



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR JUSTICE

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

38TH PLENARY MEETING
20TH CEPEJ ANNIVERSARY

Intervention by Hon. Dr. Jonathan Attard, Minister of Justice of Malta

Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms Pejčinović Burić,
President Garagurbanli,
Honourable Mr Justice Depasquale,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished experts and guests,
Jurists,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I begin, please let me welcome you all to this sixteenth century landmark in our Capital City.

And I welcome those of you who have travelled to Malta especially for the conference. We are pleased to see you.

I hope your stay is proving to be enjoyable despite the extensive warm temperatures and that you will return again.

It is a pleasure to address you on the occasion of the 20 years of CEPEJ.

During the past 20 years the CEPEJ has played an important role, not just in every member state, but also in the international field.

It serves as a guiding forum that connects us all.

Justice should neither be delayed, nor denied and in order for this to be done we need to ensure that all projects undertaken with the aim to enhance the quality and efficiency of Justice are measurable – since whatever is not measurable is generally speaking not worth pursuing.

It is for this reason that I hereby wholeheartedly thank CEPEJ, and hence all of you hereby gathered today, for your work and efforts in this regard.

Exchanging knowledge and good practices – especially in areas dealing with the efficiency and the digitalisation of our Justice System is to be encouraged and further fostered.

This does not only create healthy networks but also inspire new ways of proverbially reaching the centre.

We are committed to continue enhancing said exchanges and building our networks and bridges in order to learn from one another's experiences.

As already underlined in the introductory speech by Secretary General Pejčinović Burić, the quality and efficiency of national justice systems is of the essence in any functioning Justice system.

Whilst ensuring that national legal systems and traditions are respected, CEPEJ's support towards national authorities in their pursuit to enhance the national justice system is of central importance.

This Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Robert Abela, is committed and fully determined to continue on in its pathway in attaining this goal.

As retained in the Electoral Manifesto, my Government is committed to addressing the efficiency of justice by implementing new landmark reforms.

These reforms includes major amendments to the committal process and the appeals procedure, which both are intended to address the problem of the delays that have accumulated over the years.

Furthermore, Government will continue to invest in the infrastructure and human resources to achieve the best possible results and ensure that justice is not only done but manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be served.

In order to continue enhancing the quality of our national justice system, Government is also committed to facilitating the transition to a more digitalised justice environment.

This is being done through the recently launched Digital Justice Strategy, which Strategy shall be achieved through the gradual redesign of the business processes in the justice sector.

We want to have a system that is digital by default, whilst ensuring that all citizens and legal professionals have access to justice and legal information irrespective of one's level of IT literacy.

The Digital Justice Strategy, in and of itself, also continues to cater for the building and improving of digital skills and competences of the Judiciary as well as of all the stakeholders within the Justice sector.

In the coming months the Justice Ministry will be rolling out several initiatives within this Strategy based on consultation and all aimed to facilitate the access to Justice.

We believe that training members of the judiciary is the solid bedrock and backbone of a strong, effective, independent national justice system.

In fact, apart from providing the necessary training, we are also looking into introducing the use of Artificial intelligence to assist the Judiciary in analysing documents and court decisions.

We are committed to see this through, in order to further enhance the quality of our national justice system.

In terms of its independence, and in line with the January 2022 Eurobarometer surveys, over 70% of the general public and over 65% of companies consider the Maltese judicial institution to be independent.

This marks a notable improvement in public and industry perception of judicial independence over the previous years.

This is also as a result of a number of reforms undertaken over the past few months, rendering the appointment procedures of all members of the judiciary, including that of the Chief Justice, even more independent and severed from any linkages to the executive.

By way of conclusion, let me once again thank you all for your tireless work and efforts in making national justice systems more efficient and hence of higher quality to all Justice users.

I would like to also extend my thanks to the organisation team from the office of the Permanent Secretary namely Joanne Battistino, Paul Pace and Katrianne Rizzo, that worked tirelessly in organising the conference.

On a personal note, I would also like to thank Mr Justice Francesco Depasquale, for his hands on approach and putting hours into work to push forward the digitalisation reforms both locally and Internationally.

Finally let me also take this opportunity to wish CEPEJ a happy 20th birthday.

Thank you.