

**30th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of justice**  
**“transparent and efficient justice”**  
Istanbul, 24 – 26 November 2010

**SPEECH**

**Mr Loucas LOUCA, Minister of Justice and Public Order**  
**CYPRUS**

Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Having taken the floor for the first time, on behalf of Cyprus, I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing our appreciation and sincere thanks for the warm hospitality accorded to us, and congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for the excellent organization of this Conference.

I also wish to express my appreciation for the laborious and indeed impressive main report you have presented for the Conference, as well as thank the Secretary General and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe for the preparation of the other elaborate reports and draft papers, all of which guide and support our deliberations.

Advances in technology and particularly the constantly growing borderless “e-world”, which affects many aspects of life, indeed poses a duty for Governments and Judiciaries to embark on structural and procedural changes, for modernizing the administration of justice through the increased use of Information and Communication Technologies, so as to improve efficiency and transparency of justice for the benefit of court-users.

It is clear that efficiency of justice cannot, in today’s electronic environment, be effected anymore by conventional methods and means. A modern case management system, making use of ICT in case – tracking and planning, in scheduling of procedural stages and hearings, in paper management and, generally, the automation of the back-office and the administrative work of court staff, is a key weapon in tackling backlog of cases and delays, as it allows judges to focus on their main task and more expediently deliver it.

Moreover, the use of information and communication technologies is indispensable in strengthening international cooperation, as it facilitates the timely and successful response to requests for mutual legal assistance. Video-conferencing is an example of a time and money saving measure, increasing efficiency in international cooperation, a measure that we, in Cyprus have also made use of.

But it is also true that, at least for some jurisdictions, the transfer of the administration of justice from conventional structures into the electronic environment, may be faced with skepticism by stake-holders who are unfamiliar with the new concepts and the complexity of e-justice and may be reluctant to leave legal tradition behind. In my belief, transition to e-justice is better served by gradual and concrete steps, building on confidence among the legal stakeholders and also the public, rather than sweeping changes.

Furthermore we are all aware of the possible threats to human rights resulting from the misuse of data collected by justice systems and law enforcement agencies and also the need to address issues that arise in crossborder use of ICT.

In my mind, it is again a case of striking out a fair balance between reshaping justice systems in today’s e-world, while maintaining safety and certainty of law and protection of human rights.

I think that these elements are adequately reflected in draft resolutions 1 and 3, therefore I express our agreement with the texts respectively.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.