

# QUARTERLY STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHT | N. 119 | NOVEMBER 2023

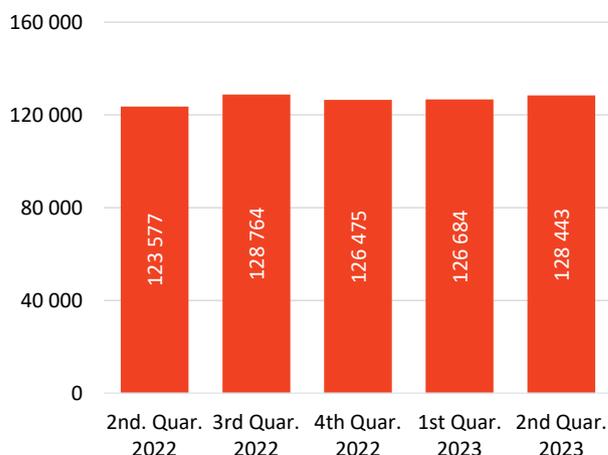
## QUARTERLY STATISTICS ON CIVIL ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS (2007 – 2023)



### Pending<sup>2</sup> civil enforcement actions<sup>1</sup> and clearance rate<sup>3 4</sup> – Quarterly evolution

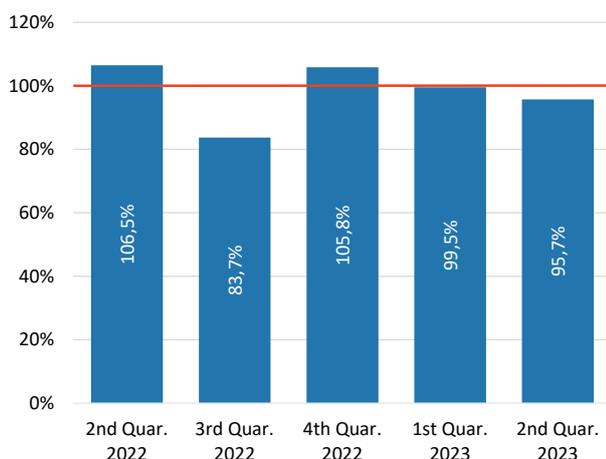
In the first quarter of 2023, the number of pending civil enforcement actions has increased 1.4% when compared to the end of the second quarter of 2023. On 30 June 2023, the number of pending civil enforcement actions was 128.443 (table 1).

Table 1 - Pending civil actions, consecutive quarters



The clearance rate (**table 2**), that measures the capacity of the system on a given moment to face the demand verified on that same moment, was 95,7%, in the second quarter of 2023. This resulted in an increase in the pendency at the end of this quarter compared to the immediately preceding period. Except for the third quarters, when judicial holidays occur, the first quarter of 2009, the fourth quarter of 2014, the second quarter of 2020, the first quarter of 2021 and the first and second quarters of 2023, the clearance rate has been over 100% since 2015.

**Table 2 - Clearance rate of the civil actions, consecutive quarters**

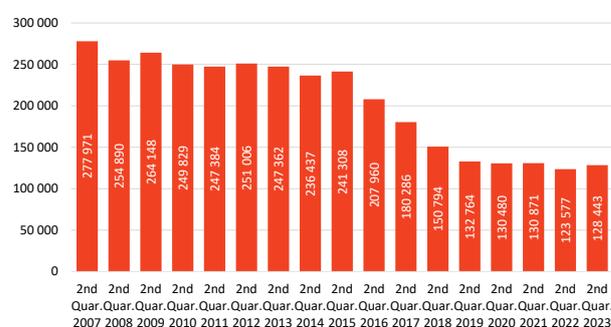


**Pending civil actions, clearance rate and disposition time<sup>5</sup> – Similar periods**

Between the second quarter of 2007 and the second quarter of 2023 there was an accumulated decrease of 53,8% in the number of

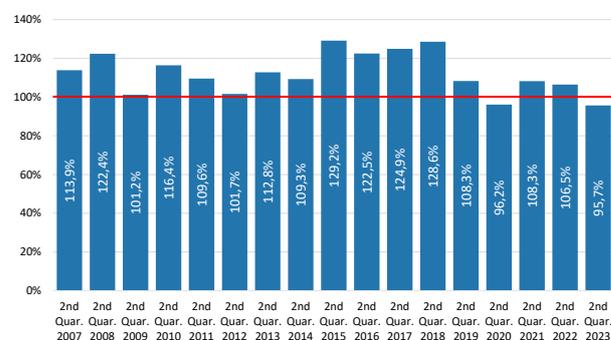
pending civil actions. In the similar periods for the second quarters of the years 2015 to 2023, there was a cumulative reduction of 46,8% in the number of pending civil actions. Between the second quarter of 2022 and the second quarter of 2023 there was an increase of 3.9% in the number of pending civil actions (**table 3**).

**Table 3 - Pending civil actions, 2nd quarter**



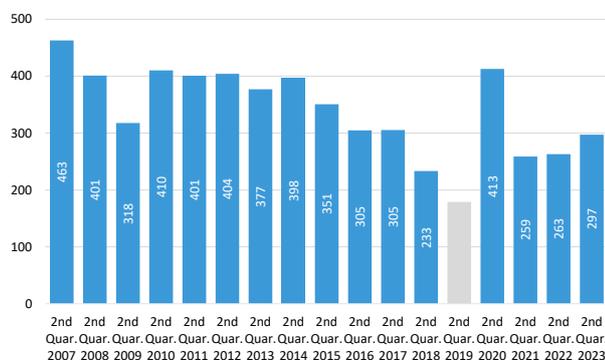
In the second quarter of 2023, the clearance rate was 95.7%, a decrease of 0.4 percentage points when compared to the minimum value of 96.2% recorded in the second quarter of 2020 (**table 4**).

**Table 4 - Clearance rate of the civil actions, 2nd quarter**



The calculation of the disposition time in the second quarter of 2019 was affected by the unusually high number of cases completed that quarter, as a result of the internal transfers resulting from the application of Decree-Law 38/2019 of 18 March, which reorganised the courts of 1<sup>st</sup> instance (table 5).

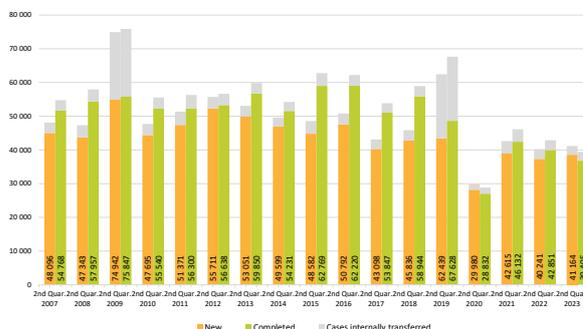
Table 5 - Disposition time (in days) of the civil actions, 2nd quarter



**New and completed civil actions and procedural balance – Similar periods<sup>6 7</sup>**

In the second quarter of 2019, the number of new and completed civil actions was unusually high, as a consequence of the application of the aforementioned legal diploma, which reorganised the 1st instance courts. In the second quarter of 2023, the number of completed civil actions was lower than the number of new civil actions (table 6).

Table 6 - New and completed civil actions, 2nd quarter



As a result, the procedural balance in the second quarter of 2023 was unfavourable, corresponding to 1.759 more cases (table 7).

Table 7 - Procedural balance of the civil actions, 2nd quarter

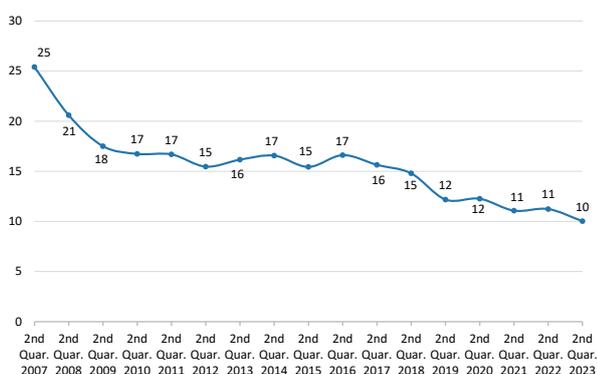


**Average duration<sup>8</sup> of completed civil actions – Similar periods**

Regarding the average duration of completed civil actions in the second quarters between 2007 and 2023 it is possible to observe that the

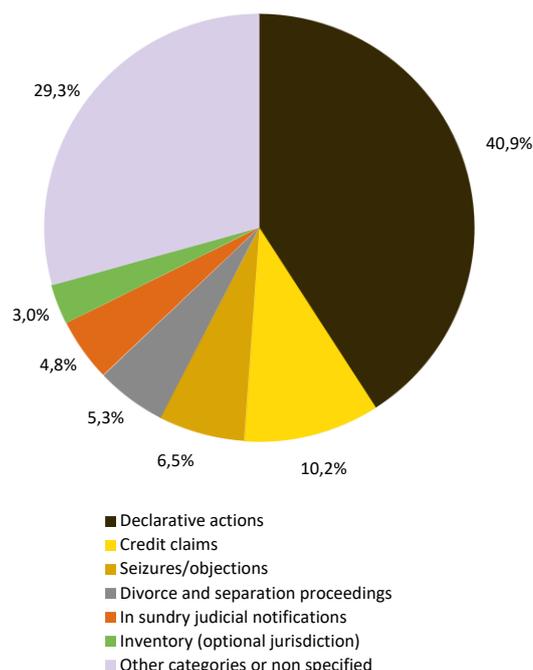
value has ranged between 10 and 25 months. In the second quarter of 2023, when compared to the first quarter of 2007, there was a decrease of 15 months in the average duration of completed civil actions (going from 25 to 10 months). Considering the similar period of 2022, in the second quarter of 2023, the average duration of the completed civil action, has had a decrease of 1 month (going from 11 to 10 months) (table 8).

Table 8 - Average duration (in months) of the civil actions, 2nd



divorce and separation proceedings, 4,8% to sundry judicial notifications and 3,0% to inventories (optional jurisdiction) (table 9).

Table 9 - Distribution of the type of completed civil actions - 2nd quarter 2023



### Distribution of the type of completed civil actions – 2nd quarter of 2023

Considering the distribution of the type of completed civil actions in the second quarter of 2023, it is possible to state that 40,9% corresponded to declarative actions, 10,2% to credit claims, 6,5% to seizures/objections, 5,3% to

*Footnotes:*

<sup>1</sup> In the current statistical highlight, the civil actions do not comprise the enforcement actions, the bankruptcy, insolvency and company rescue cases, the special revitalization procedures and the special procedures for payment agreement, given that the behaviour of these types of cases has been subject to analysis in autonomous quarterly statistical highlights (see quarterly statistical highlight 118 on civil enforcement actions and statistical highlight 117 on bankruptcy, insolvency and company rescue cases, on special revitalization procedures and on special procedures for payment agreement).

<sup>2</sup> Pending cases correspond to those new cases that have not yet had a final decision, judgment, sentence or order, in their respective instance, regardless of *res judicata*. These are cases that are waiting for acts or diligences to be carried out by the court, by the parties or by other entities. In certain types of cases, they may also be waiting for certain facts to occur or for a time period to run out. A suspended case is, for instance, a pending case, irrespective of the cause of suspension. A pending case is not necessarily a delayed case, as it may be a case that is running within the legal timeframes.

<sup>3</sup> The clearance rate corresponds to the ratio of the total volume of completed cases over the total volume of new cases. If equal to 100% the volume of new cases is equal to the completed ones, being the variation of the pendency zero. If greater than 100%, there is a recovery in the pendency. The higher this indicator is the higher the recovery in the pendency in that year. If less than 100%, the volume of new cases is higher than the completed ones, generating pendency for the following year.

<sup>4</sup> As the indicators are calculated based on the number of new and completed cases, the clearance rate and the disposition time of the periods in which internal transfers occur between organic units/courts may be impacted and should therefore be interpreted accordingly.

<sup>5</sup> The disposition time is an indicator that measures, in days, the time that would be required to complete all the cases that are pending at the end of a specific period based on the rate of work done in that same period, i.e., the number of completed cases in this period. Applied to a quarter, this indicator multiplies by 91.25 (average number of days in a quarter) the total of pending cases at the end of the quarter divided by the total number of completed cases during that same period.

<sup>6</sup> In the second 17 quarters from 2007 to 2023 were registered, respectively, 48.096, 47.343, 74.942, 47.695, 51.371, 55.711, 53.051, 49.599, 48.582, 50.792, 43.098, 45.836, 62.439, 29.980, 42.615, 40.241 and 41.164 new civil actions and also respectively, 54.768, 57.957, 75.847, 55.540, 56.300, 56.638, 59.850, 54.231, 62.769, 62.220, 53.847, 58.944, 67.628, 28.832, 46.132, 42.851 and 39.405 completed civil actions. However, from these totals, only 45.013, 43.763, 54.882, 44.411, 47.410, 52.352, 49.967, 46.913, 44.807, 47.589, 40.282, 42.792, 43.442, 28.180, 38.924, 37.340 and 38.554 new civil actions and 51.685, 54.377, 55.787, 52.256, 52.339, 53.279, 56.766, 51.545, 58.994, 59.017, 51.031, 55.900, 48.631, 27.032, 42.441, 39.950 and 36.795 completed civil actions correspond to actual movements of beginning and end of the cases. The remaining 3.083, 3.580, 20.060, 3.284, 3.961, 3.359, 3.084, 2.686, 3.775, 3.203, 2.816, 3.044, 18.997, 1.800, 3.691, 2.901 and 2.610 cases do not correspond to new civil actions or to civil actions that have been completed. These numbers on new and completed cases refer to the total of civil actions that have run internally between organic units/courts. They are not thus cases that have re-entered the justice system but cases that were completed in the organic unit/court from where they left and that have entered the organic units/courts to which they were transferred.

<sup>7</sup> The procedural balance corresponds to the difference between new and completed cases. If positive, there is an increase in the pendency. If negative, there is a decrease in the pendency.

<sup>8</sup> The average duration of a completed case in court corresponds to the period of time between the day in which the case began in the court first seized and the day it was completed, even if re-distributed, that is, between the day the case began in the court where it entered and the day it was completed in that same court or in any another court to which it has been redistributed. The concept of average duration used in this statistical highlight corresponds to the so-called duration of the initial case, to which the duration in the various courts where it has run is added.

*Framework note – Time scope and other considerations*

From 2007, the statistical data related to the cases in the first instance courts are directly gathered from the courts' computer system. Thus, the present procedural situation corresponds to the cases that are recorded in this system. In the new and completed cases are included those that were transferred between organic units as a result of extinction and creation of new courts or sections.

*Technical sheet:*

The Directorate-General for Justice Policy (DGPJ) of the Ministry of Justice, in accordance with Article 2 (1) of Decree-Law 163/2012 of 31 July has the mission to give technical support within the scope of legislative production and legal assessment, to monitor the policies and the strategic planning for the sector, to coordinate the external affairs and the cooperation in the justice area, being also responsible for the statistical data in the Ministry of Justice.

Law 22/2008 of 13 May defines the basic general guidelines and principles that govern the National Statistical System (SEN), particularly regarding the delegation of powers of the National Statistics Institute (INE), in other entities.

Under the provisions of Article 24 of Law 22/2008, of 13 May, a protocol was celebrated empowering the DGPJ with the production and dissemination of the Justice official statistics.

As a delegated entity, DGPJ is subject to compliance, in its relevant part, with the Law 22/2008, of 13 May, with the Decree-Law 166/2007, of 3 May, as well as with the rules established by Community legislation, adopting the Code of Conduct for European Statistics and the Regulation for the Application of the Principle of Statistical Confidentiality of the National Statistical Institute.

**Directorate-General for Justice  
Policy**

Av. D. João II, n.º 1.08.01 E,  
Torre H, Pisos 2/3  
1990-097 Lisboa, Portugal  
Tel.: +351 217 924 000  
Fax: +351 217 924 090  
E-mail.: [correio@dgpj.mj.pt](mailto:correio@dgpj.mj.pt)  
<https://dgpj.justica.gov.pt>