



Ten years of the Italian School for the Judiciary (2011-2021)

Quaderno 12

Edited by the Board of Directors of the Italian School for the Judiciary (*Scuola superiore della magistratura*): Giorgio Lattanzi, Marco Maria Alma, Lorenza Calcagno, Antonella Ciriello, Claudio Consolo, Fabrizio Di Marzio, Costantino De Robbio, Gian Luigi Gatta, Gianluca Grasso, Sara Lembo, Marisaria Maugeri, Gabriele Positano and Marco Fabri, Davide Carnevali, Francesco Contini, National Research Council of Italy (*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*) (IGSG-CNR – Bologna Branch)

Series edited by the Board of Directors of the Italian School for the Judiciary (*Scuola superiore della magistratura*):

Giorgio Lattanzi, Marco Maria Alma, Lorenza Calcagno, Antonella Ciriello, Claudio Consolo, Fabrizio Di Marzio, Costantino De Robbio, Gian Luigi Gatta, Gianluca Grasso, Sara Lembo, Marisaria Maugeri, Gabriele Positano



Editorial co-ordination and graphic design:

Camilla Pergoli Campanelli

© Scuola superiore della magistratura – Roma 2022

ISBN 9791280600134

The rights of translation, adaptation, reproduction by any process of this work or parts thereof are reserved for all countries.

The contents of the contributions reflect the personal opinions of the authors.



Ten years of the Italian School for the Judiciary (2011-2021)

The School and the *Quaderni* series

The Magna Carta of Judges, adopted by the Consultative Council of European Judges, endorsing a principle shared in the European legal systems, recognises training as “an important element to safeguard the independence of judges as well as the quality and efficiency of the judicial system” (point 8).

In this perspective, the Italian School of the Judiciary provides continuous training to judges and public prosecutors supported by the experience gained by the Superior Council of the Judiciary (*Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura* – CSM). According to the reform of the judiciary system (Legislative Decree no. 26 of 2006), the School has exclusive competence in this task.

The first Board of Directors took office on November 24th, 2011. On October 15th, 2012, the School offered the first seminar dedicated to trainees, and, in January 2013, it launched the first continuous training programme.

Today the School covers all areas of the judicial training: initial, continuous, decentralised, aspirants to managing positions, honorary, trainees, and international. In addition to the organisation and implementation of training sessions, legal documentation also represents a central issue in training activities.

The School’s website offers a rich online library for all Italian judges and public prosecutors. Equally fundamental is the teaching material used for the training sessions, available on the institutional website.

The *Quaderni* (Notebooks) series, realised in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Printing and Minting (*Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato Italiano*), was conceived to extend the scope of use of training materials and the findings of the School’s research activity.

The series follows the steps of the training activities for judges and public prosecutors published by the CSM in the 1980s. At that time, the training activity fell within the scope of the Council. Users can consult the series volumes on the School’s website for free and in the virtual library containing official State publications.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	11
Introduction	13
SECTION 1.	
Training activities carried out by the SSM since its establishment	17
Introduction	17
Executive summary	19
Part I.	
Study of the changes in continuous training courses and diachronic analysis of course evaluations	23
1. The database	23
2. Courses and participants from 2013 to 2021	24
2.1. Continuous training	24
2.2. Training for aspirants to managing positions	27
2.3. Training for ordinary trainee magistrates (MOTs)	29
3. Study of changes in the courses	30
3.1. Continuous training at the central level	30
3.2. Continuous training at the local level	36
4. Participants' evaluation of the training offer	39
4.1. Evaluation of continuous training	39
4.2. Evaluation of training for aspirants to managing positions	42
4.3. Evaluation of initial training	44
4.4. Correlation between the different evaluation variables	47
4.5. Evaluation of online courses	49

Part II.

Questionnaire on distance learning activities	51
1. Methodology	51
1.1. The survey instrument: the questionnaire	51
1.2. The survey method, data collection, and processing	52
2. Univariate (and bivariate) data analysis	53
2.1. Context variables	53
2.2. Variables for evaluating distance learning courses via videoconference	60
2.2.1. Level of participation and reasons for ‘non- participation’ in courses held via videoconference (on the Teams platform)	60
2.2.2. Summary evaluation of the courses as a whole	62
2.2.3. Specific evaluation of logistics and technical issues	69
2.2.4. Specific evaluation of organisational aspects	71
2.2.5. Specific evaluation of teaching methodology	74
2.2.6. Level and methods of interaction in the virtual classroom	77
2.3. Evaluation variables of other courses and training contents accessible at a distance	78
2.3.1. Summary evaluation of the courses and training content on the YouTube platform	79
2.3.2. Summary evaluation of the training content offered through the ‘School Newsletter’ and the ‘School Portal’	81
2.4. Assessment variables on possible training provided by the School in the future	83
2.4.1. Summary evaluation of the different ways courses could be delivered	83
2.4.2. Specific evaluation of the relationship between traditional and distance learning	87
2.4.3. Specific evaluation on further methodological aspects of distance learning	89

2.4.4. Specific evaluation of future training offer	91
2.4.5. Specific evaluation of some statements regarding what the School should do	94
2.5. Comments and suggestions by the respondents: a summary of the main topics	97

SECTION 2.

Innovative methodologies for training, use of new technologies, and legal documentation	101
1. The reorganisation of training activities following the spread of COVID-19. Introduction	101
2. Reorganisation and retraining of staff, software, infrastructures	101
3. The reorganisation of training activities	107
4. Positive aspects and problems encountered in online training	107
5. New kinds of distance learning	109
6. Legal documentation and study materials. The implementation of websites' functions. The implementation of SSM's Newsletter and the <i>Quaderni</i> series	111

SECTION 3.

The School's activities at the international level	115
1. Introduction	115
2. The <i>European Gaius</i> project for the strengthening of Italian magistrates' European judicial culture	115
3. The European Judicial Training Network	117
3.1. Activities and projects within the Network's working groups	118
3.2. Network Exchange Programmes	121

3.3. Initial training projects: AIAKOS programme and THEMIS competition	122
4. Training on the European Convention of Human Rights: the HELP programme	124
5. Projects co-funded by the European Commission	126
6. International Cooperation. Activities related to Institution building projects co-financed by the EU	131
7. Collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to provide training courses on the rights of refugees and asylum seekers international protection	132
8. International Organisation for Judicial Training. Collaboration Memoranda. Participation in the Euro-Arab Judicial Training Network (EAJTN)	133
SECTION 4.	
Focus Groups: past, present, and future of the judicial training	135
1. Focus groups. Methodology and contents	135
2. Points emerged from the focus groups	137
2.1. Initial Training	137
2.2. Continuous Training	139
2.3. Managers' training	145
2.4. Honorary Magistrates Training	147
2.5. Distance Learning and new Technologies	149
2.6. Training: compared experiences	152
APPENDIX	
Questionnaire	155

Preface

This volume contains the research report on the training activities carried out by the Italian School for the Judiciary (*Scuola Superiore della Magistratura*, SSM) since its establishment, which was written in collaboration with the Bologna branch of the Institute of Legal Informatics and Judicial Systems (*Istituto di Informatica Giuridica e Sistemi Giudiziari*, IGSG) of the National Research Council of Italy (*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*, CNR), together with an in-depth study on innovative training methodologies, a reflection on the School's activities in the international field, as well as a summary of focus groups' discussions on the past, present and future of judicial training. The report was edited by the School's Steering Committee.

It presents in a descriptive way the main findings obtained from the data analysis; their interpretation is reserved for the School's bodies.

More specifically, the volume is divided into the following four sections:

Section 1. Training activity carried out by the SSM since its establishment

Section 2. Innovative methodologies for training, use of new technologies, and legal documentation

Section 3. The School's activities at the international level

Section 4. Focus groups: past, present, and future of the judicial training.

Introduction

The Steering Committee of the School for the Judiciary took office on 24 November 2011.

The first training course of the School aimed at ordinary trainee magistrates and prosecutors (*magistrati ordinari in tirocinio*, MOT) was launched on 15 October 2012.

In 2012, the SSM joined the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN).

In January 2013, the first continuous training programme was launched.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the funding of the School, three initiatives were promoted by the Steering Committee.

The first was a study on the training programmes carried out over the years by the SSM with a view to the future, which was carried out in collaboration with the Bologna branch of the IGSG of the CNR.

In this research, particular attention was paid to distance learning, which has virtually become the only teaching format available as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years. To study this phenomenon, a questionnaire was prepared to collect useful data for the evaluation of the distance learning courses offered in 2020 and 2021, which include initial training, continuous training, training for those who aspire to managing roles, and honorary magistrates, as well as the teaching materials in digital format recently created by the SSM.

A number of focus groups were also organised to discuss the following topics: initial training, continuous training, judges aspiring to managing positions, honorary magistrates, technical and organisational aspects of distance learning, and international training. The focus groups included representatives of judicial training institutions from France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Romania, and Portugal. The aim was to investigate the issues that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire data and the information gathered during the ten years of activity of the SSM to add to the contents of the analysis and identify useful elements for the School's future development.

The second initiative involved research and documentation and saw the launch of the School Newsletter and of the *Quaderni* series.

The Newsletter, sent monthly to ordinary, honorary, and trainee magistrates and freely available on the SSM website, is a project designed to provide information on the activities under way at the SSM and simplify access to legal documentation starting with that produced within the institutional training network.

The Newsletter, consisting of three main parts (SSM § I, new legislation § II and other institutions § III), is not a collection of texts, nor a simple hypertext, but a reasoned set of multimedia resources: texts (documents, reports, court decisions, collections), videos, podcasts, courses (e-learning, webinars) and websites.

Therefore, it is an instrument of institutional communication, complementing the training activity, which is part of the project integrating education with new technologies.

The *Quaderni* (Notebooks) series is a series of volumes produced in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Printing and Minting (*Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato*) to ensure widespread access to the most significant study material produced during the courses run by the SSM and to the results of the research activity carried out by the School itself. It is inspired by the series of volumes created in the 1980s by the Italian High Council of the Judiciary (CSM) on study meetings for judges and prosecutors held as part of the initial and continuous training programme, which at the time was under the Council's responsibility.

The SSM already provides all Italian judicial officers with an extensive electronic library available in the database section of its website. Equally fundamental is the teaching material created as part of the training sessions, available on the institutional website for each course.

The individual volumes are freely available on the School's website and in the virtual library which contains official government publications.

The third initiative addresses the **digital challenge**. The use of new technologies in training has become a critical aspect that all training institutions need to address in order to seize the related opportunities.

The recommendations given to training institutions in the European Commission's Communication, *Ensuring justice in the EU – a European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024 – COM(2020) 713 final*, include: (a) to offer interactive, practical, and accessible e-learning that is aligned with training objectives; (b) to explore further the potential of modern techniques, such as e-learning and extended reality solutions; (c) to make greater use of online training 'pills' (short, up-to-date, tailored) to meet the immediate needs of judicial officers in the context of an actual case; (d) to ensure that trainers are fully prepared to exploit the potential of e-learning methodologies.

In the past, the only distance learning tools were e-learning courses, sometimes carried out using a mixed modality (a 'face-to-face' initial or final meeting alongside an online part, generally available on a didactic platform such as Moodle) which, for the online component, consisted of brief interactions, possibly

limited to brief discussions, simultaneous or not, with the trainers in charge of tutoring, rarely in web-conferences, preferably via chat, or checks carried out via asynchronous dialogue.

The health emergency has prompted a revolution in training tools, leading, on the one hand, to the creation of virtual classes, relying on e-learning, i.e., contextual teaching conducted on the web (webinars, video seminars, or virtual seminars), involving people located in different places who can interact with the speaker and the other participants by using video-conference working facilities, and, on the other hand, to the launch of live events with a potentially high number of participants whose interactions are limited to chat messaging.

Besides online courses with virtual classes, the SSM created its own YouTube channel with sessions selected from its catalogue and thematic podcasts on legal research.

SECTION 1.

Training activities carried out by the SSM since its establishment

Marco Fabri, Davide Carnevali, Francesco Contini
National Research Council of Italy (IGSG-CNR —Bologna branch)

Introduction

In May 2021, the SSM Steering Committee and the Bologna branch of the IGSG of the CNR signed a collaboration agreement for the processing and statistical analysis of data relating to the SSM's training activities since its establishment.

In agreement with the School, data collection and processing activities concerned three main areas.

- 1. Study of the changes in the continuous training courses** planned by the SSM from its establishment to December 2021. The analysis covered the following area: 'civil', 'criminal', 'common', and 'linguistic', which were then further classified by theme, again in collaboration with the SSM. By mutual agreement, it was also decided not to collect data on the 'international' and 'decentralised' training areas, therefore not covered by this study.
- 2. Diachronic analysis of the evaluations of the training courses** actually carried out by the SSM from its establishment to July 2021, with regard to the 'Continuous Training', 'Training for aspirants to managing positions' and 'Training of trainee ordinary magistrates' (MOTs) courses.
- 3. Questionnaire on distance learning activities** addressed to all ordinary and honorary magistrates. The questionnaire was designed in collaboration with the SSM and administered online to collect data on levels of satisfaction, critical issues, and opportunities offered by the e-learning method used in the last year and a half, with some questions to understand its possible use in the future.

This report first provides an executive summary of the results and then consists of two parts. The first part presents the study results on the changes in

continuous training courses and the diachronic analysis of the evaluations of the training courses. The second part presents the analysis of the data obtained through the administration to all Italian magistrates of the questionnaire on distance learning activities.

The database used for all data processing in this work in both Excel and Tableau format¹ was handed over to the SSM so that it could carry out further analysis independently.

This report presents the main results descriptively, while interpretations of the data, as agreed, are reserved for the School bodies.

The data on the training activities carried out were provided by the School's IT department, to which our thanks are due.

¹ Tableau is a business intelligence application that provides, among other things, a graphical and intuitive presentation of data through an interactive dashboard.

Executive summary

The data collection and processing activities carried out under the collaboration agreement between the SSM and the Bologna branch of the IGSG of the CNR concerned three main areas: 1) the **study of the changes in the continuous training courses** planned by the SSM from its establishment to December 2021, 2) the **diachronic analysis of the evaluations of the training courses** actually carried out by the SSM from its establishment to July 2021, with regard to the ‘Continuous Training’, ‘Training for aspirants to managing positions’ and ‘Training of trainee ordinary magistrates’ (MOTs) courses, 3) a **questionnaire on distance learning activities** addressed to all ordinary, MOT and honorary magistrates, in order to collect data on levels of satisfaction, critical issues and opportunities offered by the e-learning method used.

Courses, participants, evaluations

The data collected by the School’s IT department and processed by the CNR reveal a growing interest in and appreciation of the courses offered since 2013, with telling figures.

On average, more than 100 **continuous training courses** are offered each year. From 2013 to 31 December 2021, 997 courses were organised at central and local level, excluding decentralised courses. Applications for enrolment have steadily increased over the years, from 5,926 in 2013 to 9,612 in 2021. A total of 64,388 magistrates attended the continuous training courses.

From 2013 to 2021, 850 courses were planned at central level, of which 270 were on ‘civil’ matters, 328 on ‘criminal’ matters, 205 on ‘common’ matters, and 47 on ‘linguistic’ matters. A further classification of the courses according to their titles shows a great variety of topics covered, with more than 20 courses in the following areas: procedural law, labour law, judicial system, general and special parts of criminal law, telematic civil proceedings, business law, bankruptcy law, family law, comparative law, organised crime, economics, and finance. Most courses were held in the Scandicci campus, but many courses were also held in other locations, especially in Naples.

The evaluation expressed by participants at the end of the course has steadily improved over the years in all four areas monitored by the School. ‘Hospitality and logistics’ went from an average value of 7.3 in 2013 to 9.1 in 2019 and 9.4 in 2021, when the courses took place via videoconference and this indicator measured the level of appreciation for the IT platform set up for holding

courses remotely. The ‘Organisation and secretariat’ score rose from an average value of 5.9 in 2014 to 8.3 in 2019 and 9.3 in 2021. Course content scored on average 7.7 in 2013, 8.8 in 2019, 9.1, and 9.3 in 2020 and 2021 with online courses. The average ratings for each of the four areas into which the School’s teaching activities are divided (civil, criminal, common, linguistics) were not significantly different. In contrast, the ratings may differ considerably between individual courses. Only 19 courses received a score lower than 7 in ten years of teaching activity.

Training courses for aspirants to managing roles started in 2014, and as of 2021, 44 courses have been organised, attended by 1,902 magistrates.

The evaluations for these courses were also high on average, although more fluctuating when compared to the scores obtained by continuous training courses. Nevertheless, an increase in scores can be seen over the years. ‘Hospitality and logistics’ obtained an average rating of 8.8 in 2016, then 9.5 in 2019, and 9.2 and 9.8 in 2020 and 2021 with the online courses. ‘Organisation and secretariat’ aspects scored 6.1 in 2015, 9.4, and 9.9 in 2020 and 2021. The rating of course content almost always increased, starting with a score of 6.9 in 2015, then 8.6 in 2019, 9.1, and 9.2 in 2020 and 2021.

Training courses for trainee ordinary magistrates (MOTs) have been attended by 3,485 officials, with one course every year since the Italian Ministerial Decree of 2012.

Overall, the ratings were somewhat lower than those for continuous training courses and more similar to those obtained by courses for aspirants to managing positions, although always quite positive. ‘Hospitality and logistics’ always rated above 7, except in 2018, when it scored 6.7, only to increase in 2019 with an average score of 8.3, increasing again in 2020 with 8.7 and in 2021 (online courses) with 9.3. With regard to course content, the general internship usually scored above 7 (except in 2017 with 6.9), 7.5 in 2019, 8.3, and 8.9 in 2020 and 2021; the specific internship scored on average half a point higher.

The digital transformation and a look to the future

As is well known, the pandemic triggered a digital transformation of the SSM in March 2020, with the introduction of training courses held via videoconference on the Teams platform.

As mentioned above, these courses had very high average scores in all training areas (continuous training, MOTs, aspirants to managing positions, honorary), reflecting the excellent work done by the School during the emergency period.

The questionnaire administered to all Italian magistrates (a reference population of more than 14,000 people with judges, public prosecutors, MOTs, and honorary magistrates) collected more detailed information on digital training activities. It explored their possible use once the emergency phase is over. The respondents represented about 10% of the target population, of which 55.3% were ordinary magistrates (judges and prosecutors), belonging to all qualifications and serving in all judicial offices, 22.3% were MOTs and 22.4% were honorary magistrates. 92.7% of the magistrates who replied to the questionnaire had participated in at least one e-learning course, making the analysis of their opinions particularly interesting.

Online training received a good rating overall (still over 80%), with continuous training courses receiving a more positive response than training for MOTs and aspirants to managing positions. No significant technical problems were reported. Some complaints were made about the excessive number of forms required to take part in the courses, but this appears to be a more general problem and not exclusively related to online courses. The way in which evaluations of individual courses were collected also raised some criticism as to their effectiveness.

The other training contents delivered through other digital channels (e.g., live streaming or pre-recorded courses and training pills on YouTube, newsletter, portal, etc.) were generally appreciated, with varying degrees of appreciation. An important asset, and one to be improved, are the tools for searching the rich collection of materials already available on the School's portal.

The answers to the questionnaire suggest that the teaching methodology used in online courses should be adapted to the media used. The lectures should be shorter, always using specific didactic material (e.g. slides, reports, exercises, etc.) that should be made available before the course starts. The possibility to interact during the course should be encouraged more, even if remote interaction can never replace face-to-face interpersonal relationships; this is the most critical aspect of online courses. The results also suggest that the analysis of real cases, which is a fundamental opportunity for learning, should be encouraged, including through group work adapted to online training needs. If online courses are not sufficiently engaging, participants tend to engage in other activities during the training hours, which is the case for 30% of respondents and, more specifically, for over 40% of all responding ordinary judges, 22.3% of MOTs and 29.4% of honorary magistrates.

As mentioned above, online courses were positively evaluated; however, 80% of the respondents showed a preference for face-to-face courses, even though

online courses should not be abandoned but adapted to certain types of courses. When analysed by qualification and gender, video-conferencing courses tend to be preferred by honorary magistrates and women. Generally, distance learning is appreciated for its flexibility, allowing people to better balance work and private life. On the other hand, the so-called 'blended' mode, where judges and/or speakers can freely participate either in person or at a distance, is not particularly appreciated. Alternating face-to-face lessons with distance learning activities is beneficial, especially for specific courses (e.g., MOT, honorary, specialised courses, refresher courses, etc.).

The School's digital transformation needs to be properly organised, but the benefits (didactic, logistical, and economic) of online training are now becoming evident. Distance learning is appreciated by judges, who believe it should be an integral part of the training offer.

Lastly, with a view to the future, there is a desire to further increase the contribution of teachers who are not members of the judiciary and can broaden the spectrum of interdisciplinary knowledge required in the judicial profession. The SSM should also have a more proactive approach towards proposing research activities, producing teaching materials, and running digital discussion groups.

Part I.

Study of the changes in continuous training courses and diachronic analysis of courses evaluations

1. The database

In this type of work, it is fundamental to build a reliable and structured database prior to carrying out in-depth processing and analysis of data.

The data relating to the courses and courses evaluations presented here were supplied over time by the IT structure of the SSM at the request of the CNR researchers, under the coordination of the School's General Secretariat. In addition, checks were carried out on the School's website, which contains extensive information on the School's activities, and data available in the four-yearly reports produced by the two previous Steering Committee (2012 to 2015 and 2016 to 2019) at the end of their term of office were also used.

Therefore, data for the study of the course changes and for the diachronic analysis of the evaluations were mainly gathered from: a) the four-yearly reports of the two Steering Committee of the SSM, b) the School's website, c) the list of courses and participants' evaluations provided by the School, d) some specific information retrieved by the School's IT department at the request of the researchers.

As mentioned later in the study, some data are missing either because the SSM switched to a different course management application or because the evaluations of some courses could not be retrieved during the lockdown period. However, these are exceptions that do not invalidate the results presented and provide an accurate description of the courses organised by the SSM from 2013 to the present day and the relative evaluations.

Data on ratings and evaluations of all continuous training, aspirants to managing positions, and MOT courses held since 2013 are also available on the business intelligence application Tableau, which allows quick and in-depth data analysis through an easy-to-use interactive dashboard.

2. Courses and participants from 2013 to 2021

2.1. Continuous training

A total of 850 continuous training courses were held between 2013 and 2021, plus 147 local courses and 70 ‘unplanned’ courses, for 1067 courses, excluding decentralised ones. According to the most recent data available, as of July 2021, 64,388 participants, mostly ordinary magistrates (judges and prosecutors), attended the courses.

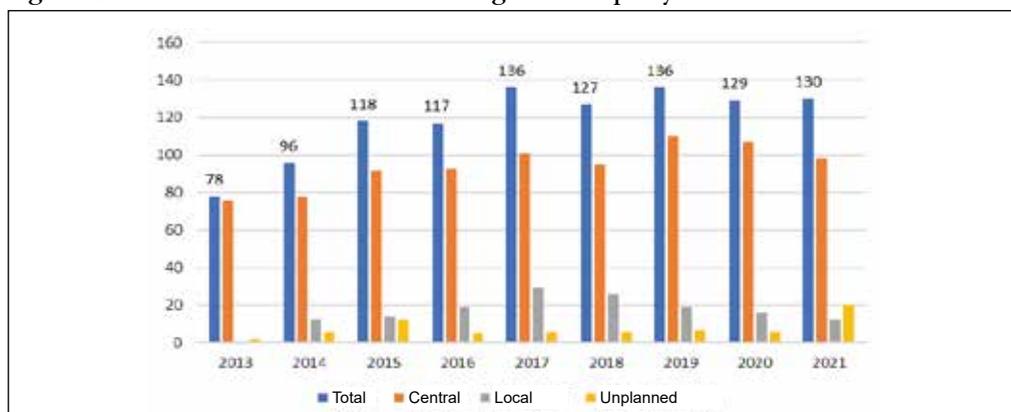
The following tables and figures detail these numbers. The following analyses do not take into account data concerning ‘unplanned’ courses, whose data are not always fully available.

Table 1 – Number of continuous training courses planned per year

NUMBER OF CONTINUOUS TRAINING COURSES PER YEAR										
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totale
Total	78	96	118	117	136	127	136	129	130	1.067
Central	76	78	92	93	101	95	110	107	98	850
Local	0	12	14	19	29	26	19	16	12	147
Unplanned	2	6	12	5	6	6	7	6	20	70

Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM¹.

Figure 1 – Number of continuous training courses per year



¹ Note that the numbers of courses per year reported in the four-yearly reports and in the programmes differ slightly.

Table 2 – Enrolment requests by year ²

ENROLMENT REQUESTS BY YEAR							
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
5.926	6.483	8.089	8.550	8.919	9.633	9.427	9.612

Source: 2012-2015 Report (years 2013-2015) p.14; 2015-2019 Report p. 35 (years 2016-2019); SSM Communication of 4 October 2021 for 2020 data.

Figure 2 – Enrolment requests for continuous training courses per year

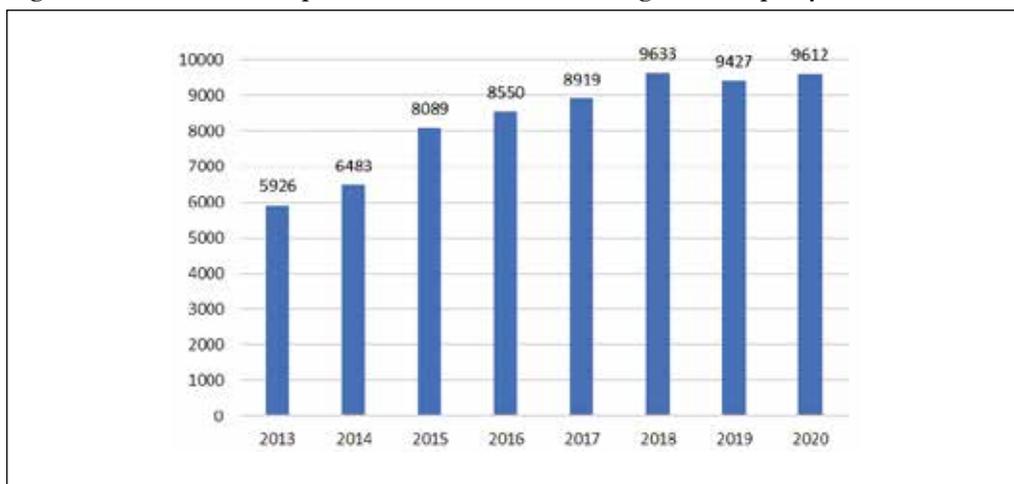


Table 3 – Admissions to continuous training courses per year

ADMISSIONS								
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
5.633	5.926	6.225	7.325	8.219	8.890	9.311	7.118	9.662

Source: 2012-2015 Report (years 2013-2015) p.14; 2015-2019 Report p. 35 (years 2016-2019); SSM Communication of 4 October 2021 for 2020 data.

In 2020, several courses had to be cancelled due to the Covid emergency. However, in both 2020 and 2021, the number of actual participants was much higher than the number of formally admitted participants, since a considerable

² Enrolment requests are usually submitted the year before participation in the course. The figure for 2021 is not available.

number of judges, in addition to those formally registered, had access to the courses via videoconference³.

Figure 3 – Admissions to continuous training courses per year

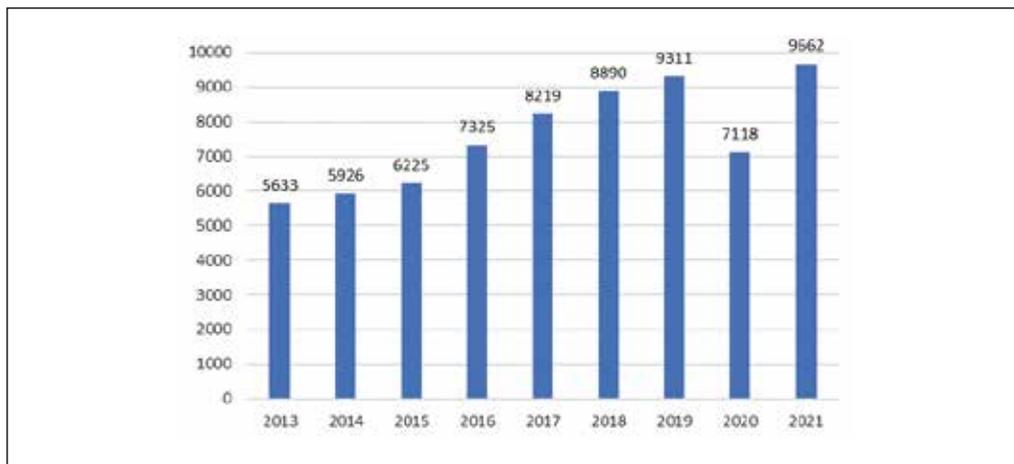


Table 4 – Enrolment requests vs. admissions ratio by year

PERCENTAGE OF ADMISSIONS OVER ENROLMENT REQUESTS							
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
95%	91%	77%	86%	92%	92%	99%	74%

Source: 2012-2015 Report (years 2013-2015) p. 14; 2016-2019 Report p. 35 (years 2016-2019); SSM Communication of October 2021 for 2020 data.

³ 'Compared to the traditional 80/100 participants of 'face-to-face' courses, the Teams platform allows for up to 300 participants (by the end of the year the number will be increased to 10,000), while in a large live web event or webinar it is possible to reach even 20,000 or more participants (with the possibility of further increasing the total number of participants if required); this allowed, as of 16 October 2020, to reach considerable numbers of participants: 1,003 for face-to-face courses, 2,108 for online courses, over 3,500 for webinars, and approximately another 1,500 participants will reasonably attend further online courses scheduled until the end of the year'. *CSM Note Prot. 10953/2020 - Guidelines for the professional training and updating of judges for the year 2021. Report on the progress of training activities in the year 2020. Contributions and remarks by the SSM Steering Committee.*

Table 5 – Participants in continuous training courses per year⁴

PARTICIPANTS IN CONTINUOUS TRAINING COURSES PER YEAR								
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
4.504	5.814	7.625	6.875	8.564	8.195	9.223	5.682	7.906

Source: 2012-2015 Report (years 2013-2015) p. 37; 2016-2019 Report p. 35 (years 2016-2019); SSM Communication of October 2021 for 2020 and 2021 data.

As already mentioned for admissions, the number of ‘official’ participants in the courses held in 2020 is affected by the cancellation of several courses due to the lockdown. However, with the launch of e-courses, the total number of participants has increased significantly.

The four-yearly reports prepared by the Steering Committee also provide some data on **teaching assignments**, which reveal certain trends. For example, there is a considerable turnover of teaching staff; there is a growing balance between ‘judges’ and ‘non-judges’ and, to a lesser extent, between women and men, the latter remaining a majority⁵.

2.2. Training for aspirants to managing positions

From 2014 to June 2021, 44 training courses for aspirants to managing positions were held, attended by 1,902 judges. Data on the different titles of the judges who participated in these courses are not currently available.

The tables, and related graphs, below provide summary data on these courses, with a peak of 14 courses organised in 2015 but a higher number of participants in 2016: 743 judges in 12 courses.

Table 6 – Number of courses for aspirants to managing positions per year

NUMBER OF COURSES FOR ASPIRANTS TO MANAGING POSITIONS PER YEAR							
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	14	12	4	2	6	3	2

Source: Report 2012-2015 p. 74 and Appendix 4; Report 2016-2019 p. 114; SSM Communication for 2020-2021.

⁴ The figure for 2021 includes participants up to July 2021.

⁵ Report (2012-2015) p. 45, Report (2016-2019) p. 8-9.

Figure 4 – Number of courses for aspirants to managing positions per year

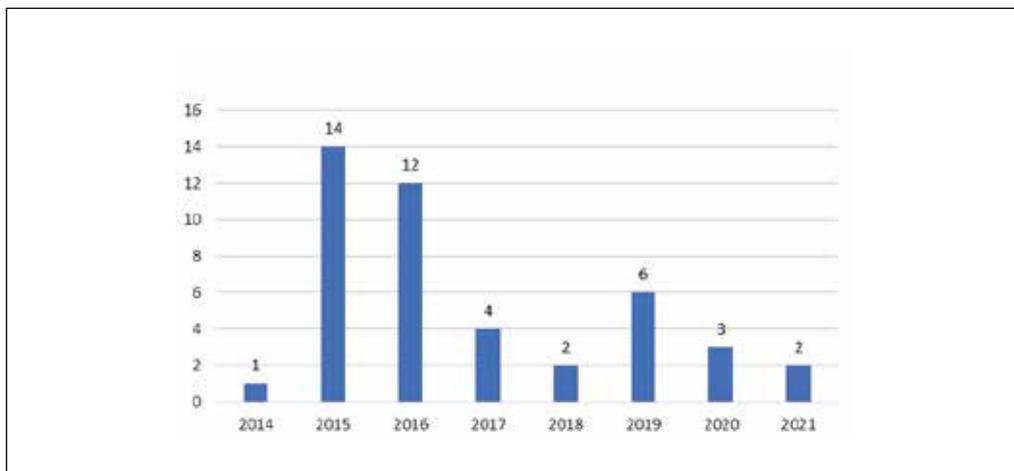


Table 7 – Participants in courses for aspirants to managing positions per year

PARTICIPANTS IN COURSES FOR ASPIRANTS TO MANAGING POSITIONS PER YEAR							
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
N.D.	409	743	282	49	179	161	79

Source: SSM Communication of 24 September 2021.

Figure 5 – Participants in courses for aspirants to managing positions per year

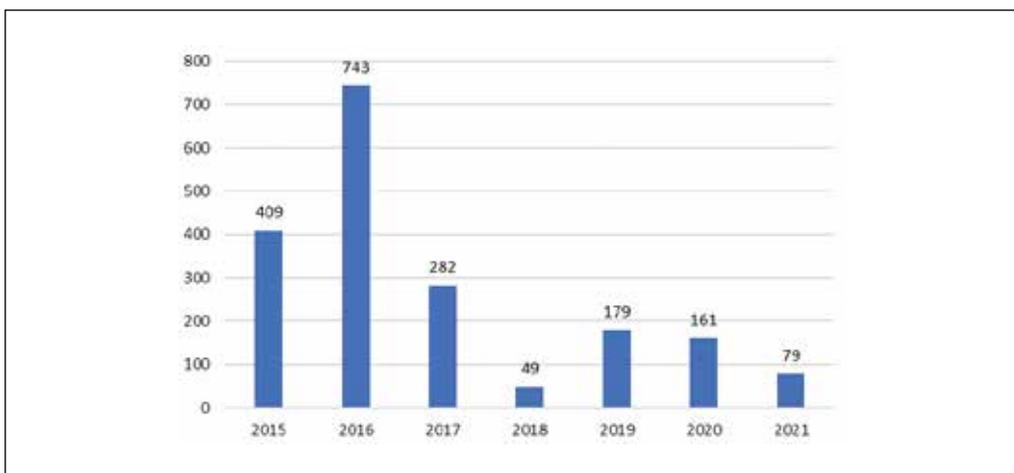
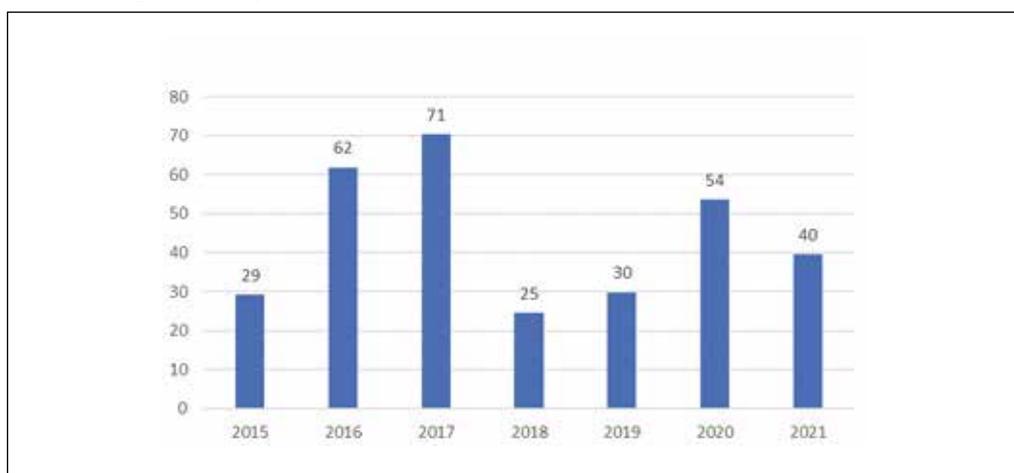


Table 8 – Average number of participants in courses for aspirants to managing positions per year

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN COURSES FOR ASPIRANTS TO MANAGING POSITIONS PER YEAR						
2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
29	62	71	25	30	54	40

Figure 6 – Average number of participants in courses for aspirants to managing positions per year



2.3. Training for trainee ordinary magistrates (MOTs)

To date, the School has trained a total of 3,485 MOTs. In the four-yearly reports, data on MOTs are only available in aggregate form, and therefore, it is not particularly useful to present them in tables or figures.

Up to 2015 included, 997 judges were trained for three public competitions (Italian Ministerial Decree of 8 June 2012, Italian Ministerial Decree of 2 May 2013, Italian Ministerial Decree of 20 February 2014. 2012-2015 Report, p. 20). From 2016 to 2018, on the other hand, 1,370 judges were trained (Italian Ministerial Decree of 2015/2016; Ministerial Decree of 2017; Ministerial Decree of 2018. 2016-2019 Report, p. 7). In 2019, 576 MOTs were trained (Italian Ministerial Decree of 12 February 2019 with 337 participants and Italian Ministerial Decree of 18 July 2019 with 239 participants), while in 2020, another 265 were trained (Italian Ministerial Decree of 3 January 2020) and in 2021 a further 277 (Italian Ministerial Decree of 2 March 2021).

3. Study of changes in the courses

The data collected in collaboration with the SSM covered all continuous training courses planned at central and local level from 2013 to July 2021, MOT courses and courses for aspirants to managing roles. In the case of courses for MOTs (which tend to be one per year) and courses for aspirants to managing positions (from twelve to only a few in certain years), no quantitative analyses of the changes were carried out as the rather standard features of the courses effectively preclude this.

For a more detailed analysis of content-related aspects, please refer to the four-yearly reports or other SSM documents, where these two areas' evolution and critical elements are examined in detail.

Over the years, an in-depth analysis of the course evaluations was carried out for these courses, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Therefore, the quantitative analysis focused on the 850 continuous training courses planned at the central level from 2013 to December 2021 and the 147 courses planned at the local level.

3.1. Continuous training at the central level

The following tables summarise the main data concerning the continuous training courses planned by the SSM, which, as is well known, have been divided into four main areas since the School's foundation: civil, common, linguistic, and criminal. As agreed with the SSM, this study does not cover the international area.

As the table shows, planned continuous training courses have increased from 76 in 2013 to 98 in 2021, with a peak of 110 courses in 2019.

Table 9 – Planned continuous training courses per area and year

Area	YEAR									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
CIVIL	28	27	31	32	32	27	31	26	36	270
CRIMINAL	27	31	36	35	39	37	45	43	35	328
COMMON	15	16	20	22	25	25	27	32	23	205
LINGUISTIC	6	4	5	4	5	6	7	6	4	47
Total	76	78	92	93	101	95	110	107	98	850

Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

As mentioned, the classification into the four areas provided by the SSM was further refined into thematic areas to try to better reflect the content of the courses in the different years. The 'themes' were defined in cooperation with the SSM based on the main topic of the course as derived from the course title. The fol-

lowing tables show the results of this further classification which, as mentioned, is intended to offer an initial, more accurate representation of the contents of the teaching activities and which may subsequently be modified and refined using the criteria deemed most appropriate by the SSM.

Figure 7 – Planned continuous training courses per area and year

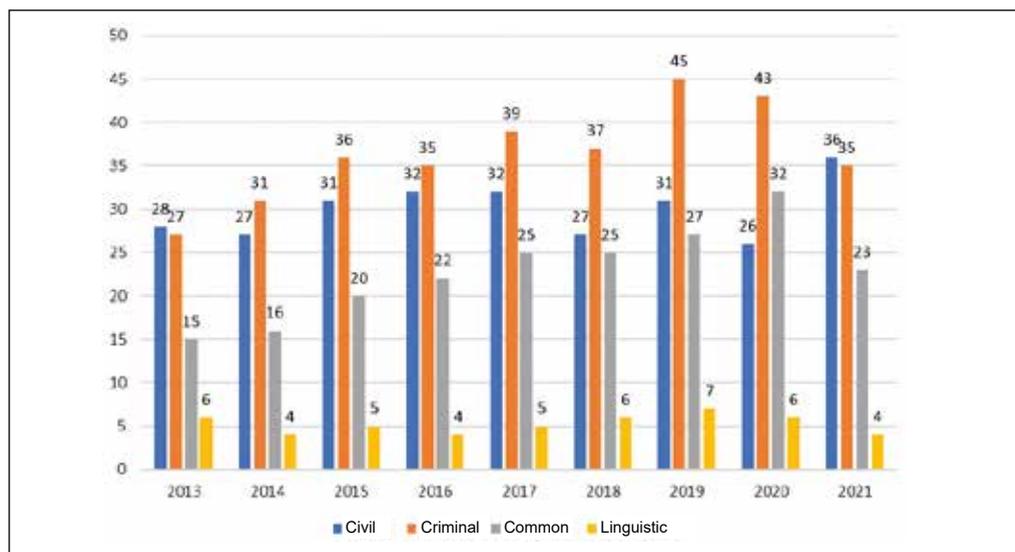


Table 10 – Planned continuous training courses per theme and year

Theme	YEAR									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Environment	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	7
Administrative			1	2		1			1	5
Civil appeal	1	1	1		1					4
Criminal appeal			1	1	1	1				4
Bioethics and biolaw				1		1	1	1	1	5
Cassation				1					1	2
Comparative law			5	5	4	3	4	3		24
Communication	1	2	3	3	2	3	1	3	1	19
Consumers	2				1	1	1		2	7
International cooperation					1			1	1	3

Table 10 – Planned continuous training courses per theme and year

Theme	YEAR									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Bribery			1	1		1	1			4
Undefined course							3	7		10
Constitutional law				1	1	1	1	2		6
Covid									2	2
Organised crime	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	1	18
Leadership	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	2		15
Property rights	2	1	1		4				1	9
Disciplinary		1					1			2
Economy and finance	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	3	18
Civil enforcement		1	1	2	1	1		2	1	9
Criminal enforcement		1	1		1	1	1		1	6
Ethics/Deontology	1		2			2	2	1	2	10
European law and institutions	5	3	3	2	1	5	3	2		24
Bankruptcy	5	5	2	2	4	1	1	2	2	24
Family	3	2	2	3	1	1	5	1	2	20
Law sources/Jurisdiction	1	2			2		1		3	9
Forensic	1		1	2	2	2	2	1	1	12
Training		1				1	2	2		6
Justices of the peace			1	2	1		2	2		8
Jurisprudence					2	2	1	1		6
Restorative justice				1			1		1	3
Immigration		1	2	2	4	3	2	1	2	17
Business law	3	2	3	5	4	5	5	4	6	37
Appeals						1	1	2		4
Investigations	1		3	2	2	2	2	2	1	15
Wiretapping		1	1					1	1	4
Labour law	4	5	6	5	5	2	5	5	5	42
Linguistics	6	4			1	2	3	3	4	23
Probation			1		2					3
Juvenile	1		1	2	1	2	2	3	1	13
Precautionary measures	1	1	1	1	1	1			2	8

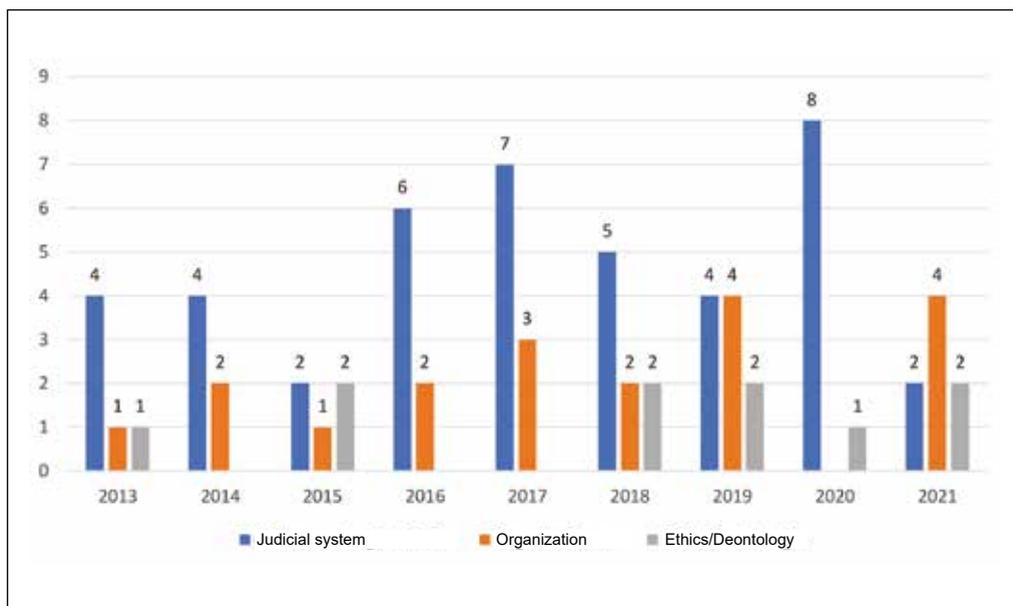
Table 10 – Planned continuous training courses per theme and year

Theme	YEAR									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Legal reasoning	1	1	2	1	1					6
Obligations and contracts		1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	11
Honorary judges			5	3	2	2	3	1	1	17
Judicial system	4	4	2	6	7	5	4	8	2	42
Organisation	1	2	1	2	3	2	4		4	19
Public administration				1	1	2		1	1	6
General part criminal law	1	2	1	4	6	3	5	2	7	31
General part/penalty				1	2					3
Special part criminal law	3	7	4	4	2	5	4	8	4	41
Penitentiary		1				1				2
Prevention	1	1			2		2	2	2	10
Social Security		1			1	1			1	4
Privacy						1	1	1	1	4
Digital proceedings		2	5	5	4	2	1	4	2	25
Processual	13	7	11	3	3	5	6	5	4	57
Processual/hearing	2	1		1						4
Processual/duration	1								1	2
Processual/evidence	1	2	1			1	2	4	2	13
Processual/expenses	1				2		1	1		5
Psychology	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1		10
Civil liability	1	1	2	1		2	2		2	11
Medical liability		1		1		2	1	1		6
Alternative procedures		1	2	1		1	2		1	8
Surveillance			1	1	1		1	1	1	6
Judiciary history				1	1	1	2	1	1	7
Successions		1						1	1	3
Technologies		1			2	4	2	2	4	15
Terrorism					1		1		1	3
Tax			1		1	2		1	2	7
Guardianship			1		1		1	1	1	5

Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

The database we have created allows for a variety of in-depth studies to be carried out by the SSM and to produce diagrams such as the one below, which groups together courses falling under the categories of ‘judicial system’ (42 courses over the years), ‘ethics/code of conduct’ (10 courses) and ‘organisation’ (19 courses).

Figure 8 – Number of courses on certain topics per year



As mentioned above, the database created was also made available using the business intelligence application Tableau, which allows for a series of analyses to be carried out. These analyses, which are not replicated on paper but are accessible in electronic format, effectively show the various courses carried out on the various topics and their evaluations.

For example, below is a table showing how to filter the courses by area (box on the right) and analyse the evaluations received for each course held on each topic.

As regards the locations for the ‘central’ continuous training courses, many of these were held in Scandicci as well as on other premises, as can be seen from the table below. Some of the courses in 2020 and all those in 2021 show the venues where they were to be held, although they had to be held online out of necessity.

3.2. Continuous training at the local level

The tables below summarise the data collected in cooperation with the SSM.

Table 12 – Continuous training courses at local level by area and year

Area	YEAR								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
CIVIL	4	0	6	11	8	8	9	7	53
COMMON	4	14	5	10	7	8	3	1	52
CRIMINAL	4	0	8	8	11	3	4	4	42
Total	12	14	19	29	26	19	16	12	147

Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

Figure 10 – Local courses by area and year

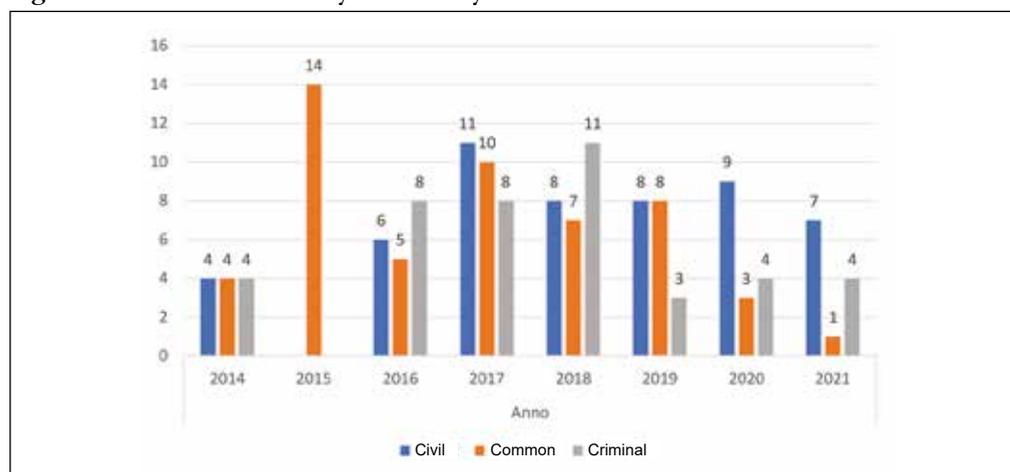


Table 13 – Local courses by area, topic and year

Area/Topic	YEAR								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
CIVIL	4	0	6	11	8	8	9	7	53
Property rights							2	1	3
Economy and finance	1								1
Enforcement				1					1
Europe law and institutions				1	1		1		3

Table 13 – Local courses by area, topic and year

Area/Topic	YEAR								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Bankruptcy			1	2		1			4
Family					2		1	1	4
Immigration					1		1		2
Business law			1	1				1	3
Appeals							1		1
Labour law			1	1	1	2	2		7
Juvenile					1				1
Obligations, contracts	1			1		1	1	1	5
Judicial system			1						1
Special Part								1	1
Persons and Subjects				1				1	2
Processual				1	1	2			4
Civil Liability	1		1	2	1	1			6
Technologies	1		1					1	3
Guardianship						1			1
COMMON	4	14	5	10	7	8	3	1	52
Environment							1		1
Bioethics and biolaw						1			1
Consumers		1							1
Organised crime	1	1							2
Economy and finance		1							1
Enforcement			1						1
Europe law and institutions	1			1	1				3
Bankruptcy	1	1		1	1		1		5
Law sources/Jurisdiction				1					1
Justice of the peace			1						1
Immigration		3	1		1				5
Business law						2	1		3
Labour		2		1					3
Literature and law					1	1			2
Juvenile		1		1					2

Table 13 – Local courses by area, topic and year

Area/Topic	YEAR								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Legal reasoning					1				1
Obligations, contracts				1		2			3
Judicial system	1	1	1						3
Special part		2	1	1		2		1	7
Persons and subjects					1				1
Prevention				1					1
Processual		1							1
Psychology				1					1
Medical liability					1				1
Technologies				1					1
CRIMINAL	4	0	8	8	11	3	4	4	42
Bribery			1						1
Organised crime	1		1						2
Economy and finance				1					1
Enforcement							1		1
Family					1				1
Justice of the peace				1	1				2
Company			1		1				2
Appeals					1				1
Investigations				1	1				2
Juvenile						1			1
General part criminal law	1								1
Special part criminal law	1		2	3	2	1	2	4	15
Persons and subjects					1				1
Prevention	1		1		1		1		4
Digital proceedings			1						1
Processual						1			1
Processual/evidence			1						1
Medical liability				1					1
Alternative procedures					1				1
Terrorism				1	1				2

Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

4. Participants' evaluation of the training offer

In 2013, the SSM introduced course evaluation forms to be filled in by participants at the end of each training initiative. This evaluation system, which has been slightly modified over the years, is also used for online courses held on Teams. The data, collected anonymously, are then processed to evaluate various aspects of the training activity with regard to the courses and teachers. In agreement with the School, it was decided to analyse only data referring to courses. The analysis takes into account the evaluations of continuous training courses, courses for aspirants to managing positions, and MOTs. This report presents only summary data. The database created was processed using the Tableau application using interactive dashboards that make it possible to select, filter and sort the data for all the courses offered by the SSM.

4.1. Evaluation of continuous training

The evaluation system of continuous training courses has been modified over time. Some areas of evaluation were abandoned, others were added, and others were slightly modified in their definition. More specifically, the data collected over different years regards⁷:

- 1) 'course organisation' which, although labelled differently over the years, refers to the activity of the administration offices;
- 2) 'hospitality and logistics', introduced in 2014, refers to transport, hotel accommodation, and catering for courses taught in person and the IT area – i.e., the functioning of communication systems (Teams or other) – for online events;
- 3) the training content has been evaluated using different terminology: 'overall assessment of the course' (2013), 'overall formative assessment of the course' (2014-17), 'overall assessment of the course content: topics, reports, teaching methodology' (2018-21), 'usefulness of judicial activity' (2013-17).

As indicated above, the number of courses planned by the SSM from 2013 to December 2021 was 850.

The number of courses scheduled as of 31 August 2021 was 774, and a further 35 courses will be delivered by the end of 2021. In addition, 41 courses were postponed during 2020-2021 due to the pandemic and have not been held to

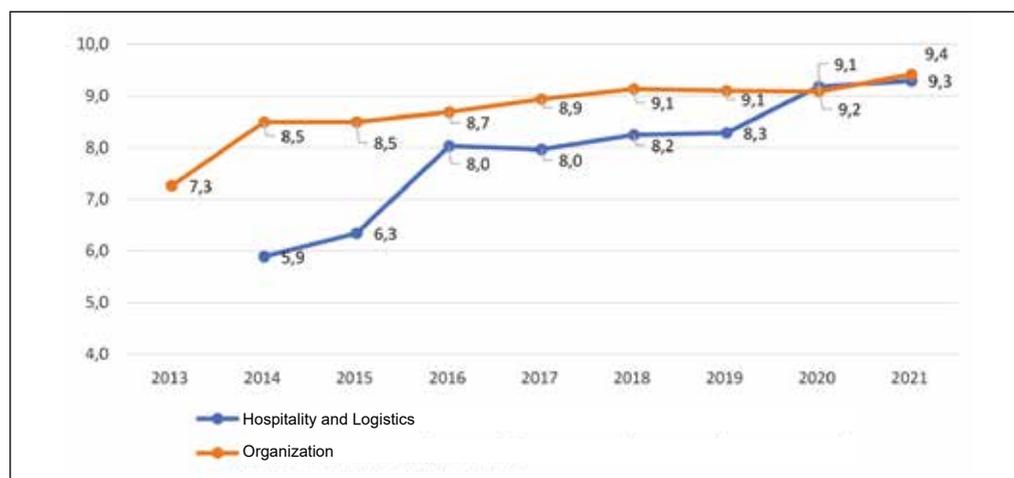
⁷ The data were provided by the SSM and processed so as to be comparable between the different years.

date. Furthermore, it should be noted that the evaluations of some of the courses delivered during 2020-21 could not be obtained in time to prepare this report.

As reported, the evaluation of training activities can be divided into three main dimensions: ‘administrative and secretariat activities’, ‘hospitality and logistics’, and ‘training contents of courses’.

Figure 11 shows the ratings given over time by participants to ‘hospitality and logistics’ and ‘course organisation’ respectively. A progressive growth characterised the trend of both variables. The ratings given to ‘organisation and secretariat’ showed a significant improvement after the first year of activity. ‘Hospitality and logistics’ instead recorded a significant increase in 2016, probably associated with an improvement in hotel accommodations. The annual average score for ‘organisation and secretariat’ varied from 7.3 in 2013 to 9.4 in 2021. The annual average for ‘logistics and hospitality’ went from 5.9 in 2014 to 9.3 in 2021 (a year in which courses were predominantly online). With regard to the data for 2020-2021, it should be noted that the lessons were delivered almost exclusively online through the Teams platform.

Figure 11 – Average ratings for ‘hospitality and logistics’ and ‘organisation and secretariat’

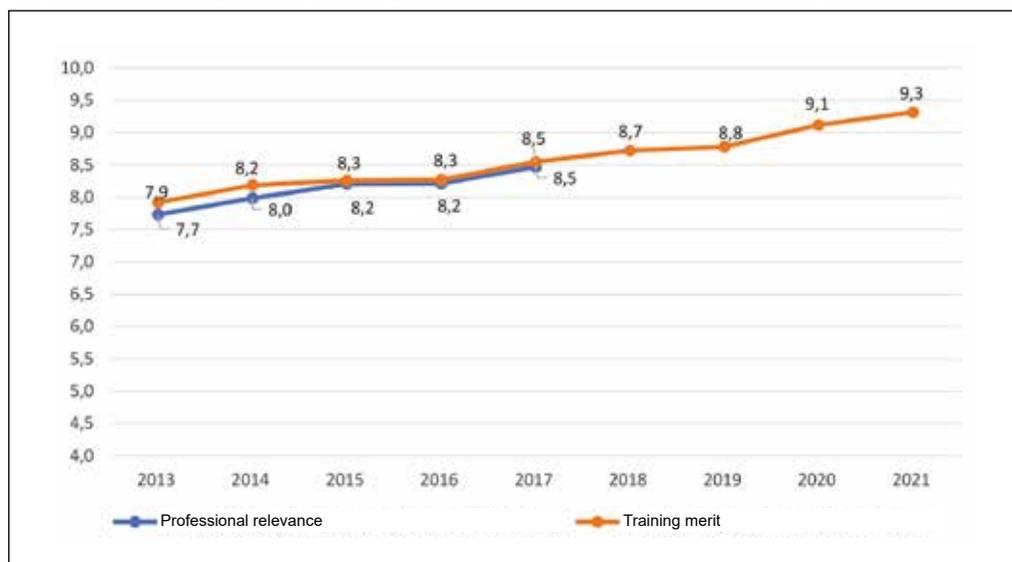


Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

The two criteria considered for evaluating the training content during the period, ‘professional relevance’ and ‘training merit’, had a very similar trend, showing progressive growth (Figure 12). The annual average was already very high in 2013 (close to 8) and above 9 in 2020 and 2021.

The average evaluation did not vary significantly among the four training areas considering the whole period. The overall average evaluation was 8.5, the average evaluation for the civil area was 8.6, and the average evaluation for the criminal area was 8.4. The linguistic area reached 9.1 and the common one 8.3. Since the survey did not include data on the personal profiles (e.g., gender) or professional profiles of the respondents (e.g. judge, prosecutor, honorary magistrate), it was not possible to analyse whether there were variations with respect to these aspects.

Figure 12 – Average ratings for ‘professional relevance’ and ‘training merit’



Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

Significant differences between individual courses can be observed. In the period under examination, 19 courses scored less than 7 in terms of training merit. In the last two years, when e-learning was used almost exclusively, only 8 out of 110 courses scored below the average (8.5) of the course evaluations from 2013 to 2021. As mentioned above, from 2008, the question asking to evaluate courses on their ‘professional relevance’ was no longer being asked. Based on the interviews conducted, the decision to stop assessing professional relevance was based on the fact that some courses do not have a direct impact on work practices but provide broader knowledge. Furthermore, very similar scores were found between ‘professional relevance’ and ‘training merit’ (see next figure). This suggests that it is difficult for participants to differentiate between the two types

of ratings at the end of the course. Lastly, the guidelines drawn up by the European Judicial Training Network⁸ point out that the relevance in terms of vocational training can only be measured at a later date with a dedicated evaluation system (level 3 of the Kirkpatrick scale).

4.2. Evaluation of training for aspirants to managing positions

A number of preliminary remarks on the nature of the data collected regarding the training of aspirants to managing positions should also be made.

The data used for evaluating the ‘organisation and secretariat’ and the ‘logistics and hospitality’ of the courses remained identical to those collected for continuous training courses. The formative evaluation indicators were slightly different from those observed in the case of continuous training courses. The data on ‘coordination’ was only collected for the first courses (up to D15014) and with some interruptions. The indicator ‘usefulness of vocational training’ was collected, again with interruptions, until 2017. Again, the ‘overall evaluation’ variable was collected with some interruptions from 2014 to 2021. The analysis is affected by these changes over the years⁹.

Between 2013 and 2021, the SSM offered 44 courses to train aspirants for managing positions. The first course was held in 2014. The most significant number of courses took place in 2015 and 2016 with 14 and 12 courses respectively, before becoming stable with around 3-4 courses per year.

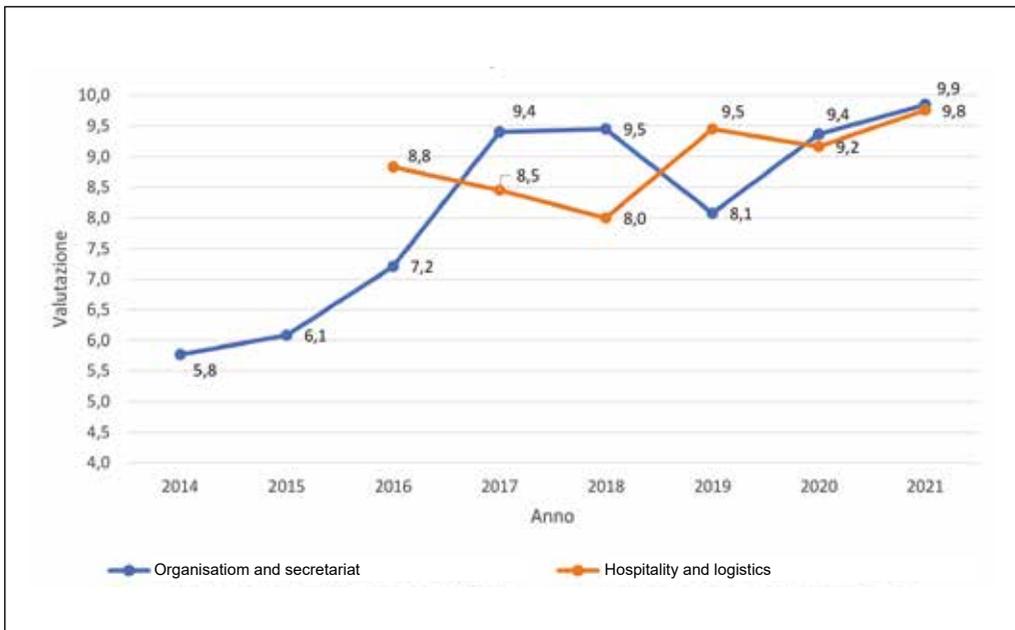
As observed in the case of continuous training courses, the annual averages for ‘organisation and secretariat’ and ‘logistics and hospitality’ have improved over the years in the case of courses for aspirants to managing positions. The ‘organisation and secretariat’ rating rose from 5.8 in 2014 to 9.9 in 2021. The rating for logistics went from 8.8 to 9.8. However, as can be seen in the figure, the trend is not linear, having variable data, especially in 2018 and 2019 (Figure 13).

⁸ EJTN, *EJTN Handbook on Judicial Training Methodology in Europe*, European Judicial Training Network (Brussels, 2016), https://www.ejtn.eu/MRDDocuments/EJTN_JTM_Handbook_2016_EN.pdf

⁹ Data for the 2014-2015 and 2020-2021 courses were provided by the SSM. Data for the other years (2016-2019) were retrieved from the four-yearly reports. As the data provided for 2014-2015 courses did not include any course code, this was reconstructed by cross-referencing the course date with the data available on the School’s website. Consequently, it was possible to associate each course with the date on which it was taught. This was not possible in the case of one course which, according to the data provided by the School, was held on 4 May 2014 and of which there is no trace on the School’s website (code DIR14001). The data for 2020-2021 (online courses) were processed so that they could be compatible with the structure of the data in the table.

Over the years, the evaluations of the individual courses were quite different. The ratings for ‘organisation and secretariat’ ranged from 3.1 to 9.8. The ratings for ‘hospitality and logistics’ went from 7.9 to 9.8. As in the case of continuous training courses, the ratings for IT aspects of courses held in 2020-2021 were very positive, ranging from 9 to 9.8.

Figure 13 – Average ratings for ‘organisation and secretariat’ and ‘hospitality and logistics’

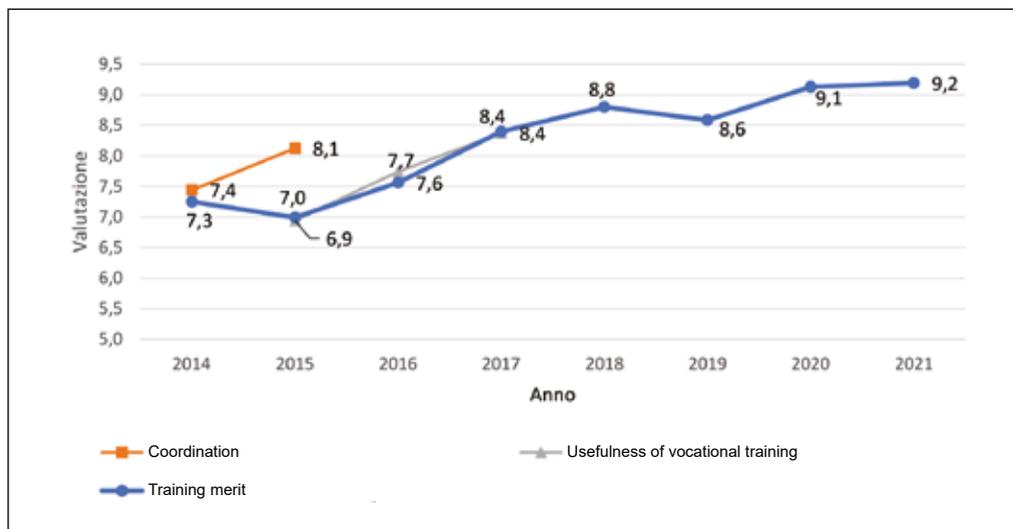


Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

The data considered for the ‘evaluation of the training content’ (Figure 14) show an upward trend: ‘professional relevance’ went from 6.9 in 2015 to 8.4 in 2017, the ‘overall evaluation’ went from values around 7 in 2014-15 to scores slightly above 9 in 2020-21. The ratings for ‘course coordination’ went from 7.4 (2014) to 8.1 (2015), then were no longer collected.

Training for aspirants to managing positions has a wider range of individual course evaluations (i.e., the range between the course with the lowest average evaluation and the course with the highest average evaluation for the same parameter) than that observed for continuous training. The ‘overall evaluation’ indicator of individual courses ranged from 5.4 to 9.2. The evaluation of individual courses in terms of ‘professional relevance’ ranged from 5.6 to 9.

Figure 14 – Average ratings for ‘usefulness of vocational training’ and ‘training merit’



Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

4.3. Evaluation of initial training

Initial training involves indicators similar to those described above¹⁰.

The purely didactic aspect was assessed using three indicators: ‘correspondence to expectations’ (up to 2018), which is not considered in this document, ‘usefulness for judicial activity’, and ‘overall assessment of the course’. The data for 2021 is partial, as the evaluations relating to specific training are not available.

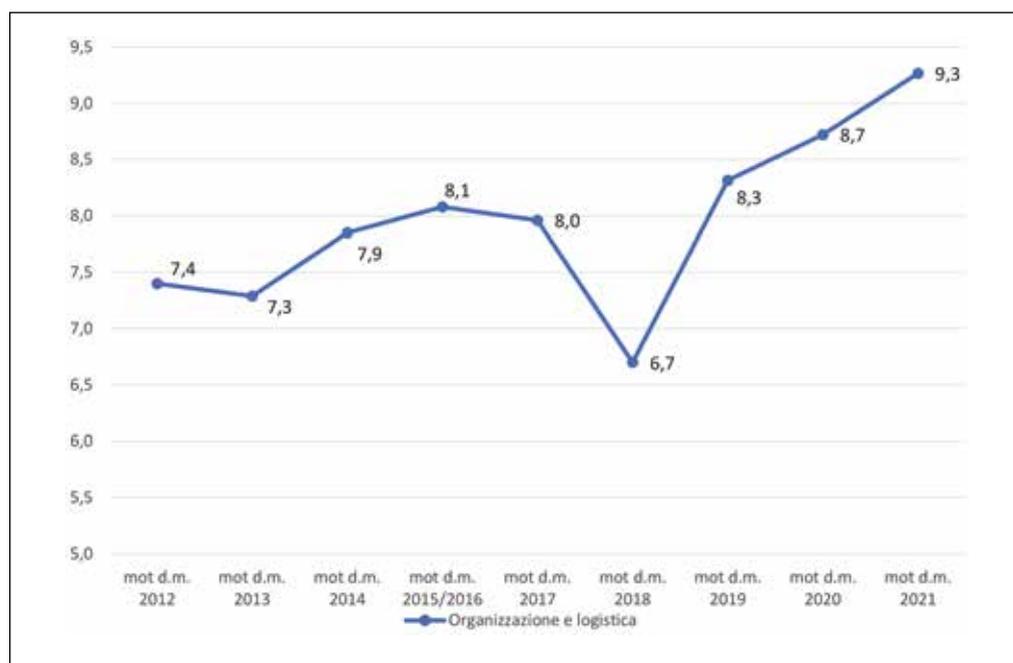
For each week of training, the evaluation system collected data later processed and aggregated to provide a single average figure for ‘general training’ and ‘specific training’.

The first course involving the SSM in initial training was aimed at judges recruited under the 2012 Ministerial Decree. Since then, the SSM has provided initial training courses annually.

¹⁰ The data are organised by year according to the decree for the appointment of MOTs and were mainly retrieved from the School’s four-yearly reports, being careful to align them with those collected for other training programmes. In particular, since the SSM collected evaluations for every single training event in which the ordinary and specific training was organised, it was necessary to merge the data in order to have an overall average evaluation for ordinary training and one for specific training. Data for Ministerial Decree of 2019, 2020 and 2021 were provided by the School Administration Office.

With regard to general training, carried out mainly at the School's campus in Scandicci, the ratings for 'organisation and logistics' were on average lower than those observed for the other types of courses. They improved slightly up to the courses for Ministerial Decrees of 2015/2016 and then dropped to 6.7 for Ministerial Decree of 2018. On the other hand, the ratings for the 2020/21 courses that were taught online were very positive (Figure 15).

Figure 15 – Ordinary training: ratings for hospitality and logistics

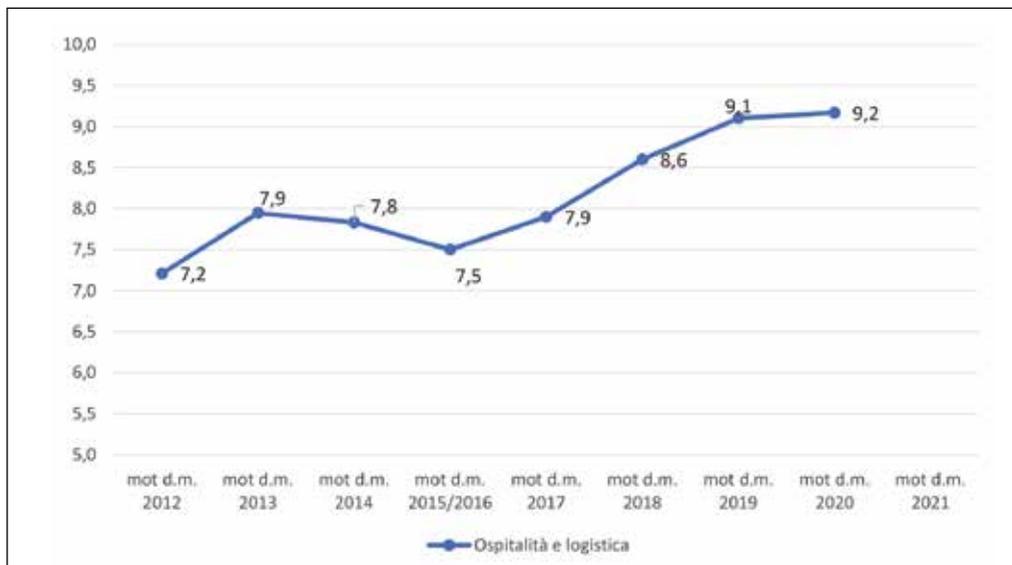


Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

The ratings for specific training courses show a slightly different trend, with average ratings more favorable than those for general training, including an upward trend starting with the courses for Ministerial Decrees of 2015/2016 (Figure 16). Much appreciated, again, were the 2020 courses taught online.

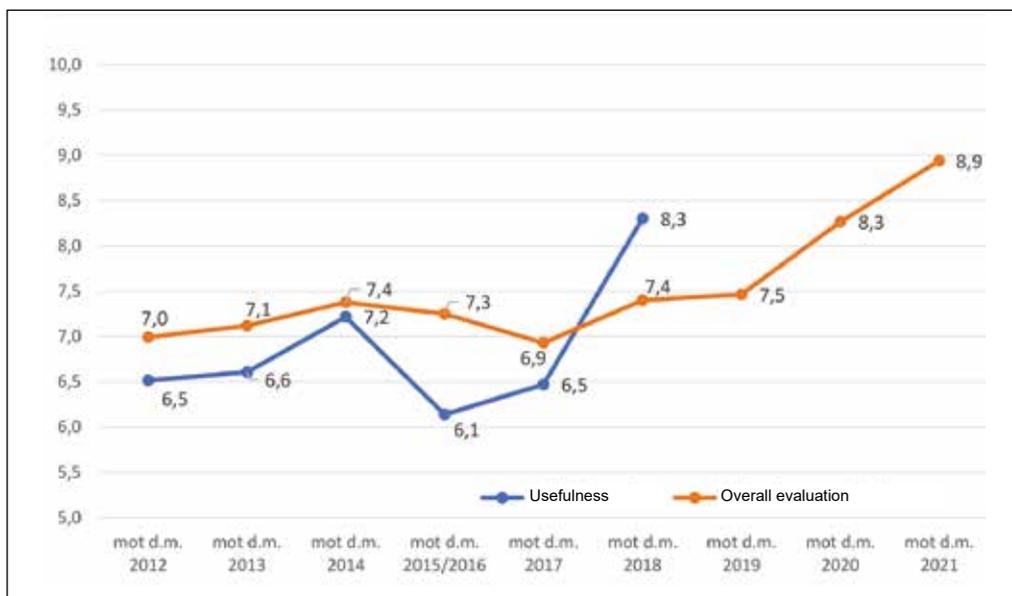
As mentioned above, training contents were evaluated through the following indicators: 'overall evaluation of the course' and, until Ministerial Decree of 2018, 'usefulness for judicial activity' (Figure 17). With regard to general training, these two indicators showed an upward trend up to Ministerial Decree of 2014, dropped in the following courses, and rose sharply from Ministerial Decree of 2018. However, it should be noted that these evaluations were slightly lower than those observed for continuous training courses.

Figure 16 – Specific training: Ratings for hospitality and logistics



Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

Figure 17 – General training: average ratings in terms of usefulness and overall evaluation

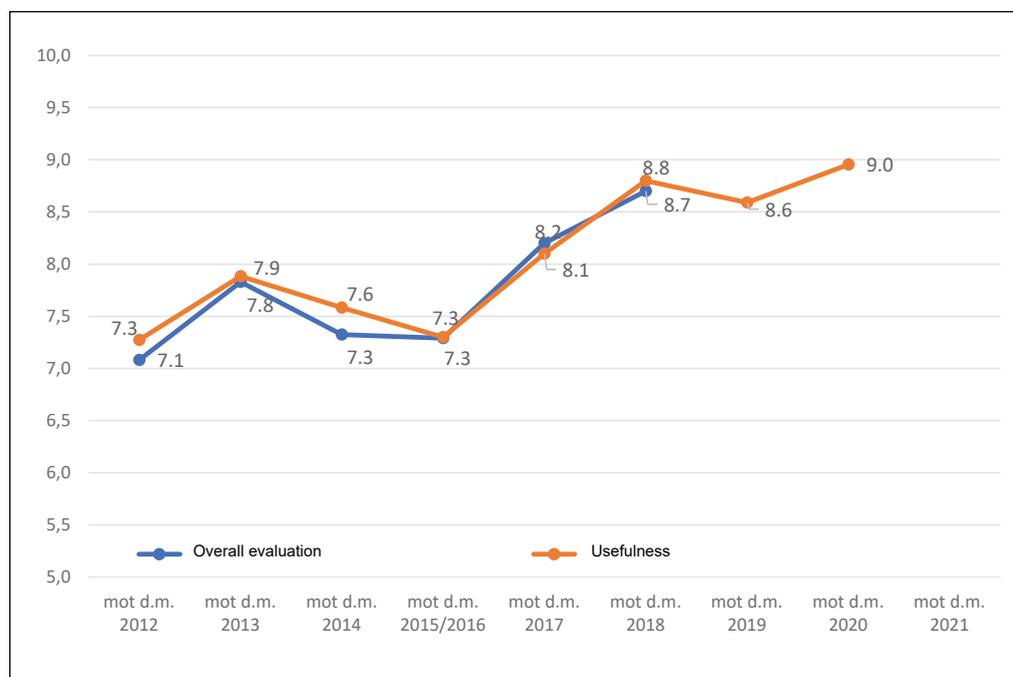


Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

The last two courses (2020 and 2021) received the highest ratings, both above 8.0. In short, while the first courses received relatively low ratings (compared to the average ratings given to continuous training courses), a significant and progressive improvement can be observed from 2017 onwards, with ratings more in line with those obtained by continuous training courses.

A similar trend can be observed for specific training (Figure 18). Also, in this case, the ratings, which in the first four years were consistently lower than 8.0, began to improve from Ministerial Decree of 2017, reaching 8.8 with Ministerial Decree of 2018. The overall evaluation for specific training in 2020 (latest available data) stood at around 9.0.

Figure 18 – Specific training: average ratings in terms of usefulness and overall evaluation



Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

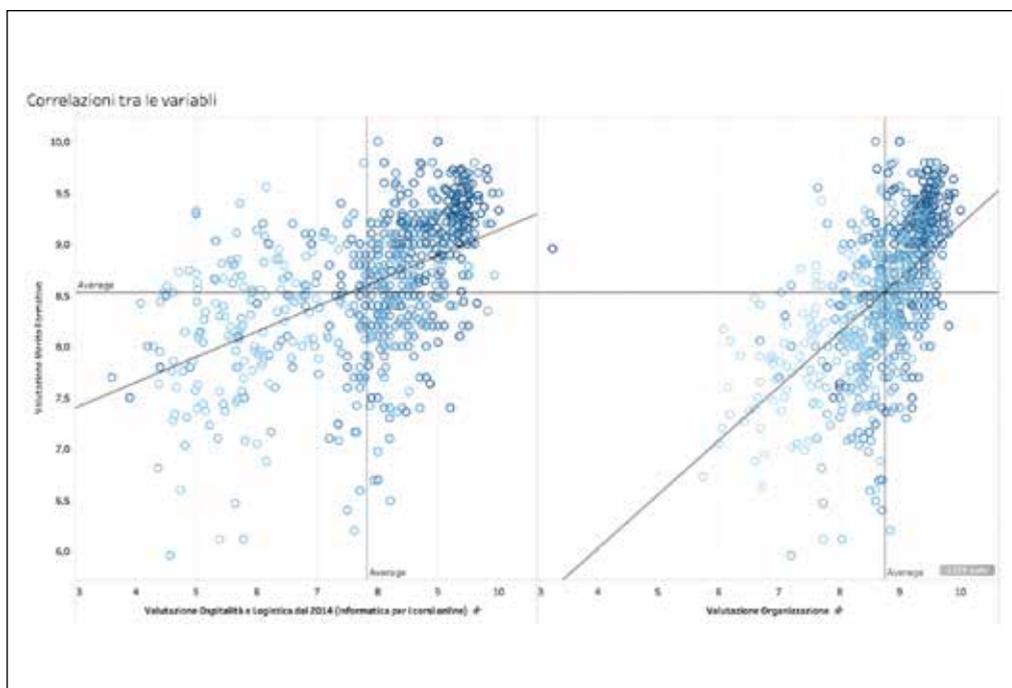
4.4. Correlation between the different evaluation variables

A high-quality course requires high scores on all three variables used by the SSM to evaluate it, i.e., efficient administration, well-organised logistics, and

high-quality training content. As far as continuous training courses are concerned, positive correlations emerged between these three variables¹¹.

The ratings for ‘training content’ have a positive, but not very strong, correlation with the variables ‘hospitality and logistics’ (r. 0.25) and ‘organisation and secretariat’ (r. 0.32). In other words, while there are several courses in which the three ratings vary consistently, there are also courses with low ratings for ‘logistics or secretariat’, but at the same time with a high rating for content. Therefore, the data show that it cannot be empirically argued that, for example, a good rating on ‘hospitality and logistics’ affects the rating on ‘training content’ or vice versa. The following two scatter diagrams (Figure 19) clearly demonstrate the described dynamics.

Figure 19 – Scatter diagrams with correlations between the evaluation variables



Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

¹¹ The same analysis process is less relevant in the case of MOTs and aspirants to managing positions due to the more limited number of courses carried out.

4.5. Evaluation of online courses

As mentioned above, from March 2020 until August 2021, the courses were held online, mainly using the Teams platform. Comparing the data from the last two years with those from previous years has produced a number of observations.

Table 14 – Continuous training: average ratings in selected periods

Period	AVERAGE RATINGS		
	Training merit	Organisation	Hospitality and Logistics
Online only (May 2020 - Aug. 2021)	9,29	9,33	9,25
2020-21	9,22	9,25	9,24
2018-19 courses	8,75	9,16	8,37
Entire period (2013-2021)	8,51	8,73	7,80

Source: Elaboration on data provided by the SSM.

The first observation is that the courses held in the last two-year period had a higher average rating than the courses offered in the immediately preceding two-year period (2018-2019) and those in the entire period (2013-2021). This applies to continuous training courses and courses for aspirants to managing positions and MOTs. To better understand this figure, the answers to the questionnaire on distance learning presented in the next section can also be helpful.

Part II.

Questionnaire on distance learning activities

1. Methodology

This section presents the analysis of the data collected through the administration to all Italian magistrates (judges and prosecutors) of a questionnaire entitled “**La formazione a distanza della Scuola superiore della magistratura: il parere dei magistrati**” (Distance learning at the School for the Judiciary: the magistrates’ opinion), which contained a series of questions on the evaluation of distance learning courses, on the digital teaching materials offered by the SSM and on future training¹.

1.1. The survey instrument: the questionnaire

The survey was carried out using a structured questionnaire consisting of 30 questions specifically designed to collect quantitative information precisely and timely. The questionnaire consisted of single-answer questions, multiple answer questions, and a final open question.

The process leading up to the online administration of the questionnaire was as follows:

- preparation of a first draft;
- review of the first draft by the School’s Steering Committee;
- administration to a sample group of subjects to identify any possible difficulties of interpretation and to ‘calibrate’ the instrument;
- final revision by the School’s Steering Committee;
- sending of an email from the School (using the School’s mailing list) with the link to the online questionnaire;
- collection of the answers (anonymously);
- data processing and analysis.

¹ We would like to thank Dr. Domenico Piscitelli for his collaboration in the preparation and processing of the questionnaire data.

The thematic areas covered by the questionnaire were the following:

- context data;
- information on participation in distance learning courses via videoconference;
- evaluation of distance learning via videoconference:
 - technical and organisational aspects;
 - methodological aspects of teaching;
- evaluation of other courses and training contents accessible at a distance;
- opinions on the learning of the future.

1.2. The survey method, data collection, and processing

An online questionnaire, accessible from any device (PC, smartphone, tablet, etc.), was used to collect the data. It was conducted using a CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) system on the “Lime” web survey platform used by the National Research Council of Italy (*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*, CNR). The CNR received and therefore processed only anonymous data.

For administering the survey, in June 2021 an email containing the link to the questionnaire was sent by the School to the reference population of the survey, consisting of all ordinary magistrates, ordinary trainee magistrates (MOTs), and honorary magistrates (14,884 persons in total²).

Respondents were given about one month to answer the questionnaire. The total number of responses was 1,465 (about 10% of the target population), of which 1,339 were valid for processing.

The reliability of the survey was ensured by several quality checks on the answers collected. For some questions, a further processing step was necessary to code the answers so that they could be classified into standardised categories. The information could be correctly entered into the data matrix.

Data processing was carried out using the statistical analysis software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) and included quality checks at several levels:

- data cleaning (plausibility/out-of-range checks, filter questions);
- processing of ‘non-responses’ and missing values;
- cross-checks and consistency checks.

² Source: ‘*Relazione sull’amministrazione della giustizia nell’anno 2020*’ (Report on the administration of justice in 2020) by the First President of the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation opening the 2021 legal year.

2. Univariate (and bivariate) data analysis

Data processing was carried out through a ‘univariate’ analysis of each question of the questionnaire, and a ‘bivariate’ analysis, which essentially consisted of a cross-analysis of all the variables for evaluating training based on the magistrates’ qualifications (ordinary magistrates, MOTs, and honorary magistrates) and genders.

The report also contains ‘summary boxes’ of the main results to make them more easily accessible.

2.1. Context variables

The first question asked the magistrates to specify their **qualifications**: ‘ordinary magistrate’, ‘ordinary trainee magistrate (MOT)’, ‘honorary magistrate’ (see ‘question D1’ in the questionnaire). Those who did not answer this ‘screening’ question could not complete the rest of the questionnaire.

Of the 1,465 magistrates who opened the link to the questionnaire (about 10% of the reference population), 1,339 answered this fundamental question (just over 9%). Therefore, their questionnaires are the database for processing.

The following table summarises the distribution of respondents and compares it with the reference population’s data by qualification.

Table 1 – Qualification of magistrates

QUESTION D1	frequency	% respondents	reference	% prop.
Ordinary magistrate	740	55.3	9348 ³	7.9
MOT	298	22.3	542 ⁴	55.0
Honorary magistrate	301	22.4	5267 ⁵	5.7
TOTAL	1,339	100.00	— ⁶	—

³ The reference figure for the ‘ordinary magistrate’ qualification was reconstructed on the basis of the data taken from the ‘Report on the administration of justice in 2020’ by the First President of the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation opening the 2021 legal year, adding up the number of ‘magistrates serving in judicial offices’ and of ‘*fuori ruolo*’ magistrates (magistrates who do not go to court but work for other state administrations).

⁴ The reference figure for the ‘MOT’ qualification was reconstructed on the basis of the data provided by the School concerning participation in courses by this category of magistrates.

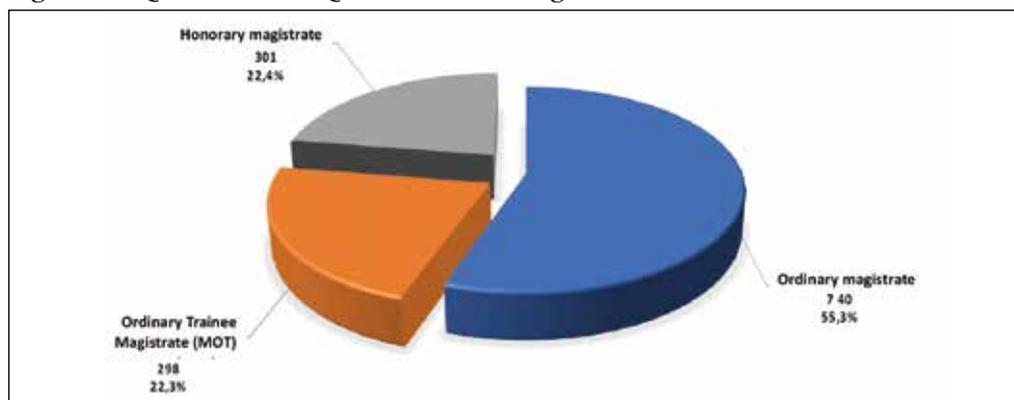
⁵ The reference figure for the ‘honorary magistrate’ qualification is taken from the ‘Report on the administration of justice in 2020’ by the First President of the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation opening the 2021 legal year.

⁶ As can be seen from the previous notes, the reference data for each qualification do not have to be summed up, as they refer to different databases and are calculated paying specific attention to the characteristics of the questionnaire administered, especially with regard to MOTs.

The number of ‘ordinary magistrates’ is 740, more than 55% of the respondents. The other two groups, ‘MOTs’ (298) and ‘honorary magistrates’ (301), account for just over 22% each.

As can be seen from the table, compared to the reference population, 7.9% of ‘ordinary magistrates’, 5.7% of ‘honorary magistrates’, and 55% of MOTs submitted replies. MOTs’ responses regarding the use of distance learning via videoconference were particularly significant as MOTs were the ones who mainly used distance learning.

Figure 1 – Question D1 – Qualification of magistrates



The respondents who provided their **gender** (see ‘question D9’ in the Questionnaire) were 1,322 out of 1,339 magistrates (17 did not reply), while 40 respondents (3.0%) did not want to indicate it explicitly. 779 respondents were women (59.0%), while 503 were men (38.0%).

Figure 2 – Question D9 – Gender of magistrates



As for the **year of birth** (see ‘question D8’ in the Questionnaire), 1,282 magistrates gave answers (57 did not indicate it). On this subject, it may be interesting to analyse the data by the decade of birth as in the table below.

Table 2 – Year of birth

QUESTION D8. BORN IN THE...	frequency	percentage
1950s	100	7.7
1960s	453	35.5
1970s	282	22.0
1980s	317	24.6
1990s	130	10.2
TOTAL	1.282	100.0

The majority of respondents were born in the 1960s, reflecting the current average age of Italian magistrates (54 years)⁷. The high numbers of respondents in the most recent decades are due to the large presence of MOTs.

Another question asked about the **year of entry into service** (see ‘question D2’ in the questionnaire), to which 1,258 magistrates replied (81 did not). Also, in this case, the data can be divided by decade as follows.

Table 3 – Year of entry into service

QUESTION D2. ENTERED INTO SERVICE IN THE...	frequency	percentage
1960s	1	0,1
1970s	5	0,4
1980s	91	7,3
1990s	300	23,8
2000s	298	23,7
2010s	308	24,4
2020s	255	20,3
TOTAL	1.282	100,0

The distribution of respondents is consistent with their age group. However, there is an imbalance of respondents towards more recent decades due to the high presence of MOTs among respondents, as reported above.

⁷ Source: ‘Report on the administration of justice in 2020’ by the First President of the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation opening the 2021 legal year (page 16).

The **ministerial decree of appointment of the MOTs** was also requested (see ‘question D4’ in the Questionnaire) to immediately identify those who mainly or exclusively used distance learning as part of their training activities. Here is a summary of the results.

Table 4 – Ministerial decree of appointment

QUESTION D4	frequency	percentage
Ministerial Decree of 12 February 2019	1	0,3
Ministerial Decrees of 18 July 2019 and 3 January 2020	95	32,1
Ministerial Decree of 2 March 2021	200	67,6
TOTAL	296	100,0

67.6% of the responding MOTs were appointed with Ministerial Decree of 2 March and thus are those whose training courses were conducted exclusively at a distance via live streaming (videoconferencing). This makes the survey carried out on MOTs even more significant for evaluating this teaching method.

Table 5 – Functions currently performed by ‘ordinary magistrates’ and ‘MOTs’

QUESTION D5	frequency	percentage	percentage of cases
Ordinary Civil Law judge	360	31,5	39,6
Business Law Judge	34	3,0	3,7
Bankruptcy Law Judge	65	5,7	7,2
Enforcement Judge	54	4,7	5,9
Immigration Law Judge	22	1,9	2,4
Labour Law Judge	111	9,7	12,2
Family Law Judge	66	5,8	7,3
Judge of the Juvenile Court	17	1,5	1,9
Criminal Judge	165	14,4	18,2
Preliminary Investigations Judge (GIP)/ Preliminary Hearing Judge (GUP)	46	4,0	5,1
Inmates Surveillance Judge	26	2,3	2,9
Public prosecutor	154	13,5	16,9
Public prosecutor for Juvenile	7	0,6	0,8
Magistrate currently not performing court or public prosecutor functions (<i>fuori ruolo</i>)	16	1,4	1,8
TOTALE	1.143	100,0	125,9

Ordinary magistrates and **MOTs** were then asked about their **current functions** (see ‘question D5’ in the Questionnaire). The question allowed for multiple responses. 1,143 out of 1,399 respondents (81.7%) answered it. The corresponding frequencies are visible in the table below.

The question on the functions performed allowed for multiple responses, so the column ‘percentage of cases’ shows how much a certain category had more responses in proportion. As can be seen by the wider difference between the ‘percentage’ and ‘percentage of cases’ values in the table, this is especially true for the broader functions of ‘civil judge’ and ‘criminal judge’, where respondents also indicated more specialised functions.

In detail, the most represented category is clearly that of the ‘civil judge’ (360, 39.6%), but judges performing other specialised civil functions are also represented (241 judges) or 26.5% of respondents. Judges performing civil functions are the majority (601, 66.1%), not including labour judges, a category that is well represented (111 cases, 9.7%). The ‘criminal judge’ function accounted for 23.3% of the respondents (237). The ‘public prosecutor’ function was selected by 161 magistrates (17.7%). To a much lesser extent, juvenile and inmates surveillance judges also replied. However, it should be noted that judges from all the different functions exercised in the Italian system replied to the questionnaire. The *fuori ruolo* (interim) magistrates who replied work mainly in the Ministry of Justice.

Among the judges who replied, a number of them performed **top managing or middle-management functions** (see ‘question D5bis’ in the Questionnaire).

Table 6 – Performance of top managing or middle-management functions

QUESTION D5BIS	frequency	percentage
Top managing functions	36	5,0
Middle-management functions	44	6,1
I do not perform any of these functions	642	88,9
TOTAL	722	100,0

Among the 722 ordinary magistrates who answered this question, 36 performed management functions and 44 middle-management functions. Overall, they account for 11.1% of the respondents.

The questionnaire also asked both ordinary magistrates and MOTs the **office they were currently serving** (see ‘question D6’ in the Questionnaire). The table below summarises the distribution of respondents, comparing it with the distribution of the reference population in the different offices.

Table 7 – Current office of service

QUESTION D6	frequency	% valid	reference ⁸	% prop.
Court of Cassation	23	2.3	353	6.5
Public Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Cassation	4	0.4	84	4.8
Court of Appeal	94	9.4	1171	8.0
Public Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Appeal	20	2.0	248	8.1
Trial Court	672	66.9	4931	13.6
Public Prosecutor's Office at the First Instance Court	128	12.7	1838	7.0
Inmates Surveillance Court and Bureau	29	2.9	229	12.7
Juvenile Court	8	0.8	194	4.1
Public Prosecutor's Office at the Juvenile Court	7	0.7	105	6.7
Other	19	1.9	—	—
TOTAL	1004	100.0	9153	—

Respondents were mainly found among those serving in 'trial courts', accounting for more than 65%, then in 'public prosecutor's offices', around 13%, and in 'courts of appeal', about 9%. It is interesting to compare the number of respondents and the reference population by the office (last column of the table). The respondents accounted for 13.6% of all judges serving in trial courts', 12.7% of surveillance judges, about 8% of appeal judges and their prosecutors general, 7% of public prosecutors, 4.8% of public prosecutors at the Court of Cassation, 4.1% of juvenile judges; judges working for the 'Public Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Cassation (4,8%) and the 'Juvenile Court' (4,1%) appeared underrepresented. Among the respondents, judges working in 'judicial offices' (*uffici giudicanti*) were around 45%, while those working in 'prosecutorial offices' (*uffici requirenti*) were 26,6%.

Honorary magistrates were also asked about the functions they were currently performing (see 'question D3' in the Questionnaire). The following table summarises the respondents' distribution, comparing it with the specific reference population.

⁸ The reference data for this processing were reconstructed on the basis of data provided by the Italian CSM.

Table 8 – Functions currently performed by honorary magistrates

QUESTION D3	frequency	% valid	reference ⁹	% In proportion
Justice of the Peace	72	24,0	1169	6,2
Auxiliary Judge at the Court of Appeal	6	2,0	328	1,8
Honorary Judge at a First Instance Court	138	46,0	2035	6,8
Honorary Deputy Prosecutor	60	20,0	1722	3,5
Other	24	8,0	—	—
TOTAL	300	100,0	—	—

Respondents were mainly found among those serving as ‘honorary magistrate at a first instance court’ (46%), while 24% worked as ‘justice of the peace’, 20% as ‘honorary deputy prosecutor’ and only 2% as ‘auxiliary judge at the Court of Appeal’. The ‘other’ category includes other functions, such as those carried out in inmates surveillance bureaus and courts and in juvenile justice courts. When compared to the reference population (last column of the table), about 6% of ‘judges of the peace’ and about 7% of ‘honorary magistrates at a first instance court’, 3.5% of ‘honorary deputy prosecutors’, and only 1.8% of ‘auxiliary judges at the court of appeal’ answered the survey.

The following figure shows the geographical distribution of all respondents according to their **area of jurisdiction** (see ‘question D7’ in the Questionnaire).

As can be seen from the figure, all districts are represented, although with different percentages in relation to the number of magistrates in each district. Note the high participation of magistrates from the Venice district (8.2% of responses) and the Bologna and Florence districts (5.8% of responses for both). Slightly fewer replies were received from large areas such as Milan and Naples (7.4% and 7.3% respectively) and even fewer from Genoa and Turin (3.7% and 4.8% respectively). Rome is the district that provided the highest number of responses to the questionnaire (10.3%), but it is also by far the largest district. 4% of respondents did not wish to indicate the district they belonged to.

⁹ The reference figure ‘honorary magistrate’ is taken from the “Report on the administration of justice in 2020” by the First President of the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation opening the 2021 legal year.

Figure 3 – D7 District of jurisdiction

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida
Valido	A01 Ancona	30	2.2	2.3
	A02 Bari	54	4.0	4.2
	A03 Bologna	74	5.5	5.8
	A04 Bolzano (sezione distaccata)	7	.5	.5
	A05 Brescia	39	2.9	3.0
	A06 Cagliari	29	2.2	2.3
	A07 Callarissetta	29	2.2	2.3
	A08 Campobasso	6	.6	.6
	A09 Catania	45	3.4	3.5
	A10 Catanzaro	37	2.8	2.9
	A11 Firenze	74	5.5	5.8
	A12 L'Aquila	31	2.3	2.4
	A13 Lecce	29	2.2	2.3
	A14 Messina	15	1.1	1.2
	A15 Milano	94	7.0	7.3
	A16 Napoli	66	7.1	7.4
	A17 Palermo	92	6.9	7.2
	A18 Perugia	17	1.3	1.3
	A19 Pienza	25	1.9	1.9
	A20 Reggio Calabria	33	2.5	2.6
	A21 Roma	132	9.9	10.3
	A22 Salerno	33	2.5	2.6
	A23 Sassari (sezione distaccata)	11	.8	.9
	A24 Taranto (sezione distaccata)	5	.4	.4
	A25 Trento	13	1.0	1.0
	A26 Trieste	20	1.5	1.6
	A27 Venezia	105	7.8	8.2
	A28 Genova	48	3.6	3.7
	A29 Torino	62	4.6	4.8
	Totale	1266	96.0	100.0
Mancante		53	4.0	
Totale		1319	100.0	

2.2. Variables for evaluating distance learning courses via videoconference

This part of the questionnaire started by asking those who took part in distance learning courses held via videoconference on the Teams platform for a specific evaluation of this tool, using questions on technical, organisational and teaching issues.

Those who did not have direct experience with the Teams platform were instead directed to the next section. They were asked to evaluate other teaching tools and training content provided by the SSM, which will be discussed later in this report.

2.2.1. Level of participation and reasons for 'non-participation' in courses held via videoconference (on the Teams platform)

The respondents who used this didactic tool (see 'question D10' in the Questionnaire) were 1.221 out of 1.317 (92,7%), while 22 did not answer. Thus, only 7.3% of the respondents did not participate in lessons via videoconference (96 cases).

89 respondents answered the question of why **not attend the videoconference courses**. The reasons are given in the table below (see ‘question D23’ in the Questionnaire).

Table 9 – Reasons for non-participation in videoconference courses

QUESTION D23	frequency	valid percentage
I did not participate, because I haven't had the chance to access them yet	27	30,3
I did not participate, because I don't think they are effective	15	16,9
I did not participate because I am overloaded with work	16	18,0
I did not participate because the courses are not suitable for distance learning	1	1,1
I applied but was not admitted to any course	14	15,7
I was admitted but was unable to attend for IT reasons	2	2,2
I was admitted but was unable to attend for personal reasons	5	5,6
I was admitted but was unable to attend due to an emergency at work	9	10,1
TOTAL	89	100,0

The analysis of the answers shows that about 30% of those who did not participate had not yet had the opportunity to access the service. In 28% of the cases (18% and 10.1%) there were impediments due to work problems or emergencies. About 16% of the magistrates made a request but were not admitted. Personal and computer problems were marginal. There were also those who considered this teaching method unsuitable for training (around 18%); however, to correctly evaluate this data it should be noted that this figure corresponds to only 16 magistrates out of a total of 1,317 respondents, i.e. 1.2% of the total.

To complete the picture, the magistrates who did not use this service were asked whether they **intended to do so in the future** (see ‘question D24’ in the Questionnaire). 59 of them replied yes (65.6%) and 31 no (34.4%). This figure further emphasises how small the number of those who do not intend to attend the distance learning courses offered by the School is 2.5% of the total number of respondents.

SUMMARY BOX – 1

The magistrates who participated in distance learning courses via videoconference on the Teams platform accounted for the vast majority of respondents: 1,221 out of 1,317 (92.7%). This makes the survey on the evaluation of this tool particularly relevant.

Those who did not participate, for the most part, had not yet had the opportunity to do so (about 30%). Some did not join for work problems or emergencies (about 28%), others were not admitted to the courses (about 16%), while personal or IT problems were marginal. Those who did not participate because they considered this teaching method unsuitable for training were a minority: 16 out of 1,317 respondents, i.e., only 1.2% of the total.

In any case, it is important to stress that a good majority of the magistrates who did not participate, **intend to do so in the future** (65.6%). There are only 31 magistrates who do not intend to do so (2.5% of the total number of respondents).

2.2.2. Summary evaluation of the courses as a whole

Below are the evaluations of the online courses divided by type of course – continuous training, initial training, training for aspirants to managing positions, training for honorary magistrates – according to the qualification of the magistrates (see ‘question D11’, ‘question D11bis’ and ‘question D11ter’ in the Questionnaire)

The first question asked those who had participated in distance learning courses via videoconference on the Teams platform to express a summary evaluation, based on their direct experience, giving a mark from 1 to 10. Their answers were grouped together in the following categories to reduce dispersion: ‘extremely satisfied’ (mark 10), ‘very satisfied’ (marks 8 and 9), ‘moderately satisfied’ (mark 7), ‘somewhat satisfied’ (mark 6), ‘not so satisfied’ (mark 5), ‘not at all satisfied’ (marks 4, 3, 2 and 1). The results of this first grouping were then further grouped together to simplify the interpretation of the data, creating a positive evaluation category (which includes ‘extremely satisfied’, ‘very satisfied’, and ‘moderately satisfied’ ratings), a negative evaluation category (including ‘not so satisfied’ and ‘not at all satisfied’ ratings) and an evaluation category that we have defined as ‘critical’, which, in addition to the negative ratings (‘not so satisfied’ and ‘not at all satisfied’) also includes the ‘somewhat satisfied’ rating which, in an overall context of positive assessments, allows us to identify some critical aspects.

Ordinary magistrates: continuous training and courses for aspirants to managing positions

The evaluations of the **ordinary magistrates** who replied about their experience with the **continuous training** courses offered by the School are distributed as follows.

Table 10 – ‘Continuous training’ courses for ordinary magistrates

QUESTION D11_SQ01	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	90	14,0
very satisfied	333	52,1
moderately satisfied	102	16,0
somewhat satisfied	48	7,5
not so satisfied	33	5,2
not at all satisfied	33	5,2
TOTAL	639	100,0

As can be seen, the evaluations are highly favourable for more than 80% of the respondents. Negative ratings only slightly exceed 10%, and ‘critical’ ratings do not exceed 18% overall.

Ordinary magistrates who took part in the online courses for **aspirants to managing positions** were then asked to evaluate such courses. Their summary evaluations, grouped according to the criteria described above, were distributed according to the frequencies in the table below.

Table 11 – ‘Aspirants to managing positions’ courses for ordinary magistrates

QUESTION D11_SQ02	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	4	13,3
very satisfied	15	50,1
moderately satisfied	0	0
somewhat satisfied	4	13,3
not so satisfied	1	3,3
not at all satisfied	6	20,0
TOTAL	30	100,0

In this case, over 60% of the respondents gave positive evaluations, 20% gave negative assessments and over 35% gave a ‘critical’ evaluation. The numbers of respondents were relatively low (30 cases), but it should be considered that the

total number of participants in this type of online course was 240. Thus, the respondents represent 12.5% of the specific reference population.

Trainee ordinary magistrates (MOTs): initial and continuous training

As regards the evaluation of the training courses for MOTs carried out remotely, a separate evaluation was requested for initial training and continuous training courses, given that some MOTs may have participated in both types of courses.

As for the **initial training**, their evaluations, grouped as indicated above, were distributed according to the frequencies presented in the table below.

Table 12 – ‘Initial training’ courses for MOTs

QUESTION D11BIS_SQ01	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	33	11,4
very satisfied	171	59,0
moderately satisfied	52	17,9
somewhat satisfied	24	8,3
not so satisfied	6	2,1
not at all satisfied	4	1,3
TOTAL	290	100,0

As can be seen, more than 88% of respondents gave a positive evaluation. Negative evaluations were marginal at just over 3%, while ‘critical’ evaluations amounted to around 12% overall.

With regard to **continuous training** courses, the breakdown is as follows.

Table 13 – ‘Continuous training’ courses for MOTs

QUESTION D11BIS_SQ02	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	6	15,0
very satisfied	18	45,0
moderately satisfied	11	27,5
somewhat satisfied	3	7,5
not so satisfied	1	2,5
not at all satisfied	1	2,5
TOTAL	40	100,0

Also in this case, almost 88% of the respondents gave a positive evaluation, but with a shift towards a ‘moderately satisfied’ evaluation compared to the more positive evaluation given to initial training. Negative evaluations were marginal, reaching only 5%, while the overall ‘critical’ evaluations were slightly higher than 12%.

Honorary magistrates: specific and continuous training

A separate evaluation for specific training and continuous training courses was also requested when assessing the courses aimed at **honorary magistrates**, which were held via videoconference.

With regard to **specific training** courses, the breakdown is as follows.

Table 14 – ‘Specific training’ courses for honorary magistrates

QUESTION D11TER_SQ01	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	37	17,8
very satisfied	111	53,4
moderately satisfied	29	13,9
somewhat satisfied	18	8,7
not so satisfied	8	3,7
not at all satisfied	5	2,5
TOTAL	208	100,0

85% of the respondents (85.1%) gave positive evaluations. Negative evaluations were marginal at just over 6% (6.2%), while the overall ‘critical’ evaluations amounted to around 15% (14.9%).

With regard to **continuous training** courses, the breakdown is as follows.

Table 15 – ‘Continuous training courses for honorary magistrates

QUESTION D11TER_SQ02	frequenza	percentuale valida
extremely satisfied	47	24,6
very satisfied	100	52,3
moderately satisfied	21	11,0
somewhat satisfied	12	6,3
not so satisfied	5	2,6
not at all satisfied	6	3,2
TOTAL	191	100,0

For this type of courses, the evaluations were even more positive for almost 88% of the respondents (87.9%), of which 24.6% gave an ‘extremely satisfied’ rating. Negative evaluations were marginal as they amounted to almost 6% (5.8%), while the overall ‘critical’ evaluations reached only 12%.

Evaluation of the training and functions currently carried out: an in-depth study

Lastly, it may be interesting to compare the ratings given to courses held via videoconference with the functions that respondents were currently performing. In this way, it can be seen whether there was any correlation between satisfaction and the tasks performed. This bivariate analysis was carried out for continuous training courses and only for ordinary magistrates, the largest group of respondents.

Table 16 – Evaluation of ‘continuous training’ courses and functions currently carried out (ordinary magistrates)

QUESTION D11_SQ1_ NEW	not at all satisfied	not so satisfied	somewhat satisfied	moderately satisfied	very satisfied	extremely satisfied	TOTAL	more positive	more critical
Ordinary Civil Law Judge	9 4,1%	14 6,5%	15 6,9%	28 12,9%	125 57,6%	26 12,0%	217	82,5%	
Business Law Judge	3 10,7%	1 3,6%	2 7,1	3 10,7%	14 50,0%	5 17,9%	28		
Bankruptcy Law Judge	7 13,2%	2 3,8%	5 9,4%	6 11,3%	29 54,7%	4 7,5%	53		26,4%
Enforcement Judge	3 7,7	0 0,0%	2 5,1%	5 12,8%	25 64,1%	4 10,3%	39		
Immigration Law Judge	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	1 5,6%	4 22,2%	12 66,7%	1 5,6%	18		
Labour Law Judge	1 1,5%	3 4,5%	5 7,6%	4 6,1%	40 60,6%	13 19,7%	66	86,4%	
Family Law Judge	1 2,1%	1 2,1%	4 8,5%	4 8,5%	31 66,0%	6 12,8%	47		
Judge of the Juvenile Court	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	3 25,0%	6 50,0%	3 25,0%	12		
Criminal Law Judge	7 6,3%	3 2,7%	6 5,4%	22 19,6%	57 50,9%	17 15,2%	112	85,7%	

Table 16 – Evaluation of ‘continuous training’ courses and functions currently carried out (ordinary magistrates)

QUESTION D11_SQ1_ NEW	not at all satisfied	not so satisfied	somewhat satisfied	moderately satisfied	very satisfied	extremely satisfied	TOTAL	more positive	more critical
Preliminary Investigations Judge (GIP)/ Preliminary Hearing Judge (GUP)	4 9,8%	4 9,8%	3 7,3%	7 17,1%	18 43,9%	5 12,2%	41		26,9%
Inmates Surveillance Judge	0 0,0%	2 9,5%	1 4,8%	5 23,8%	11 52,4%	2 9,5%	21		
Public prosecutor	9 7,1%	8 6,3%	12 9,5%	22 17,5%	60 47,6%	15 11,9%	126		22,9%
Public prosecutor for Juvvenile	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	1 20,0%	3 60,0%	1 20,0%	5		
Magistrate currently not performing court or public prosecutor functions (<i>fuori ruolo</i>)	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	2 18,2%	1 9,1%	5 45,5%	3 27,3%	11		
TOTALE	44	38	58	115	436	105	796		

The data analysis clearly shows the generally positive evaluation given to the distance learning courses held via videoconference for all the functions performed indicated by the magistrates, with some slight variations highlighted. Particularly positive evaluations were highlighted, with positive ratings above 80%. Similarly, ‘critical’ evaluations, which were more than 20%, were also highlighted. This process was only carried out for those functions that had at least 40 respondents.

There is a considerable degree of satisfaction if one considers the generic functions performed by a general ‘civil judge’ and a ‘criminal judge’. However, when looking at more specific categories, there are interesting differences. While those who perform the function of ‘labour law judge’ gave a particularly positive evaluation, those who serve the role of ‘bankruptcy law judge’ expressed a more critical evaluation. Similarly, those who perform the function of ‘GIP/GUP’ or public prosecutor in the criminal sector gave a slightly more critical assessment.

SUMMARY BOX – 2

The overall summary rating given to the distance learning courses held via videoconference using the Teams platform was largely positive for all magistrates.

As regards **ordinary magistrates**, they were asked to evaluate the continuous training courses and the courses for aspirants to managing positions. The evaluation given on **continuous training** was very positive (82.1%). Only about a fifth of the respondents (18.1%) gave a critical evaluation, while 10% gave a negative one. With regard to the courses for **aspirants to managing positions**, critical evaluations were much more significant and concerned more than a third of respondents (36.6%). In this case the numbers of respondents were relatively low (30 cases), but it must be considered that there were 240 participants in this type of online courses. So the respondents represented 12.5% of the specific reference population.

With regard to the **trainee ordinary magistrates (MOTs)**, they were asked to evaluate their initial training and their continuous training if they had already received it. The evaluations given on **initial training and continuous training** were in both cases very positive (88.3% and 87.5%). Only slightly more than 10% of respondents gave a critical evaluation, while negative evaluations were marginal. If we compare the evaluations given by MOTs with those given by ordinary magistrates, no particular differences emerge. In the case of MOTs, the evaluation was slightly more positive, but it should be noted that this may also be influenced by the lower number of MOTs that responded to this question (40 cases compared to 639 for ordinary magistrates).

Honorary magistrates were asked to evaluate both the specific training they received and the continuous education courses they attended. The evaluation given on specific training was very positive (85.1%), critical evaluations did not exceed 15%, while negative evaluations were marginal. The evaluation given by honorary magistrates to continuous training courses was even more positive (87.9%).

When **comparing the evaluations for continuous training**, honorary magistrates gave an almost identical evaluation to MOTs, with a level of satisfaction of almost 90% in both cases, while for ordinary magistrates the evaluation was slightly less positive (80%).

Please note that the positive but more critical evaluation given to online courses for aspirants to managing positions referred to a low number of respondents, although they still accounted for 12.5% of those who participated.

Lastly, it is interesting to note what emerged from the **analysis of the evaluations given to the courses (in the case of continuous training) by respondents classified according to the different functions performed**. Despite a general pos-

itive evaluation of distance learning courses, the functions of general ‘civil judge’ and ‘criminal judge’ registered more positive evaluations, ‘labour law judges’ (and ‘enforcement judges’) more so, ‘bankruptcy law judges’ (and ‘business law judges’) gave slightly more critical evaluations. In the criminal field, the evaluations of GIP/GUP and prosecutors were slightly more critical than those of the other ‘criminal judges’. This may be due to the characteristics of the online courses followed by the respondents, but it also suggests that it is advisable to assess how well the courses are tailored to the functions of the judges who will participate in them at the design stage of the courses.

2.2.3. Specific evaluation of logistics and technical issues

After being asked to give a brief overall evaluation of their experience with distance learning held via videoconference, the respondents were asked to examine in more detail various aspects of this teaching method, from logistics to any technical issues encountered (see ‘question D13’ to ‘question D18’ in the Questionnaire).

When asked **where** the videoconference distance learning courses were attended (question D13), 1,139 out of 1,339 magistrates (85.1%) replied. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 17 – Logistics: where the courses were attended

QUESTION D13	frequency	valid percentage
Exclusively in the office	130	11,4
Exclusively from home (or other location)	601	52,8
Partly in the office and partly from home (or other location)	408	35,8
TOTAL	1.139	100,0

Slightly more than 11% of the respondents attended the courses from the office, while almost 53% attended them exclusively while out of the office and almost 36% from a mixed home-office setting. Therefore, the respondents took full advantage of the great flexibility that this teaching method allows compared to traditional in-person teaching.

With regard to **technical issues**, four specific questions were asked: on the presence and type of issues; on the causes of the issues; on the influence that these issues had on the ability to attend the course; and finally, on the assistance provided by the SSM in this regard.

The first question on the **presence and type of technical issues** was answered as shown in the table below.

Table 18 – Presence and type of technical issues

QUESTION D15	frequency	percentage	percentage of cases
None	831	66,6	72,9
Trouble with the login to the video conferencing system	87	7,0	7,6
Initial connection problems	84	6,7	7,4
Poor quality of the audio/video stream	87	7,0	7,6
Unstable connection during the courses	148	11,9	13,0
Chat services of the videoconferencing system unavailable	11	0,8	1,0
TOTALE	1.248	100,0	109,5

To this question, 831 out of 1,248 magistrates (66.6%) replied that they did not experience any technical issues. Among those who experienced technical malfunctions (417 respondents, corresponding to 27.1%), 7% of each group reported problems with access, initial connection, and poor audio/video stream quality. The unstable connection issue was slightly more significant at around 12% (11.9%). On the other hand, the trouble with using the chat during the courses was minor (about 0.8%). Thus, the technical issues were almost exclusively linked to the quality of the connection: initial connection, quality of the stream, and unstable connection.

Consequently, the magistrates who reported issues were asked whether they were aware of the **possible causes**. More than 86% did not give any indication of the cause, about 10% attributed it to the videoconferencing system (the Teams platform) and another 10% to office technology and, to a lesser extent, to speakers' equipment.

Many did not respond to the question asking **how these issues affected their participation in the courses** (311 out of 1,339). More than 90% (91.6%) managed to attend the whole course despite the problems. The remaining respondents were those who were not able to attend the course or were only able to attend a small part of it (8.4%).

Finally, the respondents were asked whether the SSM could do something about these issues and, in particular, whether there was **adequate assistance from the School**. Also, 301 out of 1,339 answered the question in this case, a number similar to that of the previous question. Of these, 39.9% received adequate assistance, and 40.5% felt that it was not the School that had to solve the problem. Only 60 magistrates (19.6%) attributed any responsibility to the School.

SUMMARY BOX – 3

In this part of the questionnaire, magistrates were asked to evaluate their experience with distance learning via videoconference on the Teams platform regarding logistics and technical issues encountered.

With regard to **logistics**, the vast majority of the respondents took full advantage of the great flexibility that this teaching method allows compared to traditional in-person teaching, attending the courses mostly from home (52.8%) or a mixed home-office setting, although to a lesser extent (35.8%). Slightly more than 10% were those who attended from the office.

One-third of the respondents experienced **technical issues** related almost exclusively to the quality of the connection: initial connection, quality of the stream, and unstable connection. Most of those who experienced issues (85%) were unable or unwilling to explain the causes. Those who did provide a reason attributed the problem mainly to the Teams platform, then to office technology or personal equipment, while only a minority attributed it to the speakers' equipment. These were, however, very low absolute numbers. Moreover, the vast majority of those who had technical issues managed to attend and complete the course (91.6%). The remaining ones were not able to attend or were only able to follow the course to a small extent. Finally, more than 80% of those who had problems felt that the School either gave adequate assistance or was not responsible for giving it. The remaining 20% or so (60 magistrates) attribute some responsibility to the School, blaming it for inadequate service and calling for more effective problem-solving.

2.2.4. Specific evaluation of organisational aspects

A more detailed evaluation of the organisational aspects linked to one's own experience with distance learning courses held via videoconference was obtained by asking respondents to agree or disagree with a series of statements ("Likert") (see 'Question D19' in the Questionnaire).

To better understand the results, the answers were presented as a dichotomy, i.e., by grouping together the answers of those magistrates who expressed total agreement or partial agreement with the statement and those who expressed complete disagreement or partial disagreement, keeping unaltered only the group of those who said they did not know how to answer or preferred not to answer.

More than 85% of the magistrates responded to these statements, which are summarised in the table below.

Table 19 – Evaluation of organisational aspects

QUESTION D19	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / I prefer not to say	%
1. Enrolling in the courses through the portal was easy	1.030	90,9	55	4,9	48	4,2
2. Overall, the assistance provided by the administration office during the courses was effective	934	82,7	43	3,8	153	13,5
3. I was not able to fully express my evaluation of the courses due to the evaluation forms	307	27,2	724	64,2	96	8,5
4. It would be necessary to have a help desk for all administrative matters	739	65,9	186	16,6	197	17,6
5. Filling in the course attendance form was problematic	298	26,4	770	68,1	62	5,5
6. The administrative procedures related to the courses are effective	941	84,1	72	6,4	106	9,5

Table 19 – Evaluation of organisational aspects

QUESTION D19	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / I prefer not to say	%
7. I needed to contact the school administration office and the service was satisfactory	483	43,8	115	10,4	506	45,8
8. Overall the number of forms to be filled in for the course is excessive	404	35,8	632	56,0	92	8,2

The results of this first question regarding organisational aspects for those who participated in distance learning courses held via videoconference can be divided into administrative activities and the level of assistance provided by the administration office.

With regard to **administrative activities**, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with the first statement claiming that enrolling on the portal was easy (D19_1): 91% of magistrates (1,030, 90.9%) thought that enrolment was easy and only 4.9% disagreed. There were only a few who could not answer (48, 4.4%), thus reinforcing the positive response. More generally, all the administrative procedures related to the courses (D19_6) were considered effective by the overwhelming majority of respondents (941, 84.1%), but the forms to be filled in (D19_8) should be less for 56% of the magistrates (632). With regard to the specific forms to be filled in during the course, the form attesting participation in the course (D19_5) was considered non-problematic by a good majority of the magistrates (770, 68.1%), as well as the form for evaluating the course (D19_3), which registered a 64.2% of agreements (724 cases). The negative replies, around 30%, denote a need for improvement.

With regard to the **level of assistance provided by the administration office**, when asked about the effectiveness of the service as a whole (D19_2), the majority of magistrates responded positively, and 82.7% agreed with the statement (934 cases); those who disagreed were a minority (43, 3.8%). A large number of non-responses (153, 13.5%) was probably due to the fact that many did not need assistance. When asked to express their opinion, the majority

of those who had contacted the administration office (D19_7) gave a positive opinion (483/43,8% against 115/10,4%). However, in this case, the number of non-respondents was even higher: 45,8% (506 cases) probably did not need to contact the administration office. On the possibility of having a help desk for all administrative procedures (D19_4), a large majority (66%, 739 cases) agreed, while 16.6% (186) disagreed. In this case 197 magistrates did not respond (17.6%).

SUMMARY BOX – 4

The evaluation of the organisational aspects of those who attended distance learning courses can be divided into administrative activities and the level of assistance provided by the administration office.

Administrative activities, such as enrolment in courses and management of administrative procedures in general, were deemed easy to carry out by the vast majority of the magistrates. However, the forms to be filled in were considered excessive. There were no problems with the forms for registering attendance and evaluating the courses, although in this case the ‘critical’ answers suggest that there is room for improvement.

On the level of **assistance provided by the administration office**, the service was appreciated by the vast majority of magistrates, however, the fact that the number of non-responses was very high indicates that many of the respondents probably did not experience it directly. Finally, there was a good majority of respondents who agreed with the prospect of having the School set up a help desk for all administrative matters.

2.2.5. Specific evaluation of teaching methodology

A more detailed evaluation of the teaching methodology connected to one’s own experience with distance learning courses held via videoconference was obtained by administering another series of statements with which the respondent had to agree and disagree (see ‘question D20’ in the Questionnaire). More than 85% of the magistrates responded to this set of statements. Here are the answers, summarised in the table below.

Table 20 – Evaluation of teaching methodology

QUESTION D20	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / prefer not to say	%
1. The use of slides made it easier to follow the lectures	990	89,2	86	7,7	34	3,1
2. Using the chat during the lectures was very useful	984	88,3	102	9,2	28	2,5
3. The videoconference presentations allowed a good interaction with the speakers	824	74,0	280	25,1	10	0,9
4. The discussion in the working groups was the most interesting moment of the programme	736	66,5	282	25,5	89	8,0
5. In the plenary sessions little space was given to discussions	442	40,3	581	53,0	74	6,7
6. The speakers' remote presentations in plenary sessions were too long	440	40,0	614	55,9	45	4,1
7. I was able to do other things while following the distance learning course	368	33,4	643	58,4	90	8,2
8. The case studies and their discussion were a key learning moment	958	86,5	91	8,2	59	5,3
9. The quality of distance lectures is generally lower than those we are used to in presence	393	35,5	601	54,3	112	10,1

The results of this question on teaching methodologies can be divided into two areas: the techniques used for distance learning and the classroom dynamics in videoconferencing sessions.

As regards the questions related to the **techniques used with distance learning**, the first statement claimed that it was easier to follow the lectures with slides (D20_1) and almost 90% of the magistrates (990, 89.2%) agreed with this statement. The remaining respondents disagreed or did not respond. The same was true for the statement on the usefulness of the chat during the sessions (D20_2), which was widely agreed with (984, 88.3%). 66.5% of the magistrates (736) appreciated the working group format, but 25.5% (282 cases) did not consider it the most interesting moment of the course; 8% did not reply. The use of case studies (D20_8) was also popular among respondents (958, 86.5%), with only a few disagreeing. Finally, the majority of respondents considered remote plenary sessions to be of no less quality than in-person sessions (D20_9), around 55% of magistrates (601 cases). In comparison, 35.5% disagreed (504 cases), which is certainly cause for reflection.

With regard to issues related to **classroom dynamics in videoconference sessions**, it was asked whether there was also classroom interaction during videoconference lectures (D20_3). 74% of the magistrates (824) agreed, while 25% disagreed. The opinion regarding the discussion space given in the plenary session was different (D20_5), with 53% of the magistrates (581 cases) believing that little space was given, while over 40% considered the discussion time sufficient (442 cases). Finally, concerning the statement claiming that distance learning also allows carrying out other things during the course (D20_7), 58.4% of respondents disagreed (643 cases). By contrast, 33.4% of magistrates agreed (368 cases), which means they might not have actively participated in the courses, carrying out other activities.

This was further investigated by checking the **different qualifications of the magistrates** in relation to the question.

Table 21 – Other activities carried out during the online course

QUESTION D20_7_NEW	Ordinary magistrate		MOT		Honorary magistrate		
7. While attending the distance learning course, I was also able to do other things	agree	238	40,2%	61	22,3%	69	29,4%
	disagree	314	53,0%	187	68,2%	142	60,4%
	i don't know / prefer not to say	40	6,8%	26	9,5%	24	10,2%
TOTAL	592		274		235		

The data show that among those who answered that they did other things during the online course, 40.2% were ordinary magistrates; the percentage drops to 29.4% for honorary magistrates and 22.3% for MOTs.

SUMMARY BOX – 5

The results emerging from the answers to this question can be categorised in two complementary areas relating to the evaluation of the teaching methodology: the techniques used for distance learning and the classroom dynamics in videoconference sessions.

With reference to the **techniques used for teaching in videoconferencing**, it emerged that the use of slides alongside the lectures is recommended, and the use of chats is also considered useful. Case studies are also a very appreciated teaching technique in videoconferencing and group work, although to a lesser extent. Certainly this is a teaching method that is based on being present and on the related interpersonal dynamics and therefore is more affected by distance, but if prepared appropriately, it can still give good results from remote. Plenary reports via videoconference were also considered effective by the majority of magistrates.

Referring then to the questions more properly related to the **classroom dynamics during the videoconference sessions** of the courses, the majority thought that classroom interactions were provided also during videoconferences, but they asked that more space be given to discussion both in plenary and in group work. It is worth reflecting on the fact that more than 30% of the respondents claimed to do also other activities during online courses. This figure varies depending on the qualification of the magistrates: about 40% of ordinary magistrates, about 30% of honorary magistrates and just over 20% of MOTs claimed to do other activities during their online course.

2.2.6. Level and methods of interaction in the virtual classroom

The importance of understanding the modalities and the level of interaction between those participating in the virtual classroom – speakers with participants and participants with each other – required further investigation with a specific question. The magistrates were asked whether and how they had interacted during the videoconference courses (see ‘question D21’ in the Questionnaire). This question was answered by more than 85% of the magistrates. A summary of the results is given in the table below.

The data indicate that almost 30% of the respondents did not interact during the course. Among those who intervened during the classroom activities, the majority did so through the chat provided by the Teams videoconferencing system (480 cases, 33.1%) and in almost equal measure by intervening directly via audio-video (414 cases, 28.6%). E-mails were occasionally used (49 cases, 3.4%), while group chats were used slightly more (79 cases, 5.4%). Being a multiple-choice question, the percentage of cases shows that many intervened both

via chat and through direct interaction during the course, much less via group chat and almost not at all via e-mail.

Table 22 – Interaction during the courses

QUESTION D21	frequency	percentage	percentage of cases
I did not interact, I just followed	428	29,5	38,5
I interacted via audio-video	414	28,6	37,3
I interacted via Teams chat	480	33,1	43,2
I interacted via email	49	3,4	4,4
I interacted via group chat (WhatsApp or other social media)	79	5,4	7,1
TOTAL	1.450	100,0	130,5

SUMMARY BOX – 6

It is also important to understand the level and mode of interaction between those participating in a virtual classroom when it comes to distance learning.

With regard to the **level of interaction**, the most evident result is that around 30% of participants did not interact during distance learning courses. Together with the fact that 30% of the respondents stated that they did other activities during the courses, it is necessary to reflect on how to keep attention alive and improve interaction during online courses.

Finally, those who intervened during the courses did so using the following **modes of interaction**: mostly through chat (33%) or by intervening directly during the videoconference (28.6%). This confirms that these systems allow for effective interaction, as already emerged in the answers to the previous question on teaching methodology. Similarly, alternative tools such as group chats, WhatsApp, etc., or even simple e-mails are used, although only marginally.

2.3. Evaluation variables of other courses and training contents accessible at a distance

In this section of the questionnaire, those who had no experience with distance learning via videoconference (therefore, all respondents) were also asked to evaluate other courses and training contents accessible at a distance (excluding those via videoconference) with a score from 1 to 10. Among the courses

mentioned were those offered on YouTube in live streaming or pre-recorded, the so-called pre-recorded training ‘pills’, and other training content provided through the School Newsletter and the School Portal (see ‘question D25 in the Questionnaire).

As for the previous summary evaluation, also, in this case, the answers were grouped together according to a summary evaluation criterion, which allows for less frequency dispersion, as already explained (see Section 2.2.2).

2.3.1. Summary evaluation of the courses and training content on the YouTube platform

With regard to the summary evaluation of the courses and training content on the YouTube platform, respondents were first asked to rate the **live streaming YouTube training courses**. The respondents’ evaluations are distributed according to the frequencies found in the table below. The results were grouped as explained above.

Table 23 – Live streaming YouTube training courses

QUESTION D25_SQ4	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	59	19,3
very satisfied	118	38,7
moderately satisfied	48	15,7
somewhat satisfied	31	10,2
not so satisfied	20	6,6
not at all satisfied	29	9,5
TOTAL	305	100,0

305 out of 1,339 respondents (about 23%) answered the question. As can be seen, more than 73% of the respondents (73.7%) gave positive evaluations. Negative ratings, however, exceeded 16% (16.1%), and the overall critical evaluation exceeded 26% (26.3%). When comparing the ratings given to the YouTube streaming system with those given to the similar Teams platform, it appears that YouTube received a slightly more critical rating: 25% for YouTube compared to around 14% for Teams.

The magistrates were then asked to rate from 1 to 10 the **pre-recorded YouTube training courses** that they had direct experience of. Below are the answers grouped according to the same criteria as for the previous variable.

Table 24 – Pre-recorded YouTube training courses

QUESTION D25_SQ5	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	72	24,7
very satisfied	104	35,5
moderately satisfied	42	14,4
somewhat satisfied	32	11,0
not so satisfied	17	5,8
not at all satisfied	25	8,6
TOTAL	292	100,0

There were 292 out of 1,339 respondents (about 22%). As can be seen, more than 74% of respondents (74.6%) gave positive evaluations. Almost 25% of the respondents gave an ‘extremely satisfied’ rating. Negative evaluations were around 14% (14.4%) and the overall ‘critical’ evaluation amounted to around 25% (25.4%).

Finally, magistrates were asked to rate from 1 to 10 the pre-recorded ‘YouTube training pills’ they had a direct experience of. Also in this case, the answers are grouped according to the same criteria as for the previous variable.

Table 25 – Pre-recorded ‘Training Pills’ on YouTube

QUESTION D25_SQ6	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	63	22,1
very satisfied	113	39,6
moderately satisfied	31	10,9
somewhat satisfied	32	11,2
not so satisfied	20	7,0
not at all satisfied	26	9,2
TOTAL	285	100,0

285 respondents out of 1,339 (about 21%) answered the question. As can be seen, more than 72% of the respondents (72.6%) gave positive evaluations. In 22% of cases, the respondents were ‘extremely satisfied’. Negative evaluations accounted for around 16% (16.2%), and the overall critical evaluation amounted to over 27% (27.4%).

SUMMARY BOX – 7

To summarise, the opinion on the use of the YouTube platform for training was generally positive, although the number of respondents was not very high. This was most likely due to the lower number of respondents who had direct experience with these training channels.

With regard to **live streaming courses available on YouTube**, the evaluation was positive, although not as positive as for the Teams platform. The high level of appreciation for the **pre-recorded courses available on YouTube** may however suggest that YouTube could be used as an archive for courses previously delivered via Teams. This is also confirmed by the popularity of **training pills on YouTube**, even though they received a slightly more critical evaluation than pre-recorded courses.

2.3.2. Summary evaluation of the training content offered through the ‘School Newsletter’ and the ‘School Portal’.

The questionnaire then asked respondents to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, the training content offered through the ‘School Newsletter’ and the ‘School Portal’. Below, the answers concerning the School Newsletter were grouped together according to the same criteria used above.

Table 26 – Training contents delivered through the ‘School Newsletter’

QUESTION D25_SQ7	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	121	19,7
very satisfied	269	43,7
moderately satisfied	96	15,6
somewhat satisfied	65	10,6
not so satisfied	27	4,4
not at all satisfied	36	6,0
TOTAL	305	100,0

First of all, it should be noted that the respondents to this question were more than twice as many as those to the previous questions: 614 out of 1,339 (45.1%), which suggests that they were more familiar with this tool. Almost 80% of the

respondents (79%) gave a positive evaluation, with well over 60% of them being ‘very satisfied’ or ‘extremely satisfied’. Negative evaluations were just around 10% (10.4%) and the overall critical evaluation amounted to 21%.

The magistrates were then asked to give a score from 1 to 10 to the training contents, particularly to the teaching materials delivered through the **School Portal**, they had direct experience of. Below the answers were grouped according to the usual criteria.

Table 27 – Training contents (teaching materials) delivered through the ‘School Portal

QUESTION D25_SQ8	frequency	valid percentage
extremely satisfied	167	21,0
very satisfied	373	46,9
moderately satisfied	120	15,1
somewhat satisfied	64	8,1
not so satisfied	25	3,1
not at all satisfied	46	5,8
TOTAL	795	100,0

Here, too, it should be noted that the respondents to this question were more than twice as many as those to the previous questions, surpassing even those who responded to the previous question on the School Newsletter: 795 out of 1,339 (59.4%). This suggests a greater familiarity with this tool. Over 83% of the respondents gave very positive evaluations, with almost 70% of them being ‘very satisfied’ or ‘extremely satisfied’ (67.9%). Negative evaluations were very low, not reaching 9% (8.9%) and the overall critical evaluation amounted to 17%.

SUMMARY BOX – 8

The magistrates gave a very positive evaluation of the tools used to distribute the **training content provided by the School**, both as regards the more traditional tool of the “Newsletter” and the “Portal”. This finding is also reinforced by the fact that the number of respondents was higher (about 50% of the total) than for other training tools (e.g. YouTube) mentioned above, a sign of greater use.

2.4. Assessment variables on possible training provided by the School in the future

The aim of the questionnaire was also to gather information for the planning of training in the coming years and the ways in which such training could be delivered. Therefore, the last part of the questionnaire was designed to collect magistrates' opinions on future prospects.

In order to explore these aspects, magistrates were asked about their level of satisfaction with the different ways courses could be delivered in the future (see 'question D26' in the Questionnaire). Specifically: in-person courses; live-streaming courses (videoconference); video-recorded courses; blended mode courses (in-person and live streaming). As in the case of the previous summary evaluations, the responses here are presented in a more summarised manner, making it possible to keep track of attendees better.

The magistrates were then asked to evaluate statements on future teaching by expressing their degree of agreement-disagreement on a series of statements concerning the assessment of the different ways in which training could be delivered, the relationship existing between distance and in-person learning, some methodology-related aspects and a series of areas of activity that the School could take into account for the future (see 'question D27' through 'question D29Copy' in the Questionnaire). The responses were once again divided into two groups by linking together those who expressed total and partial agreement and disagreement.

2.4.1. Summary evaluation of the different ways courses could be delivered

The following table shows the results concerning the level of satisfaction expressed by the magistrates on the different ways courses could be delivered in the future, according to the grouping, which was already widely explained. Over 80% of the magistrates responded to the different statements.

Ratings are very positive, especially as far as 'in-person courses' are concerned, with over 80% of satisfaction, 46.9% of which with the highest level of satisfaction ('extremely satisfied'). As for the 'live streaming courses' (videoconference), there was a positive response too, with 65% satisfaction, but with a much lower level. On the other hand, the mix between the two modes ('blended mode courses'), is appreciated by over 50% of the respondents, while the satisfaction rating drops below 50% for 'video-recorded courses'. Negative ratings are very low for 'in-person courses' (around 13%) but rise to almost 25% for 'live streaming courses' and are even more negative for 'blended mode courses'

(almost 40%) as well as ‘video-recorded courses’. Quite the same applies to critiques, which are very low for ‘in-person courses’ (about 18%), while they reach 35% for ‘live streaming courses’, almost 40% for ‘video-recorded courses’ and almost 50% for ‘blended mode courses’.

Table 28 – Satisfaction with the different training methods

QUESTION D26	In-person courses	%	Live streaming courses (videoconferrence)	%	Video-recorded courses	%	Blended mode courses (in-person and live streaming)	%
extremely satisfied	525	46.9	201	18.0	150	13.8	166	15.2
very satisfied	307	27.4	332	31.9	246	22.7	278	25.4
moderately satisfied	87	7.8	170	15.2	124	11.4	120	11.0
somewhat satisfied	52	4.6	118	10.6	146	13.4	118	10.8
not so satisfied	37	3.3	74	6.6	113	10.4	117	10.7
not at all satisfied	112	10.0	197	17.7	308	28.3	294	27.0
TOTAL	1120	100.0	1116		1087		1093	100.0

To better analyse the results concerning the magistrates’ level of satisfaction on the different ways courses could be delivered in the future, it may be deemed useful to take a look to any difference existing between magistrates’ status and gender.

Therefore, a table containing the cross-evaluation of the satisfaction variables with training tools and the groups of respondents by status was created (Table 29). In order to carry out the analysis, initial ratings (from 1 to 10) concerning the respondents’ level of satisfaction with personal training tools were used to calculate averages and other statistical indicators. In this table, the ‘standard deviation’ measuring the deviation of single responses with respect to average was also indicated. The higher standard deviation, the higher the lack of uniformity of responses within the group that was taken into account (indicated in ‘light blue’). Moreover, we also highlighted the most meaningful values using different colours: i.e., ‘green’ for the most favourable values and ‘orange’ for the most critical ones.

The highest standard deviation (3.06 and 3.15) can be found in the critical evaluation provided by the ordinary magistrates for video-recorded courses and the so-called ‘blended mode courses’, and therefore it is a very variable judgement. On the contrary, the lowest standard deviation (1.70) can be found in the ratings provided by the MOTs for ‘in-person courses’, whose positive ratings are a very homogeneous data.

Table 29 – Cross-evaluation of the satisfaction variables with training tools and the groups of respondents by status

		In-person courses	Live streaming courses (video-conference)	Video-recorded courses	Blended mode courses (in-person and live streaming)
Ordinary magistrate	Average	8.13	6.77	5.72	5.37
	No.	619	610	596	602
	Standard deviation	2,575	2,836	3,060	3,153
Ordinary magistrate trainees (MOTs)	Average	8.93	6.26	5.72	7.30
	No.	264	265	258	260
	Standard deviation	1,707	2,726	2,793	2,436
Honorary magistrates	Average	7.47	7.65	6.83	6.54
	No.	237	241	233	231
	Standard deviation	2,947	2,257	2,707	2,886
TOTAL	Average	8.18	6.84	5.96	6.08
	No.	1,120	1,116	1,087	1,093
	Deviazione std.	2.534	2.733	2.958	3.051

By analysing the recorded averages in detail, we can see that the average of the ratings given by the three groups of magistrates confirms the trend, which was already identified in the previous univariate analysis, as also shown by the overall average of the respondents. There is general satisfaction with ‘in-person courses’. However, there are still positive ratings for ‘live streaming courses’, which is definitely higher for ‘honorary magistrates’ (average rating: 7.65, vis-à-vis 6.77 and 6.26). Moreover, ‘blended mode courses’ are not particularly appreciated among ‘ordinary magistrates’ (average rating: 5.37), while they are deemed to be an acceptable solution by young MOTs (average rating: 7.30), as in the case of ‘honorary magistrates’, even though the average rating is lower (average rating: 6.54). Finally, ‘video-recorded courses’ do not seem to be particularly appreciated (average rating: 5.72), even though ‘honorary magistrates’ do not disdain it (average rating: 6.83).

The same kind of analysis was done by cross evaluating the satisfaction variables with training tools and the groups of respondents by gender.

Overall satisfaction with ‘in-person courses’ was confirmed. However, it can also be noted that male respondents have a higher average (average rating: 8.57 vis-à-vis 7.95), while the possibility to attend ‘live streaming courses’ obtained higher ratings among female respondents (average rating: 7.09 vis-à-vis 6.56). In

line with the previously discussed result, ‘video-recorded courses’ are not much appreciated among ‘male respondents’ (average rating: 5.80), while ‘blended mode courses’ appear not to be so satisfactory. The ratings given by those who preferred not to say their gender were not considered since there was a negligible number of respondents.

Table 30 – Cross-evaluation of the satisfaction variables with training tools and the groups of respondents by gender

		In-person courses	Live streaming courses (videoconference)	Video-recorded courses	Blended mode courses (in-person and live streaming)
Female	Average	7.95	7.09	6.08	6.17
	No.	644	641	619	623
	Standard deviation	2,622	2,626	2,897	3,031
Male	Average	8.57	6.56	5.80	6.07
	No.	434	433	428	429
	Standard deviation	2,266	2,779	3,008	2,991
Prefer not to say	Average	7.34	5.48	5.97	4.55
	No.	29	29	29	29
	Standard deviation	3,548	3,690	3,581	3,785
TOTAL	Average	8.18	6.84	5.97	6.09
	No.	1,107	1,103	1,076	1,081
	Standard deviation	2,537	2,737	2,961	3,046

SUMMARY BOX – 9

If we look at the results, the learning mode the respondents are much more satisfied with are ‘**in-person courses**’ (over 80%), while ‘live streaming courses’ are still appreciated (65%). Clearly, these learning modes are the most appreciated ones.

If we analyse the averages of the three different groups of magistrates, we can see that honorary magistrates show a higher level of satisfaction with ‘**live streaming courses**’, if compared with other groups (average rating: 7.65 vis-à-vis 6.77 and 6.26). The averages recorded based on gender show a higher satisfaction with ‘in-person courses’ for male respondents (average rating: 8.57 vis-à-vis 7.95), while female respondents are more satisfied with ‘live streaming courses’ (average rating: 7.09 vis-à-vis 6.56), maybe because this mode makes it possible to have a better work-life balance.

On the contrary, the evaluation of **blended mode courses, i.e., in-person and live streaming courses (videoconference)**, appears to be controversial. Ordinary magistrates appear to be rather unsatisfied with it (average rating: 5.37), while MOTs find it acceptable (average rating: 7.30). Honorary magistrates find it acceptable too, even though to a lesser extent with respect to them (average rating: 6.83). The reason why respondents do not appear to be satisfied with this mode is not mainly because some classes are held remotely, but that some attendees and/or speakers are in class, while others attend classes remotely.

‘**Video-recorded courses**’ are basically criticised (average rating: 5.72) by respondents, except for honorary magistrates (average rating: 6.83). Female respondents express more positive ratings than male ones (average rating: 6.08 vis-à-vis 5.80), and this is probably due to the same reasons supposed for the higher level of satisfaction with ‘live streaming courses’.

2.4.2. Specific evaluation of the relationship between traditional and distance learning

After asking for a summary evaluation of the satisfaction with the different training methods, magistrates were asked to evaluate some aspects of future teaching more in detail by expressing their degree of agreement-disagreement on a series of statements concerning the **relationship between traditional and distance learning**. About 85% of the magistrates responded to these first statements (about 1,150 out of 1,339). Please find a summary of the responses in the following table.

Table 31 – Relationship between traditional and distance learning

QUESTION D27	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / prefer not to say	%
1. Distance learning makes it possible to better focus on classes	505	43.9	627	54.5	19	1.7
2. Distance and in-person learning should be mixed in every course	543	47.7	541	47.5	54	4.7

Table 31 – Relationship between traditional and distance learning

QUESTION D27	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / prefer not to say	%
3. The interaction between colleagues with in-person learning is an essential value.	950	82.6	169	14.7	31	2.7
4. Attending courses remotely is much harder than attending them in class	692	60.2	430	37.4	28	2.4
5. The only advantage of distance learning is that people do not waste their time traveling and going on business trips	776	67.2	353	30.6	25	2.2
6. Courses held remotely should be shorter than in-person courses	769	67.0	323	28.1	56	4.9

Respondents are basically split in half on the possibility to attend blended mode courses, that is a mix of in-person and live streaming courses (D27_2): 47.7% of the respondents (543) completely or partially agrees, while 47.5 of them partially or completely disagrees (541). 43.9% of the respondents (505 cases) completely or partially agrees on the fact that distance learning makes it easier to focus, while 54.5% of them completely or partially disagrees (D27_1). 60.2% (692) of the respondents believes that attending live streaming courses is way harder, while 37.4% (430) of them does not believe that it is in any way harder (D27_4).

Further statements highlight aspects respondent agree more on. 82.6% (950) of the respondents believes that the interaction between colleagues with in-person learning is an essential value, while 14.7% (169) of them completely or partially disagrees (D27_3). 776 magistrates (i.e., 67.2%) believes that saving time instead of travelling is the only advantage linked to distance learning, while 30.6% (353) of them completely or partially disagrees (D27_5).

Finally, 67% (769) believes that courses held remotely should be shorter than in-person courses (D27_6), while 28.1% (323) of them disagrees with this statement.

SUMMARY BOX – 10

If we analyse the results on the **relationship between traditional and distance learning**, we can see that one group of respondents appreciates less distance learning, while another one appreciates it more. This is in some ways in line with the summary evaluations given to the two training methods, which appear to show that the two groups are in stark contrast.

The 'blended mode course' option was criticised by about 50% of the summary evaluation's respondents, and this is in line with what was also recorded in the responses to the specific stimulus in this question. As respondents will state in the comments section, the reason why the 'blended mode' is criticised is not mainly due to the fact that some classes are held remotely, but that some attendees and/or speakers are in class, while others attend classes remotely.

It is also stated that the interaction between colleagues, which is only possible with in-person learning, is an essential value, and this is in line with the summary evaluations highlighting a higher level of satisfaction with traditional learning provided by the School. However, this does not decrease in any way the value that many respondents give to distance learning - as shown in summary evaluations -, which is mostly linked to its flexibility, to the possibility to have a better work-life balance (i.e., here this is identified with the possibility not to travel for work), and to cost savings.

2.4.3. Specific evaluation on further methodological aspects of distance learning

After asking about the relationship between traditional and distance learning, magistrates were asked to express their degree of agreement-disagreement on **further methodological aspects of distance learning**. About 86% of the magistrates responded to this series of statements (about 1,150 out of 1,339). Please find a summary of the responses in the following table.

About 90% of the magistrates (1,027, i.e., 89.1%) responded that, with distance learning, it would be advisable to receive learning materials in advance because this would make it easier to understand reports (D28_4). About 78% (888, i.e., 77.6%) of the respondents agree that the contents of courses should be adjusted better according to distance learning features (D28_1). This response should probably be interpreted by also taking into account that magistrates pointed out that courses should be shorter (see above, D27_6). 75% of the magistrates (863,

i.e., 74,9%) believe it would be advisable to videotape courses so that people can attend them when they have time (D28_3). The same percentage of magistrates (860 magistrates) agree that training courses held remotely should include more practical and less theoretical content (D28_6). In all these cases, the percentage of magistrates who completely or partially disagree with the statements is between 8 and 22%.

Table 32 – Further methodological aspects of distance learning

QUESTION D28	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / Prefer not to say	%
1. The contents of courses should be adjusted according to distance learning's features	888	77.6	182	15.9	75	6.6
2. It would be less hard to attend live streaming courses if they were more interactive	675	59.0	398	34.8	72	6.3
3. It would be advisable to videotape the courses so that people can attend them when they have time	863	74.9	256	22.2	33	2.9
4. With distance learning, it would be advisable to receive learning materials in advance, because this would make it easier to understand reports	1,027	89.1	96	8.3	30	2.6
5. With distance learning, round tables should be favoured	574	50.3	440	38.5	128	11.2
6. Training courses held remotely should include more practical and less theoretical content	860	75.0	224	21.3	42	3.7
7. Teamwork is hindered by distance learning	713	62.4	366	32.0	64	5.6
8. Distance learning improves the relationship with speakers	311	27.2	749	65.5	84	7.3

Even though they might not seem so self-evident, two more suggestions arise from the responses. 50% of the magistrates (i.e., 675) agree on the fact that it would be less hard to attend live-streaming courses if they were more interactive (D28_2), while about 35% of the magistrates (398, i.e., 34.8%) do not agree with this information. Similarly, 50% of the magistrates (574) responded that, with distance learning, round tables should be favoured, while 38.5% (440) of them entirely or partially disagree (D28_5).

The last two questions of the series make it possible to identify two more potential problems concerning distance learning, both being linked to the specific features of digitally mediated interactions. More specifically, 62% of magistrates' responses (713, i.e., 62.4%) acknowledge that teamwork is hindered by distance learning (D28_7). In comparison, 65.5% of the magistrates (749) do not share the idea that distance learning improves the interaction with speakers (D28_8).

SUMMARY BOX – 11

As far as the **methodological aspects of distance learning** are concerned, most respondents believe an effort is required to better plan courses by adjusting them according to distance learning features: i.e., appropriate, and more practical content, more attention to the interaction with speakers – which is certainly hindered by distance learning –, less traditional classes, possibility to videotape courses contents so that they can be watched later.

2.4.4. Specific evaluation of future training offer

Another area of interest is related to the **future training offer**. In this case, the magistrates were also asked about their degree of agreement-disagreement on a series of statements. Between 80% and 85% of the magistrates responded to this set of statements. Please find a summary of the responses in the following table.

Having regard to the different issues faced with this question, the presentation of data analysis was grouped by subject areas: School courses' usefulness for work; suitability of distance learning both from a general point of view and for particular types of courses; opportunities given by distance learning; clarity on the School's speakers selection criteria.

Table 33 – Future training offer

QUESTION D29	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / prefer not to say	%
1. Some live streaming courses should be repeated more often throughout the year	842	74.2	140	12.3	153	13.5
2. All the courses, regardless of their contents, can be held remotely	605	52.7	486	42.4	56	4.9
3. Aspiring managers training cannot be held remotely	324	29.9	194	17.9	565	52.2
4. For MOTs' <u>general internship</u> , good results can be achieved through distance learning	355	32.4	465	42.5	275	25.1
5. For MOTs' <u>specific internship</u> , good results can be achieved through distance learning	282	25.8	479	43.9	330	30.2
6. Generally speaking, the training courses proposed are not particularly useful for my job	220	19.5	862	76.5	45	4.0
7. Magistrate speakers selection criteria are clear	395	35.0	310	27.4	425	37.6

The first subject area is identified with the statement (D29/6) in which magistrates were asked to indicate the degree of agreement-disagreement on the **School courses' usefulness for work**. About 77% of the magistrates (862) disagreed with the statement. Therefore, since the question is written in the negative form (i.e., 'not useful'), 77% of the respondents believe that the courses offered by the School are useful for their job. However, 220 magistrates (19.5%) agree that courses are not particularly useful.

Another subject area that was identified regards the appropriateness of distance learning from a general point of view and for types of courses: managers' training and initial training.

As for the question asking if “all the courses, regardless of their contents, can be held remotely” (D29_2), 605 magistrates (52.7%) agree on the fact that all the courses, regardless of their contents, can be held remotely. 42.4% of the respondents do not agree, while few preferred not to say. The responses appeared to be different when magistrates were asked to express their degree of agreement-disagreement on the statement: “Aspiring managers’ training cannot be held remotely”. In this case, 565 magistrates said they could not respond (52.2%); 324 disagreed (30%), i.e., they stated that managers can be trained remotely. For this reason, the responses of those who had attended courses for management roles remotely and therefore had direct experience of them were analysed: there were only few respondents (i.e., 25 magistrates), and the responses can be equally divided among those who believed it could be done and those who thought it could not be done.

The responses concerning MOTs’ training (D29_4) follow a different trend than those concerning aspiring managers. 355 magistrates (32.4%) agree that, for MOTs’ general internship, good results can be achieved through distance learning. In comparison, most of them (465 magistrates - 42.5%) disagree, they do not think good results can be achieved. However, one-quarter of the respondents stated that they did not know what to answer. The following question focuses on the ‘specific internship’ (D29_5). In this case, too, 282 magistrates stated that good results can be achieved through distance learning (25.8%), while the majority (479 magistrates, i.e., 43.9%) disagree, i.e. almost half of them this training method is even less appropriate. 30.3% of the respondents stated that they did not know what to answer.

These results are partly confirmed by what is found when this indicator is compared with the magistrates’ different statuses. As for the ‘general internship’ with distance learning, the results are as follows: half of the MOTs agrees, while the other half firmly disagrees; most of ordinary magistrates disagree (i.e., 48.3% of them disagrees, 26,7% agrees; 25% prefers not to say); while honorary magistrates seem to agree more. As for the ‘specific internship’ with distance learning, most of the MOTs disagree too and disagreement becomes stronger than for ‘general internship’.

The third subject area concerns the **opportunities given by distance learning**, such as repeating some live streaming courses more often throughout the year (D29_1). 74.2% of the magistrates (842) share this statement, while only 12.3% (140) completely or partially disagree.

The last subject area concerns the **clarity of the School's speakers selection criteria** (D29_7). On this matter, magistrates can be divided into three similar groups quantity-wise: 395 of them find them clear (35%), 310 find them unclear (27.4%), while 425 of them stated that they are not able to provide an answer (37.6%).

SUMMARY BOX – 12

To sum up, this question provided several suggestions on the training offer for the future.

The **training offer is considered useful for work** by most of the respondents. This result is in line with the high level of satisfaction obtained by the courses in the previous questions. However, a non-negligible percentage of magistrates (about 20%) disagreed on this point.

Moreover, the results on the **appropriateness of distance learning** tell us that it can be appropriate for any course and status, but this is only according to a slight majority of respondents. This is confirmed more precisely, even though more controversially, for the courses for aspiring managers – and this also applies to those who actually took part in these courses. About half of the respondents believe that good results cannot be achieved through distance learning for MOTs' generic internship. The statements by the MOTs who took part in these courses were a bit less pessimistic. Moreover, live streaming courses do not seem suitable for 'specific internships', and the MOTs agree on this matter.

Finally, as far as the **opportunities given by distance learning** are concerned, a vast majority appreciate the possibility of repeating some courses throughout the year. The **speakers' selection criteria** are still somewhat unclear for most of the respondents (27%).

2.4.5. Specific evaluation of some statements regarding what the School should do

The last question provided magistrates with some inspiration on what the School could do about matters which are not directly linked to distance learning, such as speakers selection and assessing the opportunity to intervene in some areas or improve aspects of the activity. About 85% of the magistrates responded to several statements. Please find a summary of the responses in the following table.

Table 34 – Some statements regarding what the School should do (question D29Copy)

QUESTION D29COPY	agree	%	disagree	%	I don't know / Prefer not to say	%
1. The School should create discussion groups on topical issues	804	70.4	225	19.7	113	9.9
2. The School should be able to intervene in the specialist chats created by magistrates	432	38.3	429	38.0	268	23.7
3. The School should avail itself more lawyers as speakers	497	43.7	525	46.2	115	10.1
4. The School should avail itself more of the participation of law professors as speakers	599	52.8	471	41.5	64	5.6
5. The School should avail itself more experts as speakers	886	78.1	181	16.0	67	5.9
6. The School should also promote research	751	66.5	210	18.6	169	15.0
7. The School should have more publications	710	62.7	206	18.2	217	19.2
8. The School should make it easier to access courses materials	943	82.4	149	13.0	52	4.5

As for the possibility that the School intervenes in the several specialist chats created by magistrates (D29Copy_2), respondents can be divided equally, with about 38% of respondents who agreed and the same amount of respondents who disagreed (respectively, 432 and 449 responses). The number of magistrates who declared that they were not able to respond was pretty high (27.3%, i.e., 260 responses). As for the creation of discussion groups, the trend was different (D29Copy_1). In this case, most respondents agree that the School should promote discussion groups (804 responses, i.e. 70.4%), while about 20% of them disagree (225, i.e., 19.7%).

The following statements concerned the degree of agreement on the possibility for the School to avail itself of more lawyers (D29Copy_3), law professors

(D29Copy_4), and experts (D29Copy_5) as speakers. As for lawyers, 43.7% of the respondents wished they could be involved more (497), while 46.2% wholly or partially disagreed (525). As for law professors, most respondents (52.8%, 599 responses) wish they could be involved more, while 41.5% (471) of them disagree. The number of magistrates who wish external experts could be involved more is even higher: 886 magistrates support this idea (78.1%), while 181 disagree (16%). For this series of statements, the number of respondents who stated that they did not know or preferred not to say it was between 5 and 10%.

Moreover, according to 751 respondents (66.5%), the School should promote research, while 19.6% of the magistrates (210) entirely or partially disagree (D29Copy_6). Similarly (D29Copy_7), according to 710 magistrates (62.7%), the School should have more publications, while 206 magistrates wholly or partially disagree (18.2%). Many magistrates stated that they could respond respectively, 15% (169) and 19.2% (217).

Finally, all the materials produced during the courses are already made available by the School in the reserved area. However, most of the respondents (943 responses, 82%) think that the School should make it easier to access these materials (D29Copy_8). Only 149 (11%) respondents disagree.

SUMMARY BOX – 12

Several areas for potential future activities carried out by the School are highlighted.

The promotion of discussion groups is deemed advisable (70.4%), while the possibility of the School being part of the specialist chats created by magistrates is more controversial (about 38% agree and the same amount of respondents disagree).

As for the **involvement of people other than magistrates** as speakers, respondents mostly agree on university law professors (52.8%), while only the minority wishes that lawyers were involved more (43.7). On the contrary, many respondents (78.1%) think that it would be advisable to involve experts from other fields.

As for educational materials, respondents wish the School could make them more accessible (82%), but also that it could contribute to the creation of new materials through **its involvement in research** (66.5%) and **publications** (62.7%).

2.5. Comments and suggestions by the respondents: a summary of the main topics

At the end of the questionnaire, a so-called ‘open question’ was asked. This allowed respondents to leave comments and suggestions. The available space allowed respondents to write a text with a limited number of characters (max. 500) by way of a summary so that what was indicated could then be classified *ex post*.

120 out of 1,339 (15.7%) of the magistrates answered this last question.

By analysing comments and suggestions, some homogeneous areas emerge, and they can be grouped into four subject areas, which reflect quite faithfully what emerged from the analysis of the data identified through the questionnaire: the first one focuses on the School in general and the questionnaire in particular; the second one focuses on the relationship between traditional and distance learning; the third one focuses on the organisational and technical aspects linked to distance learning; the fourth one focuses on distance learning methodological aspects.

As for the **general comments and suggestions on the School’s activity**, several respondents emphasised the great work done during the emergency period and stated that, in any case, the courses held remotely were of good quality. Moreover, some of them highlighted the usefulness of the questionnaire to have the opportunity to evaluate, express opinions, and make proposals on training activities. The questionnaire should be repeated to also ask for information regarding the contents of courses rather than methodology only.

Many more comments emerged on the **relationship between traditional and distance learning**.

These notes too, show the presence of two different groups: those who want to get back to traditional in-person learning (preferred mode) and those who do not want to waste the opportunity to enjoy the flexibility offered by distance learning, thus confirming what emerged from the questionnaire’s data analysis. These two standings can be summarised as follows. Traditional in-person learning cannot be replaced since it makes it possible for attendees to immerse themselves in the courses without any distraction fully – as often happens with distance learning – and it is, therefore, more effective, and essential for networking. On the other hand, distance learning is more compatible with participants’ private and working life; it does not oblige them to stay away from home and work for too long, it works well and can be made available easily – much more than traditional learning. Moreover, it makes it possible to participate in more courses, watch the same courses several times, and access educational and video-recorded materials with great flexibility. Respondents also highlighted the fact that it is more cost-effective.

The comments and suggestions also show the presence of less clear-cut and more articulate standings, which deserve to be considered and put together the good sides of both these educational methods. It was stated that distance learning is an option we can no longer give up on, even though the matters to be discussed, the methodology, and the teachers' specific expertise could be improved quality-wise. However, respondents were not very excited about a possible blended mode solution involving both traditional and distance learning. As stated several times, respondents' critiques regarding the blended mode solution (also defined as 'blended') seem to indicate that some attendees and/or speakers are in class while others attend classes remotely. On the contrary, they do not seem to refer to the much-appreciated possibility of having courses providing in-person and distance learning for all the participants and speakers.

The comments and suggestions related to the **technical and organisational aspects of distance learning** are quite mixed.

No one reported any issue with the network, hardware, or software technology related to the several platforms. There were no complaints about the relationship with the administrative office. Still, respondents insisted on the need to make it easier to access courses by underlining the cumbersome nature of the request to enter two credentials. Some respondents reported the need to make it possible for honorary magistrates, who seem to find some problems when trying to access the learning materials provided by the School, to participate more in courses. Respondents requested to pay more attention to the collection of reports and their publication within a reasonable time. Moreover, they ask for improved tools such as the newsletter and the portal. Finally, following the results identified through the questionnaire, some wish the School could be more involved in research and publications.

As for some of the features that courses held remotely should have, several respondents want them to be videorecorded and made available so that they can be watched freely later. They also ask to limit the number of participants to improve interactions among them.

As for the speakers, some respondents reported that there should be an improvement in their quality, and this could be done by making it possible for participants to get to know their curricula and selection criteria. In this regard, it was reported that there are still way too many male speakers than female ones. Some respondents reiterate that they do appreciate the presence of their colleagues (i.e., magistrates) because they are closer to participants' training needs. Still, they also ask for an increase in the number of experts in fields other than the legal one.

Finally, regarding the **methodological aspects of distance learning**, respondents generally reported that additional efforts should be made to use training methodologies that better suit online courses. Distance learning is currently still too related to traditional teaching. It was reported that very long and generic lectures are still widely used. The time for interventions and presentations should not exceed 20-30 minutes. Courses should be more targeted, more time to debate, and teamwork should be strengthened. To do so, more qualified coordination is required. It was reported that sometimes coordinators waste too much time on educational reports rather than asking groups to get involved.

SECTION 2.

Innovative methodologies for training, use of new technologies, and legal documentation

SSM Steering Committee (by)
School for the Judiciary (SSM)

1. The reorganisation of training activities following the spread of COVID-19. Introduction.

The spread of COVID-19 started a few weeks after the School's new Steering Committee entered office. The resulting 'lockdown' ordered by the competent authorities at the national level imposed an overall reorganisation of training activities, with the interruption of all 'in-person' activities – starting from March 2020 –, many of which started being held 'remotely'.

Only from July 2021 was it possible to start in-person activities again partially, even though they have been held in a completely different way, i.e., with some people in the class and others attending remotely, and sometimes with trainers holding classes remotely.

In the beginning, this situation undoubtedly created many problems. It led people to make additional efforts to adapt the organisation of courses to the course of the epidemic and the resulting social activities permitted. However, this has led to an unprecedented innovation of training contents and methods and – to a certain extent – focus.

2. Reorganisation and retraining of staff, software, infrastructures

The reorganisation of the ways courses were held led to the realisation that there was the need to strengthen, first of all, human resources working at the School and, in particular, IT staff, since there was an evident shortage, considering the sudden need to create online courses and retrain administrative staff, who basically lacked advanced IT skills and were used to manage organisational processes

with manual systems (e.g., collection of courses assessments, evaluation of tasks and supply of materials, in ways that needed to be innovated and rightsized).

To face the vast difficulties due to IT and administrative staff shortage (since the Ministry of Justice could not meet the several requests made to increase staff members, also due to contingent reasons), during the lockdown, the members of the Board themselves organised the courses in videoconference using the platform linked to the Microsoft 365 account (specifically, the software Teams), which was purchased for the School's training activities by the previous Steering Committee, and filled it up with training teams, meetings and material, thus creating an actual 'virtual' School in an unprecedented way.

In order to facilitate access in an orderly manner and to check if magistrates actually attended the courses held remotely, it was necessary to promote a complex campaign for them to get used to the Microsoft account 'scuolamagistratura.it' to access virtual classrooms and teaching materials. However, this was particularly hard due to the multiple accounts available to magistrates (i.e., a Microsoft 365 account for justice-related matters, which had nothing to do with the email which was still linked to Microsoft exchange; and, for the training, an account to access the website and a Microsoft 365 education account to access virtual classrooms).

After the first few months, in-house resources dealt with the emergency. Since the internal staff was not suitable enough, it was deemed necessary to create a Help Desk service (even though it was quite limited) to include learners in the training platform. This was done while the complex procedures to allow magistrates to use only one account to access the School's website, which is an actual interactive administrative platform, and Teams' virtual classrooms was completed.

In addition, in view of the new skills needed, administrative staff were re-trained by means of specific computer training.

Finally, for the year 2020, such a timely reorganisation made it possible to avoid the interruption of the School's activities (which were interrupted in March for the lockdown, after only 14 in-person courses held in January and February 2020), and – thanks to the organisational work and versatility of the IT and administrative staff – to implement 50 online courses (including 3 courses for people aspiring to take on managing positions, and 2 to turn judges into prosecutors and vice versa) for all the weeks of training for ordinary magistrate trainees of the Ministerial Decree 12.2.2019, the Ministerial Decree 18.7.2019 (Bolzano) and the Ministerial Decree 3.1.2020, several territorial courses and webinars, in order to deal with the 'training emergencies' imposed by the crisis.

Starting from October 2020 and for the first semester of 2021, the worsening of COVID-19 pandemic, which had already had a significant impact on the car-

rying out of 2020 training activities, and the resulting lockdowns provided for by competent Authorities at national level, obliged the School to keep providing 'distance learning' only until July. On the contrary, the so-called 'blended' mode courses, where learners could either be in class (within the limitations provided for by the regulations in force on 'social distancing') or attend classes remotely, could only be held starting from July, at the School branch of Naples-Castel Capuano, which is characterised by big spaces and rooms that made it possible to comply with safety rules on infection prevention.

The School also handled the emergency by adapting its training contents since the beginning of the pandemic, to provide the necessary tools to interpret the emergency legislation with all available means (i.e., several informative webinars attended by a vast number of participants, training documents containing legislative and regulatory data, provisions by DGSIA [Italian Directorate General for Automated IT Systems], resolutions by the CSM [Superior Council of Magistracy] and organisational measures adopted by the heads of offices, as well as videos to be watched freely).

The School then dealt with the emergency, with all its consequences, regarding the world of work, with several 'traditional' courses, i.e., lectures and study groups.

The Steering Committee, thanks to specialised professionals, modified the available equipment and furniture in places where training was provided (Castelpulci e Castel Capuano), so that 'in-person' courses could be held while several other learners could actively participate remotely. The School continues to comply with the changing regulations in force concerning the number of in-class learners permitted, and this implies a considerable organisational effort as well as an ability to adapt, to ensure people can learn in a safe space, where people can respect social distancing, and Covid Certificate Passes and body temperature are checked.

In 2021, the School held 81 online courses (including 3 courses for people aspiring to take on managing positions and 1 to turn judges into prosecutors and vice versa), 8 webinars, 30 'blended' mode courses as well as 14 'in-person' only courses. Moreover, several territorial courses were held (i.e., 12 in 2021, with in-person training and, held remotely during the first six months of the year), and courses for MOTs of the Ministerial Decree 12.2.2019, the Ministerial Decree 18.7.2019 (Bolzano) and the Ministerial Decree 3.1.2020 (these courses were partly held remotely and partly 'in-person', or as the 'blended' mode courses).

In 2022 too, due to the permanent uncertainty linked to the ongoing emergency and for the primary purpose to protect the health of all those who will

take part in training courses (i.e., teachers, learners, administrative staff), the situation will be monitored constantly, and this will inevitably result to carefully choose the best way to participate in the courses provided.

With the COVID-19 experience, much emphasis was put on technologies. In-person courses were utterly interrupted, so the School had to deal with new training materials and new ‘virtual places’ for its meetings.

Even though people can get confused when an activity that has always been done traditionally is suddenly reorganised in a completely different way and an emergency, it is undeniable that the pandemic – despite all the problems it has brought about – determined an acceleration towards innovation and modernisation with respect to the ways things were handled in the past – mostly in terms of organisation –, which, in crucial fields, were no longer appropriate.

Starting from March 2020, the School – while using the videoconference mode as imposed by the pandemic – started collecting videos of almost all the courses it organised, and also gathered all the course-related materials and documents on the repositories on Teams’ virtual classrooms clouds, which were then also transferred on the School’s website and offered to all the users.

At the same time, during this development process, assessments, and attendees, which were written on paper in the past, started being recorded in an automated and digitised way, and ‘scuolamagistratura.it’ platforms were developed to collect, in a structured way, these data and make them fully available.

The computer technology of web conferences has certainly played a crucial role in avoiding the interruption of teaching activities, by giving people who would not be able to attend courses in presence the possibility to attend them. Today, it appears to play a complementary role – for specific needs – and will probably continue to do so even when we will get back to normal in terms of social interactions.

In the past, both in the *SSM* and the *CSM*, the only distance learning tool was e-learning courses, sometimes realised with a blended modality (i.e., initial or final ‘live’ meeting together with an online phase, generally on an educational platform such as Moodle). However, during the online phase, there was the possibility to only have limited interactions and, sometimes, attendees could talk to trainers in charge of tutoring – either during classes or after them –, but rather than doing it in web conference mode – which would happen hardly ever – it would work preferably through chat, or during conversations held later.

In short, before the emergency, the School would not generally offer distance learning, that is, online learning initiatives (i.e., webinars, video-lectures or virtual seminars) characterised by the fact that people located in a different place can actually attend and interact with speakers and the other participants, by using a work environment in videoconference.

The IT platform used for distance learning was Microsoft Teams, which is part of Office 365, made available to all the *SSM* learners by joining – as was already done by the previous Steering Committee between 2018 and 2019 – the so-called *CRUI* (Conference of Italian Universities Rectors) Convention agreed upon with Microsoft (that the majority of Italian Universities also joined for universities distance learning activities).

This Convention, which has been recently renewed and already covers all Microsoft products, made distance learning possible for *SSM*, which had the possibility not to interrupt learning activities during the pandemic. Moreover, only 10 days after the lockdown, it made it possible to organise the first courses for MOTs held online, which could not be postponed due to the programme agreed upon with the CSM.

As was already discussed, thanks to the Steering Committee members' personal commitment, together with the limited but efficient *SSM* IT staff, to ensure courses could be held, initial training courses, held using Microsoft applications, started. After that, actual virtual classrooms, that included courses materials and in which plenary sessions and working groups would be held, were created.

Moreover, new technologies made it possible to improve working groups methodology. This began on an experimental basis for some seminars, through the grouping by time of participants from different groups, the definition of working group contents through the identification of study materials and case studies, as well as the sharing of documents with participants within a reasonable amount of time that could make it possible to complete any tasks within the end of the session.

Therefore, the methodologies used for distance learning made it possible to have traditional lectures still, but also to add round tables and create working groups, show slides and/or videos, share participants' desktops, use chatrooms and an app for evaluations, as well as record study meetings so that participants themselves or other people could use them, thus making it possible – as stated – to collect videos of interventions, which could be used as further training tools by people other than class attendees, who could refer to them later in time or as podcasts.

'IT modules' were also organised so as to collect data and assessments on the courses, as well as manage this information, which was written on paper in the past, in an automated manner. Consequently, this has also led to an improvement in the distribution of tasks.

All the new methodologies introduced were included in a specific internal administrative document ('Methodology and good practices') and implemented by changing teachers' regulations.

Apart from organising video seminars with a limited number of participants, where attendees could interact with speakers using audio and video, which was in line with the division in small groups simulating in-person classes, live streaming events addressing a high number of participants (that is, many more if compared to traditional courses) were also held. They were characterised by the fact that it was only possible to interact by chat. In this way, thousands of participants attended the first events organised in April (i.e., during lockdown), and many participants also attended the following events.

In this perspective, ten live streaming events were organised. On the one side, they were about topical issues concerning the relationships and problems arising from 'law during COVID-19 emergency' and, respectively, criminal law, civil law, labour law, right to asylum, and immigration-related issues, and, on the other side, on civil and criminal proceedings.

Several video courses than can be watched at any time by anyone having access to the School's website, were created. Specifically:

- courses on how to use ItalgireWeb, in collaboration with the Court of Cassation's *CED* (Electronic Centre of Documentation);
- Courses on how to use the Court of Justice's and European Court of Human Rights' search engines (i.e., CURIA and HUDOC) and European Union's sources system EURLEX.

The recording of introductory course videos, made available to the participants before training sessions, was also tested for a seminar on online civil proceedings.

New technologies have made it possible to organise courses, which contributed to the training of thousands of magistrates right after the pandemic.

It can be stated that, as mentioned above, apart from making it possible to face 2020 and 2021 health emergency, the described methods used for online training through new technologies resulted in an improvement of legal practitioners' IT skills, thus making up for the delays experiences throughout the years, that can have a favourable impact also after the crisis ends.

3. The reorganisation of training activities

As stated above, during the first semester of 2021, since ‘in-person’ training activities were permanently interrupted, several ‘remote’ training activities were organised.

In reorganising the ways courses were held (i.e., distance learning or ‘blended’ mode courses), there was the need to take into account the available human resources working at the School and, in particular, IT staff, since there was a clear staff shortage, considering the sudden need to create online courses.

To face the huge difficulties due to IT and administrative staff shortage (since the Ministry of Justice could not meet the several requests made to increase staff members in general and IT staff in particular), also in 2021, it was deemed necessary to create a Help Desk service (even though it was quite limited) in order to include learners to the training platform.

In any case, specific IT training was provided to all the staff in a view to a future and necessary strengthening of IT and administrative staff, by taking into account the nature of the activities to be carried out, which necessarily implies the knowledge of such technical skills.

4. Positive aspects and problems encountered in online training

At this stage, it is deemed appropriate to highlight the pros and cons of online training with respect to traditional ‘in-person’ training, by taking into account the experience gained since the beginning of the pandemic and analysed in a specific study carried out by the School in collaboration with the *CNR* (Italian National Research Council).

If we start from the positive aspects, it shall be underlined that:

- a) the number of learners that can be reached through online training: while about 80/100 people can participate in traditional ‘in-person’ training courses, Teams platform makes it possible to gather a significantly higher number of participants and, during a large live online event or webinar the number of participants can even exceed 20,000 (with the possibility to further increase the total number, upon request).

This means that, within the end of the year, an extremely high number of people will be able to attend the School’s training courses, and – considering the challenging situation experienced – this represents a record in the field of judicial training at the European level;

- b) the possibility to videotape events and, therefore, to make available not only printed materials but also video-recordings containing re-

ports as well as study groups projects (which can also be transcribed in any language) to learners at any time after courses are held, either on-demand or as podcasts, as is done by the European Judicial Training Network;

- c) the time saved for participants, who no longer have to go on business trips to get to the places where training is provided since they can attend courses from their office or any other place;
- d) the *SSM*, which does not have to bear the costs of learners' business trips, can save money;
- e) the possibility, above all for large webinars, to organise courses in a short time without having to deal with several logistical issues.

As for the problems encountered, they can be summarised as follows:

- a) the School's IT staff workload has drastically increased since organising an online course still requires a series of particularly demanding procedures to make it possible for learners actually to register and be granted attendance certificates;
- b) both learners and trainers did not get familiar enough with the IT platform, even though they were provided with tutorials and specific training on how to use it;
- c) 'distance learning' highlighted several problems in the interactions between participants, which worsened during large webinars with respect to video-recorded courses, and this goes partly against CSM guidelines, which underline the importance of the sharing of information between trainers and learners, and between learners themselves in view of a mutual training process; several working groups showed a lack of debate among participants, which is undoubtedly more self-evident if compared to 'in-person' courses, but this is due to several kinds of variables, which are linked to working groups' specific knowledge and to the possibility to have course materials in advance, the issues discussed and participants' familiarity with them, as well as coordinators' teaching abilities;
- d) distance learning also had an impact on the duration of speakers' presentations since sometimes it was not possible to examine specific topics in depth, because learners can encounter more difficulties (even vision-related ones) and find it more difficult to stay focused for a long time in front of a screen. Moreover, if compared to 'in-person' courses, with distance learning, learners can have more distractions, and attention can drop more frequently;

- e) with distance learning, it is not possible to be sure that learners are attending classes, since one can only check whether they connect to the IT platform or not, and this could be an issue when it comes to issuing attendance certificate, which are documents attesting that learners complied with their training obligations (at the moment, such certificates are issued following a mere self-declaration by learners, stating that they took part in the courses).

5. New kinds of distance learning

However, apart from the positive aspects and the problems encountered, an unavoidable consequence of this experience is that, even though traditional training will still be the main focus after the emergency ends, some aspects of distance training will lead to changes in the School's training modalities.

As a matter of fact, the use of new technologies in training has become strategically important. All the training providers are dealing with it to take advantage of any opportunity linked to it.

Among the recommendations addressed to training providers in the Communication from the European Commission 'Ensuring justice in the EU – a European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024' COM/2020/713 final, there are:

- offer interactive, practical and accessible to all learners e-learning that is precisely tailored to training objectives;
- explore further the potential of modern techniques such as e-learning and extended reality solutions;
- make more use of 'capsule' (short, up-to-date, tightly focused) e-training to address justice professionals' immediate needs in the context of a concrete case;
- ensure that trainers are trained in exploiting the full potential of e-learning methodologies.

Specifically, *SSM's* learners could appreciate a training method characterised by modalities, which:

- on the one hand, it could encourage people being in a determined situation – that will be assessed on a case-by-case basis – to attend 'in-person' courses remotely;
- on the other hand, could propose a series of online training initiatives for specific subject areas which suit this modality (e.g., events addressed to a high number of participants who can only be participate through videoconference, courses requiring participants to watch videos that can be watched at any time and in any place or to do interactive exercises, etc.).

Therefore, it is deemed necessary to reflect on the use of new technologies in current times while making an effort to adapt traditional training means to online tools and with a view to its medium – and long-term use, i.e., at the end of the emergency.

Based on what was stated above, as mentioned earlier, distance learning could become an integrative and complementary part of magistrates' training, without replacing in-presence, which could make it possible for anyone to attend courses by facilitating:

- magistrates, who, apart from in-person courses, wish to participate in further initiatives;
- categories that have been excluded until now because of budget-related issues.

Italian and foreign speakers that, due to subjective or objective conditions, can only deliver their speech remotely.

At the European level, after all, a study carried out by the European Judicial Training Network on the use of new technologies in judicial training highlights that distance learning's effectiveness depends on several factors, among which the level of interaction of participants and the diversification of the training on offer.

However, an adequate diversification of the types of distance learning is imposed by the urge to better adapt the initiatives to the needs described.

Therefore, we can imagine using what follows:

- 1) asynchronous distance learning, whose flexibility is better expressed for those courses which do not require participants to be present, enabling them to access training tools everywhere, at any time, and using any device whatsoever (to meet this need, old-fashioned Moodle's e-learning model should be replaced by more modern and easy-to-use platforms);
- 2) e-learning (i.e., online training with participants), which was imposed during the emergency, could be used in the future for initiatives where a high number of people are expected to participate.

In particular, in the current historical moment, this way of teaching will require further efforts in order to review learning methods and contents so as to prevent participants from passively attending long lectures held in traditional ways, which would result in them getting tired and losing interest, thus undermining the institutional purposes of training itself. In order to do so, online training could be held on non-consecutive days to suit learners' working needs better.

In any case, in order to prevent these risks, interaction needs to be highly valued in the current e-learning model by maximising learners' involvement and preventing them from struggling due to a lack of motivation (e.g., this could be done by resorting to a tutor's educational support or by working in teams, where a limited number of participants can actively interact with their webcam on).

Interaction can be achieved in several ways (multiple-choice tests, tests, interactive resources, e-learning scenarios, simulations, animated videos, etc. All these tools are already used for remote language courses).

Courses of different levels – e.g., primary, intermediate, or advanced – could also be created to divide participants according to their specific training needs.

Based on previous analyses and considering how specific training for magistrates is (i.e., professional training focuses on specific topics), at least five types of courses could be organised:

- 1) video courses that can be watched in an asynchronous way and upon request (e.g., *Italggiure web*, IT courses);
- 2) interactive e-learning with the use of video, audio, exercises, and tests (e.g., language courses for a wide range of learners), including the possibility to interact via chat;
- 3) courses with a limited number of participants, which make it possible to hold plenary sessions (that could be held as large webinars) and group works with a limited number of participants (also using tools other than Teams), before and during which materials are shared;
- 4) webinars addressed to a wide range of participants, after which attendance certificates are issued based on self-declarations (e.g., honorary magistrates training, changes in regulations and law, emergency-related needs, such as the COVID-19 case);
- 5) courses among 'experts' in specific fields to be held in ways that can facilitate sharing of information.

These types of courses can also be 'put together' in order to achieve the best possible training results.

6. Legal documentation and study materials. The implementation of websites' functions. The implementation of SSM's Newsletter and the *Quaderni* series

An essential part of training concerns documentation and study materials.

Through its new collection, classification and research processes, the School has made and will make available to all Italian magistrates an online library in a specific section of the website.

With specific reference to IT and new technologies, the current Steering Committee has carried out activities aimed at constantly improving the website passed on to it by the previous Board. It performed analyses – in 2021 too – aimed at identifying all its problems so as to turn them into specific requests to the external company dealing with the School's applications, which referred to a wide range of matters, including but not limited to:

- homepage presentation;
- teachers' list and tasks registration;
- materials search engine;
- ways of providing information on the homepage through news and notices.

Moreover, the Board has promoted the entry of data concerning all the materials gathered in the previous years to make it easier to find them.

Moreover, the Board has introduced another activity of 'Research and Documentation' aimed at creating a series of books containing all the materials collected during the courses, and such activities have already led – as stated above – to the creation and dissemination of three books containing information materials which are deemed to be of primary interest.

Windows, where webinars or asynchronous video-recorded courses can be placed, were created – even though they are still being improved.

The creation of the Newsletter and the *Quaderni* (Notebooks) series has contributed to meeting the institutional needs related to legal documentation and research.

The Steering Committee decided to create its own Newsletter¹ in an attempt to provide information regarding the activities being carried out at the School and as a way to make it easier to access legal documentation, starting from the materials created during institutional training.

There are already several resources online, but the actual objective is to rationalise their knowledge.

Each issue contains a summary of the activities carried out, the main scientific reports created at the end of training courses and access to the relevant legal documentation, as well as recent legislative and regulatory news (laws, circulars, etc.), information regarding the most important decisions and institutional documentation by the Constitutional Court and Court of Cassation, international

¹ https://www.scuolamagistratura.it/web/portalessm/studi-e-pubblicazioni?p_p_id=P_GESTIONE-DOCUMENTIWEB&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&_P_GESTIONEDOCUMENTIWEB_javax.portlet.action=Loadgestionedocumenti&p_r_p_comefrom=homepage&p_auth=7reXfQW3&p_p_lifecycle=0

institutions (Court of Justice of the European Union, European Court of Human Rights and Council of Europe), administrative justice, Court of Auditors and State Attorneys. This aims to guarantee, by means of an easy-to-access tool, knowledge of all the teaching materials produced by the School and, at the same time, implement the circulation of the information considered useful to carry out daily work activities.

The Newsletter, which comprises three main parts (SSM § I., regulatory news § II. and other institutions § III. and an appendix containing links to institutional websites) is neither a mere collection of texts nor a simple hypertext. Instead, it is a well-thought-out set of multimedia resources: texts (documents, reports, legal decisions, collections), videos, podcasts, courses (e-learning and webinars), and websites.

Therefore, it is a tool for institutional communication, which integrates training activities as part of the project to integrate teaching with the new technologies.

An email box was created for people to discuss matters regarding teaching and training with the school.

The Newsletter, which is issued on a monthly basis, is sent to ordinary and honorary magistrates and trainee magistrates and can be accessed freely on the School's website.

The second initiative concerning legal documentation is the *Quaderni* series.

The series, made possible thanks to the collaboration with the Italian State Printing Works, Stationery Office, and Mint (*IPZS*), was created to allow learners to widely make use of the most significant contributions of these study materials and the results of research activities carried out by the institutions. The series is ideally linked to the one started in the 80s of the last century by the CSM, which was devoted to the study meetings for magistrates organised during the initial and continuous training the Board was in charge of back then.

A big online library in the database website section is already made available by the School to all Italian magistrates.

However, the teaching materials produced during training sessions, already available on the institutional website, are just as crucial for each course. The series meets exactly this need to rationalise the teaching materials created during the School's courses.

SECTION 3.

The School's activities at the international level

SSM Steering Committee (by)
School for the Judiciary (SSM)

1. Introduction

The School plays an essential role in European and international training.

European Union law, human rights, and compared law are a regular part of the initial training of trainee ordinary magistrates and the permanent training, also thanks to the project *European Gaius*, which was established by the CSM in 2011 and currently cured by the School, and that is considered among the best practices in European training in a study by the European Parliament on judicial training.

The report about judicial training in European law, published on an annual basis by the European Commission, highlights that Italian judicial training is at the top of a ranking that includes all the members of the European Union by number and duration of training activities in European law.

2. The *European Gaius* project for the strengthening of Italian magistrates' European judicial culture

The *European Gaius* project for strengthening Italian magistrates' European judicial culture that takes inspiration from the *Eurinfra* programme, which was launched in the Netherlands in 2000, was approved by the CSM's decision on April 13th, 2011¹.

¹ https://www.scuolamagistratura.it/documents/20126/0/01_deliberaGAIUS+%281%29.pdf/c09f88cc-68c0-b46d-a3fb-87fd921e4986?t=1618306233095

Its aim was to propose a wide-ranging training project to be implemented through three targeted actions to enable Italian magistrates to improve in terms of knowledge of European law.

The first action concerned an increase in the number of courses devoted to European law in central and decentralised training, with a particular focus on linguistic profiles, and, where possible, specific sessions on European law within courses on national-law-related matters were provided.

The second action concerned the inclusion of a magistrate, with skills in European law, in the contact persons' offices for decentralised training, alongside magistrates with specific skills in criminal and civil law.

The third action concerned the setting up, within the CSM's intranet, of a web page (e-G@ius: electronic Gaius) which would allow quick and full access to the training actions carried out and in progress, teaching materials, all European sources, and national and supranational law.

The CSM has cured the project since 2012.

The European trainers' network has been active since 2011 in the Court of Appeal and the Court of Cassation districts.

European law is an integral part of the training courses for magistrates.

The School's Newsletter², which was launched in 2021, aims at implementing that part of the project aimed at quick and comprehensive access to legal documentation.

The project³ was ranked as one of the best training practices under the pilot project European Judicial Training, which was proposed by the European Parliament in 2012 and implemented by the European Commission in 2013-2014, whereby the European Judicial Training Network conducted an in-depth study to identify and document good practices in judicial training across Europe⁴.

Similar networks exist in other countries like the Netherlands, Spain, Romania, Hungary, and Poland.

² https://www.scuolamagistratura.it/web/portalessm/studi-e-pubblicazioni?p_p_id=P_GESTIONE-DOCUMENTIWEB&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&_P_GESTIONEDOCUMENTIWEB_javax.portlet.action=Loadgestionedocumenti&p_r_p_comefrom=homepage&p_auth=ZEozYATK&p_p_lifecycle=0

³ <https://www.ejtn.eu/Resources/Good-judicial-training-practices/>

⁴ [https://www.ejtn.eu/Documents/Methodologies_Resources/Best%20practices%20Lot%201%20EN/ITT_38_Italy_EU_en%20\(3\).pdf](https://www.ejtn.eu/Documents/Methodologies_Resources/Best%20practices%20Lot%201%20EN/ITT_38_Italy_EU_en%20(3).pdf)

The European Parliament and the Commission have repeatedly expressed their support for these projects⁵.

The project to create connections between national networks has gained new strength in recent years after it was launched in The Hague in 2012. It is an ongoing project co-financed by the European Commission with the Academy of European Law in Trier and is specifically dedicated to European law coordinators. In 2020, some meetings were promoted by the Hungarian network.

The common denominator of these projects is that they all belong to the European Judicial Training Network, which works to support magistrates in becoming fully aware that European law is an essential part of national law and the daily work of each judge and prosecutor.

The *European Gaius* project's 10th anniversary was celebrated with the European partners and the Secretary-General of the Network on June 11th, 2021, in a webinar involving the School's decentralised trainers.

3. The European Judicial Training Network

In the context of the European Union, the School is one of the key players in the European Judicial Training Network, which is a body whose 20th anniversary was celebrated in 2020 and which brings together 38 judicial training institutions from 27 EU Member States, as well as the Academy of European Law and 9 observer countries. Through its national training institutions, it represents the interests of more than one hundred and twenty thousand European judges and prosecutors.

The School has been a member of the Network since 2012 and is currently an elected member of the Network's Steering Committee, a member of all the working groups (linguistic and criminal one, methodologies, fundamental rights, exchange programmes), and coordinator of the civil group.

In 2020⁶, despite the pandemic crisis, 5,074 European magistrates participated in the activities of the Network's projects, and 925 judicial exchanges and study visits were carried out. Italian magistrates were at the top of the list for their participation in the Network's activities, with 542 participants.

⁵ European Parliament resolution of March 14th, 2012 on judicial training (2012/2575(RSP))
European Parliament resolution of February 7th, 2013 on judicial training – legal coordinators (2012/2864(RSP))

⁶ <https://www.ejtn.eu/PageFiles/9825/EJTN%20Annual%20Report%202020.pdf>

3.1. Activities and projects within the Network's working groups

Since the beginning of its activities, SSM has been a member of all the working groups (programme group, exchange programme group) and sub-groups (criminal, civil, linguistic – which has become an independent group starting from 2020 – and fundamental rights) of the Network, taking on the responsibility to organise one or more transnational courses in each field every year.

From 2012 to 2014, in collaboration with representatives of the CSM, the School coordinated the group on trainers training. It also carried out a study with a questionnaire distributed to all European Schools and contributed to drafting a Methodology Manual (2014). After this group merged with the Working Group 'Judicial Training Methods' (*JTM*) at the 2014 assembly, the School took over responsibility for the subgroup activities on judicial leadership training; in this respect, it organised and chaired several activities related to the Thessaloniki conference in July 2015 and, in 2016, it was responsible for organising a conference on leadership. The group organised approximately 4-5 seminars per year trainers from different schools would attend, with an average of 2-3 Italians per meeting.

In the 2017-2019 three-year period, the School coordinated the working group on training methods, curating transnational courses on training methods and evaluation, quality of justice, judicial leadership training and deontology, and the first European seminar for the Network's courses leaders. The SSM coordinated the drafting of the Guidelines for Evaluation of Judicial Training Practices (December 2017), translated into all the EU countries' official languages⁷, and the Guidelines for Leadership Training (December 2019)⁸, drafted at the end of a four-year project on leadership training.

In the 2020-2022 three-year period, the School has been coordinating the civil subgroup. In 2020, it organised a conference on mediation and alternative dispute resolution, while in 2021 it organised a seminar on industrial property, three webinars on smart contracts (*Smart Contract: a comparative view*), the impact of Covid on civil litigation (*Covid-19 Litigation in Civil Law: a first com-*

⁷ http://www.ejtn.eu/MRDDocuments/EJTN_JTM_Guidelines%20for%20Evaluation%20of%20judicial%20Training%20Practices%20Handbook%202017_2.pdf

⁸ http://www.ejtn.eu/Documents/News%20articles/EJTN_Judicial%20Training%20Methods%20Guidelines%20for%20Leadership%20Training_2019.pdf

parative overview), the regulation of the European Account Preservation Order under Regulation (EU) No. 655/2014 and a conference (1-hour webinar) on ‘Lawyering in the Digital Age’.

Due to the pandemic, from April 2020 to September 2021, almost all the Network’s seminars were held as webinars on different platforms (Zoom, TEAMS, BBB, BlueJeans, GoToMeeting, etc.), considering the host institution and readjusting programmes that tended to be designed for in-person training.

In addition to the already scheduled seminars, each working group proposed and launched, with the coordination of the Secretary-General of the Network, specific webinars on the COVID-19 emergency in the different fields of law, as well as a series of one-hour events at lunchtime (1-hour webinar series) with the following format: 1 topic / 1 expert / 1 hour⁹.

Particular attention was paid to the training of trainers, through several training sessions, on the use of new technologies during the health crisis.

Drawing inspiration from the health crisis that has prompted a revolution in the programmes of each institution and of the Network, a reflection on the future of judicial training and the use of new technologies is underway, also in light of the Communication from the European Commission ‘Ensuring justice in the EU – a European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024’ COM/2020/713 final, by means of which training institutions have been invited to offer interactive, practical and accessible to all learners e-learning that is precisely tailored to training objectives; further exploring the potential of modern techniques such as e-learning and extended reality solutions; make more use of ‘capsule’ (short, up-to-date, tightly focused) e-training to address justice professionals’ immediate needs in the context of a concrete case; and ensure that trainers are trained in exploiting the full potential of e-learning methodologies.

In view of the 25-26 November 2021 seminar on ‘Evaluation of innovative training methodology – past, present and future’, together with the Bulgarian School, the SSM promoted a survey on innovative training methodology in the COVID-19 pandemic period¹⁰.

⁹ These courses cover topics of interest to the EU judiciary and consist of short introduction – 30-minute presentation – Q/A session. Unlike the courses offered annually, these courses do not require any formal application or selection process. Participants simply have to click on the link provided on the day of the event.

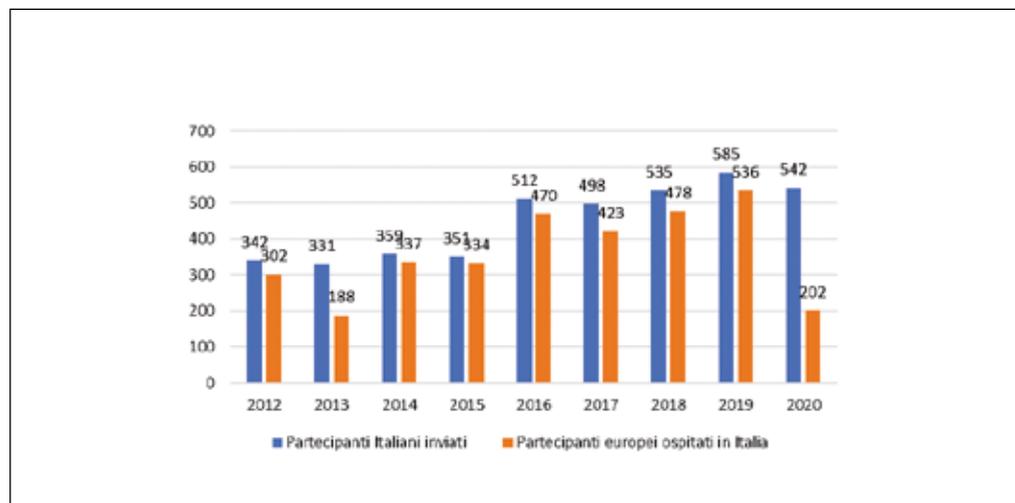
¹⁰ <https://www.ejtn.eu/PageFiles/19908/Survey-innovative-training-methodology-2021.pdf>

The number of Italian participants in the Network’s activities is particularly relevant and has increased over the years. The same applies to the number of European magistrates hosted in Italy for everyday activities¹¹. The participation of Italian magistrates was also particularly relevant in 2020 when 87% of the activities were carried out online using the new distance learning methods.

Table 1 – Participants in the Network’s activities

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Invited Italian participants	342	331	359	351	512	498	535	585	542
European participants hosted in Italy	302	188	337	334	470	423	478	536	202

Figure 1 – Participants in the European Network’s activities



(Blue-Italians; Orange-Other Europeans)

The data include both participation in the activities carried out within the Network working groups and in the courses that each institution includes in the annual general catalogue of members and in the catalogue plus (in which an interpretation service financed by the Network is provided), which are open to the participation of magistrates from the other member states.

Particular attention should be paid to exchange programmes and projects for initial training projects.

¹¹ <https://www.ejtn.eu/About-us/EJTN-documentation/>

3.2. Network Exchange Programmes

This is a strategical sector for the international training offered to magistrates. The programme envisages traineeships open to the magistrates working in EU countries and held across foreign judicial authorities.

The programme's objectives include direct knowledge of foreign judiciaries, level, and applicability of the European legislation and case law, improving language skills in the judicial and technical field and establishing direct links with foreign judicial authorities.

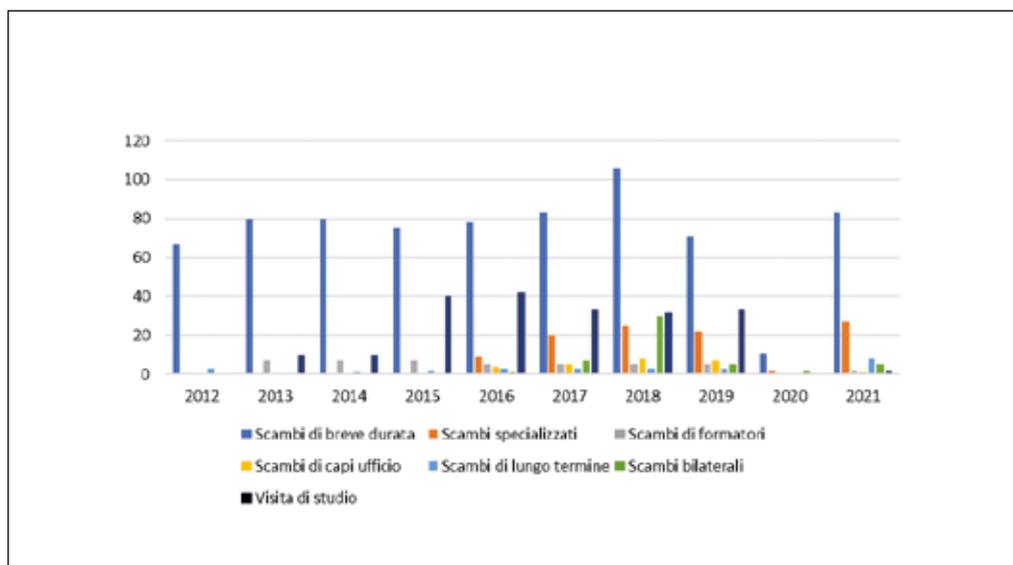
Over the years, the programme has been extended to include short-term exchanges (1 or 2 weeks), specialised exchanges (1 week), exchanges for trainers (1 week), long-term exchanges (from 3 months to 1 year) at the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights and Eurojust, bilateral exchanges among courts, exchanges between the heads of the courts and visits to the EU institutions. In 2021, regional exchanges among neighbouring regions belonging to different Countries were also included.

Italian magistrates have always actively participated in all the initiatives since programme's launch in 2005 as a pilot project monitored by the French School for the Judiciary. The figures collected across the years highlight the School's commitment and the engagement of the Italian Judiciary in the project. In 2020, exchange programmes were affected by the healthcare emergency, while workshop activities were not affected, thanks to the use of new technologies. For each short-term, specialised, and trainers exchange done in one year, an equal number of European magistrates were hosted in Italy across the offices of the Courts of appeal, Court of Cassation, and the School premises, which were possible in collaboration with the Gaius network of decentralised trainers.

Table 2 – Exchange Programmes

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Short-term Exchanges	67	80	80	75	78	83	106	71	11	83
Specialised Exchanges	0	0	0	0	9	20	25	22	2	27
Trainers Exchanges	0	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	0	2
Head of courts exchanges	0	0	0	0	4	5	8	7	0	1
Long-term Exchanges	3	0	1	2	3	3	3	3	0	8
Bilateral Exchanges	0	0	0	0	1	7	30	5	2	5
Study Visit	0	10	10	40	42	33	32	33	0	2

Figure 2 – Exchange programme



Blue-Short term; Orange-Specialized; Grey-Trainers; Yellow-Managing positions; Light blue-Long term; Green-Bilateral; Dark blue-Study visit)

3.3. Initial training projects: AIAKOS programme and THEMIS competition

As far as initial training is concerned, the School has taken part in two main projects developed by the Network.

The first is the AIAKOS programme, launched in 2014 by introducing initiatives that already saw the School involved before. The programme constitutes a relevant exchange opportunity for the magistrates and prosecutors involved in the initial training. It provides a space to share opinions and ideas about their national judiciaries, promotes mutual trust, and raises awareness of the European scope of their work. The programme is held four times per year (Spring session, 2 weeks and Fall Session, 2 weeks). It includes a 1-week seminar (in English) organised in a European School for the Judiciary and attended by trainees coming from different EU countries to debate topics related to European and comparative law and the profession of magistrate.

In this way, the Italian magistrates attending the traineeship can participate in the exchange across EU training institutions, while the Italian School hosts European magistrate trainees.

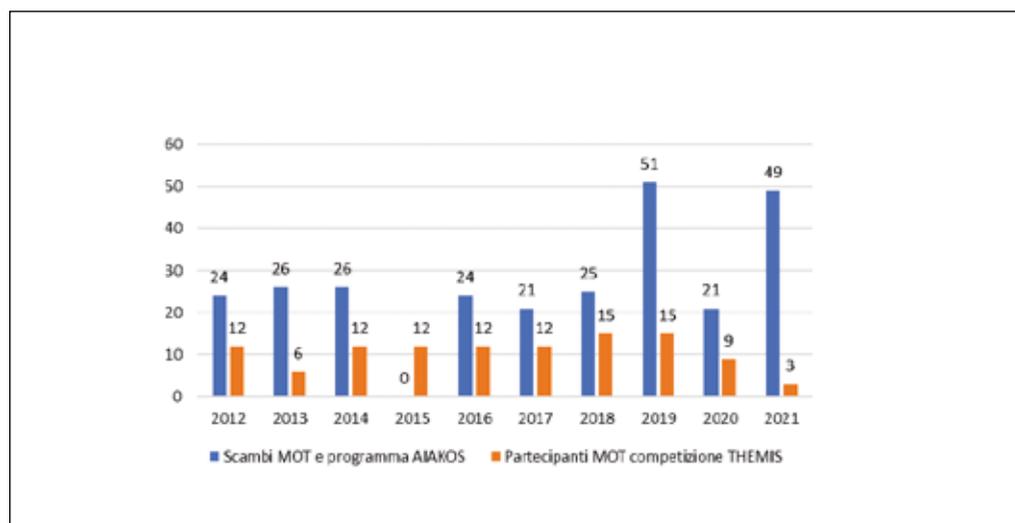
Moreover, the SSM, in line with the commitment undertaken by CSM, has taken part in the THEMIS competition addressed to EU magistrate trainees every

year. The competition involves the participation of ‘national’ teams composed of three magistrate trainees headed by an experienced tutor (magistrate or trainer), called to write an original legal dissertation in English revolving around the judicial cooperation on criminal matters, family law, civil cooperation, ethical matters, and professional ethics, to be presented before an international panel. This event contributes to raising the young magistrates’ awareness of their role as ‘European Magistrates’.

Table 3 – MOTs participation in exchanges, AIAKOS programme, and THEMIS competition

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
MOTs exchanges and AIAKOS programme	24	26	26	0	24	21	25	51	21	49
MOTs participation in the THEMIS competition	12	6	12	12	12	12	15	15	9	3

Figure 3 – MOTs activities



(Blue-MOT and AIAKOS; MOT and THEMIS)

During the pandemic outbreak in 2020 and the first half of 2021, the THEMIS and AIAKOS programmes addressed to magistrate trainees were held online in distance learning.

4. Training on the European Convention of Human Rights: the HELP programme

As for the customary law, the School is part of the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP), supporting the Council of Europe member states in implementing the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) at the national level.

Since 2012, the School has adopted the programmes of the Council of Europe in continuity with the activity started by the CSM.

Starting from 2020, the School prioritised training on the EU Law and the European Convention on Human Rights through four specific actions allowing full access to the HELP programme on behalf of Italian magistrates.

Action 1: Magistrates involved in initial training

The trainees took part in specific introductory courses on the European Court of Human Rights Convention and case law.

The first training course was held from 4 to 8 May 2020 and involved 250 magistrate trainees. The course aimed at helping magistrates become familiar with the Convention and the Strasbourg Court by offering them two HELP modules in English in distance learning: the first was an introductory module on the Court and the Convention. At the same time, the second focused on privacy and data protection.

The second edition, held between 5 and 9 July 2021, involved 300 magistrate trainees.

Action 2: Distribution of the HELP courses catalogue

The School sent to all 9,000 ordinary magistrates, including those involved in an initial training course, and 4,500 honorary magistrates a communication explaining the HELP programme and its objectives and a set of guidelines for creating an account to access classes and the catalogue of courses in Italian.

News on the HELP programme is also included in a dedicated section within the SSM Newsletter.

Action 3: School trainers' training

On 26 June 2020, an online seminar was held in partnership with the Council of Europe to introduce the HELP programme and its employability across local training activities. The potential of a standard format has been analysed across several Courts of Appeal. This subject was resumed over the annual course addressed to the trainers and held between 20 and 22 October 2021.

Action 4: Continuous Training

In 2020, two online courses were held on Preventing radicalisation and the Fundamental Principles of Human Rights in the Biomedical field.

In 2021, Italian Magistrates have been involved in four training courses on the following topics: fundamental principles of Human Rights in the Biomedical field; Asylum and ECHR; Judicial Ethics; international cooperation on criminal matters.

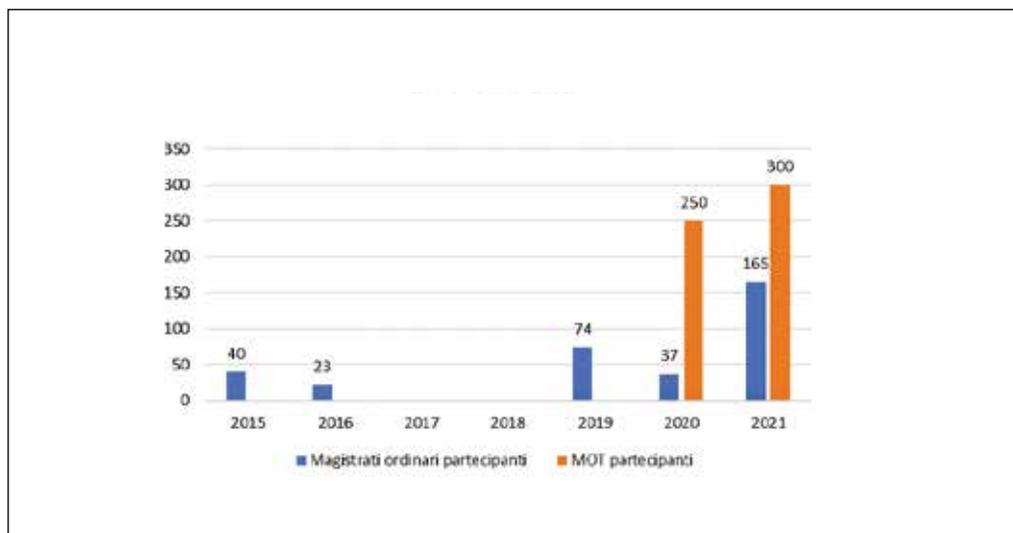
Table 4 – Training courses organised by the School in partnership with the HELP unit of the Council of Europe:

2015
1. “Family Law and Human Rights”: 20 participants
2. “Business and Human Rights”: 20 participants
2016
1. Asylum Rights and European Convention of Human Rights: 23 participants
2019
1. Radicalisation Prevention: 36 participants
2. Migrant and Refugee Minors: 38 participants
2020
1. Radicalisation Prevention: 11 participants
2. Key principles of Human Rights in the Biomedical field: 26 participants
3. Traineeship for magistrate trainees, Introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Strasbourg Court: 250 participants
2021
1. Key principles of Human Rights in the Biomedical field: 40 participants
2. Asylum Rights and European Convention of Human Rights: 45 participants
3. Judicial Ethics: 45 participants
4. International Cooperation on Criminal Matters: 35 participants
5. Traineeship for magistrate trainees, Introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Strasbourg Court: 300 participants

Table 5 – Attendance of the HELP courses of the Council of Europe

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Attending Ordinary Magistrates	40	23	0	0	74	37	165
Attending MOTs						250	300

Figure 4 – European Council Help Courses



The implementation of the said actions, combined with the commitment of the National Bar Association, brought an increase in the number of Italian users registered on the HELP platform that went from 2,100 users in April 2020 to 4,609 users in October 2020 (launch of the first course on bioethics) and up to 7,296 in May 2021. As a result, Italy ranked second, right after France, among all EU countries.

5. Projects co-funded by the European Commission

As an autonomous public entity, like the Ministry of Justice and the Superior Council of the Judiciary, the School was included under the list of public administrations entitled to apply to calls for international projects independently.

Since the end of 2015, the School, as a co-beneficiary or associated partner, regularly takes part in multi-year transnational training and research projects on civil and criminal judicial cooperation or training on EU law and human rights, along with other Schools for the Judiciary, academies, universities, or research entities of other EU countries.

The projects envisage several research activities, case-law collection, and analysis, seminars and training courses in distance learning, preparation of handbooks, guidelines, collection of good practices, and operating

protocols. The project activities involve Italian Magistrates having a specific field of expertise.

Moreover, the SSM has held national courses included in the projects and the continuous training programmes; it has also coordinated local activities, allowing hundreds of Italian magistrates to participate in project training activities taught in Italian.

2016-2017 Projects

Victims and Corporations, on restorative justice, coordinated by Università Cattolica di Milano in partnership with the Max Planck Institute of Luxembourg, Institute of Criminology of the University of Leuven, and the Italian Association of the victims of asbestos and their families. Participants: 79 in 2017.

Actiones¹², on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU across different judicial fields, coordinated by the Fiesole European University Institute (EUI) in cooperation with the Croatian Judicial Academy, the University of Parma, the University of Amsterdam, the Romanian School for the Judiciary (NIM), the National Association of Romanian Lawyers, the University of Ljubljana, the Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona, the University of Uppsala. Participants: 13 in 2016, 3 in 2017.

EUFam's (*Planning the future of cross-border families: a path through coordination*)¹³, on family law, coordinated by the University of Milan in partnership with the Max Planck Institute of Luxembourg, Ruprecht-Karls of Heidelberg, the University of Osijek, the University of Studies of Verona, the University of Valencia, Italian Lawyers' Association for people, family and minors. Participants: 10 in 2016; 2 in 2017.

Bruxelles II Regulation, coordinated by the French School for the Judiciary (ENM) in cooperation with the Montesquieu Forum, the University of Bordeaux and the Romanian School for the Judiciary (NIM). Participants: 10 in 2017.

2017-2018 Projects

Re-Jus (*Road.m.ap to European effective Justice*)¹⁴, on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, coordinated by the University of Trento in cooperation with the University of Versailles Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines, the

¹² <https://www.eui.eu/Projects/CentreForJudicialCooperation/Projects/ACTIONES/ACTIONESplatform>

¹³ <http://www.eufams.unimi.it/>

¹⁴ <https://www.rejus.eu/>

Polish Research Institute Instytut Nauk Prawnych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, the University of Amsterdam, the Spanish Council of the Judiciary (Consejo General del Poder Judicial), the Romanian School for the Judiciary (NIM), the Croatian and Slovenian Judicial Academy Pravosudna Akademija, Ministrstvo, Pravosodje Republika Slovenije and the Judicial Studies Committee of the Irish Judiciary. Participants: 4 in 2017; 74 in 2018.

Judging the Charter, on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, coordinated by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights of Vienna, in cooperation with the ISGI-CNR, Institute for International Legal Studies of Roma, the Austrian and Croatian Judicial Academies and two research institutes from Greece and Poland. Participants: 160 in 2017.

2018-2020 Projects

E-NACT (*e-learning National Active Charter Training*), on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, coordinated by the Centre for Judicial Cooperation (RSCAS) of Fiesole in cooperation with the ULB – the Free University of Brussels, the Croatian Judicial Academy, the University of Parma, the University of Lisbon, the National Association of Romanian Lawyers, the University of Ljubljana and the University Pompeu Fabra of Barcelona. Participants: 8 in 2018; 93 in 2019.

TRAI **TRAINING**, on preventing the risk of radicalisation among prisons and families. The Italian Ministry of Justice leads the project in partnership with the SSM, the Ministry of the Interior, the University l'Orientale of Naples, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, the International Superior Institute of Criminal Sciences, the Belgian School for the Judiciary (IGO-IFJ), the University of Studies of Padova. Participants: 12 in 2019.

CYBER-TERRORISM, on the use and misuse of cyberspace and online communication tool exercised by terror organisations. The Belgian School for the Judiciary (IGO-IFJ) coordinates the project in partnership with the French School for the Judiciary (ENM), the Dutch School for the Judiciary, the Bulgarian School for the Judiciary, the Estonian and Polish Prosecutor General's Offices. This activity involves EU magistrates and officers working in law enforcement and intelligence. Participants: 11 in 2021.

2019-2021 Projects

EU-RMPP (*EU cross-border matrimonial and registered partnerships proceedings: EU regulations and e-learning*), on the enforcement of the EU Regulation 2016/1103 implementing strengthened cooperation in the field of jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and implementation of sentences concerning matrimo-

nial property regimes, and the EU Regulation 2016/1104 implementing strengthened collaboration in the field of jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, and implementation of rulings concerning the property consequences of registered partnerships. The project, envisaging one section to be held in distance learning, is coordinated by the French School for the Judiciary (ENM) in cooperation with the Belgian School for the Judiciary (IGO-IFJ), the Italian Notaries Public Foundation, and the International Council of Belgium Notaries Public. Participants: 8 in 2019.

Fricore (*Fundamental Rights In Courts and Regulation*)¹⁵, on the application of EU Law – in the light of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union – towards consumers, immigration, health and non-discrimination, considering the impact of digital technologies on vulnerable people. The project is coordinated by the University of Trento in partnership with the Instytut Nauk Prawnych Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Polish Research Institute on Fundamental Rights), the University of Versailles Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines, the University of Groningen, the Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona, the Coimbra University, and the Bruno Kessler Foundations. Participants: 6 in 2020; 4 in 2021.

EJNita (*EJN – Italian Network: building bridges*). Italian project coordinated by the Italian Ministry of Justice in collaboration with the National Council of Notaries Public, the University of Ferrara, and the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. The project aims to improve the links across the European Justice Network (EJN) on civil and commercial matters, applying the Resolution of the Council No. 2001/470/EC issued on 28 May 2011. The project saw the creation of the “Aldricus Portal”¹⁶, addressed to legal professionals – magistrates, lawyers, notaries public, consular officers, registrars, etc. – dealing with international civil case law. Participants: 223 in 2021.

RE-JUSTICE (*Judicial training in Restorative Justice*), on restorative justice, coordinated by the University of Lovanio, in partnership with the European Forum for Restorative Justice (Belgian Institute), the University of Madrid, the Spanish CSM (Consejo General del Poder Judicial), the Greek Research Institute Aristotelio Panepistemio of Thessaloniki, the Greek School for the Judiciary, the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan, the Belgian School for the Judiciary (IGO-IFJ) and the European Judicial Training Network. Participants 15 in 2020 and 20 in 2021.

¹⁵ <https://www.fricore.eu/>

¹⁶ <https://aldricus.giustizia.it/>

2020-2022 Projects

TRIAL (*Trust, Independence, Impartiality, Accountability*), on the Rule of Law, coordinated by the European University Institute of Fiesole (EUI) in cooperation with the Belgian School for the Judiciary (IGO-IFJ), the University of Florence, the Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona, the University of Ljubljana, the INPRIS Polish Research Institute, the University of Maastricht, the Romanian National Lawyers' Union, the University of Lisbon, the University of Gdansk, the ELTE Research Institute of Budapest. Participants: 12 in 2021.

EFE (*Evidence for Environment*), on environmental law, coordinated by the French School for the Judiciary (ENM) in cooperation with the Belgian School for the Judiciary (IGO-IFJ), the Bulgarian School for the Judiciary, the Spanish General Council of the Judiciary (Consejo General del Poder Judicial). Participants: 13 in 2021.

JUSTFREE (*Justice and freedom of expression*), on freedom of expression, coordinated by the French School for the Judiciary (ENM) in cooperation with the Belgian School for the Judiciary (IGO-IFJ), the Polish School for the Judiciary, the Spanish General Council of the Judiciary (Consejo General del Poder Judicial) and the French Training School for Lawyers. Participants: 13 in 2021.

CCE (*Court Coordinators in European Law*). The project addresses the need for shared, advanced training on EU Law for EU judicial coordinators (CCE) through legal seminars about the latest developments on EU Fundamental Rights, preliminary ruling, and EU citizenship matters. The project will provide a platform to exchange good practices, information, and knowledge and create links between the CEEs of the Member States with active CCE networks. The training course is coordinated by ERA in collaboration with the Dutch Training Centre for the Judiciary (SSR), the Bulgarian National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the Hungarian Training Institute (NOJ), the Polish School for Judicial Training (KSSiP), and the Spanish School for the Judiciary (*Escuela Judicial*). Participants: 17 in 2021.

EPPO (*European Public Prosecutor's Office*). The project aims to train legal professionals across EU member states to work with the European Prosecutor's Office by sharing legal documents and training activities offered to national prosecutors, investigating magistrates, and defence operators in 2021 and 2022. ERA coordinates it in partnership with the Judicial Training Institutions of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, and Greece. Participants: 17 in 2021.

2022-2024 Projects

In 2021, the consortia working with the School were awarded three projects funded by the European Commission.

CCE2 (*Court Coordinators in European Law, Second edition*). The second edition of the project on Court Coordinators organised by ERA.

INSOLVENCY II on insolvency law and the EU Directive 2019/1023 issued by the EU Parliament and the Council on 20 June 2019 regarding preventive restructuring frameworks, discharge of debt and disqualifications, and measures to increase the efficiency of procedures concerning restructuring, insolvency, and discharge of debt and amending Directive (EU) 2017/1132 (Directive on restructuring and insolvency.) Coordinated by the French School for the Judiciary (ENM).

VICTI (*The place of victims in criminal proceedings with a substantial number of victims*) on criminal proceedings with a significant number of victims. These activities will start in 2022. Coordination by the French School for the Judiciary (ENM).

6. International Cooperation. Activities related to Institution building projects co-financed by the EU.

In the framework of international cooperation, the School has activated a stable partnership with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECD) and a collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, also supported by an international round table established by the CSM.

In 2015, SSM was awarded three multi-year projects in international cooperation, addressed to improving judicial institutions across non-EU Countries. The projects are co-funded by the EU in the scope of enlargement (Serbia) or neighbouring policies (Tunisia).

The projects, launched in 2016, ended in 2018:

- Twinning project with Tunisia, “*Appui à la formation des personnels de justice*”, aimed to “Provide Judicial Staff Training Support” in partnership with the Italian and French Ministries of Justice and the French School for the Judiciary (ENM). The project aimed at strengthening the independence of Tunisian Magistrates and the justice effectiveness in the country. The Italian and Tunisian Schools ratified a cooperation agreement at the end of the activities.
- Twinning project with Tunisia, “*Renforcement des capacités du Ministère de justice, des Droits de l’Homme et de la Justice transitionnelle (MJDHJT)*”, in

concert with the Italian and Spanish Ministries of Justice, aimed at improving the powers of the Tunisian Ministry of Justice and strengthening the protection of Human Rights in Tunisia.

- Twinning project with Serbia, “*Prevention and Fight Against Corruption*”, held in partnership with the Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC) and the Spanish General Prosecutor’s Office to improve the effectiveness of the Serbian anti-corruption authority. The Italian School for the Judiciary published a handbook on media relationships edited by Massimiliano Belli from the International Department.

The School, flanked by the High Council for the Judiciary and the Italian Ministry of Justice, and in partnership with the French, English, and Spanish Ministries of Justice, has taken part in the EU project “Support to the modernisation of Justice – Egypt”, for which the Secretary-General of SSM was appointed *Key Expert*.

Moreover, the activities also included projects in Latin America (one in the Republic of México, on tackling organised crime and laundering of drug trafficking proceeds: sharing experiences; one in Peru, to support EU law enforcement authorities in tackling drug trafficking and organised crime).

As for the Balkans, the SSM partnered with the CSM to implement a project to support the Albanian School for the Judiciary, financed by the Italian Cooperation funds.

7. Collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to provide training courses on the rights of refugees and asylum seekers international protection

SSM has regular collaboration with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its representatives and experts. They have been taking part in continuous training courses provided by SSM on asylum, international protection, and immigration.

The School has established a partnership with the *European Asylum Support Office* (EASO). Every year, ten to fifteen Italian magistrates specialised in immigration issues take part in EASO training courses in Malta; besides, EASO representatives have regularly attended the SSM training courses on international protection.

During the pandemic, all training activities and workshops were held in distance learning.

8. International Organisation for Judicial Training. Collaboration Memoranda. Participation in the Euro-Arab Judicial Training Network (EAJTN)

The School adheres to the International Organisation for Judicial Training (IOJT) and holds relationships with several schools providing judicial training also outside the European Union. This framework invites and hosts delegations from the four continents (including Afghanistan, Albania, China, Brazil, Japan, México, Serbia, and the Schools for the Judiciary of Ukraine, Libya, Montenegro, Tunisia, Vietnam) and undertakes study visits across similar foreign institutions.

SSM has established a close working relationship with the Schools for the Judiciary of Montenegro and Tunisia, ratified by a cooperation and support agreement.

In 2021, the School has also set up agreements with the Armenian Judicial Academy and the Algerian School for the Judiciary. Currently, it is concluding cooperation agreements with the Albanian and Moroccan Schools for the Judiciary and the French School for the Judiciary within the European Union.

On 2 June 2021, a virtual conference was held with the Algerian School of the Judiciary, attended by trainee magistrates from both countries, who were able to compare their knowledge and experience on the fundamental and constitutional principles of their respective judicial systems.

In 2021, the School has also joined the Euro-Arab Judicial Training Network (*Réseau Euro-Arabe de Formation Judiciaire*, REAFJ). Established in 2010 upon the proposal of the French School for the Judiciary (ENM) and its Jordan and Algerian counterpart, the Network (which also includes CSM since 2012) aims to provide joint training for the magistrates working across the Member States. It currently accounts for 13 member states, including Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Kuwait, Tunisia, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Romania, and France.

SECTION 4.

Focus Groups: past, present, and future of the judicial training

SSM Steering Committee (edited by)
School for the Judiciary (SSM)

1. Focus groups. Methodology and contents

Along with the training courses held over ten years of activity, the Steering Committee resolved the creation of focus groups on several sectors having a substantial impact on the School's functions (initial and continuous training for managers, honorary magistrates, distance learning and new technologies), by engaging members of previous Committees, experts and professors belonging to the CSM and School circuit as speakers, tutors, expert and decentralised trainers.

A specific focus group is dedicated to comparative studies. This group involves judicial training representatives with which the Italian institution has extensively collaborated over the years: France (*École nationale de la magistrature*, ENM), Spain (*Escuela Judicial – Consejo General del Poder Judicial*), Belgium (*Institut de formation judiciaire*, IFJ/*Instituut voor gerechtelijke opleiding*, IGO), Netherlands (*Studiecentrum Rechtspleging*, SSR) and Romania (*Institutul National al Magistraturii*, NIM).

The groups provided new contributions to the subject by starting from a quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted on the study presented during the first plenary meeting, later followed by a second thematic session. These meetings also aimed at exchanging ideas to develop the School's activities for the next ten-year period.

Table 1 – Focus Groups

Initial Training
Members of the existing Committee: Costantino De Robbio – Gianluca Grasso – Fabrizio Di Marzio Members of the former Committee: Raffaele Sabato – Nicola Russo Tutors: Cecilia Bernardo – Vincenzo Sgubbi Speakers: Pier Paolo Lanni – Michele Toriello
Continuous Training
Members of the existing Committee: Lorenza Calcagno – Marco Alma Members of the former Committees: Cosimo D'Arrigo – Guglielmo Leo Expert Trainers: Giuseppe Campanelli – Roberto Valli Speakers: Stefano Guizzi – Fabrizio D'Arcangelo
Managers
Members of the existing Committee: Marco Alma – Gabriele Positano Members of the two former Committees: Giuseppe Meliadò – Luisa Napolitano Expert Trainers: Claudio Viazzi – Luca Verzelloni Speakers: Margherita Cassano – Antonio Mura
Honorary Magistrates
Members of the existing Committee: Lorenza Calcagno – Gianluca Grasso Members of the two former Committees: Ernesto Aghina – Nicoletta Giorgi Decentralised Trainers: Giuseppe Tango – Ivana Peila Speakers: Pasquale Serrao D'Aquino
Distance-learning and New Technologies
Members of the existing Committee: Antonella Ciriello – Gabriele Positano Expert Trainers: Maria Cassia – Gian Andrea Chiesi Speakers: Ileana Fedele – Paolo Abbritti
Training: comparative experiences
Workshop internazionale con rappresentanti delle istituzioni di formazione giudiziaria: Francia, Spagna, Belgio, Olanda e Romania Members of the existing Committee: Marco Alma – Gianluca Grasso – Marisaria Maugeri – Claudio Consolo Members of the two former Committees: Giovanna Ichino – Luca Perilli Members from European Schools: Ingrid Dervaux (ENM), Carolina Fons (Escuela), Jos Devos (IGO-IFJ), Joke Halk (SSR), Diana Mihaila (NIM).

2. Points emerged from the focus groups

The thematic sessions were held as seminars featuring an introduction followed by a debate.

After each session, the participants received summary reports containing all the topics discussed in the meeting. A list of the main points that emerged during the sessions is reported below. Some issues have a cross-cutting impact, i.e., the training methodologies implemented during the health emergency, which resulted in the use of new techniques to carry out the sessions.

2.1. Initial Training

The ten-year study and survey on distance learning show a positive trend that started in 2012 and includes the period participants had to attend the training courses in distance-learning modality.

As for the methodology, the study of actual cases and the pragmatic contents of the reports are remarkable.

The group discussion focused on the training course implemented for the initial training, including the general and target periods.

As clarified in the study¹ conducted by the initial training Steering Committee, the discussion aimed to spread the 'know-how'. This resulted in increased case analysis, including the so-called individual reports. This training aims to provide magistrate trainees with a methodological approach through the study of specific cases and dossiers.

The initial training programme aims to train professional jurists but also good case manager able to face court disputes. In this regard, learning how to carry out specific tasks and acquiring expertise with IT devices are fundamental elements.

Moreover, the training provides information on the role of the magistrate by providing a set of contents to counter the risks of bureaucratic drift that can affect the exercise of judicial functions seen as a set of tasks and activities to be

¹ https://www.scuolamagistratura.it/web/portalesm/carosello?p_p_id=P_CAROSELLO_INSTANCE_1hiQYd0ZwACU&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&_P_CAROSELLO_INSTANCE_1hiQYd0ZwACU_javax.portlet.action=dettaglioNotiziaAction&_P_CAROSELLO_INSTANCE_1hiQYd0ZwACU_idNotizia=1625732272219&p_auth=sY9Ouvn7&p_p_lifecycle=0

carried out mechanically. Therefore, the training programme focuses on ethical and professional aspects and the legal system.

The suggestions also included reducing individual lessons in favour of group discussions and debates involving all magistrate trainees. In addition to the previous, the participants also suggested taking part in actual court hearings with the parties' consent instead of recurring to mock trials.

The respondents underlined the effectiveness of the traineeships held in the prisons and the Court of Cassation. In this regard, the school's traineeship office has improved by including new legal profiles to focus on specific matters and carry out traineeships across different institutions (Juvenile Courts, business units, etc.).

The fundamental training function of the drafting exercises carried out at the SSM headquarters and corrected jointly to disseminate and homogeneously share best practices was also highlighted. These are crucial moments to discuss the same case, bringing out divergent approaches and fostering a joint reflection. These aspects cannot be realised during the specific training (at the judicial office), given the mainly individual character of the training activities carried out in the field. The drafting and correction of judicial writings is thus an essential element in general training, regardless of the possible anxieties that their drafting may generate and that should certainly be reduced, emphasising the training aspect rather than the evaluative one. In distance learning, the most difficult part was the drafting of documents and their correction.

Another shared aspect involved prioritising class training and limiting distance learning to specific moments related to the general traineeship. In this regard, the lack of class training might have affected the fact that online courses have been highly appreciated over the last period. Although distance learning was the only applicable approach during the pandemic, it was not as effective as class training. Having direct contact with magistrate trainees is fundamental. Tutors also complained about the limiting nature of distance learning. In this regard, to provide a full analysis of the training held in distance learning (so-called "Kirkpatrick 3" level), the need for an evaluation of training over time also emerged.

The importance of expanding the training content dedicated to extra-legal studies, such as those concerning the psychology of judging, was also highlighted.

Another relevant issue emerged concerning the need to increase coordination with decentralised training programmes in terms of learning and office traineeships, falling within the scope of the CSM, in order to ensure the chronological continuity of the matters discussed.

Moreover, the need to carry out further training activities after taking office also emerges. These could be provided through tutoring activities envisaged by the regulations on initial training appointed by the Judicial Council or by implementing specific courses for magistrates at the early stage of their careers. Among the proposals, there was also the creation of a helpdesk for six months or one year after starting their career path. Magistrate trainees often stay in touch with tutors and professors to discuss job-related issues.

2.2. Continuous Training

In the field of continuous training, the study conducted on the first 10 years of activity underlined the absence of clear division between ‘criminal’, ‘civil’ and ‘general’ training courses. Said issue also affected data collection. CNR researchers divided the lessons based on their names and suggested offering more accurate information about the course curricula and subjects in the future.

The need to share the outcomes of the course assessments with the speakers and the expert trainers to work on the creation of new training programmes was also underlined.

The discussion also focused on the evaluation criteria for courses and, more specifically, speakers since the replies indicated that the forms were not suitable for expressing the evaluation in full.

In this regard, it was noted that many participants failed to complete the evaluation forms.

The possibility of making the compilation of the evaluation forms mandatory to obtain the certificate of attendance was discussed, but this approach did not convince the participants to the discussion.

In this regard, in 2021, the Steering Committee has reviewed the evaluation criteria to allow collecting specific information on the contents of the activity performed and the methodologies used while also providing a global assessment of individual trainers and courses. It is, therefore, essential to make the evaluation done on each course available.

The discussions also revolved around the best moment to ask participants to fill in the evaluation form (at the end of each day, course, or later).

In fact, the need for participants to be adequately informed about the usefulness of filling in the evaluation questionnaires became clear, in the belief that only when participants are put in a position to understand that filling in the questionnaires is not to be considered as an unnecessary bureaucratic frill but is functional to the improvement of the courses, will this motivate them not only to fill in the questionnaires but also to avoid hurried and careless compilation.

In addition to the previous, it was noted that if a trainer scores a low evaluation, the participant who provided said evaluation should also provide a motivation since a numerical value is not enough.

All participants agreed that the evaluation questionnaires distributed to participants should include a question related to the actual effectiveness of the course in relation to the professional activity carried out by the participant.

As for the courses format and implementing methodologies, the data collected in the investigation was analysed along with the pros and cons of distance-learning.

Where possible, if there is a suitable health situation, the participants agree on carrying out the course in class. In class, training was evaluated as more effective in knowledge transfer.

Along with the greater effectiveness of face-to-face communication compared to that provided from remote (through a laptop, or even worse, a mobile screen), it should also be noted that participants pay less attention during distance learning compared to a classroom setting.

This statement is also confirmed because a consistent group of participants (33.4%) declared that they had performed other activities while attending the training courses from home.

The experience of these last two years showed the positive impact of new distance-learning and training methodologies, as they provide easier access to courses, conferences, debates etc., and the impossibility to abandon this unique teaching and exchange dimension. It is, therefore, necessary to think about how to make distance courses more accessible and provide a schedule in line with the implementation times (often connected to the need to inform on legislative and judicial innovations), also according to the number of participants.

Rethinking and adapting distance-learning formats is therefore necessary. Such courses should go beyond a mere reproduction of class lessons to engage participants more. In terms of format, the possibility of carrying out lessons with trainers in a central office connected to multimedia classrooms of different courts or districts was proposed. This approach would reduce transfers, and costs, facilitate the discussion among the groups of participants involved, and improve the focus on the contents of the course by limiting possible distractions (personal or job-related).

The discussion on this topic underlined the following:

- a) Need to assess and adapt the course format and modalities on a case-by-case basis, preventing the use of standard models;
- b) Need to divide the participants into working groups which should include selected participants, mostly regarding high-level specialisation courses, to improve information exchange practices among participants.

Moreover, the possibility to organise specific courses addressed to different professionals by selecting participating magistrates based on their skills and field of work was also evaluated. The courses might be extended to surveillance magistrates, labour magistrates, magistrates in charge of reviews, executions, bankruptcy, etc., to improve the course's accuracy and quality.

In order to improve the course preparedness level (which is one of the main objectives of the School training), the participants should have a homogeneous level of preparedness as a prerequisite for the course to be practical and valuable for their careers.

The course could be more 'tailored' to the participants' learning objectives (providing increased homogeneity among participants in terms of 'cultural background') to ensure the training objectives are met.

Moreover, the different levels of preparedness among individual magistrates should also be considered, thus increasing the number of courses on judicial matters provided to homogeneous groups of participants.

The participants offered several suggestions in relation to the course contents.

Enabling the update of the basic training

Law continuously evolves. The subjects included in the academic curricula, or those studied to pass the examination to work as a magistrate, are

strongly affected by new legislative amendments and the developments in the judicial field, including those at a supranational level (think about the “interpretation on the law”, and, more specifically, the topic of “conforming interpretation”).

To ensure constant updates among students and participants, one should restart from basic law principles and revise them without taking their acquisition for granted. Magistrates can’t keep constantly updated on every legal arrangement; they usually keep up with these new arrangements when they must implement them.

So, before attending a specific course and discussing a particular topic, magistrates should keep up with the latest legal updates connected to it, just as they would do when performing their job on a specific case, by verifying, for example, the last arrests performed by using the last legal arrangements.

This approach inevitably requires part of the course to focus on the basic principles underlying the topics of the course. Given the impossibility of reviewing all primary subjects, each course will only provide those related to the subjects addressed.

Reviewing the assumptions underlying the specific topic to be covered makes it easier to understand the lesson and thus helps to maintain a higher level of attention. If this is not the case, the course participant may be lost and distracted.

Promoting higher preparedness of the judiciary

This objective implies a deep knowledge of judicial matters that can be obtained by a continuous update on the basic legal arrangements (as already highlighted in the previous section). Anyway, this is not enough. The School’s educational offer should strengthen basic knowledge while addressing specific matters and topics: in this regard, each course should thoroughly investigate a particular issue to allow possible publications (as was the case with the *Quaderni* – Notebooks, recently published by SSM).

The analysis of questionnaire data showed that this solution is the most appreciated among the magistrates who responded to the questionnaire. More specifically, 66.5% of respondents stated that “the School should also promote research activities”, while 62.7% of respondents declared that “the School should publish more”.

Implementing courses on extra-judicial matters and increasing the number of speakers specialised in different fields (more specifically, the field of scientific evidence)

Training should include other sectors usually not included in the magistrate curriculum if not spontaneously added by the magistrate. A magistrate lacking the fundamental knowledge to carry out the job does not have a high level of preparedness. In other words, no one can reach a high level of preparedness without having 'complete' knowledge.

Therefore, preparedness stands for professionalism.

Being competent in law is not enough for a magistrate. This role also requires the professional to have the extra-judicial competencies completing the magistrate's professional profile, in other words, the skills needed to do a 'good' job.

Therefore, the School's educational offer should focus on these aspects more and provide magistrates with such knowledge necessary to perform their job to the fullest (i.e., to be a good magistrate, a prepared prosecutor, a skilled surveillance magistrate, etc.). So, for example, a magistrate should know how to use the IT devices and the scientific and technical instruments needed to verify the events of a case. A magistrate should also learn languages and have expertise in technical and scientific language.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the "Questionnaire" shows a high demand to integrate the educational offer through expert speakers or trainers outside of the judicial field. Most of the magistrates who were administered the questionnaire (78.1%) declared that "*the School should make more use of experts as speakers*". The topic also appears in the comments of the interviewees which, on the one hand showed specific appreciation for the presence of peer magistrates "*which are closer and more suitable to meet the educational needs of the participants*", while on the other hand, specifically requested "*to increase the number of experts in extra-judicial matters instead of integrating lawyers and law experts*".

Implementing courses to develop IT competencies among magistrates

IT competencies are crucial for the magistrate who want to use the technical devices provided across judicial offices and get the best of such devices through adequate knowledge of their functions. Given the advanced

level of technicality and complexity, all these functions cannot be learned independently by professionals. The educational offer should, therefore, help master these instruments as quickly as possible. In fact, in 2020, the School designed a course on Microsoft Word in distance learning. The number of enrolled participants was so high that many could not attend the course.

Moreover, as of today, magistrates have evaluated their IT competencies in a specific section of the magistrate evaluation form used by the Judicial Board called “Use of the IT tool” and provided under the “Skill” parameter, assessed before the indicator related to judicial preparedness (“Case-law and legal update”). For this reason, the School needs to provide specific courses and help magistrates acquire and consolidate their IT skills.

The summary report shows that during continuous educational activities, the School only held fifteen courses (from 2013 to 2021) covering all areas – civil, general, and criminal – related to “technology” (expected to be the area involved in the development of IT skills), in other words about 2 courses per year.

Implementing several courses on professional ethics, the legal system, and the ‘models of the magistrate’

Magistrates should be aware of their role. Awareness implies knowing to be part of a body – the judicial body – which is, in turn, part of the State: this is the basic element to prevent a certain degree of individualism (or egocentricity) that we have recorded among our colleagues.

Magistrates should be aware of the duties and limitations of their role and the values underlying it, conduct rules, and principles on which the magistrate role should be founded. This approach does not involve a review of the ethical code but rather a severe and open discussion on the magistrate’s role. This aspect covers both the exercise of the profession and the real meaning of the professional role of magistrates and prosecutors.

We should, therefore, raise awareness of the fact that the feature of independence is a guarantee and a prerogative for the judiciary. Moreover, this feature causes the magistrate to comply with specific duties (impartiality, abstention – in a broad sense – moderation, etc.) that allow complete independence.

Planning courses on the measures to be taken across different trial instances by creating appropriate working groups among colleagues working along with the proceedings “supply chain”

This action aims to improve the predictability and consistency of judicial rulings, thus reducing the number of appeals and the overall duration of the proceedings, to promote fair trials by fostering exchanges among magistrates coming from different offices.

Promoting further recourse to the fundamental rights provided under the Constitution and international regulations

As for the documents related to the courses and the website access, the following proposals have emerged:

- a) Facilitate the enrolment in the instructor register;
- b) Reducing the number of papers submitted for compilation to those in charge of teaching activities;
- c) Improving document collection;
- d) Implementing database entries (by adding written documents and the courses video recordings), by also including documents drafted in the previous years;
- e) Facilitating hyperlink research within the documents uploaded on the School’s website;
- f) Enabling third parties to access the course documents (i.e., trainees, lawyers, university professors, etc.);
- g) Following up and improving the number of publications made by the School.

2.3. Managers’ training

As for the managers’ training, the report suggests broadening the scope of educational activities offered to ‘governing’ bodies and other categories: middle-managers, administrative directors [non magistrates], ordinary magistrates, and initial training.

In this regard, a proposal was made to introduce the subject of court organisation within initial training and continuous education courses to promote joint interest in the organisation of judicial offices. Managing an office is not an indi-

vidual task; it implies engaging all those who can provide their contribution in terms of proposals and expertise.

The organisational training brings the managers closer to the employees and helps people understand management-related issues. In this way, the magistrates interested in occupying managerial roles can assess whether they are suitable.

Extending the courses to other professionals would allow the creation of a complex system involving magistrates as a group and not detached units.

As for the administrative directors, it was noted that the course on organisation should cover some specific sectors: i.e., the macro sector of administrative activities, performed by the manager; the industry dealing with the management relations with social parties, the High Council for the Judiciary, and the Ministry of Justice; local stakeholders. This cultural background is to be added to the traditional organisation-related topics.

Engaging administrative directors in managing magistrates' training enables them to share their roles and values.

As for the recipients of the courses, to increase the involvement of magistrates with mid-managerial tasks in the decision-making procedures of administrative magistrates and mitigate the gap between the two roles, a suggestion was advanced to hold courses for both professionals.

The middle-manager magistrate is still employed in the judicial field. This role shares some managerial tasks with the magistrates at the apex of courts and prosecutors' offices and should participate in the office organisation, i.e., the meetings defined under Article 47 *quater* No. 12 of 1941, as a functional element for the office's healthy performance.

As for the new middle-manager magistrate, for which no specific course exists – i.e., the course specified under Article 26 *bis* of Legislative Decree No. 26 of 2006 –, a fixed course should be organised for newly appointed magistrates (i.e., deputy prosecutors, whose role is often not defined).

The group discussion members also underlined the need to increase or provide regular contributions from non-judicial speakers. They noted that the number of experts has reduced over time.

The group found it necessary to employ organisational experts to teach this kind of subject. They would base their lessons on criteria different from those used by magistrates with managerial tasks.

A central element lies in the methodology, which is complex and should be taught by the organisational expert. Therefore, external contributors are more than necessary.

Using a new language, that of organisational analysts, is also very relevant. The use of practical business language in place of the judicial one when talking about the organisation was very appreciated.

Common agreement was reached on the need to avoid wasting time on theoretical lessons.

As for the course addressed to the aspirants to managing positions, the group highlighted a weakness due to the range of functions, since offices are dealing with entirely different functions, from surveillance to minors, while the course pursuant to Art. 26 *bis* of Legislative Decree No. 26 of 2006 is addressed to all potential candidates interested in judicial and prosecutorial functions of first and second instance. As provided for by the primary sources, the course allows for preliminary information on the matters which should be studied in second-level courses designed for aspirants who become managers, to be carried out in conjunction with the High Council for the Judiciary suggested by the second Steering Committee.

They also noted the opportunity to record the most critical speeches on central matters that can be used (in asynchronous mode) during refreshment courses provided to the managers.

As for the session's structure, the group suggested maintaining at least two afternoon sessions for the test, which duration cannot be further reduced.

Other criticalities emerged that the High Council for the Judiciary often fails to mention the course, its implementation, and the exam evaluation in its resolutions. In fact, the exams carried out at home show a decline in quality, which was recorded over time. The final exam is regarded as pointless, thus affecting the course credibility under Article 26 *bis* of Legislative Decree No. 26 of 2006.

2.4. Honorary Magistrates Training

As far as the training provided to honorary magistrates is concerned, the analysis of data related to the organisation, quality, and value of the courses offered by the School over the first ten years of activity shows an alignment with the evaluation provided by magistrate trainees and permanent magistrates. However, a different aspect emerged from the questionnaires – answered by 301 honorary magistrates out of 1339 interviewees – in relation to distance learning. Compared to magistrate trainees and permanent magistrates, honorary magistrates expressed a preference for the courses held in a videoconference

and a higher appreciation for video-recorded lessons. This preference might result from the possibility to attend the classes avoiding transfers, resulting in economic benefits.

Given the appreciation shown by honorary magistrates for distance learning courses, the group discussion members considered creating two educational paths, one dedicated to permanent magistrates – to be carried out in class – and another on specific matters addressed to honorary magistrates – to be carried out in distance learning. This experience shows the interest of honorary magistrates in taking part in specific educational activities and other side courses probably related to other professional activities performed by some of them.

As expressed in the questionnaire, the preference for distance learning might lead to implementing this approach for main courses and leave a more practically oriented scheme for decentralised offices.

The group highlighted how honorary magistrates have always shown appreciation for activities that meet their specific educational needs and how the School's educational offer should compensate for the lack of adequate offers across its decentralised offices. Although the main courses addressed to honorary magistrates still play a vital role, the need emerged to revive the activities across decentralised training offices. The attempt to unify training at a decentralised level, both for magistrates and honorary magistrates, resulted from the unification of the structures formerly provided for the training of honorary magistrates with those of decentralised training. This combination was intended to broaden dialogue and allow a constructive exchange of experiences. But this approach has not so far generally produced adequate training. The difficulties within the decentralised training structures stem from the limited space reserved for the honorary judiciary and the participation of honorary trainers.

The need to provide general guidelines applying at all local levels – specifically for the traineeships addressed to honorary magistrates also emerged.

The group noted that some traineeship activities dedicated to honorary magistrates, such as the guided drafting of judicial writings, might also be extended to magistrates already appointed.

Another issue results from failure to access the permanent magistrates' database. Many honorary magistrates stated that they found it difficult to enter the School's website and sign in to the courses as they could not find their

justice and School accounts. A solution to this problem might be creating access points to the School databases for honorary magistrates at a decentralised level.

An executive meeting will be held with decentralised offices and honorary trainers to discuss the meaning of shared training and effectively integrate the local training provided to honorary magistrates, thus solving some of the issues recorded in various districts.

In conclusion, the group strongly agreed – also based on the data that emerged – on establishing training for honorary magistrates featuring different methodology and addressees by providing:

- Participation in the courses offered to permanent magistrates to promote an exchange of experiences involving all magistrates on general matters (i.e., proceedings);
- Proposing specific distance learning courses for honorary magistrates to address the subject-matters they are called to deal with;
- Promoting effective integration of the training offered to permanent and honorary magistrates at a decentralised level could be done by providing practical courses on educational tools such as guided discussions, working groups, and meetings to draft legal measures.

2.5. Distance Learning and new Technologies

Only 10% of all magistrates replied to the questionnaire on distance learning provided by the School. Although the unexpected scarce participation to the survey, some interesting ideas have emerged.

As for the relation between traditional and distance learning, a polarisation emerges between those who wish to return to the classroom traditional learning approach (preferred modality) and those who do not want to relinquish the flexibility allowed by distance learning. These two positions can be summarised as follows.

Traditional classroom learning cannot be replaced, as it allows students a total immersion without distractions, which are instead common in distance learning. In other words, traditional classroom lessons are more practical to build a job network.

On the other hand, distance learning is more in line with the participants' private and working life, enabling them to study while being close to their families and jobs. Moreover, with this approach, participants can attend several courses at

once, watch them at any moment and benefit from teaching materials and video recordings.

A blended solution combining distance and class learning was proposed without obtaining unanimous consent; however, the comments and suggestions provided show more complex positions worth considering as they combine positive aspects of both approaches. The economic benefit resulting from distance learning, for example, cannot be ignored and makes it an irreplaceable tool. However, it needs to be improved in terms of subjects taught, methodology used, and specialised trainers' choice.

Therefore, the respondents did not express critical opinions on distance or class courses. Still, they underlined how blending these two modalities within the same cycle of lessons might be unsuccessful.

The members of the group discussion agree on these outcomes.

As for the *blended* courses, the group highlighted that the blended modality is quite complicated, and distance learning courses should be separated from class courses, thus providing the entire course in the same modality.

In some cases, distance learning proved successful, as in the Court of Cassation, for example, where it allowed an unimaginably high number of judges to attend the lessons. In this regard, distance learning was privileged. Access to courses was made easier through a link enabling the participants to take part in the course without interacting with other participants (i.e., the SSM and Cassation webinars or the YouTube channel).

Distance and asynchronous learning can also meet the needs of participants who cannot attend classroom lessons (i.e., due to healthcare problems).

On the other hand, the School has tested the asynchronous learning mode with significant interventions that were widely spread, i.e., the contribution made with PCT information clips and national and EU databases.

The respondents underlined how cognitive and relational profiles can be limited in distance learning to support class learning, unless other exchanges among participants are promoted. Among the examples, e-learning courses feature a one-month e-mail exchange moderated by an expert tutor and a day together to discuss and reach a conclusion on the topics previously addressed. Class learning also leaves room for social moments (dinner, lunch) that allow participants' discussions and exchanges.

The group admitted that distance learning affects the magistrates' sense of belonging to the community, as remote training exacerbates the trend of magistrates being monads.

Classroom lessons are undoubtedly the best way to convey the cultural and social aspects and an organised knowledge and set of skills, which are taught during a two or three-day cycle of lessons held in class. When implemented, the blended approach affects these aspects and undermines those who are not in class, thus resulting in second-level participation.

The group also highlighted the effectiveness of distance learning in offering updates on legal innovations or judicial changes, which participants can access through short online sessions. Again, the same applies to relevant topics that raised magistrates' interest but could not be addressed due to organisational limitations.

The solution proposed implies shaping the educational offer based on the topic addressed and the target participants, thus allowing both approaches to be implemented.

As for the format, the group also stressed that classroom lessons require the instructor to be present in class to ensure effective communication. In fact, the speakers who joined class lessons via videoconference received less favourable assessments.

As for distance learning management and the scarce engagement of the participants, 30% of the respondents reported they were able to do other tasks while attending online courses. This aspect raises concerns, as the students should pay specific attention to the contents of the course.

To ensure higher engagement and effective participation among those attending courses in distance learning, the group underlined how dividing participants into smaller groups might be useful to improve their attention and make their involvement less formal and superficial. Small groups can improve the engagement level of the audience.

This consideration finds an agreement among participants, who specify that distance learning should be limited in duration and address specific topics. Anyway, dividing into small groups is not always possible when addressing actual case studies in the field of case law and in terms of proceedings, so, in this case, the presentation of the educational content (i.e., slides and question time) should be organised to promote more engagement among participants.

Small groups can work on a specific case to engage everyone in discussions about a given topic; the expert trainer or tutor plays a fundamental role for small groups and requires the instructor to be proactive, effective, and well-informed about the specific case to avoid interruptions during the debate.

Effective engagement implies previous knowledge of the discussion topics to be addressed during the lesson.

Shared consensus was reached on the format to use in distance learning, which cannot be a mere reproduction of classroom courses.

In conclusion, the contributions provided by participants to the group discussion suggest that blended training should be carefully organised, including lessons held in distance learning.

Unquestionably, specific and relevant presentations on some topics allow asynchronous training, also offered to colleagues who could not attend the course but might need such content. Analogously, the added value of classroom training lies in the relational and human aspects reflected in the exchange among participants and a sense of belonging to the magistrate community. Therefore, a fair balance between new technologies and the magistrates' sense of belonging – promoted through classroom lessons – should be reached to meet unique educational needs without abandoning distance learning opportunities.

In addition to the previous, an administrative aspect also exists which deals with the course implementation: i.e., checking attending participants, providing an attendance certificate, limiting the number of sessions in a course, etc.

2.6. Training: compared experiences

The group discussion on compared experiences included the former and current Steering Committees that established international relations with some European training institutions that have partnered with the School in the European Judicial Training Network framework. These institutions are those of France (ENM), Spain (Escuela), Belgium (IGO-IFJ), the Netherlands (SSR), and Romania (NIM).

The group discussion emphasized the light organisational structure of the Italian School, which consists of a permanent Steering Committee with administrative and teaching functions. The group also focused on future challenges for the judicial training institutions in the light of new technologies and the pandemic. The last period allowed the discovery of the potential of technology (virtual classrooms, *podcasting*, video lessons, etc.) on the one hand. Still, it underlined the irreplaceability of classroom lessons on the other hand. Meanwhile, the School reviewed its activities based on strategical sectors, such as the field of research and documentation. However, the future envisages closer and improved collaboration with other European Schools.

The ENM entirely agrees with the observation made by the Italian School and underlines that a similar approach is currently being implemented in France. The data collected there shows the need to combine distance and classroom learning models. Therefore, new formats might be adopted that enable participants to attend online lessons before the classroom event, benefiting from the greater flexibility of distance learning modalities.

The NIM underlined the excellent results obtained by the Italian School across Europe thanks to the work and efforts of the School members.

The *Escuela* highlighted how classroom lessons better address the needs of initial trainees, mainly at a methodological level, as the training of new magistrates should envisage on-field experiences, workshops, and the assessment of knowledge and attitudes. Distance learning can be used effectively where there are knowledge gaps among participants, such as in the Iberic-American Network, which includes institutions from Europe and South America. The Spanish magistrates show a certain reluctance to attend online events. They spend many hours before their laptop and would prefer to have a direct confrontation with their peers during a classroom lesson. Blended distance and classroom teaching was a new experience also among trainers.

The need to carry out initial classroom training to develop skills that cannot be learned from books met the consensus of all.

The pandemic forced the Belgian School (IGO-IFJ) to fully rethink distance learning and equip with the resources needed to use new technologies. New technologies were mostly used to transfer knowledge, as the interaction among participants was quite limited with this approach.

During the discussion, the group noted how contents play a fundamental role while new technologies are a tool and not an aim per se. However, using new technologies allows for better results and helps face the current challenges with an innovative approach. For example, using new technologies might be very helpful to discuss legislative innovations, as proved by the training provided in Romania on new legislative codes made available in streaming on the School's website.

As for the contents, the group discussed the need to increase training on extra-judicial matters, such as judicial ethics, the magistrate profession, soft skills to deal with the victims of crimes, institutional communication, and promoting the exchange of experiences. Another crucial topic is the protection of the Rule of law, which some EU member states have endangered, and needs to be addressed and promoted by the European magistrates.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire – “Distance Learning provided by the School for the Judiciary: the magistrates’ opinions”

S0. Introduction

This questionnaire is intended to collect data to assess the courses held in distance learning in 2020 and 2021. The questionnaire refers to the courses offered to initial trainees, permanent magistrates, aspirants to managing positions, and honorary magistrates and the digital teaching materials recently introduced by the School. This questionnaire does not investigate decentralised and international training courses.

The questionnaire is anonymous. Data will be analysed in an aggregated form. The expected time to fill in the questionnaire is 10 minutes.

S1. Context Data¹

D1. Qualification/Title: *[this is a mandatory question required to complete the questionnaire]*

- Ordinary Magistrate
- Ordinary Magistrate Trainee (MOT)
- Honorary Magistrate

D2. Year of entry into service:

- _____ [write the year]

D3. Current duties: *[Question EXCLUSIVELY addressed to Honorary Magistrates]*

- Justice of the Peace
- Auxiliary Judge at the Court of Appeal
- Honorary Judge at the First Instance Court
- Honorary Assistant Prosecutor
- Other (please specify) _____

¹ The questions numbering reflects the encryption used for data processing.

- D4. Ministerial Decree enforced for the appointment: *[Question EXCLUSIVELY addressed to Ordinary Magistrate Trainees]*
- Ministerial Decree of 12 February 2019
 - Ministerial Decree of 18-07-2019 and Ministerial Decree of 03-01-2020
 - Ministerial Decree of 2 March 2021
- D5. Current duties: *[Question EXCLUSIVELY addressed to Ordinary Magistrates and Ordinary Magistrate Trainees (MOTs)] [more than one answer is allowed]*
- Ordinary Civil Law Judge
 - Business Law Judge
 - Bankruptcy Law Judge
 - Enforcement Judge
 - Immigration Law Judge
 - Labour Law Judge
 - Family Law Judge
 - Judge of the Juvenile Court
 - Criminal Law Judge
 - Preliminary Investigations Judge/Preliminary Hearing Judge (GIP/GUP)
 - Inmates Surveillance Judge
 - Public Prosecutor
 - Public Prosecutor for Juvenile
 - Magistrate currently not performing court or public prosecutor functions (*fuori ruolo*)
 - Other (please specify) _____
- D5bis. Do you carry out managing or semi-managing duties? *[Question EXCLUSIVELY addressed to Ordinary Magistrates]*
- Yes, I perform top managing functions
 - Yes, I perform middle-management functions
 - No, I do not perform top managing or middle – management functions
- D6. Current place of work: *[Question EXCLUSIVELY addressed to Ordinary Magistrates and Ordinary Magistrate Trainees (MOTs)]*
- Court of Cassation
 - General Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Cassation
 - Court of Appeal
 - Public Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Appeal
 - First Instance Court (Tribunale)
 - Public prosecutor's Office at the First instance Court
 - Inmates Surveillance Court

- Juvenile Court
- Public prosecutor's Office at the Juvenile Court
- Other (please specify) _____

D7. District of jurisdiction:
 [list with districts in alphabetic order]

D8. Year of birth:
 _____ [write the year]

D9. Gender:
 Female
 Male
 Rather not say

S2. Attendance of distance learning courses by videoconference

D10. Over 2020 and 2021, the School offered several training courses by videoconference. We would like to ask you if you have taken part in these courses or not: *[this is a mandatory question required to complete the questionnaire]*
 Yes, I attended distance learning courses by videoconference
 No, I have not attended distance learning courses by videoconference

S3. Assessment of distance courses by videoconference *[this section is addressed to those who replied "yes" to the previous question]*

D11. How would you rate the distance learning courses by videoconference that you have attended from 1 to 10? Please indicate the assessment only for the courses you have had direct experience in *[Question ONLY for ordinary magistrates]*.
 SQ1 Permanent Training Courses 1 _____ 10
 SQ2 Training Courses for aspirants for top managing positions 1 _____ 10

D11bis. How would you rate the distance learning courses by videoconference that you have attended from 1 to 10? Please indicate the assessment only for the courses you have had direct experience in *[Question ONLY for ordinary magistrate trainees (MOTs)]*
 SQ1 Initial MOTs Training Courses 1 _____ 10
 SQ2 Permanent Training Courses 1 _____ 10

- D18. When you experienced technical issues, did the School offer you adequate support?
- Yes, the School support was satisfactory
 - Partly, the School support might have been more effective
 - No, the School support was inadequate
 - The School could not solve that kind of issue

- D19. We would now like to ask you to evaluate the **organisational aspects of distance learning courses**, indicating your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW/ I CAN NOT ANSWER
1. it was easy to register for the courses through the portal	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
2. The overall support provided by the Secretary's office during the courses was effective	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
3. The courses assessment forms allowed me to express my assessment in full	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
4. An help desk should be created to carry out all administrative procedures	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
5. I had problems filling in the form to certify the course attendance	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
6. The administrative procedures connected to the courses are effective	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
7. I had to contact the School Secretary's office, and I was satisfied with the service provided	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
8. Overall, the course requires to fill in too many forms	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

S3.2. Teaching methodological aspects

- D20. We would now like to ask you for an evaluation of the teaching methodology adopted in the courses you have followed at a distance by videoconference, indicating your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW / I CAN NOT ANSWER
1. The use of slides made it easier to follow the presentations	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
2. The use of chat during the lesson was beneficial	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
3. The videoconferencing sessions allowed good interaction with the lecturers	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
4. The discussion in the working groups was the most interesting part of the programme	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
5. In the plenary sessions, little space was given to the discussion	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
6. The presentations of the plenary speakers using distance learning were too long	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
7. I was able to do other things while attending the distance learning course	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
8. The study of concrete cases and their discussion was a pivotal learning moment	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
9. The quality of the relationships at a distance is generally lower than what we are used to in presence	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

D21. How did you interact during the course? *[more than one answer allowed]*

- I did not interact, I just followed
- I took the floor in audio-video
- I interacted via Teams chat
- I interacted via email
- I interacted via group chat (WhatsApp or other social media)

D22. —

- S4. Reasons for non-participation in videoconference distance learning courses**
[Section reserved for those who have NOT participated in initial, continuous, managing aspirant, and honorary magistrate training courses via videoconferencing distance learning]
- D23. If you did not participate in the videoconference distance learning courses, please indicate the main reason:
- I did not participate, because I have not yet had the opportunity to access it
 - I did not participate because I do not find it effective
 - I did not attend because I am overloaded with work
 - I did not attend because the courses are not suitable for distance learning
 - I applied but was not admitted to any course
 - I have been admitted but was unable to attend for IT reasons
 - I have been admitted but was unable to attend for personal reasons
 - I have been admitted but was unable to attend due to an urgent business matter
- D24. Do you intend to take part in distance learning courses via videoconferencing in the future?
- Yes
 - No
- S5. Assessment of other courses and training content provided by the School**
[Section for all Respondents]
- D25. In recent years, the School has also made available other courses and training content accessible at a distance. We would like to know what rating you think you can give from 1 to 10 for the courses and content you have had direct experience of:
- SQ4 YouTube live streaming Training Courses 1_____10
 - SQ5 YouTube training courses deferred recorded 1_____10
 - SQ6 YouTube tutorials 1_____10
 - SQ7 School Newsletter 1_____10
 - SQ8 Training materials available on the school portal 1_____10

D26. Among the different ways in which courses may be provided by the School in the future, we ask you to indicate your liking among the proposals (1 min. liking – 10 max. liking):

- SQ1 Classroom courses 1 _____ 10
- SQ2 Live streaming courses (via videoconference) 1 _____ 10
- SQ3 Video Recorded courses 1 _____ 10
- SQ4 Blended Courses (classroom and live streaming) 1 _____ 10

S6. Opinions on future teaching
[Section for all the interviewees]

D27. In the future, the School's courses may be provided in different modes. We would like to have your opinion on the relationship between traditional and distance learning, by indicating your degree of agreement-disagreement on the following statements:

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW/ I CAN NOT ANSWER
1. Distance learning makes it possible to better focus on classes	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
2. Distance and in-person learning should be mixed in every course	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
3. The interaction between colleagues with in-person learning is an essential value.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
4. Attending courses remotely is much harder than attending them in class.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
5. The only advantage of distance learning is that people do not waste their time traveling and going on business trips	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
6. Courses held remotely should be shorter than in-person courses	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

D28. Moreover, we would like to have a more detailed opinion on further methodological aspects of distance learning, by indicating your degree of agreement-disagreement on the following statements:

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW/ I CAN NOT ANSWER
1. The contents of courses should be adjusted according to distance learning's features	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
2. It would be less hard to attend live streaming courses if they were more interactive	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
3. It would be advisable to videotape the courses so that people can attend them when they have time	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
4. With distance learning, it would be advisable to receive learning materials in advance, because this would make it easier to understand reports	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
5. With distance learning, round tables should be favoured	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
6. Training courses held remotely should include more practical and less theoretical content	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
7. Teamwork is hindered by distance learning	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
8. Distance learning improves the relationship with speakers	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

D29. Moreover, we would like to have a more detailed opinion on training offer for the future, by indicating your degree of agreement-disagreement on the following statements:

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW/ I CAN NOT ANSWER
1. Some live streaming courses should be repeated more often throughout the year	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
2. All the courses, regardless of their contents, can be held remotely	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW / I CAN NOT ANSWER
3. Aspiring managers training cannot be held remotely	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
4. For MOTs' <u>general training</u> , good results can be achieved through distance learning	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
5. For MOTs' <u>specific training</u> , good results can be achieved through distance learning	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
6. Generally speaking, the training courses proposed are not particularly useful for my job	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
7. Magistrate speakers selection criteria are clear	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

D29Copy. Finally, we would like to have your opinion on what the School could do, by indicating your degree of agreement-disagreement on the following statements:

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW / I CAN NOT ANSWER
1. The School should create discussion groups on topical issues	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
2. The School should be able to intervene on the specialist chats created by magistrates	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
3. The School should avail itself more of lawyers as speakers	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
4. The School should avail itself more of the participation of law professors as speakers	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DON'T KNOW/ I CAN NOT ANSWER
5. The School should avail itself more of experts as speakers	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
6. The School should also promote research	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
7. The School should have more publications	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]
8. The School should make it easier to access courses materials	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[9]

S7. Comments and suggestions
[Section for all the interviewees]

D30. The questionnaire is over. If you would like to leave comments and/or suggestions, you can do it here [500 characters max.]

Thanks for participating in the research.

I QUADERNI DELLA SSM

nella stessa collana

- Quaderno 1 – Bioetica e biodiritto
- Quaderno 2 – Raccolta delle fonti e delle principali delibere della Scuola superiore della magistratura
- Quaderno 3 – Comunione e condominio
- Quaderno 4 – Diritti e obblighi del lavoratore all'epoca COVID
- Quaderno 5 – Il trattamento dei dati personali in ambito giudiziario
- Quaderno 6 – Storia della magistratura
- Quaderno 7 – I metodi di risoluzione alternativa delle controversie:
Focus su mediazione, negoziazione assistita e conciliazione
giudiziale
- Quaderno 8 – Il procedimento disciplinare dei magistrati
- Quaderno 9 – L'ordinamento giudiziario
- Quaderno 10 – L'evoluzione della responsabilità civile
- Quaderno 11 – I diritti fondamentali fra Carte e Costituzioni europee



Finito di stampare nel mese di giugno 2022
a cura dell'Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato S.p.A.

