CARDS 2004 Twinning-Project

"Support to more efficient, effective and modern operation and functioning of the Administrative Court of the Republic of Croatia"

Activity 2.5: Improvement of the website for the Administrative Court

Assessment report with recommendations

I. INTRODUCTION

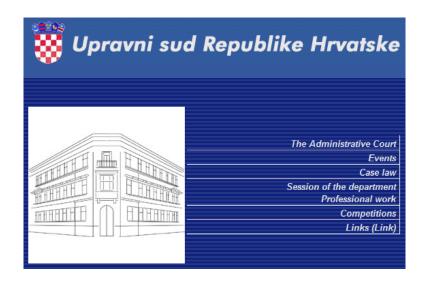
The web site of the Administrative Court was procrammed in the programming language PHP by the company CENTAR MCS (Croatia). The provider of the web site is the company: ISKON (Croatia). The documents on the web site that are offered for download are .doc format (see: Natječaji).

The web site is maintained by two administrators (Mr. Kralj and Mr. Vete) who modify the content of the sites (text) or create new sub menu links to new sites in the navigation menu (left side of the page) and fill the new sites with content. Accompanying documents or a handbook on the structure of the web site or the implementation and updating of content do not exist. No appropriate software program is available with which the sites can be edited easier and faster. The sites are edited in the source code with WINDOWS EDITOR.

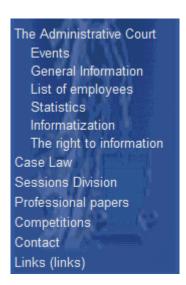
The construction or update of a navigation sub menu as well as its content is a very time-consuming and unsatisfying activity, for which the staff of the Administrative Court is not properly trained. In addition to that, a program documentation is not available. It is a cost-intensive and inefficient work by "trial and error". Changes in the basic settings of the web site, concerning the layout, functional design, colour, font and font size can only be satisfactorily executed by the company CENTAR MCS (Croatia).

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT WEBSITE

1. Design of the internet presence



On the cover page (starting page) of the Administrative Court, several navigation menu links are listed on the right side. If one of these links is selected, a new web page opens which is designed differently. A navigation menu on the left side of the new page contains the same navigation menu links like the cover page.

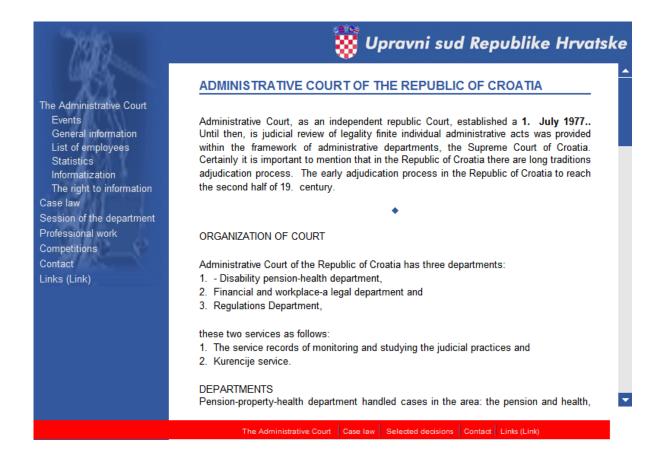


A direct return from these sites to the cover page is only possible by using the "back button" of the browser, because neither the main navigation menu nor the following pages have a back-choice.

The following navigation menu links can be followed:

a) The Administrative Court

History of the Administrative Court, its organisational structure, name and tasks of its departments, as well as a reference to the collection of judgments which is published annually



b) Events

Reports on recent seminars, conferences and lectures



c) Contact dates

Address of the Administrative Court, telephone number and accessibility per telephone (hours)



d) Officials and judges



e) Statistics

Table with the annual statistics of the Administrative Court with the following headings:

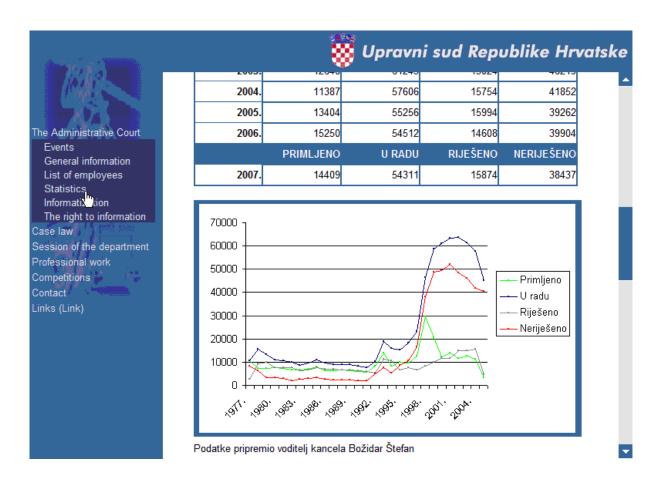
1st column year,

2nd column incoming cases,

3rd column pending cases throughout the year,

4th column solved cases,

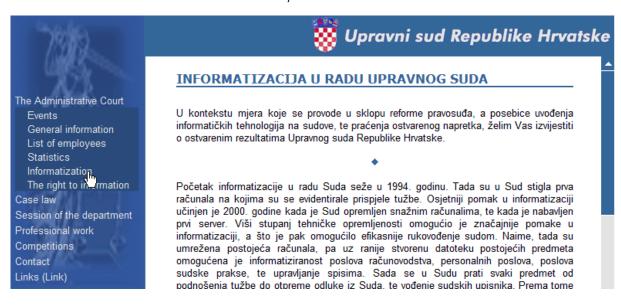
5th column pending cases at the end of the year.



The table is followed by a graphic presentation of the statistical data from 1977 (foundation of the Administrative Court) until today, and a business report.

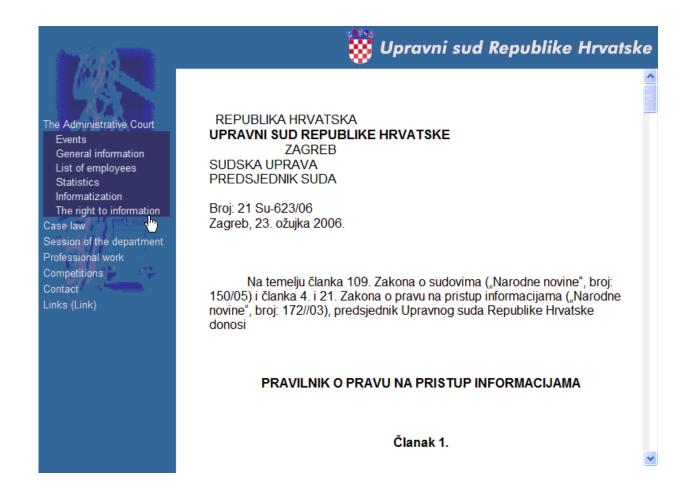
f) Information on the work of the court

The page contains a report how the application of information technology has influenced the work flow at the Administrative Court.



g) The right on access to information

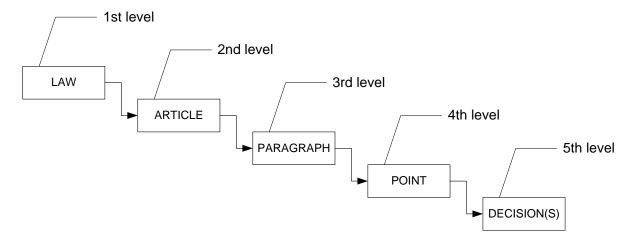
The page contains legal instructions on the access to information.



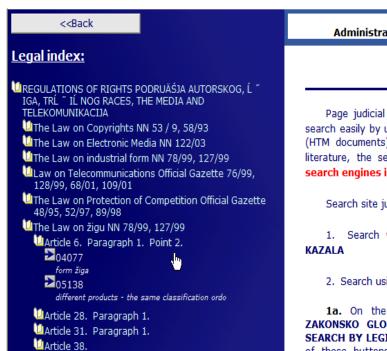
h) Decision data base of judgments (opened in a new window)

Search options for the decision data base:

Law index
 (Arrangement levels of the paging function)



- Alphabetical index
- According to the documents (specifying rules or regulations)
 (to be added)
- According to words in documents (full-text search)



Administrative Court of the Republic of Croatia -> judic

simple guidelir

Mislav I

Page judicial practices Administrative Court of the Republic search easily by using the left mouse button. In order to use moc (HTM documents) and form the kind we search in the print e literature, the search is very simple and quick. Prerequisite 1 search engines is a minimum of Internet Explorer 5.5.

Search site judicial practice is possible in two ways:

- Search with ZAKONSKOG KAZALA and ABECEDNOG KAZALA
 - 2. Search using KEYWORDS INSIDE CONTENT DECISION
- 1a. On the left side of your Internet browser buttor ZAKONSKO GLOSSARY, ABECEDNO POJMOVNO GLOSSARY SEARCH BY LEGISLATION (POJMOVA). Pressing the left mouse of these buttons, you can choose a name search through t

i) Department sessions

Decisions from the department sessions in which important legal questions are decided with binding effect for the chambers



j) Publications

Publications on administrative law (seminar papers and articles), articles and lectures written/given by judges of the Administrative Court in the fields of administrative law, which were published in law magazines



k) Vacancies at the Administrative CourtJob advertisements including invitations for job interviews



Contact

The page only contains the e-mail address of the Administrative Court



m) Links

The page contains unstructured links to web sites of public institutions (courts, ministries etc.).



2. Modifications of the cover page and the following pages

Modifications concerning the layout, the functional design or the content of the cover page and/or the following pages of the court's web site are very inefficient because there is no appropriate software available. The web site is accessed through a connection with the provider's server (user name and password). After the page which has to be modified is located, this page has to be copied on the local computer. Once the page has been opened in the source code, modifications can be made. After the page has been saved, it can again be uploaded on the provider's server.

The locating of the respective website is very time-consuming, because a hierarchic file-structure can not be identified. To find a specific page, the whole file system has to be checked by opening every single file (trial and error). To make this task easier, it is highly recommended, that the necessary software tools with a user interface (WYSIWYG) like for example Dreamweaver (Adobe) or some other adequate program are purchased.

3. Populating of decisions into the database

a) If a decision is released for publication on the intranet/internet, it has to be saved in the data base of the intranet server in HTML-format. This work is done by a court advisor.

The decisions which are published in the annual collection of decisions of the Administrative Court are sent annually to the company CENTAR MCS (which has programmed the portal) and burned on a CD. CENTAR MCS also publishes the anonymised decisions on the internet. It is very likely that the error rate for the search of published decisions is increased by this procedure, because the decisions are populated by external staff, which has no profound legal education. This problem could be solved by a direct connection with the server. If this solution is chosen, the responsible Court Advisor can populate the decisions directly on the portal server. A necessary interface already exists in the program.

The whole work concerning the population of decisions into the database is done by only one court advisor. Nobody else seems to be really familiar with the system. With regard to the risk of losing knowledge, at least one additional person should be instructed how to publish decisions on the internet/intranet.

b) Meeting with Mrs. Marija Šimunović Filipančić (Head of IT Department, Supreme Court) at the Supreme Court on 11 June 2008

The contract for the Phare 2006 project "Harmonisation and Publication of Case Law" for which Mrs. Šimunović Filipančić is responsible will be signed at the end of November 2008. The project is scheduled to start in the first quarter of 2009. A hardware-rollout is scheduled for April 2009.

At the moment, the Supreme Court has a decision database which contains the anonymised decisions (full text) of the Supreme Court from 2004 onwards. The decisions from 1990 until 2003 will be included step by step. Several people are involved in the workflow of populating the decisions. Judges add head notes, norms and key words to their decisions, other judges control whether head notes, norms

and key words are correct, typists type decisions, anonymise them and populate them into the database. Not only the Supreme Court, but also three other courts are entering their decisions in this data base.

The access to the database takes place via VPN dial-in node over the internet. With the suitable software, access is possible from any PC and very easy (username and password).

According to Mrs. Šimunović-Filipančić, the decisions contained in the Administrative Court's yearbook are already submitted to the Supreme Court in order to be included into the decision data base by the staff of the Supreme Court. So far, the data base contains about 530 decisions, including about 200 in full text (beginning 1 January 2004).

Under the "Phare 2006" project the database will be enhanced. The aim is to include all decisions rendered by Croatian courts. According to Mrs. Šimunović-Filipančić, the decision whether to join this database is up to the Administrative Court.

In future, the servers hosting this decision database will be located at FINA which will also take care of the maintenance of hardware. According to Mrs. Šimunović-Filipančić, the Ministry of Justice will bear all costs for this system.

At the end of the Phare 2006 project, the decision database of the Supreme Court will comprise all features of a state of the art decision database. And, as stated before, it is possible for the Administrative Court to get free access to enter its decisions into this database.

4. Future of the Internet presence

Meeting with Mr. Lukenda (Head of IT department, Ministry of Justice) and Mrs. Magdić Ukalović (IT department, Ministry of Justice) at the Ministry of Justice on 28 August 2008

The Ministry of Justice is currently planning a uniform Internet presence for the whole Croatian judiciary. It is intended that from a starting page either the starting page of the Ministry of Justice or a starting page for each of the four jurisdictions (administrative, ordinary, commercial and misdemeanour) can be reached (by pushbutton or link). From the latter pages, the starting pages of all courts will be available. All web sites will share the same "corporate design" in order to ensure a uniform appearance of the Croatian judiciary on the internet. In addition to that, it is planned that every court will have its own web address, so that it also can be reached by the users directly.

The design of the web sites is defined by the Ministry of Justice, while the courts will be responsible for the content of their pages. In every jurisdiction the responsible administrative staff should maintain these contents. It will be possible, that first instance courts could do smaller updates on their web site themselves. However, it is more efficient if the updating as well as the administration of these pages will be taken care of by the administrative staff of the higher instance court.

Furthermore it is planned to publish forms and templates via the internet.

The question how to populate court decisions into the decision database, on a local level or centralized, is not yet decided. According to Mr. Lukenda and Mrs. Magdić Ukalović this project should be finished until 2010.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE INTERNET/INTRANET PRESENCE

THE ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION AND THE DECISION DATABASE

Even if in the future there will be a uniform internet presence of the Croatian judiciary, the transition period should be used to update the current website of the Administrative Court in order to adjust it to future demands (e.g. new first instance courts or oral hearings).

To achieve this aim, it is recommended

1. to train Mr. Kralj and Mr. Vete

The staff that maintains the web sites of the Administrative Court at the moment and in future should be trained (e.g., at the company CENTAR MCS) and the required tools (manuals as well as software) be purchased to guarantee an efficient handling of the web sites of the future administrative judiciary. Many incidental works could then be done more economically by own staff.

Software: Adobe Dreamweaver CS4 V.10

Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro

Training: Script language PHP

Adobe Dreamweaver CS4 V.10

Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro

2. to change the download format

Currently, all downloadable documents of the Administrative Court are deposited in doc-format. For reasons of safety (immutability of documents) it is strongly recommended to deposit all documents in pdf-format and provide them with a secure password (Software: Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro).

- to contact the Ministry of Justice as soon as possible in order to get information about the planned corporate design for the Croatian judiciary so that the future internet presence of the Administrative Court/the administrative jurisdiction can be planned according to future standards.
- to include all decisions of the Administrative Courts in the decision database run by FINA, once the Phare 2006 project "Harmonization and Publication of Case Law" is finished.

After the Project "Phare 2006" is finished, FINA will run the most modern and most comprehensive decision database in Croatia. This database is open to all Croatian courts. According to Mrs. Šimunović-Filipančić the courts who decide to join this platform will not have to bear any costs for hardware, software or maintenance of the database servers. The choice of the decisions to be

published, the preparation of head notes and key words as well as the anonymisation of decisions would be in the hands of the Administrative Court. The entering into the database can be made directly by the court's typists so that an effective and economic workflow is guaranteed.

5. to establish a workgroup "internet/intranet"

For a better coordination with the Ministry of Justice and as a direct contact for the company CENTAR MCS a workgroup "internet/intranet" should be established, consisting of a judge or court advisor, an official from the kancel and a system administrator (protection of interests and representation of all relevant groups). The function of this group is to present concrete proposals for the improvement of the design and content of the internet presence of the future administrative jurisdiction (1st and 2nd instance courts) to the President of the Administrative Court/Supreme Administrative Court.

The working group should discuss the following topics:

Internet:	Preparation of forms, applications and templates which could
	be of interest for the public, lawyers, public and local
	authorities and their publication on the internet
Internet:	Structure, design and content of the internet presence for the
	new first instance courts
Internet:	Structured redesign of the existing internet site which contains
	the links to other courts, authorities and the Ministry of Justice
	considering the respective site of the Supreme Court
Internet:	Consolidation of existing web sites (e. g. address, telephone
	number, fax number, e-mail address, working hours, telephone
	accessibility, picture of the court as well as a road description,
	consolidated on one site)

Internet /	Information request to CENTAR MCS about complexity and
Intranet:	costs for the installation of a search engine on all sites (quicker
	search for required information)
Internet /	Optical upgrading of the internet/intranet presence, especially
Intranet:	integration of graphics (e.g., download not by the use of a
	banal link, but rather by a floppy-disk icon).
Internet /	Preparation and publication of a time table for public oral
Intranet:	hearings held by administrative courts
Intranet:	Preparation of forms, applications and templates which could
	be useful for internal administrative processes (e.g., application
	for vacation, updates in the user authorisations/IT, form to
	apply new users/IT, etc.) and publication on the intranet

Help and inspiration for all these duties can be found under the following links:

- W3C, recommendations for administrators <u>www.w3.org / WAI/</u>

- judges weave www.sudacka-mreza.hr

- Courts of Singapore (best court homepage 2007) <u>www.subcourts.gov.sg</u>

6. Barrier free access

With regard to COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, barrier free access should be one of the top priorities for the design of the web site, because it influences all ranges of the design (e.g., font and font size) of the web sites decisively.

An extra sublink for barrier free access should be foreseen in the navigation menu. This sublink should lead to a page with help and informative links for users with special needs, like e.g. links for auxiliary programs like

screen reader

(http://www.nvda-project.org/)

In addition to that instructions for the download, installation and starting of auxiliary programs as well as help to adjust the user's software settings (e.g. enlargement of display images, installation of the display magnifying glass) could be provided in word and picture:

Examples:

a) How to activate the magnifying glass of your PC:

START> PROGRAMMES> ACCESSORIES> ACCESSIBILITY > MAGNIFIER





b) Adjustment of additional personal settings

For additional personal settings, see the following menue.



Here a user can adapt his/her PC according to his/her impairments regarding vision, hearing ability or mobility.

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To provide even better service for handicapped persons the web site of the Administrative Court should offer a possibility to change the settings directly

without reference to the operating system, following the example of the

homepage of the Croatian government:

http://www.vlada.hr/hr/dodatno/pristupacnost_i_prilagodba_izgleda.

Zagreb, 7 November 2008

Jochen Rüter