EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

SECOND SECTION

# DECISION

Application no. 30983/19
Bojan COJIĆ against Serbia
and 3 other applications
(see appended table)

The European Court of Human Rights (Second Section), sitting on 9 December 2021 as a Committee composed of:

Pauliine Koskelo, *President,*
Branko Lubarda,
Marko Bošnjak, *judges,*

and Viktoriya Maradudina, Acting Deputy Section Registrar,

Having regard to the above applications lodged on the various dates indicated in the appended table,

Having regard to the observations submitted by the respondent Government and the observations in reply submitted by the applicants,

Having deliberated, decides as follows:

## FACTS AND PROCEDURE

The list of applicants is set out in the appended table.

The applicants were represented by Ms T. Stojiljković, a lawyer practising in Leskovac.

The applicants' complaints under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 concerning the non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic decisions given against socially/State-owned companies were communicated to the Serbian Government ("the Government") on 7 April 2021.

## THE LAW

### A. Joinder of the applications

Having regard to the similar subject matter of the applications, the Court finds it appropriate to examine them jointly in a single decision.

## B. Complaints under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic decisions given against socially/State-owned companies)

The Government submitted that the final domestic decisions in the applicants' favour had been enforced. They therefore suggested that the Court should reject the applications as an abuse of the right of individual application in accordance with Article 35 §§ 3 (a) and 4 of the Convention.

The applicants did not dispute the fact of full enforcement.

The Court reiterates that an application may be rejected as an abuse of the right of individual application within the meaning of Article 35 § 3 (a) of the Convention if, among other reasons, it was knowingly based on false information or if significant information and documents were deliberately omitted, either where they were known from the outset or where new significant developments occurred during the proceedings. Incomplete and therefore misleading information may amount to an abuse of the right of application, especially if the information in question concerns the very core of the case and no sufficient explanation is given for the failure to disclose that information (see *Gross v. Switzerland* [GC], no. 67810/10, § 28, ECHR 2014; *S.A.S. v. France* [GC], no. 43835/11, § 67, ECHR 2014; and *Nikolić and Others v. Serbia* (dec.) [Committee], nos. 48162/18 and 8 others, 21 January 2021).

Turning to the present case, the Court observes that between 18 July 2019 and 29 January 2021 the sums awarded in the domestic decisions at issue were fully paid by the State in accordance with domestic law (see *Stevanović and Others v. Serbia*, nos. 43815/17 and 15 others, § 17, 27 August 2019). The applicants did not inform the Court about that development before notice of the applications was given to the Government and no explanation for this omission was provided.

Having regard to the fact that the information withheld concerned the very core of the applications, the Court finds that such conduct was contrary to the purpose of the right of individual application. Lawyers must understand that, having due regard to the Court's duty to examine allegations of human rights violations, they must show a high level of professional prudence and meaningful cooperation with the Court by sparing it the introduction of unmeritorious complaints and, both before proceedings have been instituted and thereafter, they must inquire diligently into all the details of the case, meticulously abide by all the relevant rules of procedure and must urge their clients to do the same. Otherwise, the wilful or negligent misuse of the Court's resources may undermine the credibility of lawyers' work in the eyes of the Court and even, if it occurs systematically, may result in particular individual lawyers being banned from representing applicants under Rule 36 § 4 (b) of the Rules of Court (see *Stevančević v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* (dec.), no. 67618/09, § 29, 10 January 2017).

In view of the above, the Court finds that these applications constitute an abuse of the right of individual application and must be rejected in accordance with Article 35 §§ 3 (a) and 4 of the Convention.

For these reasons, the Court, unanimously,

*Decides* to join the applications;

*Declares* the applications inadmissible.

Done in English and notified in writing on 13 January 2022.

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| Viktoriya Maradudina<br>Acting Deputy Registrar | Pauliine Koskelo<br>President |

# APPENDIX

## List of applications raising complaints under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic decisions given against socially/State-owned companies)

| No. | Application no.<br>Date of introduction | Applicant's name<br>Year of birth | Relevant domestic decision | Start date of non-enforcement period or date of entry into force of the Convention in respect of Serbia (3 March 2004) | Date of enforcement of domestic decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 30983/19<br>04/06/2019 | **Bojan COJIĆ**<br>1975 | Commercial Court in Leskovac, 27/03/2006 | 14/06/2007 | 18/07/2019 |
| 2. | 5934/20<br>13/01/2020 | **Jasmina STANKOVIĆ**<br>1950 | Municipal Court in Leskovac, 06/10/2000<br>Municipal Court in Leskovac, 13/06/2001<br>Municipal Court in Leskovac, 28/01/2002<br>Municipal Court in Leskovac, 09/07/2002 | 03/03/2004<br>03/03/2004<br>03/03/2004<br>03/03/2004 | 24/01/2020 |
| 3. | 53510/20<br>27/11/2020 | **Stojan MIHAJLOVIĆ**<br>1954 | Municipal Court in Leskovac, 19/06/2003<br>Municipal Court in Leskovac, 10/04/2008 | 01/11/2005<br>11/09/2008 | 29/01/2021 |
| 4. | 53845/20<br>27/11/2020 | **Ljubomir MILENKOVIĆ**<br>1953 | Municipal Court in Leskovac, 16/07/2003<br>Municipal Court in Leskovac, 09/01/2008 | 16/03/2006<br>08/05/2008 | 29/01/2021 |