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*The aim of the CEPEJ is to contribute to improving the quality of justice and the efficiency of its functioning in the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe.*

## Editorial



*Stéphane Leyenberger,  
Secretary of the CEPEJ*

The work accomplished by CEPEJ on the evaluation of European judicial systems enjoys wide recognition today and is used in an increasing number of Council of Europe member states as a guide to public justice policies. We hope that with the invaluable support of the national correspondents, the members of the Working Group on the Evaluation of Judicial Systems and the scientific experts, the 2012 edition of the report, due in September 2012, will meet these expectations.

In parallel to this process of analysing the operation of judicial systems, CEPEJ is also interested in how their operation is perceived by the beneficiaries: the users (professionals and citizens seeking justice) and, ultimately, the community. This information, which draws on more subjective elements, is necessary to supplement the factual information and ensure that due account is taken of user's expectations in the organisation and reform of judicial systems. A handbook has accordingly been produced, as part of the work of the Working Group on the Quality of Justice, to

## File: Measuring the quality of justice: ascertainment of users' expectations



Judicial systems have certain privileged audiences, such as their regular users in a professional capacity, or stakeholders, the academics studying their functioning or commenting on the decisions delivered, or their agents in person when reflecting on their own practices.

Parties to proceedings are occasional users, and set foot inside the law courts on rare occasions in their lives. Capturing the essence of their experience through opinion polls is a chancy undertaking, even if the sampling is representative of a given society. Rather, the representations of justice in a country are revealed by such surveys.

In fact it is not easy to record the opinions of parties who have effective experience to disclose. To do so, the Working group on Quality of Justice (GT-QUAL) has developed a standard instrument for measuring the satisfaction of real court users, in the form of a questionnaire administered "on leaving the hearing", designed in such a way as to be usable in the 47 Council of Europe member states: the Handbook for conducting satisfaction surveys aimed at court users ([CEPEJ Studies No. 14](#)), adopted in September 2010.

enable courts to conduct user satisfaction surveys, together with a training programme in which CEPEJ experts are at the disposal of interested courts to train their staff and help them to organise satisfaction surveys and analyse the results.

In setting up this training programme, CEPEJ members and experts have chosen to leave the meeting rooms of the Palais de l'Europe and reach out to judicial practitioners, who are the main beneficiaries of our Commission's work. This project is actually not the only one falling within this new area of work. First, there is the CEPEJ "Roadshow", which provides an opportunity for member states to organise information and exchange sessions for a wide audience of professionals based on the activities of CEPEJ. Secondly, a training programme in the use of CEPEJ's SATURN tools for improving judicial time management is available to interested courts.

CEPEJ intends in this way to provide a better understanding and clearer explanation of its tools for improving the efficiency and quality of justice and to ascertain the views of professionals on the relevance of those tools, in order to build on them and make them more directly relevant in the day-to-day work of the courts. True to its line of action, it intends to remain an innovative body anchored in the day-to-day reality of judicial systems.

**Stéphane Leyenberger**  
Secretary of the CEPEJ

In a few months, it has already undergone the ordeal by fire four times in three different countries: the judicial districts of Angoulême (France), Turin and Catania (Italy) have conducted their own satisfaction surveys on the basis of the questionnaire prepared by the CEPEJ. In the Netherlands, it has been conducted at national level. In the first two cases, it was a matter of questioning the users of a court of first instance, in the last those of a court of appeal.

While the complete results are still being analysed, the first inferences to be drawn are these:

- The tool works, and its practical use has proved its suitability;
- The survey proceeds all the more satisfactorily when users are supported in their effort of participation: if staff members of the court registries, judicial service cadets (trainee magistrates) or law, sociology or political science students are present to complete the questionnaire with justice users, participation is greater and the replies gain in quality;
- One original feature of this tool, the distinction between users' level of satisfaction for a given criterion and the importance attached to that criterion, is well understood by the respondents.
- This distinction allows rapid determination of the fields where action is necessary, ie those for which the level of satisfaction is low whereas the degree of importance is high.
- Use of the questionnaire uncovers the shortcomings of the services offered to persons before the courts: a given service, believed to meet expectations, actually receives poor marks and should be improved.

These first successful experiments enable the CEPEJ to make available to the member states a tool which has the approval of its experts, besides being tested in practice. For greater convenience in its use, the CEPEJ offers practical help to interested courts, for example by offering them the assistance of an expert during the conduct of the survey, whether for implementation or for the subsequent analysis.

**François Paychère**  
Judge at the Court of Justice  
(Geneva/Switzerland)

## File: Court users satisfaction surveys; first experiences in France, Italy and in the Netherlands



### France: Angoulême Tribunal

#### Implementation of the CEPEJ questionnaire on the quality of justice at the Angoulême Tribunal de Grande Instance in June 2010

The Angoulême Tribunal de Grande Instance was the first court in Europe to implement the questionnaire drawn up by the CEPEJ's experts.

In the minds of the judges and officials working at this French court with jurisdiction over the entire département of Charentes, which has a surface area of 5 956 sq. km and a population of nearly 340 000, the aim was not just to test the questionnaire but also to make it a full and integral part of a process of assessing and improving the quality of justice that has already been going on for several years now.

Accordingly, at the formal opening session of the court in January 2010, the heads of the court publicly announced their intention to implement the CEPEJ questionnaire in the form of a court project.

In March 2010, a working group made up of volunteer officials and judicial assistants (assistants de justice) was appointed to run the project.

In June 2010, two-member teams made up of one court official and an assistant or trainee went to meet all the users of the Angoulême law courts.

245 court users agreed to share their feelings about each of the matters raised in the questionnaire.

In their replies on their general perception of the justice system, most of the respondents said that the system was still slow and expensive and that communication was poor. Their trust in the justice system lay just above the halfway point (3.3 out of 6) as did the importance they attached to this (3.7).

The main expectations of Angoulême's court users related mostly to security (5.3 out of 6 in the importance ranking) and the attitude of judges and clerks (4.6 and 4.85).

[\(Link to the complete article\)](#)

**Nicolas JACQUET**

Public prosecutor

at the Tribunal de Grande Instance d'Angoulême



### The Netherlands

#### A national court user satisfaction survey held in the Dutch courts

In the Netherlands there is a history of ten years of court user satisfaction surveys. In 2001 the courts started to conduct these surveys and in 2011 almost all courts executed this at least two times. In 2009 the assembly of court presidents chose one national survey for all the (19) district courts and the (5) courts of appeal, held simultaneously, under

the condition of a minimal work load for the courts.

In 2010 a project group presented a plan in the assembly of court presidents. The plan enhanced a description of the products that would be delivered. Among those products were an individual report for each court and a general report including all the courts. A major advantage of the national survey is the ability of benchmarking: for example division civil-trade from court x with all divisions civil-trade in The Netherlands. Instead of a local survey which compares the different divisions within a court.

[\(Link to the complete article\)](#)

**Ezra van Duuren**

Quality program secretary, the Dutch Council for the Judiciary  
Secretary of the survey project group  
&

**Yinka Tempelman**

Quality program leader, the Dutch Council for the Judiciary  
Member of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL

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## **Italy: The experience of Turin and Catania**

### **Users' customer satisfaction analysis: the Italian experience (January-March) 2011**

Taking the opportunity offered by the CEPEJ, in September 2010 the Statistics department within the Italian Ministry of Justice invited the Tribunal of Turin and the Court of Appeal of Catania (pilot courts within the network of CEPEJ) to conduct a Customer Satisfaction Survey among the users of justice. Also the Court of Appeal of Turin and the Tribunal of Catania immediately joint the initiative.

A key success factor towards the success of such kind of activity is to involve as much as possible all the stakeholders of the world-justice. Therefore, we decided to create a working group with the participation of representatives from the courts (judges and staff), from the Ministry of Justice (mainly statisticians with experience in conducting such surveys), from the local bar of lawyers and from the university.

The working group decided that the objectives of the survey were:

- To evaluate the overall satisfaction level of Justice amongst the final users
- To establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be tracked throughout time
- To pinpoint the areas of improvement and (propose to) take action accordingly
- To analyse the satisfaction amongst specific sub-samples (e.g. males/ females, age classes, ...)
- To plot Performance vs Importance diagram.

[\(Link to the complete article\)](#)

**Fabio Bartolomeo**

Director general of statistics at the Italian Ministry of Justice  
CEPEJ Expert

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## **Ongoing activities: what's new?**

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### **Evaluation of judicial systems**

The working group on evaluation of judicial systems (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL) is implementing the new evaluation process of judicial systems, which should lead to the publication of a new report in September 2012. The national correspondents have until 31 December 2011 to complete the Scheme.



Work is also underway, in co-operation with the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL and with the Steering group of the SATURN Centre, to define judicial quality indicators.

► [More information](#)

## Timeframes of proceedings



The Steering group of the SATURN Centre for judicial time management (CEPEJ-SATURN), in co-operation with the Network of Pilot courts, pursues the setting up of a European Observatory of judicial timeframes, with a qualitative and quantitative double-approach. A training programme for the courts has been set up for the courts wishing to be supported in the implementation of the measures developed by the CEPEJ to improve judicial time management; experts from the CEPEJ are at the disposal of the voluntary courts to work with them in this direction, on the basis of a handbook of methodology set up by the SATURN Centre. The interested courts are invited to contact the CEPEJ Secretariat: [Stephane.Leyenberger@coe.int](mailto:Stephane.Leyenberger@coe.int).

Furthermore, the SATURN Centre expects to refine the number of civil, criminal and administrative cases which could be subject to a regular follow-up in order to measure and understand timeframes of proceedings for these cases, considered in an homogeneous manner in the different member States.

► [More information](#)

## Quality of Justice



The working group on quality of justice (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL) proposes to voluntary courts a training programme for the organisation of court users satisfaction surveys, on the basis of a methodological handbook adopted last year. CEPEJ experts may accompany voluntary courts for this purpose. The interested courts are invited to contact the CEPEJ Secretariat: [Stephane.Leyenberger@coe.int](mailto:Stephane.Leyenberger@coe.int).

Work is also underway, in co-operation with the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL and the Groupe de pilotage of the SATURN Centre, to define justice quality indicators.

Furthermore, the working group is preparing guidelines on the main principles which should preside the reorganisation of judicial maps.

► [More information...](#)

## Network of Pilot courts



The plenary meeting of the Network of pilot courts took place in Strasbourg, on 22 September 2011. The Group provided its expertise in the field of the CEPEJ's work already underway for the organisation of satisfaction surveys in courts, the definition of common case categories which might be subject to a specific study in the field of length of procedure and identification of quality indicators of the functioning of the courts.

► [More information...](#)

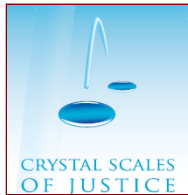
## European Day of Justice



The main event of the 9th edition of the European Day of Justice took place in the Tribunal de Grande Instance of Toulouse (France) in presence of representatives of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission. About fifteen countries participated to the celebration of the day

through the organisation of events aimed at improving the knowledge of citizens of the functioning of their judicial systems. The events which do not figure on the CEPEJ Website may be transmitted to [Annette.Sattel@coe.int](mailto:Annette.Sattel@coe.int). Furthermore, the member States willing to introduce their application for the celebration of the main event in 2012, should send their draft application to this address before 31 January 2012.

▶ [More information...](#)



## Crystal Scales of Justice

The call for applications to participate in the 6th edition of the Crystal Scales of Justice will be launched in March 2012.

▶ [More information...](#)



## 2010 CEPEJ activity report

The CEPEJ Vice-President, Georg Stawa, presented the 2010 CEPEJ activity report to the Committee of Ministers. He has underlined working prospects for the coming months. The Committee of Ministers widely congratulated the CEPEJ for its works which are oriented towards concrete results in the fields of independence and efficiency of justice.

▶ [2010 CEPEJ activity report](#)



## Publications

▶ [Study on the situation of the contractualisation and judicial process in Europe - CEPEJ Studies No. 16 / Julien Lhuillier, Institute of Criminology and Criminal Law, University of Lausanne, Scientific expert of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice](#)

▶ [Study on Council of Europe Member States on Appeal and Supreme Courts' Lengths of Proceedings - CEPEJ Studies No. 17 / Report prepared by Marco Velicogna IRSIG-CNR, Expert of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice](#)

## Readers corner

You wish to react to an article published in this issue or suggest topics to be addressed in future editions ? Please send us your suggestions by e-mail to the following address: [cepej@coe.int](mailto:cepej@coe.int).

## Forthcoming events

- 18th CEPEJ plenary meeting, Strasbourg [07-08 December 2011](#)