

Strasbourg, 16 June 2023

CEPEJ(2023)12

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE (CEPEJ)

40th plenary meeting

15 and 16 June 2023

(Strasbourg, France)

Abridged report

A. FOREWORD

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) of the Council of Europe held its 40th plenary meeting in Strasbourg (France) on 15 and 16 June 2023. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Francesco DEPASQUALE (Malta), President of the CEPEJ.

The meeting was opened by Christophe POIREL, Director of the Human Rights Directorate, who recalled the main work to be examined during this meeting.

The agenda and the list of participants are appended.

B. LIST OF ITEMS DISCUSSED AND DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CEPEJ

The CEPEJ:

1. Recent developments in the field of justice in the Member and Observer States

- **took note** of the information provided by delegations of Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Georgia, Ireland, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Slovak Republic, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom on a number of significant developments in their countries since December 2022.

2. Evaluation of judicial systems

- **took note** of the information concerning the preparation of the next CEPEJ Evaluation Report "European judicial systems" (Edition 2024, 2022 data) and the work in progress within the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL in order to further improve the content and the visibility of the report, and in particular the forthcoming distribution of a questionnaire to CEPEJ members and national correspondents on the use of the evaluation report; **recalled** in particular that the Evaluation Scheme¹ is open in the CEPEJ-COLLECT system until 1 October 2023 for the collection of the 2022 data; **reminded its members** to appoint national correspondents responsible for providing answers to the Evaluation Questionnaire, to communicate their contact details to the Secretariat as soon as possible, and to ensure that the national correspondents respect the deadlines for data collection as well as to avoid changes in the data used for standardization (GDP, number of inhabitants) after 1 June 2024;

¹ [CEPEJ\(2022\)9rev1](#)

- **welcomed** the cooperation with other Council of Europe bodies in preparing the questionnaire for evaluating judicial systems, in particular the Commission for Gender Equality and the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights;
- **took note** of the specific studies prepared by the justice professionals enjoying observer status with the CEPEJ (Council of the Notaries of the European Union, International Union of Judicial Officers, European Expertise & Expert Institute) based on CEPEJ 2020 data currently being prepared and to be published on CEPEJ-STAT after adoption by CEPEJ-GT-EVAL;
- **encouraged** delegations to contact the Secretariat with a view to organizing peer reviews to support the collection and quality control of data for the next cycle;
- **welcomed** the continued cooperation with the European Commission, on the basis of the CEPEJ's own evaluation methodology, on: (i) an annual study on the functioning of the judicial systems in the EU member states and the on-going discussions concerning the transfer of certain data collected from CEPEJ to EUROSTAT; (ii) the annual evaluation of the functioning of the judicial systems in the beneficiaries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia); (iii) the annual evaluation of the functioning of judicial systems in the “Eastern Partnership” countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), and **entrusted** the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL with the task of continuing this co-operation, which reinforces the preeminent role of the CEPEJ in the field of evaluation of justice, as well as the synergies between the European Union and the Council of Europe in this field.

3. Joint work CEPEJ-GT-QUAL / CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST on artificial intelligence

- **took note** of the progress in the implementation of the "Revised Roadmap to ensure the appropriate follow-up of the CEPEJ European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems and their environment"² and in particular of the work of the CEPEJ Artificial Intelligence Advisory Board (AIAB) in this field, and of the work on the operationalization of the CEPEJ Charter, **welcomed** the development of the Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence, officially launched in March 2023 on the CEPEJ website, and invited its members to submit information on relevant cyberjustice and artificial intelligence systems via a dedicated online form on the same website.

4. Quality of justice

- **took note** of the work and discussions underway within the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL, notably on the qualitative evaluation of judges' performance and access to justice for vulnerable people.

5. Judicial time management

- **adopted** the “draft Revised Time Management Checklist”³ and its Explanatory Note⁴, subject to amendments proposed during the meeting;
- **adopted** “the opinion on possible update of the Recommendation No.R(86)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member States concerning measures to prevent and reduce the excessive workload in the courts”⁵, and **decided** to submit it to the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) in accordance with Article 2.1.e. of Appendix 1 to Resolution Res(2002)12 establishing the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ);
- **took note** of the other work in progress within the CEPEJ-SATURN, in particular on case weighting in public prosecution services;
- **took note** of the activities of the CEPEJ Pilot Courts Network, **agreed** on the need to strengthen this Network in view of its leading role in the development, dissemination, and implementation of CEPEJ tools primarily intended for courts and justice professionals, **thanked** the President of the East Lublin District Court (Poland) for the excellent organization of the 16th annual meeting of the Network held there on March 30, 2023, and also **thanked** the Belgian judicial authorities for the invitation to hold the next meeting of the Network in May 2024 in Mechelen/Malines.

² CEPEJ(2021)16

³ CEPEJ(2023)5

⁴ CEPEJ(2023)6

⁵ CEPEJ(2023)7

6. Cyberjustice and artificial intelligence

- **adopted** the “Guide on judicial e-auctions”⁶ and **took note** of the complementing “Comparative study on judicial e-auctions in the Council of Europe member States”⁷;
- **took note** of the ongoing work in the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST on the electronic publication of court decisions and knowledge access, and online alternative dispute resolution;
- **welcomed** the activities of the recently formed European Cyberjustice Network (ECN), which now contains over 120 experts in cyberjustice and artificial intelligence and **took note** of its forthcoming seminar entitled "Artificial intelligence and the digitization of criminal proceedings", which will be held online on September 19, 2023, as well as its annual meeting, which will take place online on November 23, 2023.

7. Specific work on backlogs

- **congratulated** the members of the *ad hoc* Working Group set up in December 2022 on the important work they have accomplished in only six months to respond to a specific and urgent request from many member States for a concrete methodology to combat judicial backlogs in the courts, based on CEPEJ statistical data and efficiency indicators;
- **adopted** the “Backlog reduction tool”⁸, subject to amendments proposed during the meeting, and decided to implement it through bilateral cooperation, particularly in countries that have already submitted a request to this effect.

8. CEPEJ co-operation programmes

- **took note** of the ongoing activities, achievements, and next steps of the cooperation programmes presented in the synthesis document⁹ and the animated presentation concerning Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kosovo*, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Tunisia and the South Programme V (in particular potential cooperation activities with the Lebanese Council of State), as well as the future programme with Morocco that should start during autumn 2023;
- **took note** of the calls for expressions of interest launched by the Secretariat regarding potential bilateral or multilateral cooperation programmes on subjects specifically affecting CEPEJ tools on judicial backlogs, case weighting and the use of artificial intelligence, and which, as far as EU member States are concerned, could fall within the scope of the 2024 Technical Support Instrument (TSI), for which the deadline for applications is 31 October 2023, which means that the Secretariat must be informed in advance by 15 October.

9. Development of online training modules on CEPEJ tools

- **took note** of the latest progress in the preparation, via the HELP¹⁰ platform, of an online training course on the theme of the quality of justice and of the work of the CEPEJ, which will include different modules in the fields of quality of justice, evaluation of judicial systems, cyberjustice and AI, mediation, and judicial time management.

10. CEPEJ 2022 Activity report

- **adopted** its activity report for 2022.

11. Preparation of the CEPEJ Activity programme 2024-2025

⁶ CEPEJ(2023)11

⁷ CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST(2023)1

⁸ CEPEJ(2023)9

⁹ CEPEJ-COOP(2023)1

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

¹⁰ HELP: Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals.

- **took note** of the invitation to the members to send their contributions, in writing, regarding topics and tool that could be developed by the CEPEJ for the period 2024-2025.

12. Crystal Scales of Justice Prize

- **took note** that the 12th edition of the Crystal Scales of Justice Prize, which was launched in February 2023 and for which 48 competing entries were received from 17 countries; **thanked** the French authorities for their offer to the CEPEJ to host the award ceremony of the Crystal Scales of Justice Prize 2023.

13. Observers

- **thanked** the President of the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE) and the Secretary of the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) for their presentation of the ongoing work within both Councils and their willingness to continue co-operation with the CEPEJ;
- **took note** of the information provided by observers (European Association of Judges (AEM-EAJ), European Expertise and European Institute (EEEI), International Union of Judicial Officers (UIHJ), World Bank, European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), as well as the presentation of the work of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in the field of justice.

14. Other items






- **stressed** the need for, and importance, of appropriate and regular communication on its work, and in particular on its tools, so that its various and numerous activities really lead to an improvement in the efficiency and quality of justice in Europe through concrete and useful actions within the courts;
- **took note** that the 41th plenary meeting of the CEPEJ will take place in Strasbourg, on 4 and 5 December 2023, and that all the dates of the other CEPEJ meetings are indicated on the CEPEJ website.
















Appendix I: Agenda


Documents preceded by the sign  are submitted to the CEPEJ for adoption.

Please note that the order of business may differ from the agenda below.

The working documents will be available, in restricted access, as soon as possible, on the collaborative space of the CEPEJ. You can access this space by logging in with your email address and the password that was sent to you. If you encounter an access problem or for any other information, please contact: cepej@coe.int

1	Opening of the meeting	<p>Introduction by Christophe Poirel, Director, Human Rights Department</p> <p>Adoption of the agenda and other information</p> <p>Recent developments in the field of justice in member and observer states <i>(Delegations are invited to inform the CEPEJ, if possible before the meeting, of significant developments in their country since December 2022 - Interventions limited to 3 minutes).</i></p>	Agenda of the 40th CEPEJ plenary meeting
2	Evaluation of judicial systems (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL)	<p>Presentation of work in progress by Jaša VRABEC (Slovenia), President of CEPEJ-GT-EVAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  2024 evaluation cycle (2022 data) - Preparation of the CEPEJ Evaluation Report on European judicial systems  Support for data collection and peer review  Cooperation with the European Union <p>Study on the functioning of judicial systems in the member states of the European Union (EU Justice Scoreboard)</p> <p>Scoreboard for the Western Balkans</p> <p>Justice Dashboard Eap for Eastern Partnership countries (« Justice Dashboard Eap »)</p>	<p>Reference documents</p> <p>Evaluation grid for European judicial systems - 2024 cycle CEPEJ(2022)9rev1</p> <p>Explanatory note to the evaluation grid - cycle 2024 CEPEJ(2023)2</p> <p>Report of the 44th meeting of the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL CEPEJ-GT-EVAL(2023)3</p>
3	Joint work CEPEJ-GT-QUAL/CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST on artificial intelligence	<p>Presentation of work in progress by Maria Giuliana CIVININI (Italy), President of CEPEJ-CYBERJUST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Resource Center on Cyberjustice and Intelligence 	<p>Reference documents</p> <p>Link to the Resource Center</p> <p>Report of the 3rd AIAB meeting CEPEJ-AIAB(2023)2</p>
4	Quality of justice (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL)	<p>Presentation of work in progress by Joao Arsenio de OLIVEIRA (Portugal), President of CEPEJ-GT-QUAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Judges' performance evaluation 	<p>Reference document</p> <p>Report of the 34th meeting of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)4</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Access to justice for vulnerable persons, in particular children's participation in legal proceedings  CEPEJ IA Charter follow-up: checklist and guidelines to ensure implementation of the Charter's 5 principles 	
5	Judicial time management (CEPEJ-SATURN)	<p>Presentation of work in progress by Giacomo OBERTO (Italy), President of CEPEJ-SATURN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Revision of the judicial time management checklist  Weighting of cases within the public prosecutor's office  Tool for analysing different timeframes at different stages of the process  Possible updating of Recommendation (86)12 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on measures to prevent or reduce excessive workload in the courts  Good practices analysing success factors for judicial time management  Meeting of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot courts 	<p>Working documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Draft checklist for judicial time management CEPEJ(2023)5  Draft explanatory note to the Checklist for judicial time management CEPEJ(2023)6  Draft opinion of the CEPEJ aimed at proposing to the CDCJ the updating of Recommendation (86)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to prevent or reduce the excessive workload of courts CEPEJ(2023)7 <p>Reference documents</p> <p>Report of the 34th CEPEJ-SATURN(2023)9 meeting</p> <p>Link to the video of the 16th meeting of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot courts (English only)</p>
6	Cyberjustice and artificial intelligence (CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST)	<p>Presentation of work in progress and of the Working Group by Maria-Giuliana CIVININI (Italy), President of CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Guide to judicial electronic auctions 	<p>Working documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Draft guide to judicial electronic auctions CEPEJ (2023)11 <p>Reference documents</p> <p>Comparative study on electronic judicial auctions CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST(2023)1</p> <p>Report of the 8th meeting CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST(2023)2</p>
7	<i>Ad hoc</i> CEPEJ-GT-Backlogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Presentation of the work by Francesco Depasquale (President of the CEPEJ) 	<p>Working document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Project of a tool to fight against judicial backlogs CEPEJ(2023)9

		Reference document
		Reflection note on the preparation of a CEPEJ tool to reduce the backlog of court cases CEPEJ(2022)12
8	CEPEJ cooperation activities	Working document State of implementation of CEPEJ cooperation programmes CEPEJ_COOP(2023)1
9	Development of online training modules for CEPEJ tools	Examples of HELP CEPEJ training modules (English only)
10	CEPEJ activity report 2022	Working document  Draft activity report of the CEPEJ for 2022 CEPEJ(2023)10
11	Preparation of the CEPEJ Programme of Activities 2024-2025	Discussion on possible topics and tools to be developed by the CEPEJ for the period 2024-2025
12	Crystal Scales Award	Presentation of the 2023 Crystal Scales Edition
13	Observers	Observers to the CEPEJ had the opportunity to make an oral presentation of their current activities of interest to the CEPEJ and/or to submit written information to the Secretariat, which will share it during the meeting.
14	Others	Meeting Calendar Relations between the CEPEJ and other bodies Calendar of meetings 2023

INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

[Abridged report of the 39th plenary meeting of the CEPEJ](#)

[2022 – 2023 Activity Programme of the CEPEJ](#)

[2022 – 2025 Action plan of the CEPEJ
“Digitalization for a better justice”](#)

Appendix II: List of participants
Public list of participants / Liste de participants publique

CEPEJ MEMBERS / MEMBRES DE LA CEPEJ

ALBANIA/ALBANIE

NOT CONFIRMED

ANDORRA/ANDORRE

Marta TORRES DUEDRA, Secretària General del Consell Superior de la Justícia, AD 500 ANDORRA LA VELLA,

ARMENIA/ARMENIE

NOT CONFIRMED

AUSTRIA/AUTRICHE

Georg STAWA, Counsellor for Southeast Europe, Federal Ministry of Justice, Austrian Embassy BELGRADE,

AZERBAIJAN/AZERBAÏDJAN

Adil ABILOV, Director of the International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Justice, BAKU

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE

Jean-Paul JANSENS, Président du Comité de direction, Service Public Fédéral Justice, BRUXELLES

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE

Svjetlana MILISIC-VELICKOVSKI, Judge, Supreme Court, SARAJEVO

BULGARIA/BULGARIE

Ekaterina TODOROVA, Chief Expert, International Legal Cooperation and European Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Justice, SOFIA

CROATIA/CROATIE

Ivan CRNČEC, Justice Sector Reform Expert, Ministry of justice, Ulica Grada Vukovara 49, 10 000 ZAGREB

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Lena DEMETRIADES ANDREOU, Justice of the Supreme Court, NICOSIA, **Apologised / Excusée**

CZECH REPUBLIC/REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE

Ivana BORZOVÁ, Head of Department of Civil Supervision, Ministry of Justice, PRAGUE

DENMARK/DANEMARK

Eva Louise PADUAN, International Coordinator, Department of Training, Danish Court Administration, COPENHAGEN

ESTONIA/ESTONIE

Eneli KIVI, Adviser, Courts division, Judicial Administration Policy Department, Ministry of Justice, TALLINN

FINLAND/FINLANDE

Pasi KUMPULA, Director, Development Department, The National Courts Administration, HELSINKI

FRANCE

Sonya DJEMNI-WAGNER, Inspectrice générale de la Justice, Ministère de la Justice, PARIS

GEORGIA/GÉORGIE

Ketevan TSINTSADZE, Honorable Ms Justice, Supreme Court, TBILISI

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE

Andrea SCHULZ, Head of unit, International Civil Procedure Law, Arbitration, Federal Ministry of Justice, BERLIN

GREECE/GRÈCE

Konstantinos KOUSSOULIS, Councilor, Hellenic Council of State, ATHENS

HUNGARY/HONGRIE

Judit GYARMATHY, Judge, Secretary General of the Curia of Hungary (Supreme Judicial Forum), BUDAPEST

ICELAND/*SLANDE*

Kristin HARALDSOTTIR, Director of the Judicial Administration, Dómsstólasýslan, REYKJAVIK

IRELAND/*IRLANDE*

Liam COHEN, Head of Access to Justice, Regulation and Reform Unit, Department of Justice, DUBLIN

ITALY/*ITALIE*

Giuliana PALUMBO, Directeur Général, Direction des statistiques et analyses organisationnelles, Ministère de la Justice, ROME

LATVIA/*LETTONIE*

Aija BRANTA, Judge, Supreme Court, RIGA

LIECHTENSTEIN

NOT CONFIRMED

LITHUANIA/*LITUANIE*

Egidija TAMOŠIŪNIENĖ, Judge of Civil Cases Division, Court of Appeal of Lithuania, VILNIUS

LUXEMBOURG

Claudine KONSBRUCK, Conseiller de Gouvernement 1ère classe, Directeur, Délégué du Gouvernement, Luxembourg **Apologised / Excusée**

MALTA/*MALTE*

Francesco DEPASQUALE, The Honourable Mr Justice, Superior Courts, Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs VALETTA **President of the CEPEJ / Président de la CEPEJ**

Leonard CARUANA, Hon. Magistrate, Ministry of Justice, VALETTA

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / *REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA*

Sorin POPESCU, Director, Agency for Court Administration, CHISINAU

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Sébastien BIANCHERI, Conseiller, Secrétaire du Conseil d'Etat, Cour d'Appel, MONACO

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Jeannette VERSPUI, Head of the Strategic department, senior judge, Council of the Judiciary, THE HAGUE

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Maria Giuliana CIVININI, Judge (retired), Former President of the Tribunal of Pisa, ITALY (Chair of the CEPEJ-CYBERJUST / *Présidente du CEPEJ-CYBERJUST*)

Massimiliano BLASONE, Attorney at law, Expert of the CEPEJ-CYBERJUST, TRIESTE, ITALY

OBSERVER STATES TO THE CEPEJ / ETATS OBSERVATEURS AUPRES DE LA CEPEJ

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MORROCCO / *MAROC*

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Saâd GADDAR, Conseiller de Monsieur le Secrétaire Général Ministère de la Justice, RABAT

OBSERVERS / *OBSERVATEURS*

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN BARS AND LAW SOCIETIES / *CONSEIL DES BARREAUX EUROPÉENS (CCBE)*

Apologized / Excusé

COUNCIL OF THE NOTARIAT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (CNUE) / *CONSEIL DES NOTARIATS DE L'UNION EUROPEENNE (CNUE)*

Geertjan SARNEEL, Notary, Notaris at Meijling & Sarneel Notarissen te Kapelle, THE NETHERLANDS

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Etienne CLAES, Co-président

¹¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

Sascha DALEN GILHUIJS, Secrétaire générale

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INTERNATIONAL UNION OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS / *UNION INTERNATIONALE DES HUISSIERS DE JUSTICE ET OFFICIERS JUDICIAIRES (UIHJ)*

Mathieu CHARDON, Huissier de justice, PARIS, FRANCE

Patrick GIELEN, Secrétaire, Huissier de justice, UCCLE, BELGIQUE

WORLD BANK / BANQUE MONDIALE

Srdjan SVIRCEV, Senior Public Sector Specialist, Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions, Europe and Central Asia Region

Klaus DEKER

EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (EBRD)

Yulia SHAPOVALOVA, Principal Counsel, Legal Transitional Programme, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON LEGAL CO-OPERATION / *COMITE EUROPÉEN DE COOPÉRATION JURIDIQUE (CDCJ)*

Sopho GELASHVILI, Secretary of the CDCJ, Council of Europe

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN PROSECUTORS / *CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE PROCUREURS EUROPÉENS (CCPE)*

Jana ZEŽULOVA, President of the CCPE, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Artashes MELIKYAN, Secretary of the CCPE , Council of Europe

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN JUDGES / *CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE JUGES EUROPÉENS (CCJE)*

Artashes MELIKYAN, Secretary of the CCJE , Council of Europe

SECRETARIAT

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