

GOVERNMENT OF MALTA  
MINISTRY FOR JUSTICE

**CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF CEPEJ MALTA | 27, 28 JUNE 2022**

**38<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY MEETING**  
**20<sup>TH</sup> CEPEJ ANNIVERSARY**

**Recording by the Secretary General, Council of Europe,  
Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić**

Ministers,

Distinguished experts, jurists and guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

For two decades now, CEPEJ has played a central role in upholding individuals' fundamental rights.

The European Convention on Human Rights –

Ratified by every Council of Europe member state –

Guarantees the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time –

And the right to effective remedy.

Ensuring these is vital to exercising all of the other rights and freedoms laid out in the Convention.

So, it is vitally important that national justice systems are marked by quality and efficiency.

Of course, in the first instance, it is the responsibility of member states themselves to ensure this.

But they must not be left without help.

Among the range of mechanisms at their disposal, CEPEJ is of central importance:

Identifying individual problems and trends –

And supporting national authorities by providing the guidance and practical tools needed to implement reform.

Over the past 20 years, CEPEJ has gone from strength to strength.

It has provided a wide range of in-depth analysis –

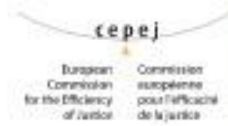
Based on extensive data - collected, collated and examined by leading experts.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Evaluation Report of European Judicial Systems is a case in point.

And I hope that CEPEJ will adopt it at the plenary session that will follow this event.

But it is also important to point out the wide range of work that CEPEJ produces in support of those who use Europe's justice systems –

And the professionals who work within them.



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This is clear from the tools produced by its working groups and used in cooperation projects with member states.

In recent years, these have included guidelines for communication with the media and public –

The improvement of judges' skills and competences –

And on the centrality of users in civil proceedings –

To name just three.

CEPEJ is also future-focused.

The rise of digital technology is posing new challenges to ensuring quality and efficient justice –

Trends that have advanced as a result of changes to working methods caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

So, CEPEJ's work on hearings by videoconference and electronic court filing has been important.

And so too has its support for states as they digitalise their justice systems.

When it comes to the role that Artificial Intelligence is now playing – and which will only expand –

The CEPEJ European Ethical Charter on this subject is crucial -

Along with its current Activity Programme –

Its Action Plan on Digitalisation for a Better Justice –

And its planned Resource Centre and Advisory Board on AI and Cyberjustice.

Taken together, these form a bedrock of resources from which our member states can draw guidance and embrace a tech-facing future.

Of course, more long-standing problems also remain.

Many countries still struggle with the length of proceedings in civil, criminal and administrative matters.

And the recent public health crisis has made this worse by slowing down the rate at which cases can be processed.

But whether we speak of old challenges – or new – CEPEJ has proven its capacity to support and to adapt.

I have no doubt that this will continue -

And that European justice will be stronger for it.

Congratulations to everyone involved in CEPEJ as we mark this important anniversary.