

LESSON 14: PEOPLE OF THE LAW

Law & Citizenship Course • *Ghid practic de educație
juridică - „Elevul și legea”* • Judecător Cristi Danileț



POWER UNDER LAW, RIGHTS FOR ALL



Police and gendarmes act only by law, prosecutors argue the case, and independent judges decide. When rules guide everyone, communities stay safe and justice earns trust.

LESSON CONTENTS

PART 1

POLICE & GENDARMERIE

What they can and can't do; identification, stops, searches, and your rights as a minor

PART 2

JUDGES & PROSECUTORS

Who decides, who accuses, and how independence, impartiality, and evidence standards protect fairness

PART 3

IN THE COURTROOM

Clerks, lawyers, and legal aid: documents, hearings, defense rights, and how a case moves from file to verdict

PART 4

INTEGRITY & INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

Complaints and discipline, anti-corruption rules, plus where rights are defended

PART 5

REVIEW & PRACTICE

Quiz, key concepts, and reflection tasks — review what you've learned and apply it

LAW & CITIZENSHIP COURSE

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter, you'll explore who **people of the law** are and how they protect everyone's rights. From **police officers** and **gendarmes** to **judges**, **prosecutors**, and **lawyers**, each has a specific role in **applying and defending the law**. You'll see how institutions cooperate to ensure that power is used fairly and that **no one is above the law**. You'll also learn where **citizens** can turn when their rights are violated — from **local authorities** to **international courts** — and how **legal professions** demand both **knowledge** and **integrity**. By the end, you should be able to explain how **law enforcement**, **justice**, and **civic responsibility** work together to keep society fair and safe.

TRUSTING THE LAW

WHY PROCEDURE, NOT POWER, GUIDES POLICING

When you meet **police** or **gendarmes**, their mission is not to **intimidate**, but to **protect**. They **act under the law** and every action must be **justified** and **respectful**. You have rights even when stopped or searched: to **know why**, to **be treated with dignity**, and to **contact a parent or lawyer if you're a minor**. Obeying lawful orders keeps everyone safe, but **officers** must also **respect your freedom**. Trust between **citizens** and **law enforcement** is essential to justice.



Warm-Up Activity



Think of a time when you saw a police officer or security guard intervene. Was the situation handled fairly? What could have been done better?

Safety grows where rights are respected.

WHY WE TRUST JUDGES & PROSECUTORS

People need **fair decisions** — not personal opinions. **Judges** and **prosecutors** turn laws into justice. A **judge** listens to both sides, studies the evidence, and **decides only by law**, not by emotion. A **prosecutor** investigates crimes and represents the **public interest** — not revenge. Together with **lawyers** and **clerks**, they make sure that every **trial** respects **truth**, **equality**, and **rights**. That's why the law protects everyone, not just those in power.



The Judge

Hears all sides, checks the evidence, and delivers a decision based on law alone.



The Lawyer

Defends each person's rights — victim or accused — so justice can be complete.



The Prosecutor

Represents the state, gathers evidence, and asks for punishment only when facts prove guilt.

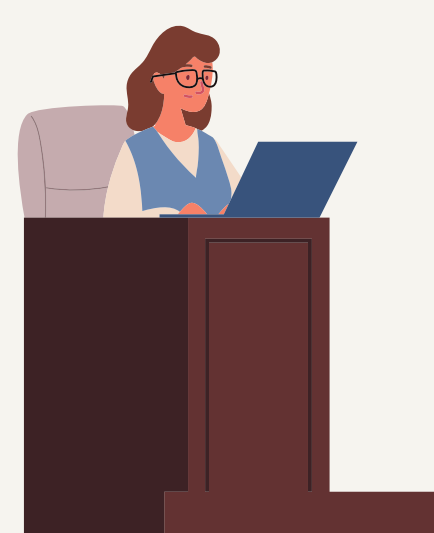


Why It Matters

Fairness — No one is guilty until proven so.

Balance — The prosecutor accuses, the lawyer defends, the judge decides.

Respect — Even those who break the law have rights in court.



The Clerk

Keeps official records and helps the court run properly.

Imagine and Reflect

Imagine if a judge favored friends or a prosecutor ignored evidence. What would happen to trust in justice? Write 2–3 sentences about why independence and honesty matter in law enforcement.

WHO DOES WHAT IN THE COURTROOM

Judges



Judges

- **Interpret laws and decide cases.** They listen to both sides, check the **evidence**, and make **rulings** only according to the law, not to please the public or the media. Judges must stay **independent**, **fair**, and **responsible**.

Prosecutors



Prosecutors

- **Represent the state and the public interest.** They gather **facts** and **evidence**, accuse those who break the law, and ask for **penalties** only when **proof supports guilt**.

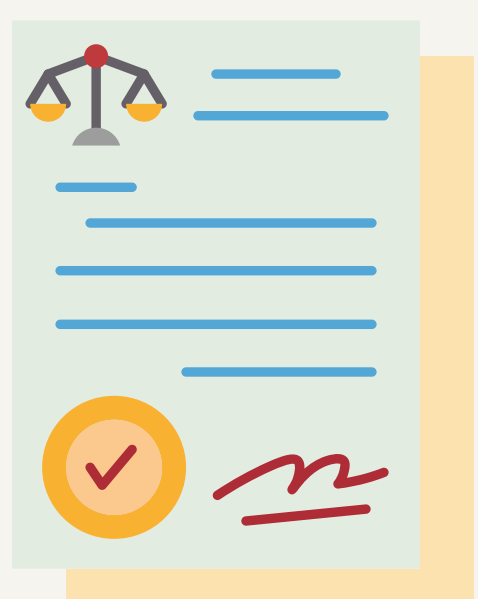
Lawyers



Lawyers & Legal Aid

- **Defend citizens' rights** — whether the client is **accused** or a **victim**. Lawyers ensure everyone has a **fair chance** and that the law is applied equally. **Legal aid** helps those who can't afford a lawyer.

Clerks



Clerks

- **Keep the official record of each hearing** and make sure the court runs properly. Every word said in court must be recorded correctly — that's how justice stays **transparent**.

Integrity



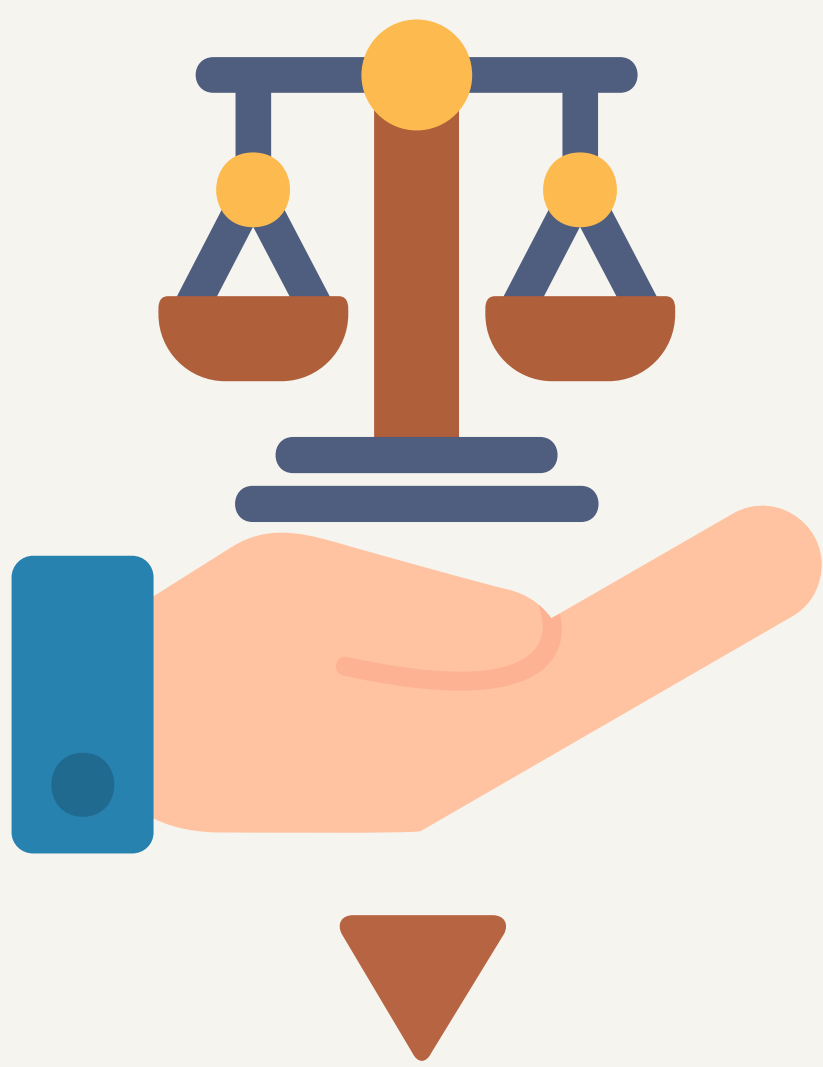
Integrity in Justice

- **Judges, prosecutors, and clerks** must refuse **gifts, pressure, or favoritism**. **Corruption** — such as taking or giving **bribes**, or influencing a colleague — is a **criminal offense**. Reports go to the **National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA)**.

INTEGRITY & INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

A **fair justice system** depends on **people who follow the law** — not personal interests. **Integrity** means **honesty**, **responsibility**, and the **courage to do what's right** even when no one is watching.

Romania's legal system protects citizens through **strict rules for judges, prosecutors, and lawyers**, and through **cooperation with international courts** when justice must go beyond borders.



INTEGRITY IN JUSTICE

Every **judge**, **prosecutor**, and **clerk** must **respect the law**, **keep professional secrecy**, and **refuse gifts or advantages**. Breaking these rules is **corruption**, punished by the **National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA)**.



DISCIPLINE & ACCOUNTABILITY

The **Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM)** checks **complaints** against judges and prosecutors. When **rules are broken**, they can receive **warnings**, **suspensions**, or be **removed from office**. **Discipline** protects the credibility of justice.



RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Citizens can report **corruption** or **misconduct**. **Integrity** is not only a duty for magistrates, but also a value for citizens who want a **fair society**.



INTERNATIONAL COURTS

If **rights are violated** and justice cannot be found in national courts, citizens can turn to the **European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)** or, in very serious cases, the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. These courts defend dignity, freedom, and peace among nations.

FROM COMPLAINT TO JUSTICE

Complaint

Anyone can file a complaint if they believe a law, judge, or institution has violated their rights.



Complaint

Investigation

Institutions such as the DNA or Judicial Inspection verify if there is proof of wrongdoing. They collect documents, witness statements, and other evidences.



Investigation

Disciplinary Action

If misconduct is proven, the CSM applies sanctions ranging from a simple warning to dismissal.



Sanctions

Public Transparency

Decisions of national or international courts are published publicly. This transparency shows citizens that no one is above the law.



Transparency

Restoring Trust

After discipline or correction, institutions rebuild credibility through honest work, fair trials, and open communication.



Trust

So what for me?

Integrity starts with small actions — telling the truth, respecting rules, refusing unfair shortcuts.

When you act fairly, you defend not just yourself but everyone's right to justice.

Try it: Think of one rule at school or in your community. How would integrity change the way people follow it? Who ensures fairness when someone breaks it?

QUIZ — Lesson 14

Check what you've learned about how democracy and laws work. Read each question carefully and choose the correct answer.



- 1** What is the main duty of the Police?
 - a) To defend national borders only
 - b) To apply laws and ensure public order
 - c) To make and interpret laws
- 2** Which authority represents justice in courtrooms?
 - a) The Prosecutor
 - b) The Judge
 - c) The Parliament
- 3** Who ensures that crimes are investigated and offenders are prosecuted?
 - a) The Prosecutor
 - b) The Lawyer
 - c) The Minister of Justice
- 4** What role does the Court Clerk have during a trial?
 - a) Keeps court records and ensures procedural accuracy
 - b) Provides legal advice to citizens
 - c) Decides the punishment
- 5** How does a lawyer contribute to a fair trial?
 - a) By defending the client's rights and presenting legal arguments
 - b) By choosing the sentence for the accused
 - c) By judging both parties equally
- 6** What is judicial integrity based on?
 - a) Obedience to political power
 - b) Honesty, impartiality, and respect for the law
 - c) Loyalty to personal beliefs
- 7** Which institution acts when a judge or prosecutor breaks ethical rules?
 - a) The Superior Council of Magistracy
 - b) The Ministry of Finance
 - c) The Parliament
- 8** What does the International Court of Justice handle?
 - a) Personal disputes between citizens
 - b) Conflicts between states under international law
 - c) Corruption cases in Romania
- 9** Why are anti-corruption rules essential in justice?
 - a) Because they keep courts busy
 - b) Because they prevent misuse of power and protect citizens' trust
 - c) Because they make trials shorter
- 10** What should a citizen do when facing an abuse from authorities?
 - a) Stay silent to avoid problems
 - b) Seek legal aid and file a complaint to the competent body
 - c) Rely on social media to solve it

QUIZ — Lesson 14

ANSWER KEY



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KEY CONCEPTS FROM LESSON 14



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Institutions like the Police and Gendarmerie maintain public order and enforce laws within communities.



PROSECUTION SERVICE

Represents the public interest by investigating crimes and bringing offenders before courts.



JUDICIARY

Independent branch of justice — judges interpret laws, ensure fair trials, and protect individual rights.



LEGAL COUNSEL

Lawyers and legal advisers provide defense, representation, and legal guidance.



COURT CLERK (GREFIER)

Ensures accurate documentation of hearings, manages evidence, and maintains procedural integrity.



JUDICIAL INTEGRITY

Ethical duty of magistrates — to act with honesty, fairness, and independence from any influence.



DISCIPLINARY ACCOUNTABILITY

Mechanism ensuring that judges and prosecutors who break the law or ethics are investigated and sanctioned.



ANTI-CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK

Set of laws and institutions (like DNA) designed to prevent, detect, and punish corruption.



INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

Includes bodies such as the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights — guaranteeing rights beyond national borders.



CITIZEN RIGHTS PROTECTION

Every person has the right to complain, to a fair trial, and to be defended by law, both nationally and internationally.