bailiffs. Electronic exchanges involving courts and notaries are implemented in Serbia through the ProNep system<sup>26</sup>, which functions as a one-stop-shop for transfer of real property rights, connecting courts and notaries with the Geodetic Authority that runs the land registry and the Tax Administration. Courts and notaries have to print, sign, stamp, scan and digitally sign each decision or contract that leads to change in the land registries and/or may create a tax obligation. Through the ProNep portal they upload them, together with all relevant metadata, so that they can reach, as appropriate, the Geodetic authority and the Tax Administration without any need for paper communication. Currently no electronic exchanges are enabled between courts and bailiffs (there is a prospect of these becoming operational in Serbia in the near future, see section 6.2 below) and courts and detention facilities in the Western Balkans.

Third, digital exchanges include various forms of exchanges with users of the court systems, which are enabled by e-filing and e-notification (to be examined in more detail in section 3 below on online access to justice). For the purposes of Figure 3, secure electronic communication between courts and lawyers is considered to be in place where a dedicated infrastructure is operational and electronic communication happens in practice. Currently, electronic filing is possible only in Serbia for administrative cases via the eSud system, and electronic notification is available for all cases in North Macedonia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina e-filing is possible for utility cases via SOKOP-Mal system, which does not allow plaintiffs to be represented by an attorney; however, in this jurisdiction, lawyers can access the electronic casefile. In the new generation of SOKOP-Mal system, the claimant will be able to participate in the procedure through an authorised representative who, subject to fulfilling certain conditions, will receive all case documents either by mail or electronically.

Shared electronic systems for recording fines and other sanctions (Registry of Fines) for misdemeanour cases are in place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. They allow secure electronic communication between courts, law enforcement agencies and other administrative bodies.

### ***Digital exchanges with prosecution services***

Regarding prosecution services (see Figure 4), their opportunities for digital exchange of data and documents with courts are analogous to the possibilities existing among courts. Again, both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo\* enable exchanges of digital casefiles between prosecution services and courts as long as they are accompanied by a paper trail with a unique bar code.

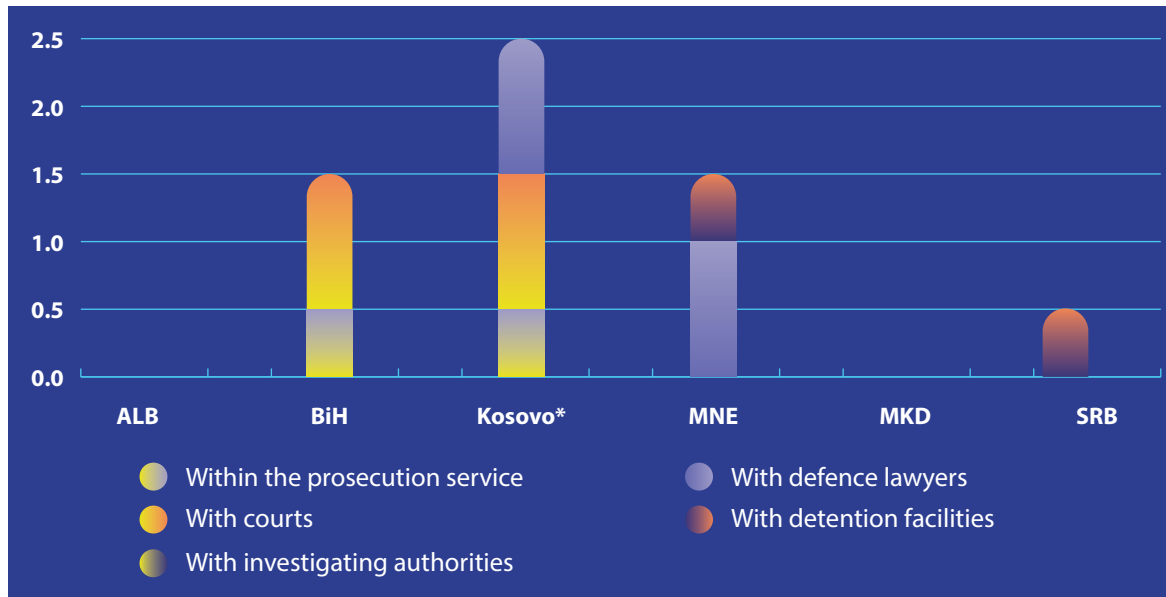


<sup>25</sup> Once the unique bar code, added when the transferred document was created, is scanned in the receiving court, the connected data (which was transferred in advance in a “temporary” buffer space) is moved to the newly created casefile.

<sup>26</sup> Shortened for “promet nepokretnosti”: transfer of real property.

**Figure 4**  
**Availability of tools for secure electronic communication for prosecution services**

[Figure 25 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Limited possibilities, 2 = Partially, 3 = Fully

It is worth noting that Kosovo\* offers the additional possibility to exchange documents and metadata directly from the prosecutor in charge of the case to the judge, and vice versa, without the need for any intervention by the respective registries. The same possibilities exist between prosecution services and the police. It is planned, once it has been shown how the system can work, to propose legislative amendments which would make the paper trail redundant. This positions Kosovo\* in the regional, and even European, forefront in moving towards ensuring full digital communication among different systems along the criminal justice chain.

Montenegro prosecution offices have access to a series of digital evidence maintained by law enforcement agencies, including ID cards and passports. Montenegro has also recently established a secure connection between the prison case management system and the prosecution offices, and work is underway to make possible data exchanges on the prisoners' location and other details. Such system is already in place in Serbia.

### 3. Online access to justice

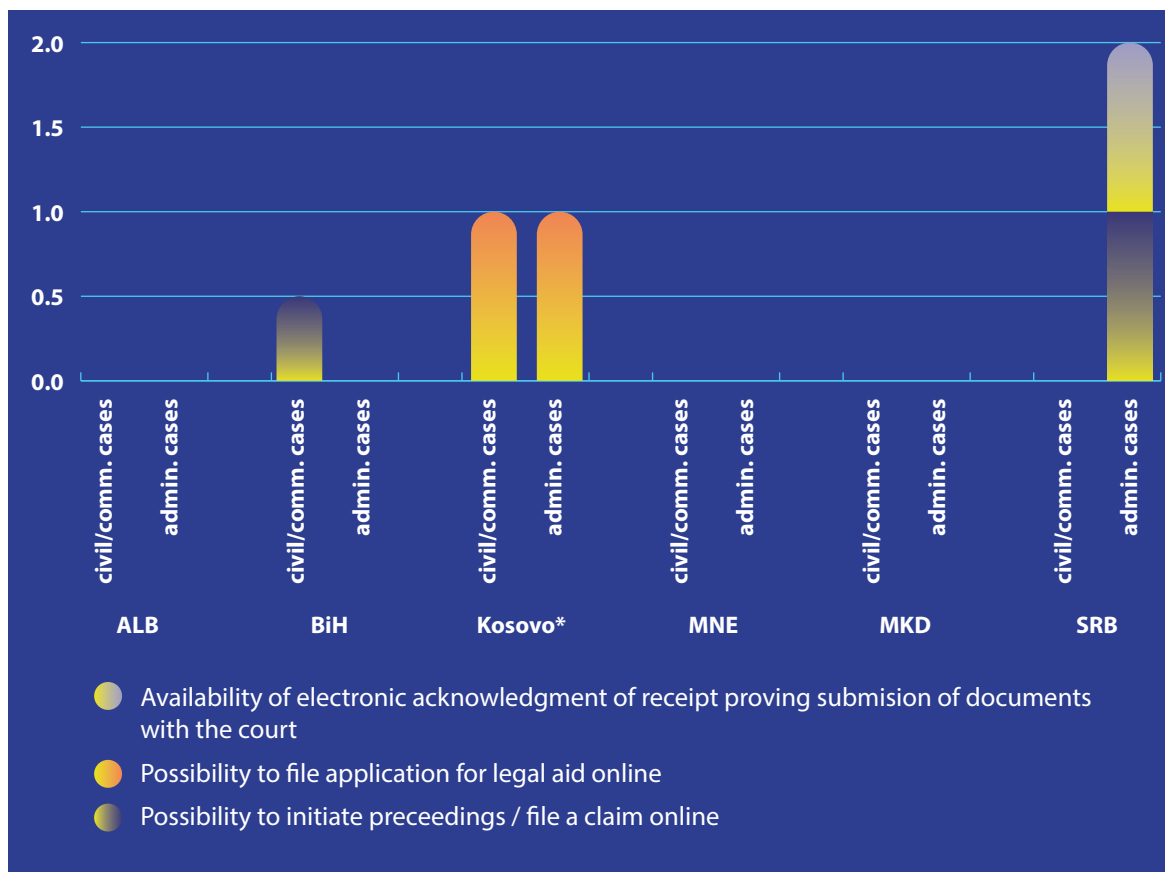
This section explores the possibility of digital interactions with the courts from the perspective of the user. To this end, it first looks into possibilities for electronic filing across the region. It then goes on to examine all actions related to processing a case, namely admissibility of digital filing of evidence, access to information on and online payment of court fees, electronic notifications to persons other than the client and, finally, online access to casefiles.



### 3.1. E-filing in civil/commercial and administrative cases

One of the most widely available options of working remotely with the court entails the ability to file various documents electronically. Therefore, this mapping exercise explores the possibilities to initiate proceedings/ file a claim electronically; to file an application for legal aid electronically; and to receive an electronic acknowledgement by the court in case of electronic filing.

**Figure 5**  
**Possibilities of electronic filing in civil and commercial, and administrative cases**  
 [Figure 9 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
 1 = Yes, in all cases, 0.5 = Yes, in some cases, 0 = No

The procedural laws frequently allow electronic filing. Thus, the civil procedural laws of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, for example, allow for submissions to be filed electronically.<sup>27</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina requires that such filing be accompanied by a qualified electronic signature and Montenegro – by advanced electronic signature. However, in practice, the requisite infrastructure for ensuring electronic filing is frequently not in place and even if parties have an electronic signature (which is currently rare) and try to file electronically, they would not receive a confirmation of receipt and cannot be certain of whether their actions would have the intended legal consequences. For these reasons, as mentioned above, this report only considers that electronic filing is in place where the accompanying infrastructure is operational and electronic filing happens in practice.

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<sup>27</sup> See for example Article 103 of the [Civil Procedure Law of Montenegro](#) and Article 98 of the [Civil Procedure Law of Serbia](#).

Electronic filing in the region is currently possible only in two distinct cases: for the so-called utility cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>28</sup> via SOKOP-Mal system (since 2011) and for administrative disputes in Serbia via eSud system (since 2019). In both cases, parties submit their submissions digitally signed in accordance with the law on electronic signature (for single cases in eSud; for packages which may contain up to thousands of cases for SOKOP-Mal) and receive all court documents in their inbox in the dedicated portal, which they can access.

The SOKOP-Mal saves all meta-data from the submissions, which can be used for the mass creation<sup>29</sup> of decisions to be notified (in paper) to the respondents in order to check if they contest the alleged debt. All communication with the claimants takes place exclusively by electronic means. During 2022, a new module will be deployed that will enable bailiffs and defendants to inspect the electronic casefiles using the mechanism, which is applicable for access to other types of cases .

While only a few possibilities for e-filing in civil, commercial and administrative cases are currently available in the region, work is underway to expand them. Thus, under pending amendments to the Civil Procedure Law in Serbia, it is expected that the use of eSud system will become accessible also for civil cases and mandatory for commercial cases. The draft amendments are currently being reviewed to take into account the position of the Bar. Provisions have been adopted to allow electronic submission of request for enforcement to courts<sup>30</sup> but there is still no operational system in place for this purpose. In Montenegro, too, a system for e-filing via a special platform ePodnesak is planned and is expected to be launched in the near future.<sup>31</sup> In North Macedonia work is underway to enable e-filing building on the existing system for e-notifications.<sup>32</sup> In Kosovo\* it is not possible to initiate proceedings electronically, but legal aid applications can be filed electronically through the website of the Free Legal Aid Agency<sup>33</sup>.



28 Cases related to unpaid utility bills (including provision of water, garbage disposal, central heating, building maintenance services) and the radio-television public service fees. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are almost two million pending cases of this type, and several hundred thousand are submitted every year.

29 With a single click the formal decision on enforcement as well as any other procedural document can be created in hundreds of cases.

30 See Rulebook on the modalities for electronic submission of request for enforcement on the basis of enforceable or authentic documents.

31 The launch of this functionality is planned for the end of 2023.

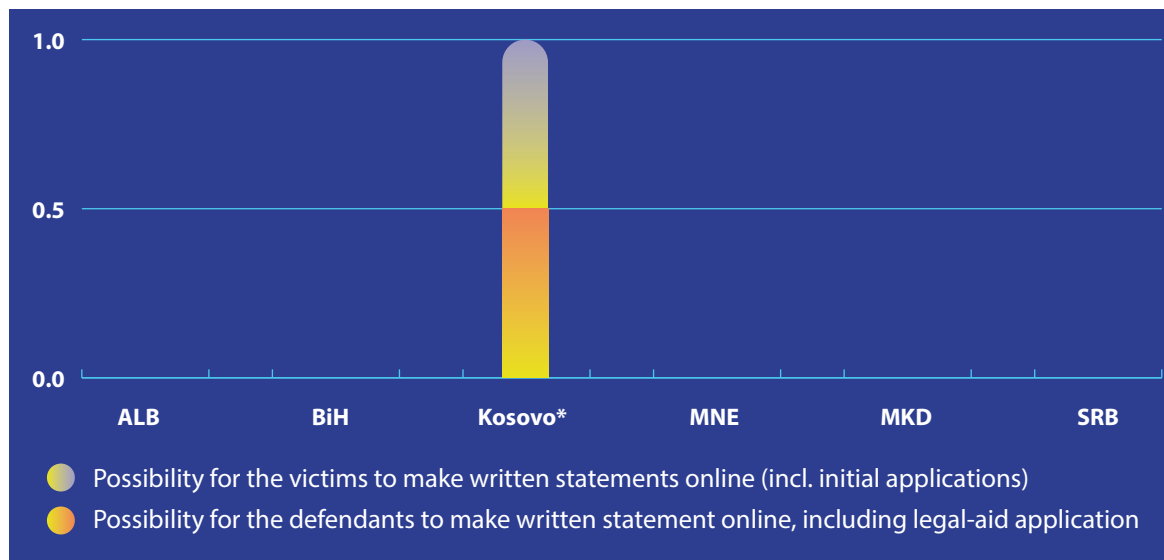
32 Information obtained in the framework of interviews and workshops.

33 See the legal aid website for Kosovo\*.

### 3.2. E-filing in criminal cases

**Figure 6**  
**Possibilities of electronic filing in criminal cases**

[Figure 10 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
1 = Yes, in all cases, 0.5 = Yes, in some cases, 0 = No

With regard to criminal cases, there are no available options for online interactions with the court for victims and defendants. As mentioned above, Kosovo\* allows e-filing of legal aid applications and this applies also to victims and defendants in criminal cases.

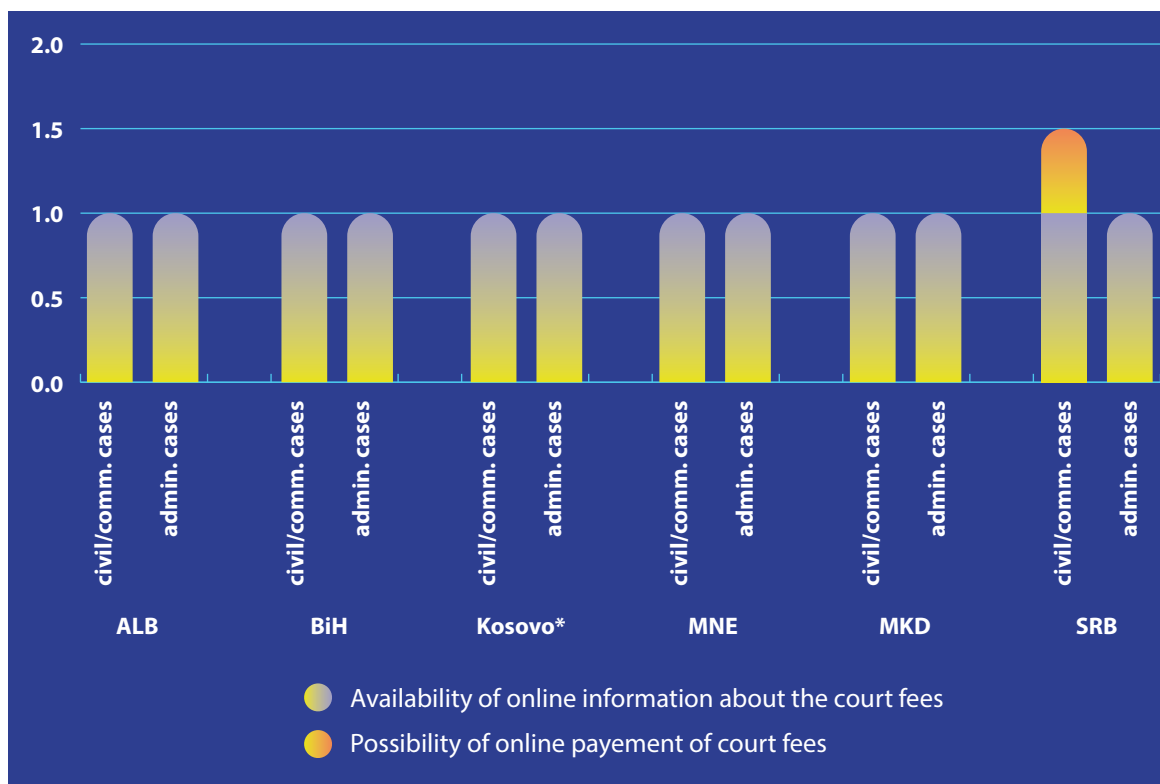
### 3.3. Admissibility of evidence in digital format

In line with the EC Mapping Exercise, this report sought to answer the question whether digital evidence (without the need for parallel submission in alternative formats) is admissible in civil and commercial, administrative and criminal cases in the Western Balkans. This is one area where the EC Mapping Exercise seemed to raise questions due to the lack of definition of the term “digital evidence”. Specifically, if digital evidence was to be understood as video and audio recordings and similar files that were by their nature digital, their use is admissible across the region. On the other hand, if digital evidence is understood as documents provided only in electronic format without their parallel submission also on paper, these possibilities in the region are very limited. Although the electronic documents are regulated in the Western Balkans, in the absence of established channels for their submission to the court and in an environment where few citizens have electronic signatures, even when such documents are submitted by email, parties tend to send them on paper too to ensure admissibility. Therefore, documents are accepted as evidence in digital format only where e-filing options are available.

### 3.4. Online access to information on and payment of court fees

**Figure 7**  
**Online information on and payment of court fees in civil/commercial, and administrative cases (at first instance courts)**

[Figure 19 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:

0 = No, 0.5 = Yes, in some courts/prosecution offices, 1 = Yes, in all courts/prosecution offices

Online information about court fees is available everywhere in the region. Oftentimes, judicial systems' websites have online calculators that assist users in determining the court fees due.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, online payment of court fees is generally not available, the one exception being Serbia which currently allows for such possibility only in some cases, depending on the readiness of the local CMS.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.5. Service of documents via electronic means (to persons other than the claimant)

Electronic service of process has two aspects. First, some systems allow electronic service to the person who has initiated the claim. Such service can be done to an email address that the person has provided at the time of filing, together with an explicit consent to receive notifications to that address. This option is used only sporadically in the Western Balkans. Service to the persons initiating the claim can also be done via court dedicated infrastructure, especially if it allows users to maintain

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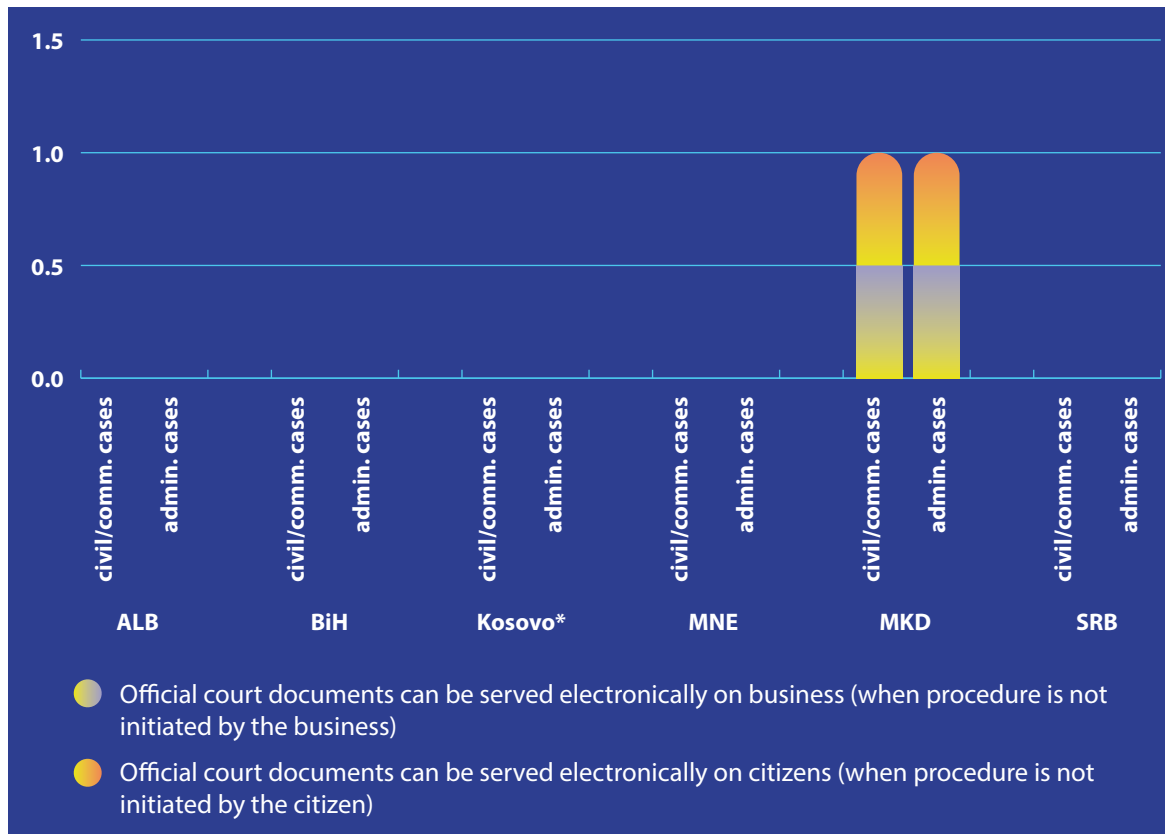
<sup>34</sup> See, for example, the online fee calculators of [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and [Kosovo\\*](#).

<sup>35</sup> The Serbian portal for payment of court fees is available [here](#). It is expected that upon the introduction of a unified CMS, the payment website will become fully operational.

individual user profiles. Usually this is the first type of electronic service of process that a jurisdiction introduces. As seen above, albeit rarely, the latter type of electronic service of process is available in some systems in the Western Balkans, i.e. the SOKOP-Mal system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the eSud system in Serbia.

**Figure 8**  
**Service of documents via electronic means in civil and commercial, and administrative cases to persons other than the claimant**

[Figure 23 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
 0 = No, 0.5 = Yes, in some courts/prosecution offices, 1 = Yes, in all courts/prosecution offices

Furthermore, with technological and regulatory advancements in the justice sector, some jurisdictions may require certain categories of users (e.g. businesses, professional users such as lawyers) to accept electronic service of process even when they have not initiated the claim. This second type of electronic service of process, i.e. to persons other than the ones who have initiated the proceedings, is subject of examination in Figure 8. Such electronic service of process is available in North Macedonia. The system, eDostava, allows parties (both legal and natural persons) and their legal representatives to receive, if they register, electronic communication and documents in all type of cases, from all courts. Each court delivers electronic documents via ACCMIS to the e-mailboxes of the users that are hosted in the portal set up by the IT Centre of the Supreme Court. Once the users identify themselves with a digital certificate and log in, they can see the received documents. Lawyers who are registered with the system receive electronic notifications for all cases where they represent parties, irrespective of whether they are claimants or defendants. The e-notification system of North Macedonia includes a presumption of service within one week of sending the notification, regardless of whether the user has opened the notification or

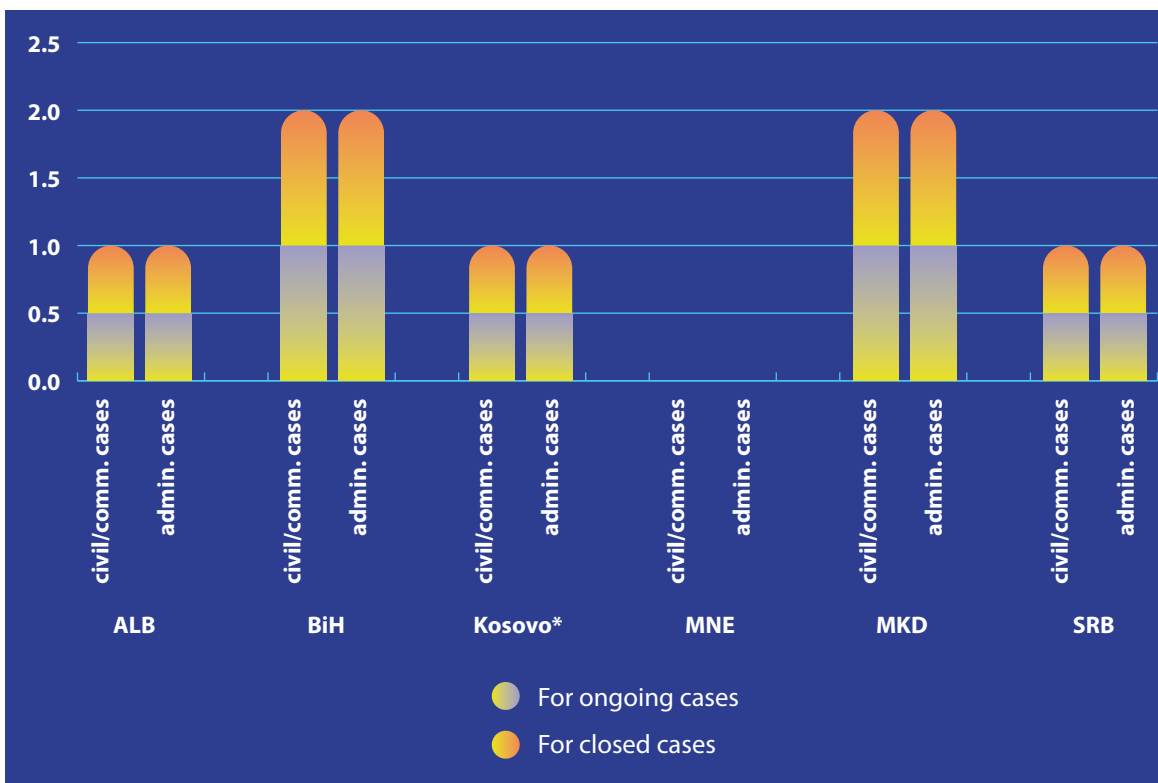
not. The system has been operational since 2013 making North Macedonia a leader in e-service in the region.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.6. Access to casefiles

Access to casefiles is one area where the scoring under the EC Mapping Exercise proved particularly unsuitable to the local environment, as it did not differentiate between access to information about the progress of the case (including key procedural events) and access to the entire casefile. Therefore, the research team modified the scoring utilised in the EC Mapping Exercise in order to make this distinction, assigning 0.5 points to the first and 1 point to the second option.

**Figure 9**  
**Access to electronic file or to information about the case in civil/commercial and administrative cases (at first instance courts)**

[Figure 13 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:

1 = Yes, access to the entire casefile, 0.5 = Yes, access to information about the progress of the case, 0 = No

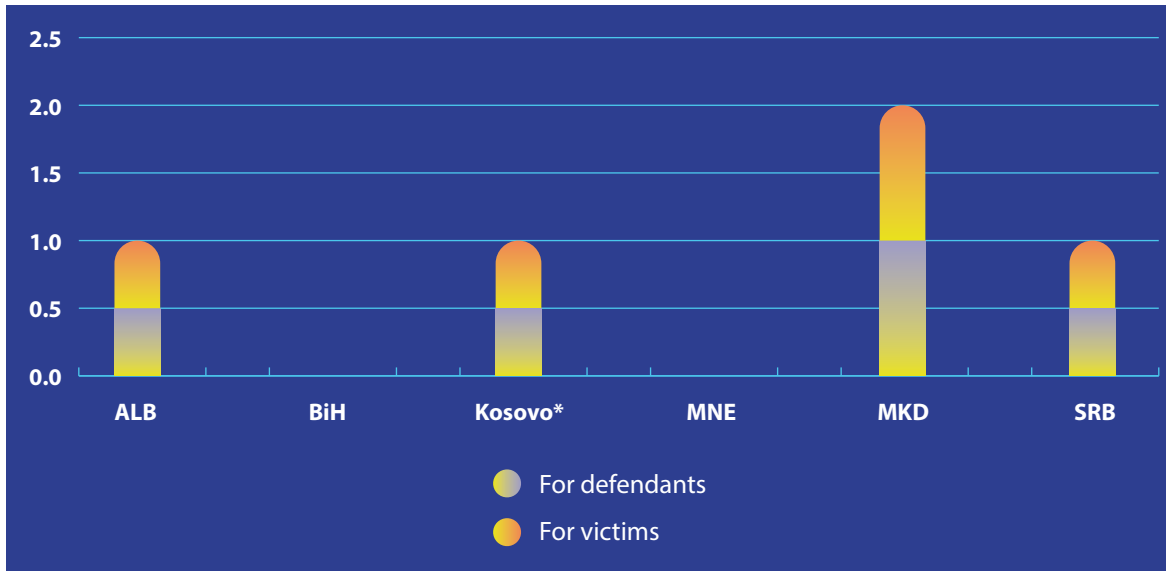
In the Western Balkans, only Bosnia and Herzegovina provides read-only access to the entire casefile that contains all the documents generated by the court as well as all incoming documents which have been scanned (larger courts do not have enough human resources to scan them all though). In North Macedonia the parties to court proceedings can access all the documents they received at any moment, provided they are registered to the e-delivery portal, but not the complete casefile. Furthermore, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\* and Serbia allow lawyers and parties to access information about the progress of the case, with Albania further allowing registered users to download, once pronounced, the decision in their cases, in non-anonymised form, but without legal

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<sup>36</sup> See the website of this system at <https://edostava.sud.mk>.

value. The access to case information in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be exercised also via mobile phone app<sup>37</sup>.

**Figure 10**  
**Access to electronic file or to information about the case in criminal cases (at first instance courts)**  
 [Figure 23 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
 1 = Yes, access to the entire casefile, 0.5 = Yes, access to information about the progress of the case, 0 = No

Across the board, the level of access to casefiles is uniform across all three categories of examined cases (civil/commercial; administrative; and criminal), the except for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro where there is no access to criminal casefiles, as shown in **Figure 10**.

## 4. Use of distance communication technologies (videoconferencing) by judicial authorities

Figure 2 above examined the general use of videoconferencing equipment by courts and prosecution services. As discussed, such use may include participation in hearings, trainings, and other types of meetings. The most formal and the most impactful use of such equipment relates to court hearings. Therefore, this section explores whether legislation allows online hearings, and if so, whether this opportunity is actually used by courts.

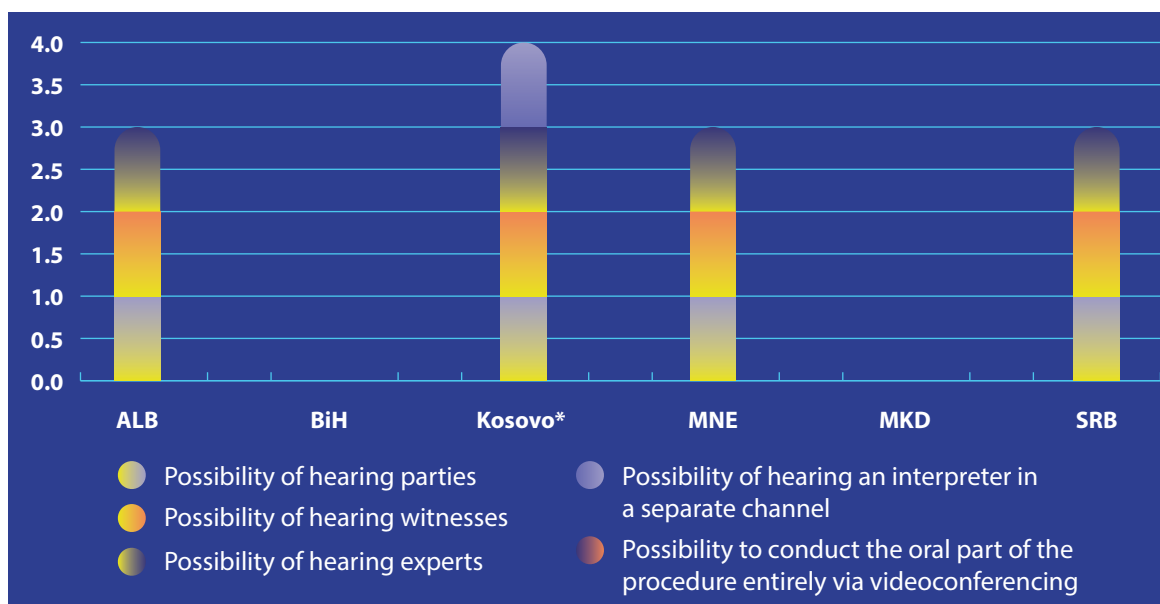


<sup>37</sup> The app eSud (not to be confused with the system for electronic interactions with administrative court in Serbia, which carries the same name) can be downloaded both on Google play and on the Apple store.

## 4.1. Use of videoconferencing in civil and commercial cases

The use of videoconferencing in civil and commercial cases has the potential to allow the resolution of business and civil disputes in situations where the physical presence of parties at a hearing may be prevented, e.g. due to lockdowns and quarantines. Furthermore, the option of distance hearings can help participants in the procedure to economise on time and transportation costs. For example, in some areas travel can be very time-consuming due to the mountainous terrain and less-than-optimal transportation links. In such situations, parties would much rather participate in an online hearing than spend many hours in transit just to attend a short court hearing in person.<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 11**  
**Use of distance communication technologies (videoconferencing) in civil and commercial cases**  
[Figure 4 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
2 = Yes, in all cases, 1 = Yes, in some cases, 0 = No

The use of videoconferencing in civil and commercial cases is allowed in Albania, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, and Serbia, although in practice it happens rarely.<sup>39</sup> Montenegro and Serbia allow such videoconferencing only by means of court's proprietary system, whereas in Kosovo\* it is possible to use commercially available platforms.<sup>40</sup>

38 Panzardi, Roberto O.; Osmanovic-Pasic, Zuhra; Petkova, Svetozara; Sipka, Olga; Sofijanic, Tatjana; Berhamovic, Esmin; Babovic, Branka; Prostran, Sonja. Improving Commercial Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Face of COVID-19 Crisis: Phase II Analysis - Medium to Long-Term Strategies (Bosnian). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/817901620783564726/Improving-Commercial-Justice-in-Bosnia-and-Herzegovina-in-the-Face-of-COVID-19-Crisis-Phase-II-Analysis-Medium-to-Long-Term-Strategies>

39 See, for example, Art. 111a of the [Civil Procedure Law in Montenegro](#) according to which procedural actions can be taken via video link, on request of the party or its representative, and subject to consent of the opposite party, judge's approval and fulfilment of technical conditions. Similar provisions are available in Articles 245 and 277 of the [Serbian Civil Procedure Law](#).

40 In pilot online hearings, the courts in Kosovo\* used the Zoom platform and North Macedonia used Microsoft Teams. (Information obtained during workshop)

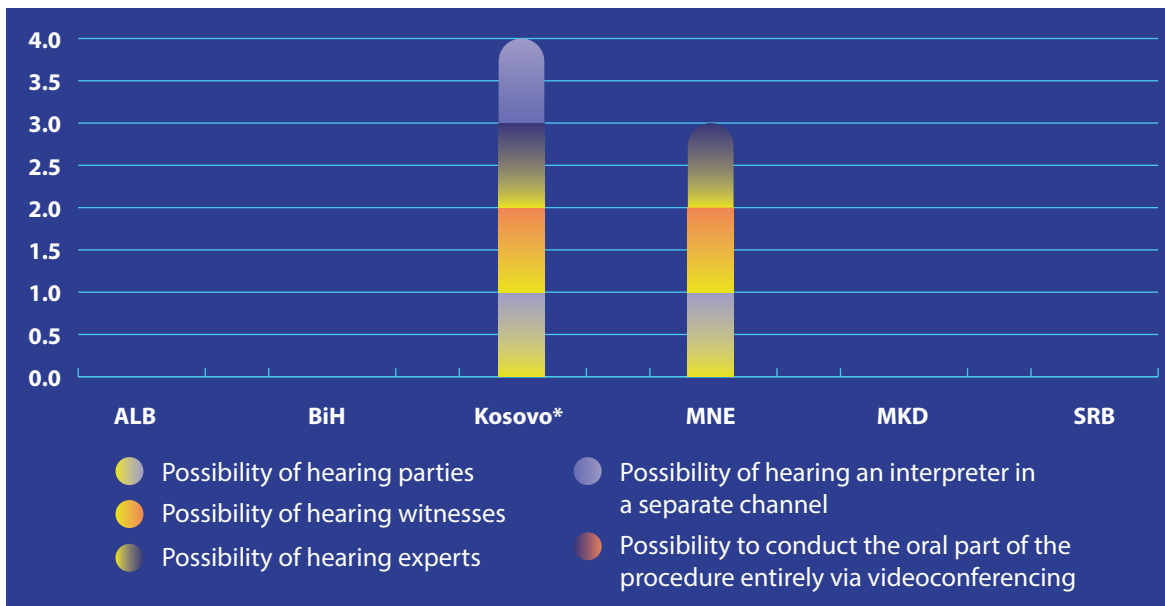


The platform being used for videoconferencing raises the question of whether simultaneous interpretation, via a separate channel, can be used in the course of videoconference. The commercially available Zoom platform has such capabilities and thus the use of simultaneous interpretation in video hearings is possible in Kosovo\*. Similarly, the proprietary video conferencing system used in some of the courts of Montenegro<sup>41</sup> allows for multiple channels and thus for simultaneous interpretation.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the laws of most jurisdictions allow for connecting to parties, witnesses, experts, etc. via a video conference but do not allow conducting the entire oral part of the proceedings online.

## 4.2. Use of videoconferencing in administrative cases

Regarding videoconferencing, the rules of administrative procedure mirror those of civil procedure. Although hearing a participant in the procedure through a videoconference is allowed in some systems in the region, such hearings are very rare. The administrative courts in Albania and Serbia are not equipped with the necessary videoconferencing tools, while the High Judicial Council of Montenegro puts a mobile kit at their disposal, if needed.

**Figure 12**  
**Use of distance communication technologies (videoconferencing) in administrative cases**  
 [Figure 5 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
 2 = Yes, in all cases, 1 = Yes, in some cases, 0 = No

## 4.3. Use of videoconferencing in criminal cases

In most jurisdiction, the first area of procedural law that introduces the examination of witnesses and other participants via videoconference is criminal procedure. The Western Balkans are no exception. Throughout the region, defendants and witnesses can be questioned from a distance. This usually happens in the presence of objective reasons that make it overly difficult for a particular person to at-

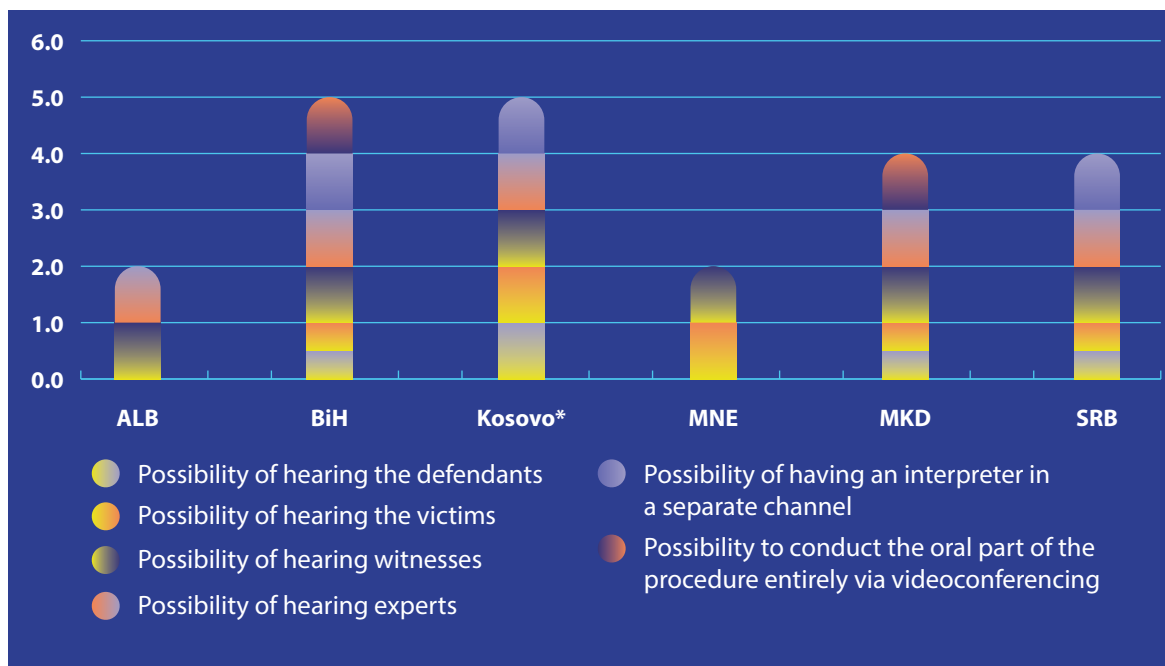


41 Montenegro has equipped some courts with smart courtrooms. They feature state-of-the-art ICT equipment.

42 Information on the functionalities of videoconferencing software in Montenegro obtained during the interview with the representative of Ministry of Justice.

tend a court hearing, e.g. in the case of witnesses whose identity must remain protected or where a participant in the proceedings must be questioned from another country. Furthermore, in most cases the rules on videoconferencing are adapted to situations where participants in the procedure must be questioned from abroad, in which case they are required to connect from another court. In the times of the current pandemic, where many persons may need to connect to a videoconference from their homes, this general limitation may hinder the use of online hearings. Thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the website of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) informs<sup>43</sup> that witnesses can connect from another Bosnia and Herzegovina court that has installed the judicial videoconferencing system, or from a foreign judicial institution. Although the judicial videoconferencing system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently integrated with the Cisco Webex cloud-based telepresence platform, which enables witnesses to connect from their home or office computers, this would in all probability not be allowed in practice in the absence of an explicit legislative authorisation.<sup>44</sup>

**Figure 13**  
**Use of distance communication technologies (videoconferencing) in criminal cases**  
[Figure 6 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:

2 = Yes, in all cases, 1 = Yes, in some cases, 0 = No

For the last two questions: 1 = Yes, in all cases, 0.5 = Yes, in some cases, 0 = No

Only a few of the Criminal Procedure Codes allow explicitly for conducting the entire procedure through remote communication technologies. One such example is the Brčko District in Bosnia and Herzegovina which in 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, passed amendments to its Criminal Procedure Law (CrPL) introducing online hearings in criminal proceedings. They can be used whenever there is an imminent health hazard or severe public danger for hearing participants.<sup>45</sup> In North Macedonia full online hearings are not regulated explicitly but were held on a pilot basis in the



43 See <https://pravosudje.ba/vstvfo/B/10001/kategorije-vijesti/7694/115396/114395>.

44 Article 205a of the Brčko District Criminal Procedure Law. See also Panzardi, Roberto O.; Osmanovic Pasic, Zuhra; Petkova, Svetozara; Sipka, Olga; Sofijanic, Tatjana; Berhamovic, Esmin; Babovic, Branka; Prostran, Sonja. [Improving Commercial Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Face of COVID-19 Crisis: Phase II Analysis - Medium to Long-Term Strategies \(English\)](#). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, page 46 - 47

45 See *ibidem* and Article 205a of the Brčko District Criminal Procedure Law.

Basic Court of Kavadarci during the pandemic.<sup>46</sup> It is expected that procedural laws with forthcoming legal amendments will allow them explicitly.

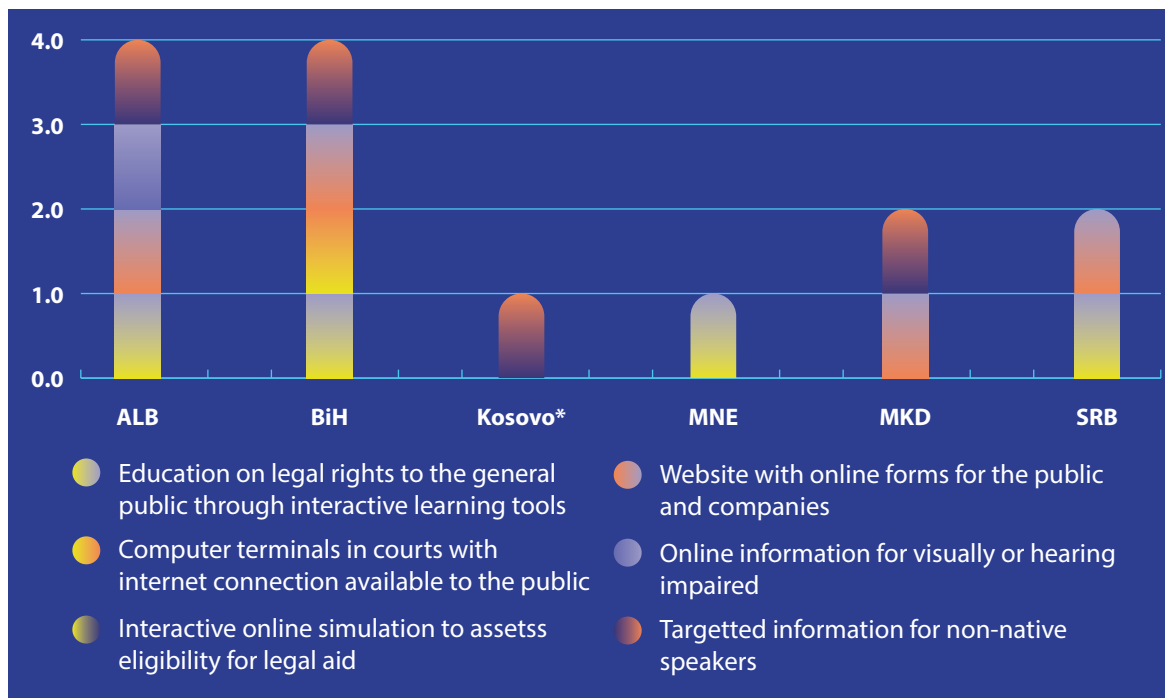
There are plans in the region to equip detention facilities with such infrastructure. For example, the [Judiciary ICT Development Programme 2021 – 2023](#) of Montenegro provides for (1) development of an analysis and technical specification for determining the number of videoconferencing rooms necessary in the Administration for Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions (AECS), allowing for testimony to be given by prisoners during court proceedings; and (2) adaptation of office space and purchase of necessary equipment, enabling giving of testimony remotely from all parts of the AECS in order to reduce costs and eliminate the risk of prisoners escaping during transport.

## 5. Online access to judicial information by the general public

Access to information and instructions about citizens’ legal rights and the means to exercise those are an essential part of access to justice. Currently, one of the most widely accessible ways to provide such access is the internet. The EC Mapping Exercise explores the available means to access such information in EU member states; in line with that approach, this report seeks to answer those same questions in respect of the Western Balkans.

### 5.1. Availability of online information about the judicial system

**Figure 14**  
**Availability of online information about the judicial system for the general public**  
 [Figure 34 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes

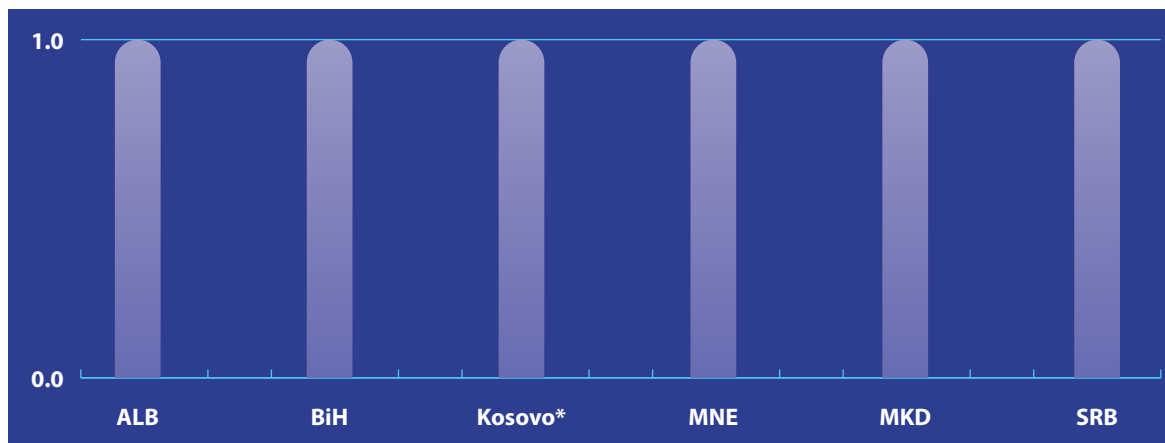
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46 See OSCE, Mission to Skopje, [Use of Advanced Electronic Tools in the Judiciary](#), Basic Assessment, December 2020.

There is no system in the region that provides all of the facilities covered by the EC Mapping Exercise (**Figure 14**). Online forms, where available, are usually documents to be downloaded and printed rather than filled in electronically; there are no interactive web forms. Albania<sup>47</sup> and Bosnia and Herzegovina appear to be most user-friendly and provide interactive information on citizens' legal rights websites with online forms and targeted information for non-native speakers.<sup>48</sup> Albania is also the only example in the region where information on court processes is available for people with disabilities. Specifically, the website of the Tirana District Court comprises videos on filing out a claim and on obtaining a certificate that include both oral instructions and instructions in sign language, for visually and hearing-impaired citizens, respectively.<sup>49</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina has publicly accessible informative kiosk in few courts. It should be noted though that these are currently not widely used, and the expectation is that they will be phased out. Interlocutors for this research report that similar kiosks were available in North Macedonia and Montenegro, but they were discontinued due to insufficient interest in them. Indeed, it can be expected that with the landslide increase in the use of smartphones, the importance of terminals at the court location will continue to decrease. Websites with online forms are also available in North Macedonia and Serbia, information for non-native speakers<sup>50</sup> – in Kosovo\* and North Macedonia, and interactive learning tools for the general public – in Montenegro and Serbia. Nowhere in the region is there interactive online simulation to assess eligibility for legal aid.

## 5.2. Availability of online access to court judgments

**Figure 15**  
**Availability of official internet sites/portals for free of charge access to legal texts**  
[Figure 35 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes



47 See [Albanian website with forms](#)

48 Regarding targeted information for non-native speakers, see, for example, the website of the [Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).

49 See website of [Tirana District Court](#).

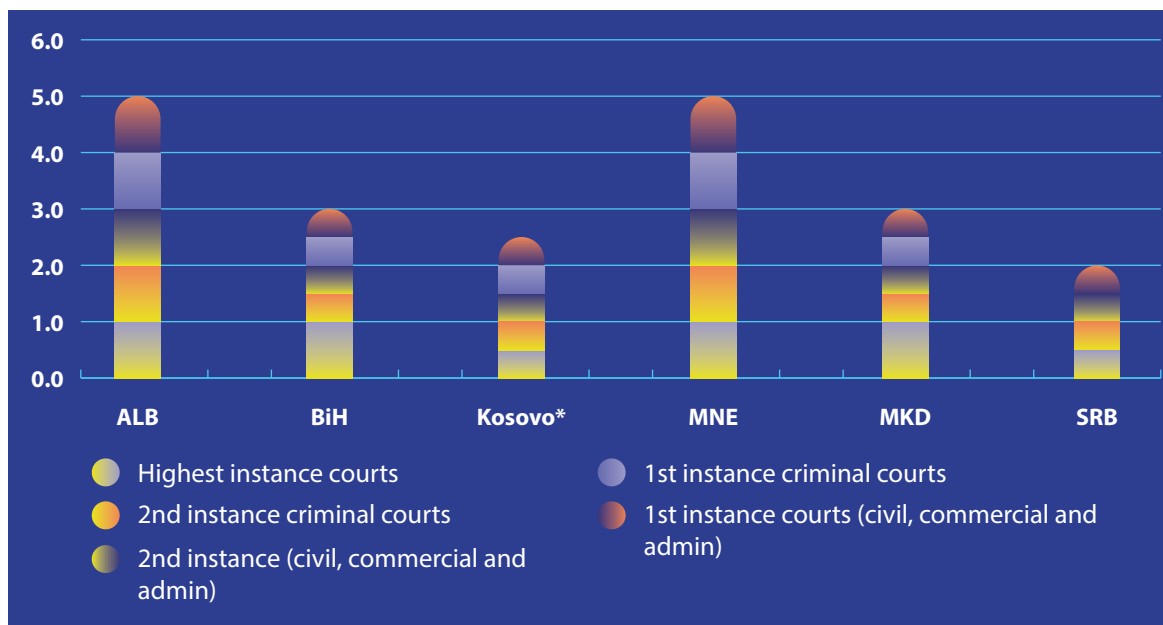
50 It should be noted that currently some browsers are able to offer machine-generated translations of websites. However, the availability of this functionality is dependent on the way in which the website is built and not all websites facilitate such machine translation.

Free of charge texts of legislation are widely available throughout the region. However, the official websites that give access to legal acts are usually not user friendly in providing possibilities for searches and consolidated or historical versions of legal texts. It might be necessary to access more than one website with legal information to locate the text of the law or obtain paid access in order to access the information in a user-friendly manner. Several commercial websites are available, which often provide a good part of the primary legislation for free.

### 5.3. Availability of online access to court judgments

Publication of caselaw is extremely important in any justice system for a multitude of reasons. Such publication fosters transparency, thus helping ensure predictability and consistency of caselaw. It also allows citizens to educate themselves on the work of the judiciary. Finally, the possibility of public scrutiny over judgments has a disciplining effect on judges, thus furthering the quality of justice.

**Figure 16**  
**Online access to published judgments by the general public**  
 [Figure 36 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:  
 0 = None, 0.5 = For some decisions, 1 = For all decisions

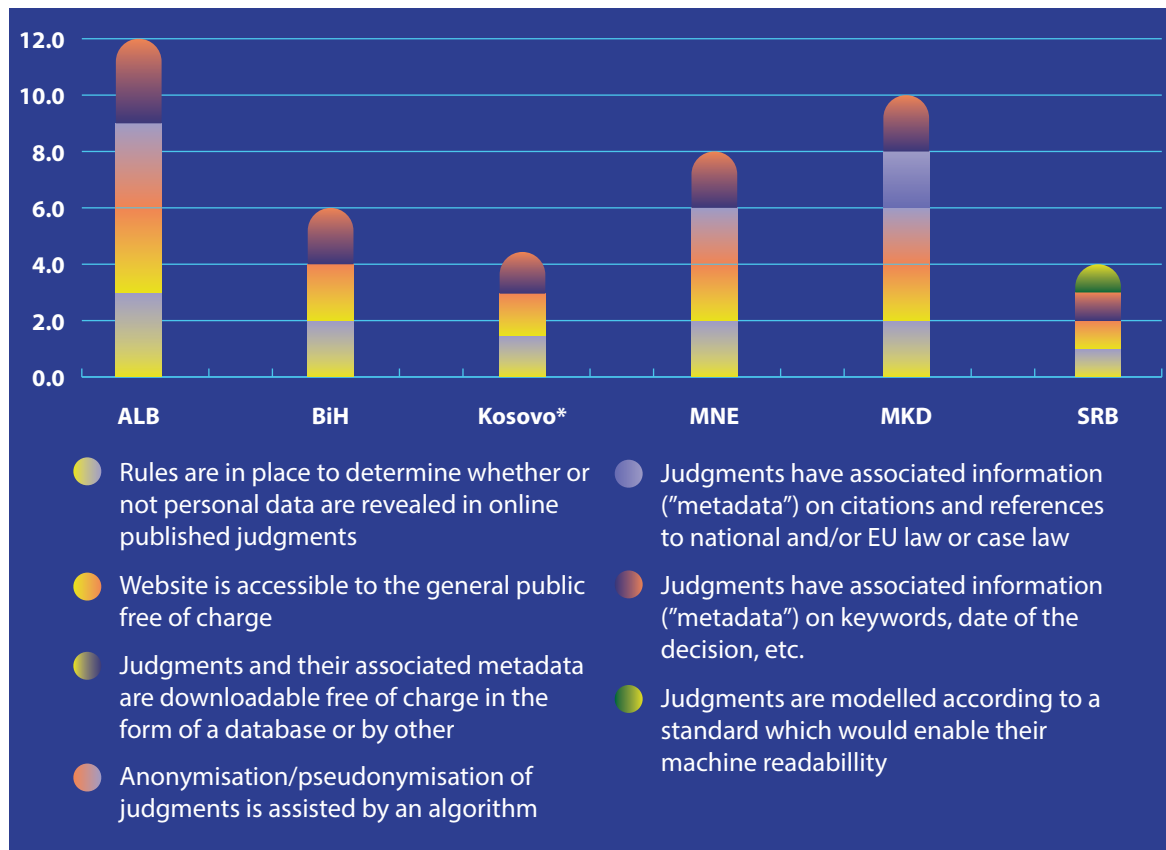
Generally, judiciaries in the region provide access to court judgments. Access to the highest instance court decisions is available in all jurisdictions, the same applies to second instance judgments. In some jurisdictions only selected judgments of each instance are published whereas in others, all judgments are announced online. Notably, Serbia does not publish first-instance judgments, except for administrative ones.

While it is important to determine whether court judgments are being published, it is no less important to assess how they are published. The latter question has several aspects including whether access to the judgments is subject to payment, whether personal data is hidden and if so, whether this

is being done manually or is assisted by an algorithm, whether metadata is available and searches by keywords are possible. These are shown in **Figure 17**.

**Figure 17**  
**Arrangements for increased accessibility to judicial decisions**

[Figure 37 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph:

0 = No, 0.5 = For each instance when some decisions are covered, 1 = For each instance when all decisions are covered

Access to published court judgments is free of charge everywhere in the region. Another feature that is available everywhere is that published judgments have associated information ("metadata") on keywords, date of the decision, etc. However, published judgments do not contain references to legal texts, which would aid in their use for analytical purposes. Furthermore, personal data is protected and anonymised in published court judgments in the entire region; however, it is not always done by an algorithm. Good practices in this regard were noted in Albania (where names are substituted by asterisks) and in Montenegro and North Macedonia (where names are pseudonymised with their initials) by simple algorithms.<sup>51</sup> In judiciaries where anonymisation or pseudonymisation need to be done manually, the preparation of judgments for publication takes more time and effort and this can lead to less judgments being duly published. While individual published judgments can be downloaded by users, it is not possible to download published judgments and their associated metadata.



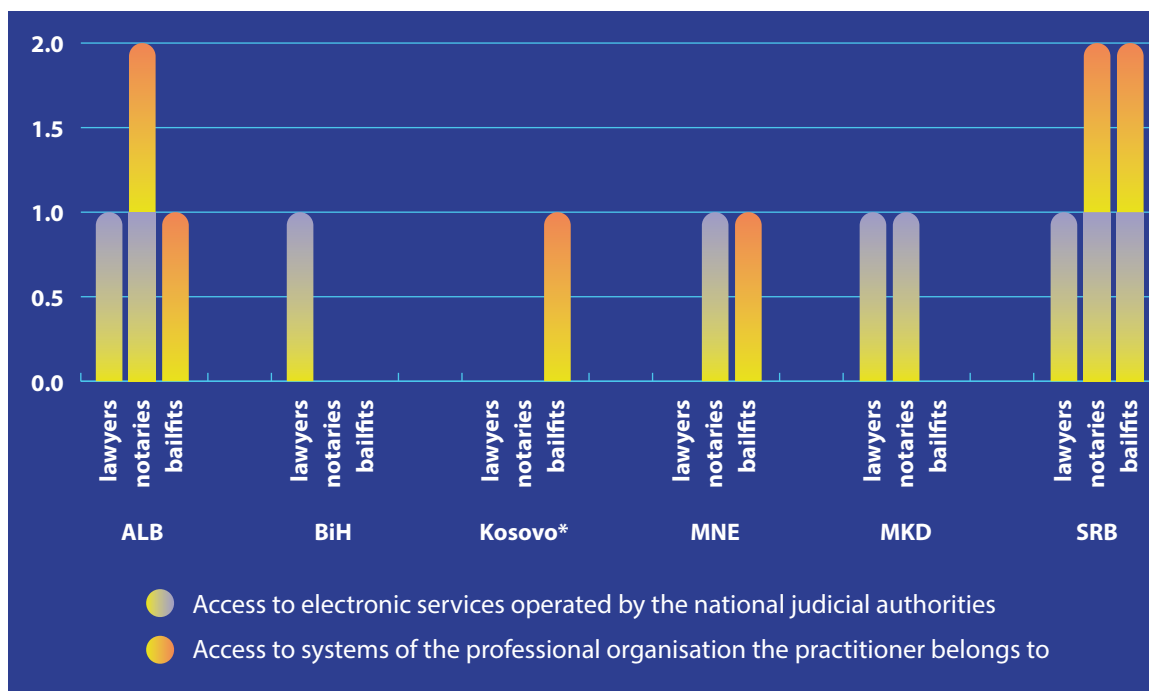
<sup>51</sup> The algorithm basically entails identifying the name of parties in the text by comparing it with the relevant metadata.

## 6. Digital solutions available to legal professionals

This section examines to what extent legal professionals in the region have access to case management systems or other digital tools to handle their work, be they provided by judicial authorities/MoJs or by their own professional organisation, and what options for effective remote work are available to each legal profession.

As illustrated in **Figure 18**, bailiffs and notaries are often using systems created by their Chambers, while lawyers utilise only services provided by judicial authorities (as mentioned above, access to casefiles and download of decisions in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, eDostava in North Macedonia and eSud in Serbia). Notaries also have access to electronic systems aimed at the registration of rights on real property in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia (probably the most complete). They also, in most instances, have access to the restricted system of their professional organisation. Such access is available in Albania, Kosovo\* and Serbia.

**Figure 18**  
**Access to IT systems for legal professionals**  
 [Figures 27 and 28 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes (No values indicated for bailiffs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since this function has stayed with the court)

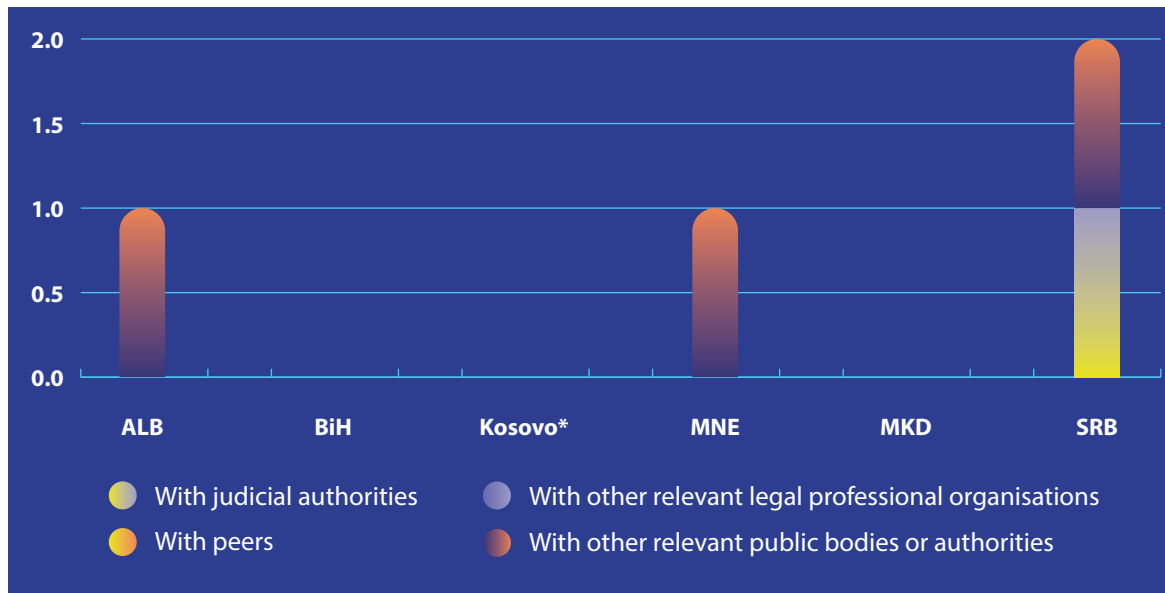
### 6.1. Lawyers

Most lawyers in the region are technically savvy and adaptive. However, the opportunities they have to conduct remote work are highly dependent on the existing legislation and governmental infrastructure. Remote work for lawyers has two aspects.

First, remote work relates to lawyers' interactions with judicial and public authorities and other practitioners' organisations (see **Figure 19**). This possibility is closely linked to the admissibility and availability of remote communication and the admissibility and availability of e-filing. Currently, as discussed above, possibilities for interactions with judicial authorities in the Western Balkans are limited. E-filing is possible only in administrative cases in Serbia (and utility claims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the non-contentious part of the process which does not involve lawyers external to the company). As far as interaction with public bodies is concerned, lawyers can electronically file requests on behalf of clients for registration of business entities in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia.

**Figure 19**  
**Possibility for lawyers to communicate securely via electronic channels and to send legally valid documents electronically (except by plain e-mail)**

[Figure 29 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes

Second, in case where lawyers need to work remotely with clients, those possibilities are linked to the regulation and use of e-identification and e-signature. While e-identification and e-signature are regulated across the region, their use between private parties remains very limited.

## 6.2. Notaries

Notaries' work usually requires physical presence of clients and in-person verification of their identities. Therefore, notarial work occurs mostly in a face-to-face setting. Furthermore, the laws regulating the activity of notaries may contain explicit provisions according to which notaries perform their duties from their office.<sup>52</sup> Still, some Chambers of Notaries in the region have case management systems that allow for remote login. Such is the system of notaries in Serbia, and in Albania, too, the CMS of notaries, Notary Information System Administration (NISA), provides for electronic filing and

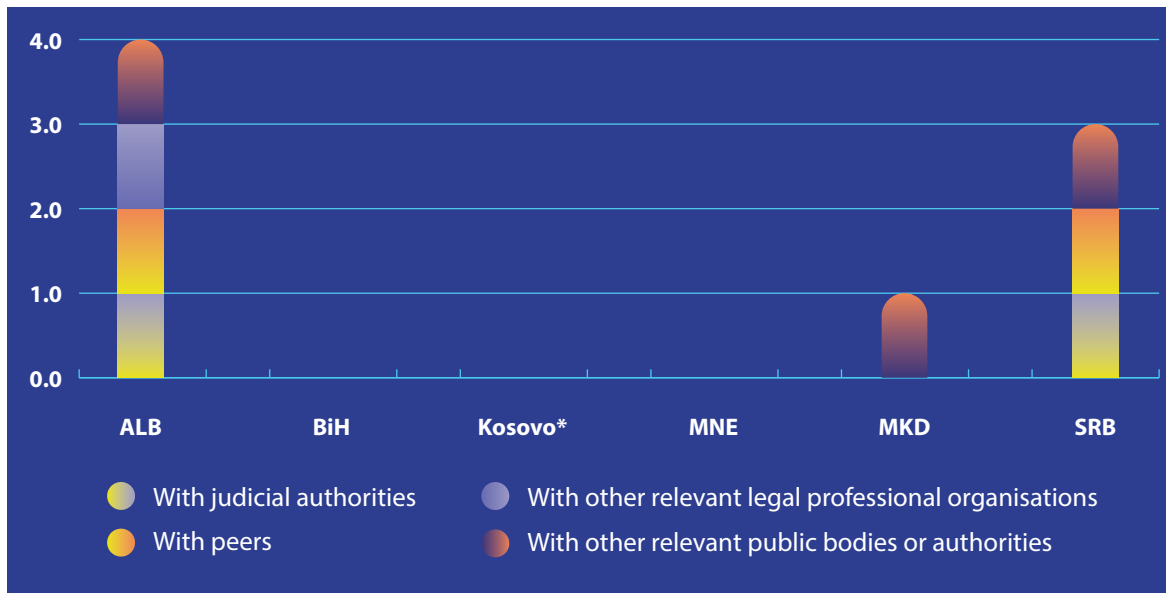


<sup>52</sup> See for example Art. 14 of the Law on Public Notaries, Serbia.



registration of cases.<sup>53</sup> These two systems also enable access to some electronic services by the court.

**Figure 20**  
**Possibility for notaries to communicate securely via electronic channels and to send legally valid documents electronically (except by plain e-mail)**  
 [Figure 30 in the EC 2020 Mapping report]



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes

Interestingly, the Serbian Law on Notaries Public provides for electronic notarisation. In practice, however, this provision is currently not being implemented and reportedly it is not clear how notaries would assess the validity of electronic signatures.

### 6.3. Bailiffs / enforcement agents

Throughout the region, Chambers of Bailiffs have created a single CMS to be used by their members. One exception is North Macedonia, where each enforcement agent is equipped with her/ his own case management system, chosen among the ones offered by a few competing providers. In Serbia, bailiffs have the right to access the information system for the judiciary (PIS) maintained by the MoJ in order to collect information about debtors and their assets.

Currently, bailiffs in the region cannot interact electronically with courts. In Serbia, it is envisaged that electronic communication between bailiffs and public bodies should be done through a special web application developed by the Ministry of Justice<sup>54</sup>; however, this functionality is not operational yet.

Bailiffs in the region generally are not able to initiate enforcement cases based on electronic request.



<sup>53</sup> According to information obtained during the workshop conducted in the framework of this research, NISA allows for a variety of electronic exchanges. Its cost is funded by a percentage of notarial fees.

<sup>54</sup> See [Rulebook on Electronic Communication Between Bailiffs and Other Authorities](#).

## 7. Use of innovative technologies

The EC Mapping exercise includes a section built on the recent *Study on the use of innovative technology in the justice field*,<sup>55</sup> which explores the current and planned use of artificial intelligence (AI) and distributed ledger technologies (blockchain) in EU member states.

In the course of the current research, only two instances of AI use emerged, one actual and one still in embryonic phase, both in Montenegro. The Montenegro Prosecution Office dealing with serious crimes has the possibility to use an IBM AI-based software to analyse large amounts of voluminous documents, after they are scanned and parsed with optical character recognition software to extract their content. The IT Department of the Montenegro Judicial Council is developing, with a private contractor, Daktilograf, a pilot application of machine learning techniques to associate sound waves with written words<sup>56</sup> in order to apply them to the automated transcription of court hearings. Given the innovative approach and the similarity of several languages within the region, after piloting, this project may be of interest in the WB region.

## 8. Recommendations

Overall, the jurisdictions of the Western Balkans are currently on the verge of a profound digital transformation in the area of justice. The ultimate goal of such transformation should be to put in place processes which are digital by default and do not require a duplicative paper trail for their validity. To achieve these goals, jurisdictions can build on the already existing good practices and implement the following approaches and solutions:

- A trend of introducing single centralised web-based systems for courts and for prosecutors is evident throughout the region. Such systems allow streamlining the maintenance of the software and production of consolidated statistical reports. To the extent that this is not yet fully implemented, it would be important to ensure that this goal is pursued consistently.
- To ensure the resilience of justice systems in times of crises such as the ongoing pandemic, the importance of remote work of judges, prosecutors and legal professionals will continue to increase. The case management systems in the region currently do not allow judges and prosecutors to log in from a location outside the premises of the court or the prosecution office. However, with the increased digitisation of processes, it is recommended to introduce such possibilities while adhering to the highest safety standards (such as procuring official laptops with controlled access, introducing two-factor authentication upon login, etc.).
- To establish processes that are digital by default it is recommended to establish digital exchanges of data and documents between courts, prosecutor services and other legal professions, which should be given legal validity via regulatory means. For the digitalisation of the



<sup>55</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Study on the use of innovative technologies in the justice field : final report, Publications Office, 2020, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/585101>

<sup>56</sup> A method similar to the one used by the commercial software Shazam to recognise musical pieces.

criminal justice chain, an integrated approach is recommended, such as the one of Kosovo\* which allows for digital exchanges between police, prosecution, and courts.

- The process of enabling e-filing in civil, commercial and criminal matters has already commenced and it can be useful to look at the already available examples in the region and build on them in continuing this development. Regarding e-filing in civil and administrative cases, Serbia (eSud) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOKOP-Mal) have examples of good practices that can be emulated. With regard to e-filing for legal aid, a good practice is present in Kosovo\*.
- The requirement of qualified electronic signatures for giving legal value to electronic submissions and documents could be re-considered. Across Europe, many private and public electronic services are provided based on simpler forms of electronic signature, for example, advanced electronic signature (e.g. username and password).<sup>57</sup> Also, the use of electronic seals<sup>58</sup> automatically added to documents finalised by the user, coupled with a two-factor authentication<sup>59</sup> may provide a solution which is less expensive and easier to deploy (at least for users within the judiciary and for legal professionals) than that of the qualified electronic signature, which highly regulated and most complex type of electronic identification and requires significant infrastructure for issuance and recognition.
- Concerning the payment of court fees, and in general any amount due from parties to public budgets and/or to courts (such as fines, advance payments, costs of criminal proceedings, etc.), it is important that each CMS makes it possible to calculate the amount due and make available, as Serbia is striving to do, as many payment options as possible (by bank transfer, credit cards, over the counter at banks or post offices or even PayPal) and to automatically follow up (through a unique payment code) if they have been paid. This would allow both to relieve staff from this task and to produce reliable data that enables monitoring of payments.
- Regarding electronic service of process (also referred to as e-notification), North Macedonia's e-Dostava is the leader in the region and its experience can be built on. The notification system of North Macedonia is making e-service possible for voluntarily registered users. European experience demonstrates that, ultimately, to improve the efficiency of service of process, jurisdictions tend to make electronic service of process mandatory for certain categories of qualified court users such as lawyers or commercial entities.<sup>60</sup>
- The successful introduction of digital processes such as e-filing and e-notification is highly dependent on the good interaction with bar associations, which should be sought at an early stage.
- Electronic access to information about the progress of the case and key procedural events is key to ensuring both improved user experience and more efficient operation of court adminis-



57 For example, the e-justice system of the Court of Justice of the European Union does not require a qualified electronic signature: [https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/P\\_78957/en/](https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/P_78957/en/)

58 The equivalent of qualified electronic signatures, but for a legal person or an electronic system.

59 When other factors are required besides the username and password, such as the possession of a mobile phone to which an additional one-time code is sent.

60 See Petkova, Svetozara; Sipka, Olga; Sofijanic, Tatjana; Berhamovic, Esmin; Babovic, Branka; Prostran, Sonja. [Improving Commercial Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Face of COVID-19 Crisis: Phase II Analysis - Medium to Long-Term Strategies \(English\)](#). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, page 68 – 69.

tration, which would not be overwhelmed with visitors seeking information. Currently, several judiciaries in the region provide possibilities to track the progress of the case online and it is recommended that these possibilities should be expanded across the board. Ultimately, though, the transition to processes which are digital by default requires electronic access to the entire casefile. Initially, such development would be resource intensive as it requires both human and material resources that would enable scanning of all documents that are received on paper. As electronic filing is enabled and an increasing number of documents are filed electronically, the need to scan paper documents will decrease substantially.

- Currently videoconferencing is usually allowed and conducted just in criminal cases but there is interest and intention to expand it also to other types of cases. Indeed, in addition to providing an opportunity to examine witnesses who are protected or reside abroad (which is the most popular current use of videoconferencing), it can also ensure more economical examination of cases which do not necessitate personal presence of participants in the court room. Conducting hearings through videoconferences poses numerous legal and technical questions (e.g. from where parties should connect, what functionalities the platforms should provide, etc.) which are largely still open, not only in this region. Given that during COVID-19 pandemic all jurisdictions have experimented in this area to various degrees, an exchange of experiences among legal professionals in the region may provide a useful contribution to the overall debate.
- Regarding online access to information for the general public, it is recommended that instructions on citizens' legal rights and means to exercise them could be made more interactive. Furthermore, websites with such information could be built in a way to enable automatic translation being offered by some browsers. Regarding access to laws and regulations, jurisdictions need to facilitate access to consolidated and historical versions of laws. In respect of the publication of judgments, it is recommended that algorithms for automatic protection of personal data be introduced across the region, to spare the time of court personnel. Furthermore, it would be useful to introduce searches by specific legal terms or by references to legislation, and summaries of important judgments.
- Regarding publication of both laws and judgments, using common standards<sup>61</sup> across the region could enable development of shareable solutions such as Building Blocks (see below) and facilitate searches among different jurisdictions.
- Regarding digital solutions for legal professionals, their integration with the systems available to justice authorities should continue. Furthermore, regional exchanges could provide useful sharing of experiences.
- It is recommended to maximise the possibilities for re-use of open-source software in a manner similar to the EU approach under the Digital Europe Programme, which is funding a set of generic and reusable Digital Service Infrastructures (DSI), also known as Building Blocks.<sup>62</sup> There are already examples of regional donations of software followed by customisation, and they could be built on (e.g. Registry of Fines donated by Bosnia and Herzegovina to Montenegro; and the case management for the execution of criminal sanctions donated by Serbia to Montenegro).

61 Such as <http://www.akomantoso.org/>

62 See <https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/The+Vision>

- In the field of innovative technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain, joint development can be fostered especially for language-related tools such as tools for transcription of hearings and natural language processing for documents and analysis of decisions, which can be developed among jurisdictions with similar languages and legal traditions.
- In the course of the mapping process, interlocutors indicated that there is an interest and there might be added value in exchanges on specific solutions implemented in other jurisdictions in the region, especially for the professionals responsible for the technical aspects of ICT for justice. Identified topics of interest include modalities for e-filing and e-notification, random case assignment, regional data exchanges, etc.
- RCC could consider setting up a regional network of justice ICT professionals to organise such exchanges in a more systematic manner, choosing topics for in-depth examination at regular meetings. Such an approach would foster cooperation modalities that are already taking place (e.g. in the form of reciprocal study visits and donations of software to be then locally customised).

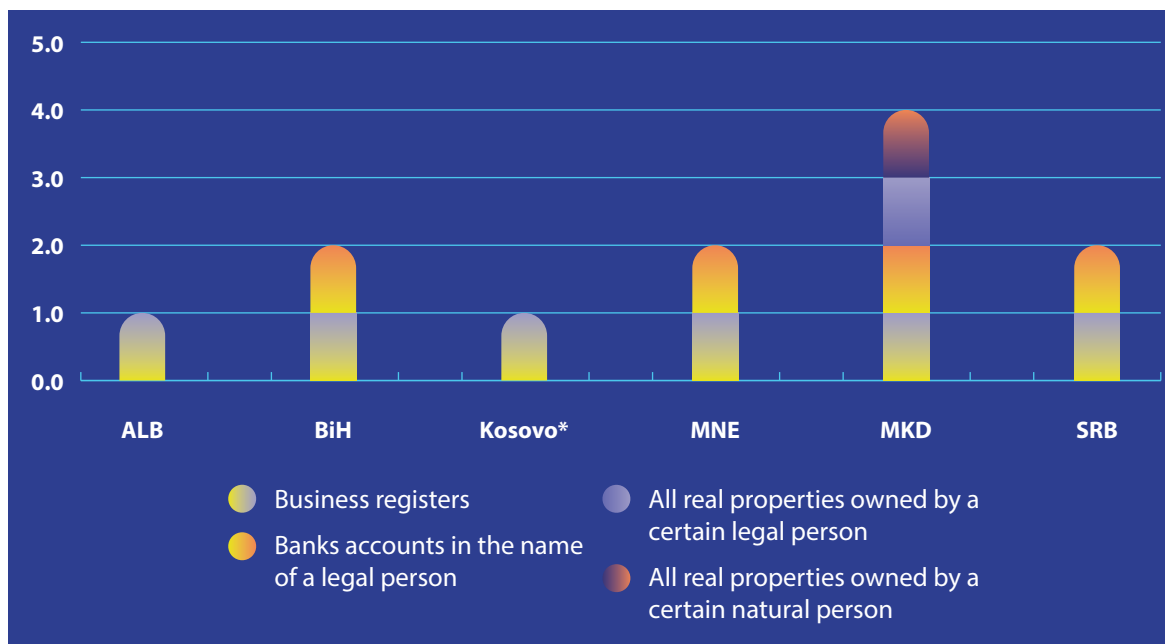
## IV. Regional exchanges of data and documents

### 1. Exchanges available at the level of individual jurisdictions

In order to identify the possibilities for data exchanges at the regional level, it is useful to first explore the mechanisms for access to and exchange of data and documents in each jurisdiction.

#### 1.1. Information available to the general public

**Figure 21**  
Data searches available to the public



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes

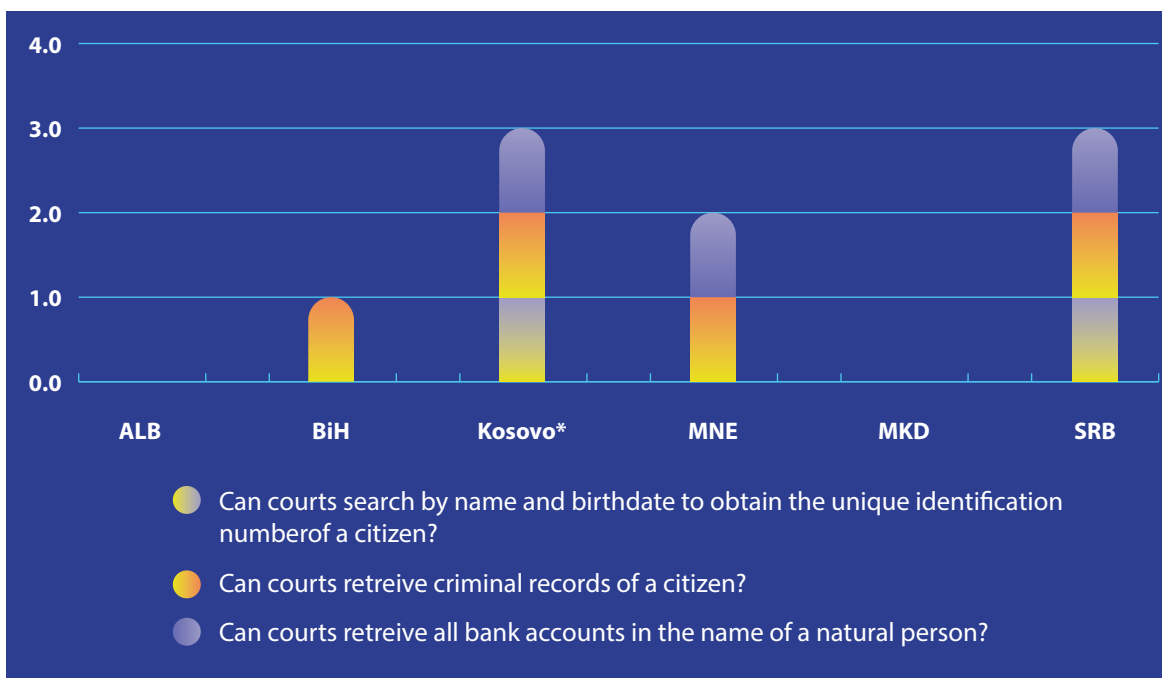
**Figure 21** presents information about public access to data via Internet. In cases where information is readily available online, with no restrictions as to the type of users who might access it, it may be redundant to establish dedicated data exchange mechanisms. However, when the data in question is needed for official use, it may still be necessary to request a formal document issued by the relevant authority.

All business registers in the Western Balkans can be searched online.<sup>63</sup> Further research would be needed to ascertain to what extent these include updated information about ongoing insolvency procedures and whether they provide information about owners and beneficiaries. Information about bank accounts opened by legal persons can be retrieved online from the websites of the central banks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Only in North Macedonia it is possible to obtain information on real properties owned by a legal or natural person.

## 1.2. Information available to courts and prosecution offices

Figures 22 and 23 show the types of data which are made available respectively to courts and prosecutor’s offices. The connection is implemented via ad-hoc secure automated web-services, which are either integrated in the respective case management systems or made available (as in Kosovo\*) to selected judicial officers and/or staff members via a web-interface. Particularly noteworthy is the integrated approach taken in Serbia with the Judiciary Informative System (Pravosudno-informativni system, PIS) which allows, using a single interface, to access data of social insurance and pension funds, business registries, courts, including misdemeanour ones, Ministry of Internal Affairs, prisons, Geodetic Institute, Central Bank, courts, notaries, the tax administration, Statistical Institute and criminal records.

**Figure 22**  
Electronic data exchanges available to courts



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes

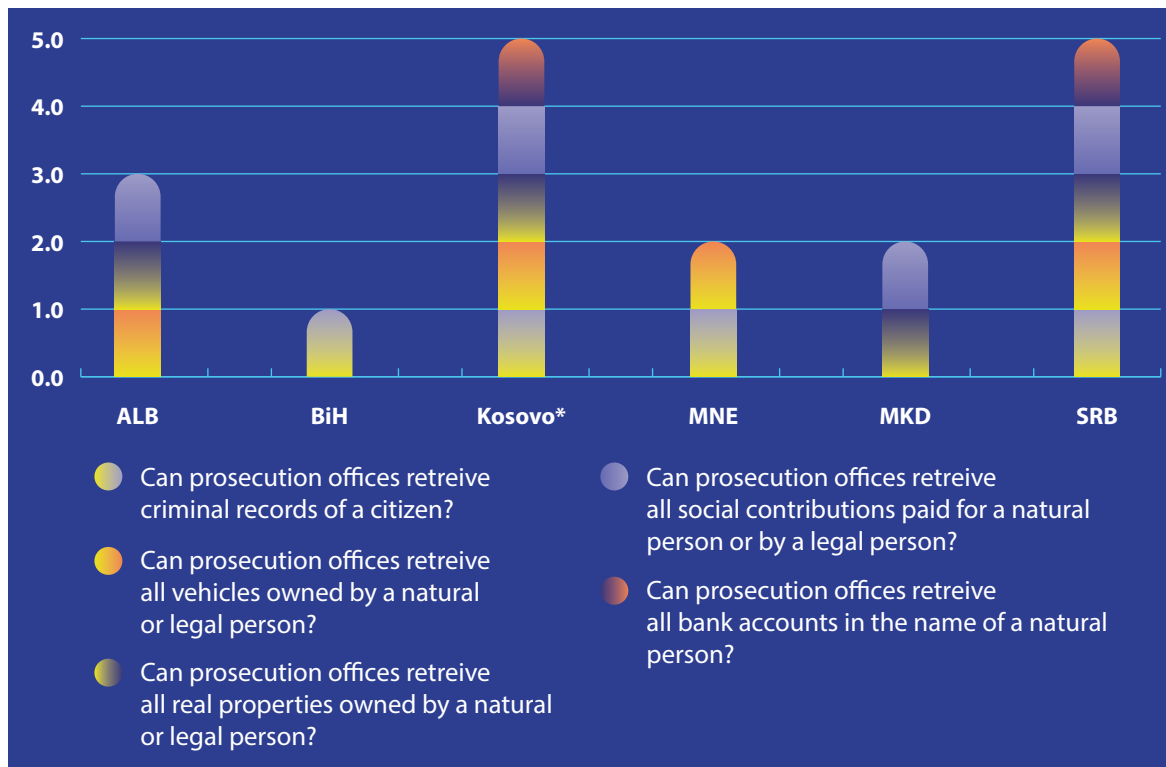
Criminal records are retrievable by courts and prosecutor’s offices almost all over the region, with the exception of Albania and North Macedonia, where there is no central criminal records registry. Kosovo\* (where similarly to Albania, Montenegro and Serbia this is the responsibility of the MoJ) was the last to deploy such a system and made it purposefully compliant with the European Criminal



63 See the table with the relative websites in Annex 2.

Records Information System (ECRIS)<sup>64</sup> specifications. It remains to be researched to what extent the information about ongoing criminal cases is available.

**Figure 23**  
**Electronic data exchanges available to prosecution offices**



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 Yes

Only in Kosovo\* and Serbia it is possible to search for the unique identification number of a citizen on the basis of the available information, which is a crucial step to enable further searches, which are almost invariably requiring this number as input parameter. Registers of vehicles are not available to prosecution offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia, but it has to be noted that they can obtain this information via the law enforcement agencies. Access to information on bank accounts in the name of natural persons is available in Kosovo\*, Montenegro and Serbia.

### 1.3. Information available to enforcement agents

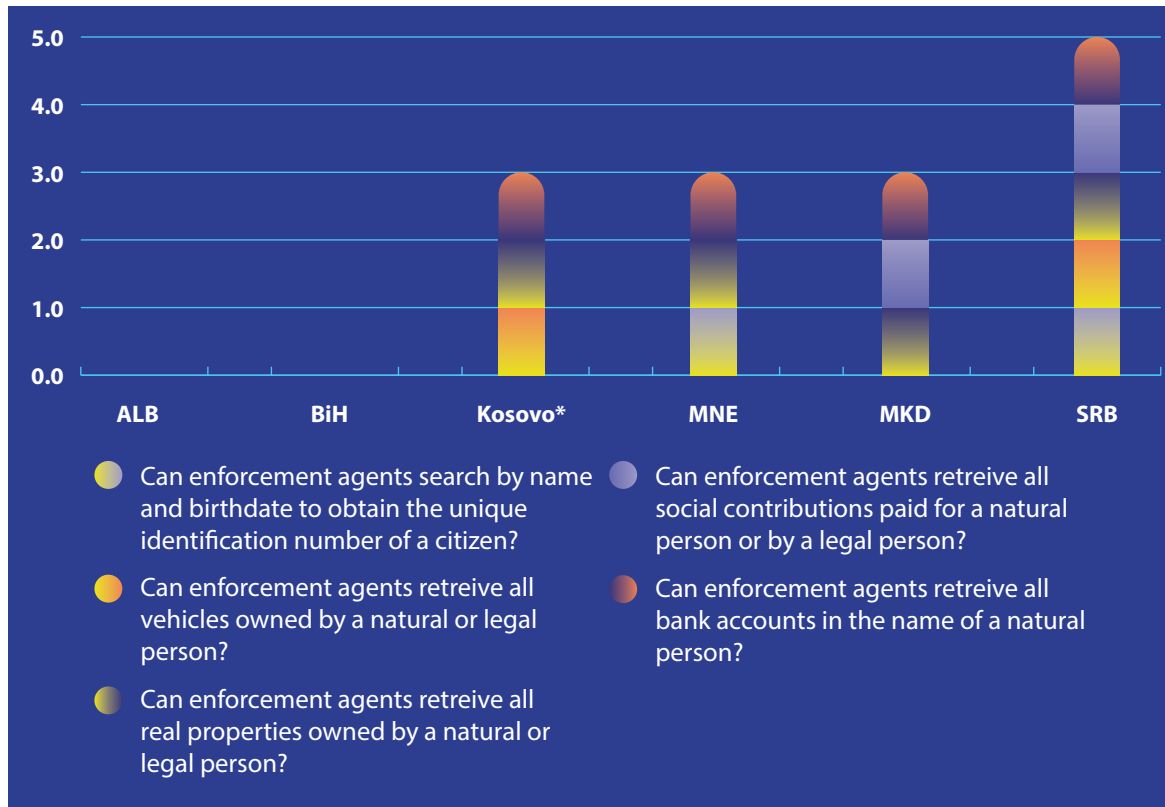
Information on bank accounts in the name of natural persons may be of interest for criminal investigations, but also for the enforcement of civil judgments. For this reason, the access to such information is also examined in **Figure 24** which summarises the data exchanges made available to enforcement agents, be them employees of public agencies (as in Albania), autonomous professionals (as in all jurisdictions with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina) or court officers (Bosnia and Herzegovina).



64 See <https://ecris.eu/criminal-record-certificate/>



**Figure 24**  
**Electronic data exchanges available to enforcement agents (bailiffs or judicial officers)**



The following values have been assigned to the answers illustrated by the graph: 0 = No, 1 = Yes

It should be noted that although Albania and BiH both receive zero scores in respect of data available to bailiffs, the reasons thereof are different in both jurisdictions. While in BiH there is no electronic service allowing to exchange such data, in Albania, there seems to be lack of an agreement with the government to access the available data.<sup>65</sup>

## 2. Current needs and possibilities for regional exchanges of data and documents

According to interlocutors’ statements collected during interviews and the three workshops, the information that is most frequently needed in the civil justice field relates to registrations of marriages and civil status registries in general, information about insolvency proceedings and real property books/ cadastres for notaries, especially in relation to inheritance.

In the criminal justice field, the most frequent subjects of such data sharing requests are access to criminal records and information about ongoing criminal proceeding, queries on civil registries



<sup>65</sup> Source: interview with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Chamber of Private Enforcement Agents.

(births/deaths/citizenship), assets information, especially real property, to assess the risk of persons escaping from justice and hence justify the request for pre-trial detention. Furthermore, there are evidence collection requests such as requests to interrogate persons that reside in another jurisdiction, through videoconference connection or otherwise. There are also requests for obtaining various documents such as hearing minutes from other cases, entire casefiles (which may include voluminous documents folders) and various types of certifications.

Requests such as the ones described above are channelled via international legal cooperation mechanisms, notably through central authorities. In the entire region this role is entrusted to the MoJs, which collect domestically the data and documents and transmit them abroad. Practitioners shared that time for responses can range from minimum 3 to 6 months to 2 years for the more complex requests.

In this context, it is useful to mention that four out of six WB jurisdictions have installed the LURIS information system for international legal cooperation. The system was originally developed in the Netherlands and then customised in each installation. The system's purpose is to register and possibly exchange both outgoing and incoming requests for international legal assistance. Currently, the system does not ensure regional interconnectedness and functions only at the level of individual jurisdiction, allowing transfers of requests from various institutions to the central authority (the MoJ). The main output of the system are very detailed reports which allow to track the real and average timing for answering each type of request, both outgoing and incoming. It is meaningful to note that, for example, out of 382 outgoing requests from Montenegro in 2019, 57% were directed to Western Balkans jurisdictions and 33% to EU member states, with the rest of the world accounting for only 9%.<sup>66</sup> As far as incoming cases are concerned, of 576 request received for criminal cases in 2019 in North Macedonia, 47% were from EU, 31% from WB jurisdictions and 23% from other countries, while out of 650 requests for civil cases the percentages were respectively 57% (EU), 27% (WB) and 16% (others).<sup>67</sup>

In terms of timing, if we use as an example the number of days needed in 2019 to satisfy a simple request for criminal records to and from other WB jurisdictions, it took Montenegro from 0 to 12 days on average for incoming and between 42 and 123 days for outgoing requests. It is interesting to note in regard to timings that the Law on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters adopted in 2021 in North Macedonia provides for deadlines for the actions to be performed both by the central authority and by the judicial authorities.

In some cases, when there are Memorandums of Understanding signed between particular authorities (e.g. on war crime cases between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia), such requests may be exchanged directly between prosecution offices. Such system allows generally for a speedier resolution of requests, and several interlocutors suggested that it would be helpful to widen its applicability.

Electronic exchange of documents is hindered by the fact that electronic signatures are not reciprocally recognised within the region. While jurisdictions in the region are striving to ensure compliance of their electronic identification legislation with the standards of Regulation (EU) No. 910/2014

66 Source: LURIS report kindly provided by the Montenegro MoJ.

67 Source: LURIS report kindly provided by the North Macedonia MoJ. A systematic comparison of all data from such systems was out of the scope of the current exercise.

on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and may provide for recognition of electronic signatures and other electronic identification schemes recognised in the EU, no mutual recognition of such schemes is available regionally. The rules for possible recognition vary: Serbia, for example, requires reciprocity as stated within an international treaty<sup>68</sup> while in Kosovo\* "a certificate issued outside of Kosovo\* shall have the same legal effect in Kosovo\* as a certificate issued in Kosovo\* if it offers a substantially equivalent level of reliability"<sup>69</sup>.

### 3. Recommendations

Based on the need to make regional exchanges of judicial data and documents quicker and more efficient, the following measures are recommended:

- On the basis of the statistics from LURIS and similar systems, collect information on the most frequent types of requests and the timelines for response. Based on this, jurisdictions in the region can jointly work to set time standards for processing requests of each type. Once standards are put in place, annual reports of actual processing times can be publicised in order to verify whether established standards are complied with. Initially, the standards referred to above could be voluntary and/or bilateral. Depending on lessons learned from their use, a multilateral regional instrument regulating such standards could also be considered.
- A fast track could be created for requests related to particular crimes, which have a strong cross-border element (such as human trafficking) or are of such nature that reoffending can be of particular risk (such as offences against minors and sexual offences in general).
- Organise discussions on the opportunity of the adoption of legal instruments and tools in the Western Balkans modelled on the approach taken by EU for its member states:
  - a regional instrument providing that most requests for international legal assistance shall be made directly between judicial authorities, possibly with central authorities being copied just for information.<sup>70</sup>
  - a regional mechanism for the exchanges of information in criminal records both related to citizens and to third-country nationals.<sup>71</sup> This would also set the basis for an easier future integration with the corresponding EU mechanisms.
- Set up channels for secure and legally valid electronic transmission of requests for international legal cooperation and responses thereto. It should be noted that even a simple email can achieve this, provided that messages are encrypted, for example, by making use of digital

68 See Article 40 of the [Law on Electronic Document, Electronic Identification and Trust Services in Electronic Business](#).

69 Article 62 of the [Law on Information Society services](#).

70 See the [Convention established by the Council in accordance with Article 34 of the Treaty on European Union, on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Member States of the European Union](#)

71 See [COUNCIL FRAMEWORK DECISION 2009/315/JHA](#) and [DIRECTIVE \(EU\) 2019/884 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL](#),

certificates. Where legally valid documents need to be transmitted, central authorities could be equipped with electronic signatures recognised by all receiving jurisdiction to ensure legal validity of the transmitted documents as certified copies.

- To facilitate the regional exchange of electronic data and documents, legislators could consider mutual recognition of such electronic identification in the Western Balkans based on a multilateral instrument or on reciprocity.

# Annex 1. List of interviews and workshops participants

## Interviews:

1. Henri Hatillari, IT specialist, Specialist, Case Management Support Sector, High Judicial Council, Albania
2. Kujtim Luli, Prosecutor, General Prosecutor's Office, Albania
3. Skender Baca, Director of IT Department, General Prosecutor's Office, Albania  
Suela Bushi, Judicial Police Officer in the Foreign Relation Department, General Prosecutor's Office, Albania
4. Kenan Softić, Head of IT Department, High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Fikret Šabić, Haris Kurtić, Deputy Heads of IT Department, High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Džejlan Šehović, Coordinator of the Legal-analytical Unit, High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina
5. Mersudin Pružan, Prosecutor, Bosnia and Herzegovina Prosecutor's Office, Bosnia and Herzegovina
6. Fatmir Rexhepi, Head of ICT Office and ICT/CMIS Project Manager, Kosovo\* Judicial Council, Kosovo\*
7. Ilir Hetemi, Head of IT Department, Kosovo\* Prosecutorial Council, Kosovo\*
8. Nikolina Mikeska Kostadinovska, Head of Sector for Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, North Macedonia  
Mihajlo Vojtkiv, ICT Advisor, Ministry of Justice, North Macedonia  
Aleksandra Vikovikj, Advisor for EU process, Ministry of Justice, North Macedonia
9. Gordana Milevska, Head of Unit for International Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Department for International Legal Assistance, Ministry of Justice, North Macedonia
10. Dražen Radonjić, Head of Division for Information System of Judiciary, Directorate for Information System of the Judiciary and Data Security, Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro, Montenegro
11. Darko Drašković, Chief of ICT Department, Judicial Council, Montenegro
12. Anica Obradović, Head of IT Department, Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, Montenegro
13. Dušan Kuzmanović, ICT Legal Specialist, Ministry of Justice, Serbia

## Workshop on regional exchanges for prosecution services (13/12/2021):

14. Eric Vincken, Project Co-manager of the IPA project Countering Serious Crime in the Western Balkans
15. Ilir Hetemi, Head of IT Department at Kosovo\* Prosecutorial Council (Kosovo\*)
16. Skender Baca, Director of IT Department, General Prosecutor's Office, Albania

## Workshop on regional exchanges for judiciary (14/12/2021):

17. Jasmina Čosić Dedović, Judge at the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)
18. Lazar Nanev, Chairperson of the Basic Court in Kavadarci and President of the ICT Coordination Council for the Judiciary (MK)
19. Marija Filipović, Senior Adviser for Normative Issues and EU Integrations, Judicial Council (SR)

## Workshop on regional exchanges for legal professionals (15/12/2021):

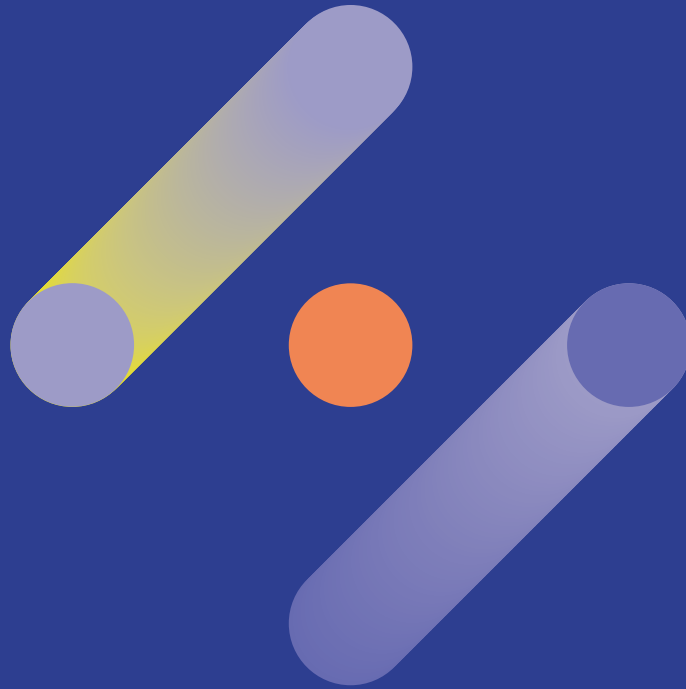
20. Emilija Pavloska, Enforcement Agent, Shtipe (NM)
21. Alban Ruli, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Chamber of Private Bailiffs (ALB)
22. Fatmir Lacey, Notary in Tirana and Deputy President of the Notary Chamber (ALB)
23. Biljana Damjanovska, Notary in Bitola (NM)

## Annex 2. Useful Internet resources

LEGISLATION OFFICIAL PORTALS		
ALB	<a href="https://qbz.gov.al/">https://qbz.gov.al/</a>	Official Gazette
BiH	<a href="http://www.mpr.gov.ba/biblioteka/zakoni/default.aspx?id=1894&amp;langTag=bs-BA">http://www.mpr.gov.ba/biblioteka/zakoni/default.aspx?id=1894&amp;langTag=bs-BA</a> + websites of parliamentary assemblies and governments	MoJ
Kosovo*	<a href="https://www.kuvendikosoves.org/srb/predlozi-zakona-i-zakoni/">https://www.kuvendikosoves.org/srb/predlozi-zakona-i-zakoni/</a>	Parliament
MNE	<a href="https://www.skupstina.me/me/sjednice/zakoni-i-druga-akta">https://www.skupstina.me/me/sjednice/zakoni-i-druga-akta</a>	Parliament
MKD	<a href="https://ldbis.pravda.gov.mk/">https://ldbis.pravda.gov.mk/</a>	MoJ
SRB	<a href="http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/">http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/</a>	Official Gazette

JUDICIAL DECISIONS OFFICIAL PORTALS		
ALB	<a href="http://gjykata.gov.al/rrethi-durr%C3%ABs/durr%C3%ABs-district-court/court-cases/penal-cases/">http://gjykata.gov.al/rrethi-durr%C3%ABs/durr%C3%ABs-district-court/court-cases/penal-cases/</a> (and similar for all courts except Tirana District Court that uses another system)	
BiH	<a href="https://csd.pravosudje.ba/vstvfo/B/142/kategorije-vijesti/141/simple">https://csd.pravosudje.ba/vstvfo/B/142/kategorije-vijesti/141/simple</a> [a new portal <a href="https://sudskapraksa.pravosudje.ba">sudskapraksa.pravosudje.ba</a> should be available as of February 2022]	
Kosovo*	Supreme Court: <a href="https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/publications/verdicts/?lang=en&amp;courtId=12">https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/publications/verdicts/?lang=en&amp;courtId=12</a> Court of Appeal: <a href="https://apeli.gjyqesori-rks.org/publications/verdicts/lista-me-aktgjkimet-e-fundit/?lang=en&amp;courtId=14">https://apeli.gjyqesori-rks.org/publications/verdicts/lista-me-aktgjkimet-e-fundit/?lang=en&amp;courtId=14</a> Basic courts: <a href="https://prishtine.gjyqesori-rks.org/publications/verdicts/lista-me-aktgjkimet-e-fundit/?lang=en&amp;courtId=5">https://prishtine.gjyqesori-rks.org/publications/verdicts/lista-me-aktgjkimet-e-fundit/?lang=en&amp;courtId=5</a> (and similar for all courts)	
MNE	<a href="https://sudovi.me/sdvi/odluke">https://sudovi.me/sdvi/odluke</a>	
MKD	<a href="http://www.sud.mk">www.sud.mk</a>	
SRB	<a href="https://sudskapraksa.sud.rs/sudska-praksa">https://sudskapraksa.sud.rs/sudska-praksa</a>	

BUSINESS REGISTERS SEARCHES		
ALB	<a href="https://qkb.gov.al/search/search-in-trade-register/search-for-subject/">https://qkb.gov.al/search/search-in-trade-register/search-for-subject/</a>	
BiH	<a href="https://bizreg.pravosudje.ba/pls/apex/f?p=183:20:1511819498290903">https://bizreg.pravosudje.ba/pls/apex/f?p=183:20:1511819498290903</a>	
Kosovo*	<a href="https://arbk.rks-gov.net/page.aspx?id=2,1">https://arbk.rks-gov.net/page.aspx?id=2,1</a>	
MNE	<a href="http://www.pretraga.crps.me:8083/">http://www.pretraga.crps.me:8083/</a>	
MKD	<a href="https://www.crm.com.mk/mk/otvoreni-podatotsi/osnoven-profil-na-registriran-subjekt">https://www.crm.com.mk/mk/otvoreni-podatotsi/osnoven-profil-na-registriran-subjekt</a>	
SRB	<a href="https://pretraga2.apr.gov.rs/unifiedidentitysearch">https://pretraga2.apr.gov.rs/unifiedidentitysearch</a>	



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