



BASIC CRIMINAL COURT SKOPJE

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Court in numbers and cases - III Quartal

1. How are convictions removed from the criminal record?
2. Equal standards – reasoned decisions
3. When does a SKY ECC message become evidence?
4. How is evidence presented in complex cases?
5. Computer fraud
6. Cybercrime without breaking into a system
7. Cyberstalking – statistics and cases

Interview

Franz Petutschnig
Project officer, OSCE Mission to Skopje
Regional trial monitoring project



U.S. Embassy North Macedonia

Chargé d'Affaires Nicole Varnes joined judges from the Skopje appellate district for a roundtable on complex organized crime and drug trafficking cases. She emphasized that efficient courts are vital...

 facebookapp

Complex cases involving organised crime and drug trafficking require an ongoing exchange of experience among judges.

Professional dialogue and the sharing of good practices contribute to more efficient proceedings and strengthen cooperation in tackling transnational crime.

Basic Criminal Court Skopje

* The roundtable, held in Skopje on 25 September 2026, brought together judges from the Basic Criminal Court Skopje, the Skopje Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

U.S. District Judge Paul Byron also participated, contributing to closer professional cooperation and the exchange of experience.



REHABILITATION

DO WE HAVE A SECOND CHANCE?

REHABILITATION IS A LEGAL MECHANISM THAT ENABLES PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED TO REGAIN THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH NO PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS. ITS PURPOSE IS TO REMOVE THE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES OF A CONVICTION SO THAT THE PERSON IS REGARDED AS NOT HAVING BEEN CONVICTED. INFORMATION ABOUT AN ERASED CONVICTION IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND MUST NOT APPEAR IN CRIMINAL RECORD CERTIFICATES ISSUED TO INDIVIDUALS.

WHERE SHOULD THE APPLICATION BE SUBMITTED?

AN APPLICATION FOR STATUTORY REHABILITATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE COURT THAT MAINTAINS THE CRIMINAL RECORD BASED ON THE PERSON'S PLACE OF BIRTH. AN APPLICATION FOR JUDICIAL REHABILITATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE COURT THAT DELIVERED THE FIRST-INSTANCE JUDGMENT.

WHAT DOES THE COURT EXAMINE?

FOR STATUTORY REHABILITATION, THE COURT CHECKS WHETHER THE STATUTORY PERIOD HAS ELAPSED AND WHETHER THE CONVICTED PERSON HAS COMMITTED A NEW CRIMINAL OFFENCE DURING THAT PERIOD. FOR JUDICIAL REHABILITATION, IT ALSO ASSESSES THE PERSON'S CONDUCT AFTER SERVING THE SENTENCE, THE NATURE AND SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENCE, COMPENSATION FOR THE DAMAGE AND OTHER RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHEN DOES THE PERIOD BEGIN?

THE PERIOD DOES NOT SIMPLY BEGIN ON THE DATE OF THE JUDGMENT. FOR A SUSPENDED SENTENCE, IT BEGINS WHEN THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD ENDS. FOR A FINE OR A PRISON SENTENCE, IT BEGINS WHEN THE FINE HAS BEEN PAID OR THE PRISON SENTENCE SERVED, OR WHEN ENFORCEMENT OF THE SENTENCE BECOMES TIME-BARRED OR THE SENTENCE IS PARDONED.

WHAT IF THE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED TOO EARLY?

AN APPLICATION FOR JUDICIAL REHABILITATION SHOULD BE SUBMITTED AFTER THE STATUTORY PERIOD HAS ELAPSED. IF IT IS DISMISSED AS PREMATURE, IT MAY BE RESUBMITTED ONCE THAT PERIOD EXPIRES. IF IT IS REFUSED ON THE MERITS, AN ADDITIONAL STATUTORY WAITING PERIOD MUST ALSO BE OBSERVED BEFORE RESUBMISSION. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT TO CHECK THAT THE LEGAL CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN MET BEFORE APPLYING.

CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND PROTECTION FROM STIGMATISATION

ENDING THE "SECOND PUNISHMENT"

THE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF A CONVICTION, SUCH AS RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYMENT, OBTAINING LICENCES OR HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE, MUST NOT LAST FOREVER OR BECOME A LIFELONG SOCIAL STIGMA.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

AS AN EXCEPTION, THE STATE MAINTAINS A SPECIAL REGISTER OF PERSONS CONVICTED OF OFFENCES AGAINST SEXUAL FREEDOM AND MORALITY COMMITTED AGAINST MINORS. THESE RECORDS ARE NOT ERASED AND ARE USED EXCLUSIVELY TO PROTECT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.

PRIVACY IN CRIMINAL RECORD CERTIFICATES

AN ERASED CONVICTION MUST NEVER BE MENTIONED IN CRIMINAL RECORD CERTIFICATES ISSUED TO INDIVIDUALS FOR USE IN THE COUNTRY OR ABROAD.

REHABILITATION IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF RESOCIALISATION: IT RECOGNISES THE CONVICTED PERSON'S GOOD CONDUCT WHILE SERVING AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE THAT SUPPORTS AND FACILITATES THEIR SOCIAL REINTEGRATION AND DISCOURAGES FURTHER OFFENDING. IT ALSO HELPS THE PERSON RETURN TO LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY AFTER SERVING THEIR SENTENCE.

Types of rehabilitation:

a) **Statutory rehabilitation (erasure by law)**
It applies after the prescribed periods have elapsed, provided that you have not committed a new criminal offence during that time.

b) **Judicial rehabilitation (erasure by court decision)**
It applies to more severe sentences and is initiated only upon the individual's application.

So far in 2026, the court has ruled on 717 applications for the removal of convictions from the criminal record, of which 46 concern cases handled by the Organised Crime Department.

Legal opinion*

Where proceedings to erase a conviction eligible for statutory rehabilitation are initiated upon the convicted person's application, the court competent to erase the conviction is the court that maintains the criminal record based on that person's place of birth.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Rehabilitation affirms the humane and social role of the legal system. It serves a dual purpose: restoring the individual's full personal and professional freedom and enabling society to welcome back a productive, resocialised member, thereby reducing the long-term risk of reoffending.

For this process to succeed, the right to a second chance must be effective and readily accessible in practice, rather than merely a formal right on paper.

Regaining the status of a person with no previous convictions is a key step towards full reintegration into the community.

*The legal opinion was issued by the Criminal Offences Department of the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia at its session held on 18 March 2026.



Equal standards - reasoned decisions

Case law as a basis for consistent decision-making and equality before the law

Equal standards



Case by case responsibility

Why does consistency matter?

Constitutional equality is also realised through the way courts interpret and apply the law. Cases involving substantially the same legally relevant circumstances should be assessed according to the same criteria. Different treatment should be based on relevant differences and supported by convincing reasons.

Equality in proceedings

Where there are several defendants, each should have an equal opportunity to present a defence, comment on the evidence, propose evidence and put forward arguments. At the same time, the court assesses each defendant's circumstances and responsibility individually. Equal criteria therefore do not imply the same outcome for everyone.

What role does case law play?

In our legal system, previous court decisions are not an independent, formal source of law. However, the reasoned legal positions expressed in those decisions provide guidance for the consistent application of legislation. The court should explain why a previous interpretation applies to the case before it or why it departs from that interpretation.

Judicial decisions accessible to the public

Publishing judicial decisions enables the public to see how the law is applied and how conclusions are reasoned. The Supreme Court's role in ensuring uniform application of the law underscores the importance of consistent case law for legal certainty and trust in the judiciary.

What does this mean for the individual?

It is important for individuals to know that their case will be assessed according to the same legal criteria as other comparable cases. Consistent case law helps them understand how the law is applied and what they can expect from judicial protection. If a court reaches a different decision in a similar case, it should clearly explain its reasons.

Equality before the law does not mean that everyone must receive the same decision or sentence. Each case has its own circumstances, and responsibility is determined individually. What matters is that differences in decisions stem from the evidence and legally relevant circumstances, and that the court explains clearly how it reached its conclusion.

When does a SKY ECC message become evidence? Can a message read in isolation reveal the whole truth?

SKY ECC COMMUNICATION IN JUDICIAL ASSESSMENT: IDENTITY, CONTEXT, AND CORROBORATION BY OTHER EVIDENCE.

*Beyond the principle of transparency, publication also serves an informative purpose, aiming to enhance legal certainty and legal culture by providing insight into specific judgments.

AUTHENTICITY, INTEGRITY, AND COMPLETENESS OF THE DIGITAL MATERIAL

Can the court determine the evidentiary value of a message without evaluating its context and its connection to other evidence?

Moving from a digital message to an evidentiary conclusion involves verification: who sent it, what it means within the context of the conversation, and whether the content is corroborated by other evidence.

With SKY ECC, the user is not identified in the conventional manner—via a phone number and subscriber details. Linking a specific individual to a SKY ID is established through the content of conversations, nicknames, photographs, locations, and other circumstances, analyzed alongside the rest of the evidentiary material.

When evaluating the communication, the court examines the authenticity, integrity, and completeness of the digital material. This entails verifying whether the communication originates from the attributed source, whether there are grounds to suspect alteration, and whether the available communication allows the messages to be correctly understood within their context. A single message taken in isolation may take on a different meaning when read alongside the messages that precede or follow it.

The content is also cross-referenced with independent evidence, such as video surveillance footage, border crossing data, photographs, physical traces, and witness testimonies. It is not necessary for every single message to have separate corroboration. It is important that the evidence, when assessed as a whole, presents a logical and consistent picture of the events.

A person's connection to the communication does not, in itself, establish their role or responsibility. The conclusion depends on their specific **conduct and the totality of the evidence**.

Decision No. KOK II7/24 and 128/24 from 15/07/2025



The evidentiary value of digital evidence—such as encrypted communications, including SKY ECC—lies not merely in the content of the messages, but in correctly interpreting that content, identifying the person behind a specific SKY ID, and linking the data to other evidence.

SKY ECC does not utilize the conventional method of identification via phone numbers and subscriber details. Instead, a user's identity is established through the content and context of the communication—such as phrasing, nicknames, photographs, locations, and other circumstances—when correlated with the rest of the evidentiary material. Only by considering the body of evidence as a whole can one determine whether a criminal offense has occurred and ascertain the specific roles played by the individuals involved.

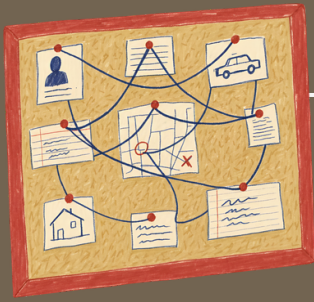
LEGAL POINT



The Court assesses whether the SKY ECC communication originates from the attributed source, whether there are grounds to suspect it has been altered, and whether the messages possess a chronological and substantive context. The absence of certain technical data—including metadata—does not in itself render the content unreliable, though it is taken into account when evaluating the evidence.

The legal crux lies in linking the communication to other evidence. The Court examines the parties involved, the content of the conversation, the timing, and whether subsequent events aligned with what was discussed. It is not necessary to prove each individual message in isolation; what matters is that the messages, when evaluated in conjunction with evidence from other sources, form a logical and consistent whole.

COURT PRACTICE



How is evidence presented in complex cases?

Does every document have to be read and every recording played in its entirety?

Manner of Presenting Evidence

Efficient presentation of evidence does not mean curtailing the evidentiary proceedings or presenting fewer pieces of evidence; rather, it entails their proper organization, structuring, and presentation based on their relevance. The presentation of evidence should not be equated with its verbatim reproduction in full.

The objective is for the evidentiary content to become the subject of discussion and assessment, rather than mechanically reading every document in its entirety. When the opposing party does not consent to the withdrawal of a motion to present evidence, the court is not automatically obliged to admit or present that evidence. Instead, the court independently assesses whether the evidence is relevant and necessary for establishing the decisive facts, and decides whether to grant or deny the motion for its presentation.

Evidence should be systematized in advance. In complex cases, the list of evidence should be organized according to specific factual groupings or events covered by the indictment. The evidence is then presented in accordance with this logical structure. When a single piece of evidence relates to multiple factual groupings, it is presented once, and subsequent references are made to the evidence already presented, rather than presenting it again.

Not every piece of evidence is presented in the same manner or to the same extent. The method and scope of presentation should depend on the evidentiary relevance and on what is required for a proper understanding of the evidence. The presiding judge oversees the organization and sequence of the proceedings, ensuring efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Regarding documentary evidence, the approach should be substantive rather than mechanical. It is not necessary to read every document from the first word to the last; instead, the evidence should be identified, and the relevant portion of its content—specifically the part establishing a particular fact—should be presented. For documents where evidentiary value derives from their type, number, date, or issuing authority, identification suffices, along with the presentation of the relevant section regarding the specific fact, if necessary. If multiple documents share the same evidentiary significance, their content may be presented summarily, with a clear indication of what they serve to prove.

For electronic and video evidence, only the relevant content is presented. In the case of video recordings, the entire duration need not be played if the evidentiary point concerns a specific time segment. The defense must have the opportunity to point out a different segment if it is relevant to supporting the arguments they are advancing.

Regarding expert testimony, the expert should not simply "read" their written report, as that document is already available to the parties. Oral examination should serve to explain, clarify, and scrutinize the report: the subject matter of the expert analysis, the methodology applied, the key conclusions, and any points of contention within the technical aspects of the findings.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

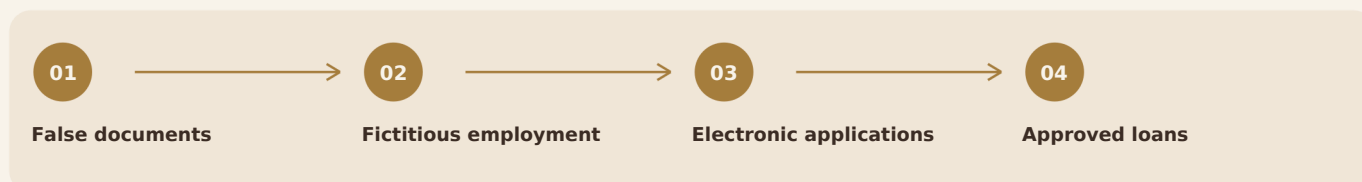
AN EFFICIENT JUDICIAL PROCEEDING DOES NOT IMPLY FEWER PIECES OF EVIDENCE OR FEWER RIGHTS FOR THE PARTIES. WHEN EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED IN A CLEAR SEQUENCE AND THE SPECIFIC, RELEVANT PARTS OF ITS CONTENT ARE HIGHLIGHTED, IT BECOMES EASIER TO UNDERSTAND WHICH FACT IS BEING ESTABLISHED BY WHICH PIECE OF EVIDENCE.

THE PARTIES MUST HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE EVIDENCE AND POINT OUT PARTS OF THE EVIDENTIARY MATERIAL THAT COULD INFLUENCE THE UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSMENT OF THAT EVIDENCE. THIS APPROACH AVOIDS BURDENING THE PROCEEDINGS WITH THE MECHANICAL READING OF DOCUMENTS OR THE PLAYING OF RECORDINGS IN THEIR ENTIRETY.



Computer fraud through fictitious employment and electronic loan applications

How false employment status affected electronic loan approval



1 A scheme with divided roles

In this case, several individuals, acting under a prior agreement and with divided roles, established a scheme to obtain unlawful financial gain from financial companies by creating the appearance that certain persons were in regular employment and met the requirements for loan approval.

2 False documents and registration

For this purpose, false documents – powers of attorney, forms and authorisations – were prepared and used to register individuals with the Employment Agency as employees of legal entities, although no such employment relationship actually existed.

3 Electronic records

The acts also involved the use of data obtained through the electronic system of the Health Insurance Fund, creating the appearance in electronic records that an employment status existed and that the employment-related requirements had been met.

4 Applications in other persons' names

On the basis of the false data thus created, loan applications were submitted through the electronic application systems of several financial companies, in the name and on behalf of the persons whose personal data and documents had been used.

5 Electronic processing and disbursement

During electronic processing of the applications, the financial companies' systems relied on the entered data about the alleged employment and employment status and generated a result indicating that the requirements for loan approval and disbursement had been met. Following this processing, several sums of money were approved and disbursed.

6 Repeated acts

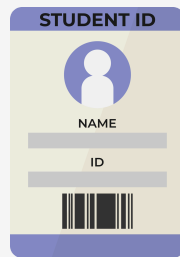
The acts were repeated over a period of time, using the same method, the same or similar electronic mechanisms and a previously established division of roles among the participants.

The essence of the case

The apparent employment status was used as the basis for electronic loan approval and disbursement.

WHEN DOES ENTERING INCORRECT DATA BECOME COMPUTER FRAUD?

THERE IS NO SYSTEM BREACH, YET COMPUTER CRIME IS TAKING PLACE.



INCORRECT DATE, REAL LOSS

The case concerns a defendant who worked as a sales advisor. On two occasions, he entered incorrect expiration dates for personal identification documents into the company's computer system.

As a result, the system accepted the documents as valid, enabling the drafting of subscription contracts and the acquisition of mobile phones at a subsidized price. The defendant then took possession of the phones and obtained an unlawful financial gain.

COURT'S DECISION



In judgment K No. 349/26 dated May 5, 2026, a crucial factor was that the incorrect data altered the outcome of the electronic processing. Had the correct validity date been entered, the system would not have generated those contracts. This very link between the data entered, the system output, and the benefit obtained constitutes the essence of the criminal offense of Computer Fraud under Article 251-b, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code.

The actions were carried out twice within a short period, in the same manner and via the same system, utilizing the same work authorizations. Consequently, in this instance, they were classified as a continuous criminal offense within the meaning of Article 45 of the Criminal Code.

The case demonstrates that computer fraud can be committed without breaching a system. It suffices for a person with access to the system to intentionally enter false data, thereby causing an incorrect electronic processing result and securing an unlawful property benefit.

LEGAL POINT



Computer fraud can also be committed by a person with authorized access to the system. The decisive factors are whether the person intentionally entered false data, whether that data resulted in an incorrect outcome during electronic processing, and whether this led to the acquisition of an unlawful financial benefit. In this instance, the incorrect date enabled the creation of contracts that the system would not otherwise have generated.

Such conduct fulfills the statutory elements of the criminal offense of Computer Fraud under Article 251-b, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code: the entry of false data, the generation of an incorrect result during electronic processing, and acting with the intent to acquire an unlawful financial benefit.

Since the actions were carried out on two occasions within a short period, in the same manner, via the same computer system, and by utilizing the same work-related authorizations, they constitute a continuous criminal offense within the meaning of Article 45 of the Criminal Code.

Computer fraud does not necessarily imply "hacking."

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT



It is important for the public to understand that computer fraud does not necessarily mean "hacking." Even a person with authorized access can misuse the system—for instance, by intentionally entering false data to produce an incorrect result for the purpose of unlawful financial gain. This is the essence of Article 251-b, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code in this context.

The case also illustrates why data accuracy and timely updates are crucial in everyday services. A single incorrect date might appear to be a minor administrative error; however, when entered intentionally to alter the system's outcome, it can carry criminal legal implications.

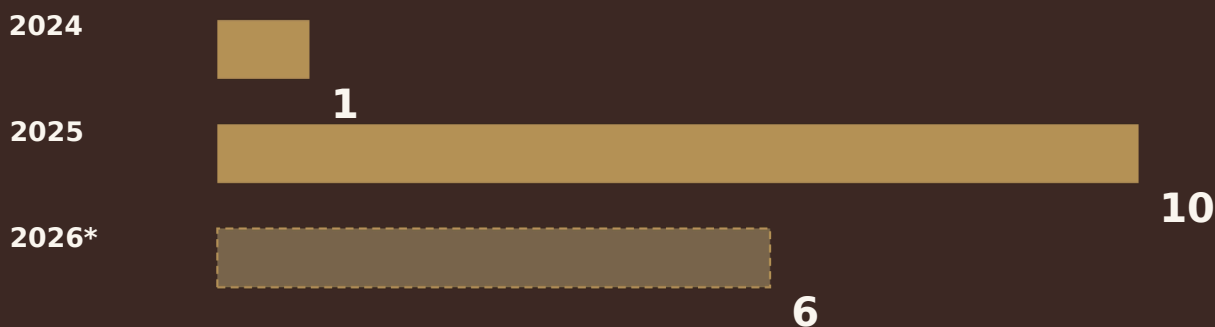
OCTOBER 2026 • CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Cyber - stalking

Boundaries apply online as well.

Repeated unwanted contact can have criminal legal consequences, even when it is carried out through digital means.

JUDGMENTS FOR STALKING • ARTICLE 144-a OF THE CRIMINAL CODE



*2026: data up to 30.09.2026; the year is ongoing. The figures refer to Article 144-a of the Criminal Code.

A RELATIVELY NEW CRIMINAL OFFENSE

Stalking was introduced via Article 144-a of the Criminal Code through amendments published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 36/2023 on February 17, 2023.

Statistics:

In **2025**, 10 individuals were charged, 9 of whom were men. There were 10 victims: 6 women, 3 men, and 1 child.

In **2026, to date**, 6 individuals have been charged, all of whom are men. There have been 7 victims, 6 of whom are women.

The statistics show that women constitute the majority of victims, while men make up the majority of the accused in these stalking cases. In 2025, women accounted for 60% of the victims, and in 2026—so far—about 86%. The victim pool also includes men and a child, demonstrating that stalking can affect a diverse range of individuals. These data highlight the need to recognize and report stalking and to protect victims.

What does that mean in the digital space?

Cyber stalking is a digital way of doing stalking. Repeated unwanted messages and calls, persistent contacting through new profiles or misuse of personal data can fulfill the characteristics of the crime when they cause insecurity, anxiety or fear for the security of the person or someone close to him.

Why talk about this in October?

Cybersecurity also encompasses personal safety online. Understanding this offense helps citizens recognize repeated harassment and realize that a physical attack is not required for stalking to occur.

RECOGNIZE • SAVE • REPORT

A refusal of contact must be respected. Save messages, calls, profiles, and dates that demonstrate a pattern of repeated behavior. If you are facing stalking or harassment, report it to the police or the public prosecutor's office.

Statistics: data submitted for the E-Newsletter; Legislation: Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 36/2023, Article 16.

STALKING AFTER A BREAKUP

Unwanted calls and stalking: a case from judicial practice (Case No. K. 659/24 of September 27, 2024)



Does a past relationship justify the contact that the other person is refusing?

The Case

Between March 23 and April 10, 2023, the accused repeatedly attempted to establish unwanted contact with his wife, from whom he was separated. She had left him due to domestic violence and intended to initiate divorce proceedings.

He would show up at her workplace every day, watching her and calling her via Viber. After work, he would follow her and reproach her about their breakup. He persisted despite her refusal to have contact, causing her to feel insecure and distressed.

The Court's Decision

The court imposed a suspended sentence with protective supervision and an obligation to utilize free time as determined by the competent authority in accordance with the law (Article 56, Paragraph 1, Item 8 of the Criminal Code), for a duration of two years from the date the judgment became final.

Why was this measure selected?

The court took into account the individual's age, employment status, obligations toward a minor child, expression of remorse, and awareness of the unlawful nature of the actions. It determined that supervision and compliance with the imposed obligation could contribute to a change in behavior and the prevention of future criminal offenses.

What is cyber stalking?

Article 144-a, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code covers repeated unauthorized monitoring, harassment, interference with personal life, or attempts to establish unwanted contact, including through means of communication.

The behavior must induce a sense of insecurity, anxiety, or fear regarding one's own safety or the safety of a close person.

Why Paragraph 2 in relation to Paragraph 1?

Paragraph 2 constitutes the more serious form of the offense when committed against a person with whom the perpetrator is or was in an intimate relationship, or against a child. A prison sentence of six months to five years is prescribed.

In this case, in addition to the elements set out in Paragraph 1, there is also a prior marital and intimate relationship. Separation does not preclude this legal protection.

What does protective supervision entail?

The measure entails a specific obligation and the monitoring of its fulfillment. Failure to comply leads to the revocation of the suspended sentence and the execution of the imposed prison sentence, in accordance with legal requirements.

ADVICE TO CITIZENS

A prior relationship (intimate connection) does not justify repeated unwanted contact or stalking. Stalking can occur via telephone or apps, without a physical assault. It is important to recognize the repetitive nature of the behavior and its impact on the person's safety.

Article 144-a

When does unwanted contact become stalking?

Repeatedly following someone, waiting outside their home or workplace, and persistently calling or sending messages against the person's wishes can constitute stalking. Legally significant factors include the repetition of the unauthorized behavior and the resulting sense of insecurity, anxiety, or fear regarding one's own safety or the safety of a close person.

Must there be a physical assault?

A physical assault is not a prerequisite for the existence of stalking.

For the criminal offense of stalking under Article 144-a, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code, the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim is not the decisive factor; rather, it is the repeated unauthorized following and persistent attempts to establish unwanted contact that cause a sense of insecurity, anxiety, or fear regarding one's own safety or the safety of a close person.

Must the individuals have been in a relationship previously?

The basic form of stalking does not require a prior intimate relationship or the existence of any other type of connection. The law provides for an aggravated form of the offense when it is committed against a current or former intimate partner or against a child.

This excerpt describes a rejected romantic advance, not a prior intimate relationship.

Stalking

Following to the workplace

01 What did the court establish?

In 2023, the defendant repeatedly stalked the victim without authorization after she had previously rejected his advances. His actions caused her to feel insecure and distressed.

02 How did the stalking unfold?

The accused would wait for her at a bus stop before she left for work. He would board the same bus, watch her, and get off at the same stops, following behind her.

He then waited for her outside the office where she worked until her shift ended and followed her on her way back. The submitted excerpt indicates that the surveillance was continuous, covering the commute to and from her workplace.

03 How was he punished?

For the criminal offense of stalking under Article 144-a, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code, the court imposed a suspended sentence, setting a prison term of three months. The sentence will not be enforced unless the defendant commits a new criminal offense within one year of the judgment becoming final.



Why is this legally significant?

The court considered the repeated conduct as a whole: the waiting, watching, and following, together with the resulting anxiety and insecurity.

ADVICE FOR CITIZENS

A refusal of contact should be respected.

Rejected courtship alone is not a crime, but repeated unauthorized stalking that causes insecurity, anxiety or fear may constitute stalking. A person has the right to move and work without such harassment.



INTERVIEW

FRANZ PETUTSCHNIG
PROJECT OFFICER, OSCE MISSION TO
SKOPJE
REGIONAL TRIAL MONITORING PROJECT

1. In which areas can the project contribute to strengthening the rule of law: efficiency, transparency, integrity, access to justice, or public trust?

The EU-funded OSCE trial monitoring project in the Western Balkans employs a multidimensional approach to monitoring and analyzing criminal proceedings, taking into account applicable domestic and international fair trial standards.

The pilot initiative titled "Organizational Plan for the Efficient and Cost-Effective Conduct of Proceedings"—launched by judges from the Specialized Court Department for Organized Crime and Corruption at the Basic Criminal Court Skopje—serves as a concrete example of how findings and recommendations derived from trial monitoring can contribute to the creation of initiatives developed and implemented by judicial professionals themselves.

How important is continuous monitoring?

The project also contributes through the presence of trained observers at public court hearings. Their role is not to evaluate or comment on the merits of individual cases or court decisions, but rather to observe proceedings against applicable domestic and international fair trial standards and to identify broader trends and systemic issues.

This provides an additional source of professional and independent information that can contribute to discussions regarding judicial practice and potential areas for improvement.

Your key message is:

Public access to information—while fully respecting applicable legal requirements regarding personal data, confidentiality, and the rights of participants in proceedings—can help citizens better understand how justice is administered.

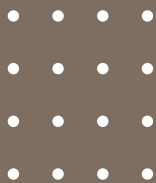


“

“THE E-NEWSLETTER WILL BE PRESENTED AS A GOOD PRACTICE AT THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL MONITORING PROJECT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS, TO BE HELD IN BUDVA, MONTENEGRO, ON OCTOBER 26–27, 2026”.



BASIC CRIMINAL COURT SKOPJE



Thank you for reading this edition of the Basic Criminal Court Skopje's e-newsletter. Our goal is to contribute to greater public awareness and a better understanding of the Court's work by providing clear, timely, and accessible information.

Note: The content of this e-newsletter is for informational and educational purposes. It does not constitute legal advice, does not influence ongoing or future proceedings, and is published in compliance with the principles of judicial independence, the presumption of innocence, and the protection of personal data and the rights of the parties to the proceedings.

Basic Criminal Court Skopje
E-bulletin, Issue 3, October 2026
Address: Goce Delchev Blvd. b.b., 1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
Contact Phone: +389 25103102
E-mail: osnovenls@yahoo.com, contact@osskopje1.mk
Website: Basic Criminal Court Skopje Home

Whistleblower Protection Act:
Radmila Stamatovska
Contact phone: 076/484-889
E-mail: ukazuvaci@osskopje1.mk

Spokesman: Dejan Ristovski
Contact phone: 075/311-914
Email: dejan.ristovski@osskopje1.mk

IMPRESUM:

Editor-in-Chief: Judge Fanka Janchuleva-Mihailovska, President of the Specialized Court Department for Organized Crime and Corruption Cases

Contributors: Lidija Petrovska and Slavica Naumova-Josifovska, both Judges at the Specialized Court Department for Organized Crime and Corruption Cases, Members of the Criminal Council – Department for Organized Crime and Corruption;

This publication was prepared within the cooperation MoU between the Basic Criminal Court Skopje and IMPETUS – Center for Internet, Development and Good Governance, with the aim of enhancing transparency, accountability, legal education, and public access to case law.

WWW.IMPETUS.MK