

Romanian judge is demoted for using witchcraft in court

A ROMANIAN judge has been fined and demoted by the country's legal authorities after allegedly practising witchcraft in her court, writes Bojan Pancevski.

Judge Elena Simionescu was accused of being a witch and of creating an atmosphere of conflict during her term as a president of the court in Vatra Dornei, a small town in eastern Romania.

She was alleged to have performed rituals involving splashing water, mud and "other liquids", as well as salt and pepper, on fellow judges' desks in what some saw as an attempt to bewitch them. The case raises unsettling questions about the outlook of some within the judicial system of one of the newest members of the European Union.

The allegations were made by court staff, judges and prosecutors, who claimed that Judge Simionescu tried to cast spells on them. The judge denied the accusations, telling investigators that her practices were in accordance with the Christian faith. She said: "I splash my colleagues' desks with holy water every day, in the spirit of good Christians' rituals."

But inspectors who investigated the complaint



Rituals Elena Simionescu

for the Superior Magistracy Council, a judiciary watchdog, concluded that Judge Simionescu used "unorthodox methods with her court colleagues and maintained a constant tension by using occult practices and witchcraft".

The council relieved the judge of her position as court president and reduced by 15 per cent her monthly salary of £660 for three months, after hearing that she had also "misplaced" an important court document.

A local lawyer said: "She had many quarrels with people working in the court. We were all convinced that she was casting spells. I can tell you those people were terrified."

The council would not comment on its decision and Judge Simionescu could not be contacted.