



EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE (CEPEJ)

*More than 20 years working
to improve the quality of
justice in Europe*

Presentation of CEPEJ
tools

cepej

European
Commission
for the Efficiency
of Justice

Commission
européenne
pour l'efficacité
de la justice

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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CEPEJ AT A GLANCE



Established in 2002

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) was established in 2002 by the Committee of ministers of the Council of Europe in order to improve the quality and efficiency of European judicial systems.



4 Working Groups

The 4 working groups of the CEPEJ are responsible for developing tools to improve the administration of the public justice service. These tools are presented in the following pages.



46 member states
and many observers

The CEPEJ is composed of representatives of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe. The following states have observer status: the Holy See, Canada, Mexico, the United States, Japan, Guatemala, Israel, Kazakhstan, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as numerous international organisations representing legal professionals.



Cooperation
programmes

The CEPEJ implements cooperation projects in which it supports the deployment of its tools within the judicial systems of certain countries of the European Union, the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Mediterranean.



Innovative objectives

The CEPEJ aims to strengthen the confidence of litigants in judicial systems and to promote the public service of justice.



3 networks...

- **National correspondents:** data collection
- **Pilot courts:** dissemination of tools
- **Cyberjustice officers:** reflexion forum, exchange of good practices

The **Working Group on quality of justice (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL)** is responsible for developing ways of analysing the work carried out within the judicial systems of the member states, as well as tools aimed at improving the quality of the public justice service, particularly with regard to the expectations of justice professionals and users.

The **Working Group on Cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence (CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST)** is responsible for developing tools to provide a framework and guarantees for member states and legal professionals willing to create or use ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) and/or artificial intelligence (AI) mechanisms in legal systems, in order to improve the efficiency and quality of justice.



The **Working Group on mediation (CEPEJ-GT-MED)** - from 2006 to 2007 and from 2017 to 2019 - has played a key role in the development of mediation practices in Europe, covering family, criminal, administrative and civil matters.

The **Working Group on evaluation of judicial systems (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL)** is responsible for implementing the CEPEJ's tool for the objective evaluation of the functioning of judicial systems, and for developing tools for measuring the effectiveness and quality of justice, in particular relevant indicators or indexes.

The **Working Group on judicial time management (CEPEJ-SATURN)** is responsible for collecting and sharing relevant information on the management of judicial time for courts and public prosecutors and for developing tools to improve their efficiency, in order to enable member states to implement policies aimed at preventing any violation of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time.

I. TOOLS DEVELOPED FOR THE EVALUATION OF JUSTICE

1. The CEPEJ Evaluation Report on European judicial systems



The Report is divided into three parts: the first contains analyses of European trends, structured around major themes such as the budget, professionals, users' access to the courts, efficiency and ICT; the second contains country factsheets presenting a selection of key data and indicators as well as summary analyses of the main aspects of each judicial system; the third contains the CEPEJ-STAT database (see below).

Within the framework of these evaluation cycles, the CEPEJ has developed its own methodology for collecting data from the CEPEJ's national correspondents and for quality control of these data, thereby guaranteeing their quality and comparability. This methodology applies to all CEPEJ evaluation exercises.

2. CEPEJ annual study for the European Union Justice Scoreboard

Since 2012, the CEPEJ has produced an annual study which is one of the main sources of the EU Justice Scoreboard published by the European Commission. This study is composed of a comparative section for all the EU member states and individual country reports.





3. CEPEJ annual Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Dashboards



The CEPEJ organises specific annual data collections on the state of judicial reforms in these two regions. The reports present the data in a comparative manner and through country profiles containing detailed analyses of the main indicators selected in order to improve the quality, efficiency and accountability of the beneficiaries' judicial systems by achieving a better knowledge of the systems and an identification of regional trends.



4. CEPEJ- STAT



This database contains all the data and comments provided by the member states as part of the CEPEJ evaluation cycle since 2010, and is freely accessible.

This tool provides access to the data but also enables certain relevant comparisons to be made, in particular through the various dashboards presented (overview of judicial systems, efficiency, budget, ICT, gender equality, judges and prosecutors).

II. TOOLS DEVELOPED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF JUSTICE



1. Checklist for promoting the quality of justice and the courts (2008)

This checklist is intended for policy-makers, court managers and judges to promote and improve the quality of judicial services. It contains questions organised by area to quickly identify the presence or absence of quality policies and indicators. The list can be used to develop new policies or modify existing ones.

2. Guidelines on the creation of judicial maps to support access to justice within a quality judicial system (2013)

Access to justice is a fundamental right. In order to bring judicial administration closer to citizens, States often need to create a network of courts accessible to all, throughout the territory. The CEPEJ has drawn up this document to provide a reference framework for administrators and decision-makers, helping them to undertake reforms and take decisions to design or redesign a country's judicial map.



3. Measuring the quality of justice (2016)

Quality has many aspects, particularly in the legal field. Although systems exist to measure it, they are limited.

This document provides decision-makers and practitioners with an approach, a method and a series of indicators for measuring the quality of judicial services.



4. Handbook for conducting satisfaction surveys aimed at court users in Council of Europe member states (2016)



This handbook helps courts to develop surveys to assess the satisfaction of users of the public justice service with the services provided, thereby promoting a quality culture focused on users. The CEPEJ proposes an adaptable standard model with a methodological guide to facilitate this process.

5. Guide on communication with the media and the public for courts and prosecution authorities (2018)

This guide is aimed at courts and judicial authorities to help them manage their communications with the public and the media. It underlines the importance of good visibility of justice to ensure citizens' trust in their judicial system.

The CEPEJ therefore intends to propose a tool enabling judicial institutions to adopt a global communication strategy using all available means.



6. Guidelines to improve the judges' expertise and interpersonal skills (2019)

This document provides an overview of the practices and tools used in Council of Europe member states to improve the quality of justice by breaking down the traditional isolation of judges. It emphasises access to information, the sharing of experience, a supportive working environment and a professional ethical culture. These methods promote informed decision-making and strengthen public confidence in the justice system.

This tool enables decision-makers and practitioners to develop and improve the sharing of knowledge between judges and with external stakeholders in order to ensure quality justice.



7. Guidelines on the centrality of the user in legal proceedings in civil matters and on the simplification and clarification of language with users (2021)



Two comparative studies and a series of guidelines have been developed on the simplification and clarification of legal language and on putting the user at the centre of civil procedures. The aim is to improve the intelligibility of the law and mutual respect between citizens and the judicial institutions.



8. Guidelines on gender equality in the recruitment and promotion of judges (2022)



Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the Council of Europe, based on the principle of non-discrimination.

These guidelines aim to promote gender equality in the profession of judge, ensuring fair access for all, balanced participation and progression based on competence. They also take into account work-life balance and seek to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and stereotypes.

The measures must be adapted to the different national realities.



III. TOOLS DEVELOPED FOR JUDICIAL TIME MANAGEMENT



1. Time management checklist (2023)

In order to avoid delays and reduce the length of judicial proceedings, the CEPEJ considered it useful to develop a Time Management Checklist to be used by stakeholders in judicial systems. It provides a diagnostic tool to collect relevant information on cases while effectively analysing their length. Based on this, the guide helps to put in place concrete measures aimed at resolving disputes promptly while making the judicial process more transparent and predictable for all.



2. SATURN guidelines for judicial time management (2021)

These guidelines aim to promote concrete measures to resolve disputes within a reasonable time. They emphasise the importance of a global analysis of the tools used in judicial systems, enabling effective strategies to be developed to improve the length of proceedings. The document is aimed at various justice professionals, including judges, court managers and non-judge staff, prosecutors and lawyers.



3. Backlog reduction tool (2023)

This tool seeks to resolve judicial backlog problems by proposing a step-by-step methodology for developing strategies adapted to specific judicial systems. It identifies the underlying causes, proposes measures and offers adaptable approaches. The implementation requires cooperation with courts and judicial institutions.



4. Handbook on court dashboards (2021)

This manual helps to design judicial dashboards to improve data management and visualisation. It covers content, visualisation, technical aspects and gives practical advice tailored to the specific needs of the judicial system. The handbook is intended to help stakeholders in judicial systems to effectively monitor and analyse court performance.



5. Case weighting in judicial systems (2020)

Measuring the complexity of judicial work is a challenging, sensitive but essential procedure for making decisions about case management and judicial workload. European practices in terms of case weighting have been examined by the CEPEJ, highlighting the similarities and differences between the models used.

Recommendations have also been made to guide those interested in implementing or re-evaluating a case weighting system.



6. Case-weighting in public prosecution services (2023)

Case weighting provides a more detailed and accurate understanding of the complexity of judicial work, facilitating informed case management for prosecutors.



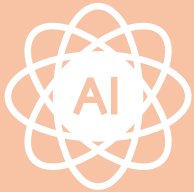
Some European courts have taken initiatives to integrate case weighting into their public prosecution services. This tool examines different approaches to measuring prosecutors' workloads.



7. Implementation guide for SATURN judicial time management tools (2015)

The SATURN guide to judicial time management seeks to solve the problem of excessively long proceedings and enable courts to work in a predictable way. It involves all relevant actors, identifies obstacles and proposes practical solutions to improve judicial time management.

The guide also offers a useful dialogue between the CEPEJ and European courts, as well as a four-step methodology: collection, evaluation, implementation of priorities and reporting.

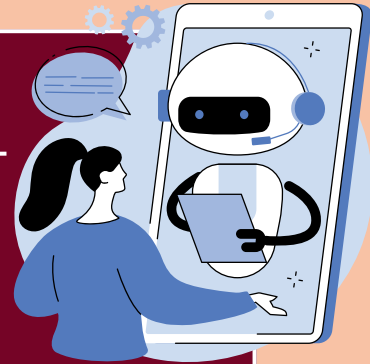


IV. TOOLS DEVELOPED IN THE FIELD OF CYBERJUSTICE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

1. Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence (IA)

The Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and AI, accessible to the public from the CEPEJ website, provides reliable information on artificial intelligence systems and other key cyberjustice tools actually implemented as part of the digital transformation of the judicial system.

It provides an overview of these systems and tools, and is a starting point for an in-depth examination of their risks and benefits for professionals and end-users, in line with the principles contained in the 'European Ethical Charter on the use of AI in judicial systems and their environment'.



2. European ethical Charter on the use of Artificial Intelligence in judicial systems and their environment (2018)



The Charter provides a framework of principles to guide policy makers, lawyers and legal professionals in managing the rapid development of AI in national judicial processes. The CEPEJ's view, as set out in the Charter, is that the use of AI in the field of justice can contribute to improving the efficiency and quality of the work of the courts.

Its implementation must be carried out in a responsible manner in compliance with the fundamental rights guaranteed in particular by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Personal Data. For the CEPEJ, it is crucial to ensure that AI remains a tool at the service of the general interest and that it is used in a way that respects individual rights.

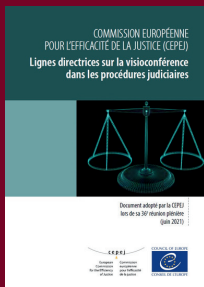
3. Assessment Tool for the operationalisation of the European Ethical Charter on the use of Artificial Intelligence in judicial systems and their environment (2023)



This tool aims to operationalise the CEPEJ Charter by providing a set of key measures and safeguards to guide public decision-makers in the procurement, design, development, implementation and use of AI in judicial systems, in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

The assessment tool aligns its logic with those of compliance and risk-based regulations, complementing the Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law Impact Assessment (HUDERIA) developed by the Council of Europe's Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), alongside the [Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#), which is the first legally binding international instrument in this field.

4. Guidelines on videoconferencing in judicial proceedings (2021)



These guidelines provide a set of measures designed to enable videoconferencing to be used in judicial proceedings to ensure a fair and secure trial, while respecting the rights of the parties. They cover all types of judicial proceedings, and pay particular attention to technical aspects. An annex provides a checklist for the practical implementation of videoconferencing in legal proceedings.

5. Selection of national best practices on videoconferencing in judicial proceedings (2021)



This document presents a selection of examples of national good practices used for the development of videoconferencing procedures in court proceedings. It aims to improve access to justice and enable remote control and accountability of hearings.

Each national good practice selected refers to the relevant point of the CEPEJ guidelines on videoconferencing in judicial proceedings.

6. Guidelines on electronic court filing (e-filing) and digitalisation of courts (2021)

The guidelines provide a complete framework covering the legal, organisational, socio-cultural and technical aspects of the digitisation of court records. They aim to establish a digital network enabling exchanges between courts and users while respecting the essential values of justice.

These guidelines are adapted to the specific institutional, legal and technological features of each State in order to ensure the effective implementation of the system for the digitisation of case files while guaranteeing the proper processing of data



7. Guide on judicial e-auctions (2023)



This guide provides an overall framework covering all aspects of online judicial auctions, supplemented by a detailed comparative study of their implementation in Europe. It is a tool for evaluating and improving existing functionalities and for sharing national best practices in this area.

V. OTHER TOOLS

1. Mediation development toolkit (2018)

The toolbox aims to help member states develop mediation with a range of practical instruments:

- checklists for national pilot projects
- a document for judges and court clerks on judicial referral to mediation,
- a training programme for mediators
- awareness-raising documents for the legal professions (bailiffs, notaries, lawyers),
- frequently asked questions on mediation, and
- a specific guide for lawyers developed with the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE).

These tools can be adapted to the specific needs of individual countries.

2. European Handbook for Mediation Lawmaking (2019)

This handbook proposes effective practices for mediation, encouraging legislators to adopt laws in accordance with international standards. It highlights the importance of taking into account the national legal context and choosing appropriate recommendations. Excessive regulation can hinder the natural development of mediation.

The Handbook is divided into two parts: one with concrete examples reflecting good practices and a comparative analysis explaining certain provisions.





3. Promoting mediation to resolve administrative disputes in Council of Europe member states (2022)

The guide to administrative mediation aims to encourage and facilitate the use of administrative mediation in the States through a practical and concrete approach. It highlights the specific features of administrative mediation without presenting it as a substitute for court action or a solution to the dysfunctions of the judicial system.

The guide highlights the benefits of mediation and proposes measures to promote its development as widely as possible in this field.

4. Guidelines on alternative dispute resolution (2023)



Some Council of Europe member states have made progress in introducing new ADR technologies into their legal systems. However, these initiatives must comply with the fundamental principles associated with these non-adversarial or consensus-based methods of settling disputes: confidentiality, voluntary nature and independence of the service provider.

These guidelines are intended to help member states and all interested parties to implement online ADR effectively while respecting the principles set out in the CEPEJ's mediation instruments.

5. Good practice guide on enforcement of judicial decisions (2015)



It is a guide highlighting good practice in enforcement in the member states. Its aim is to improve the quality of civil enforcement.

The guide proposes recommendations and measures to be followed for each of the four areas, which are:

- the control of enforcement processes by enforcement agents
- the understanding of the enforcement process by the parties
- the improvement of the quality of enforcement procedures
- the promotion of a common legal terminology on enforcement



VI. CRYSTAL SCALES OF JUSTICE PRIZE

Created in 2005, the "Crystal Scales of Justice" Prize is a competition aimed at discovering and highlighting innovative and efficient practices concerning the functioning of justice, judicial procedures, or the organisation of courts.

The competition is open to courts, bar associations, legal professionals, NGOs, or bodies responsible for judicial matters in a Council of Europe member State or in an observer country to the CEPEJ.

The competition is held every two years, in odd-numbered years.



Crystal Scales of Justice Prize - Junior Edition

The initiatives rewarded by the Crystal Scales of Justice Prize also provide a source of inspiration for Master's students at law schools in Council of Europe member states and CEPEJ observers. As part of this Junior Edition, the teams of students must defend one of the winning projects of the Crystal Scales of Justice Prize through a legal analysis and research work, highlighting the innovative aspects of the project and studying its possible transposition to another context or another country.

The competition is held every two years, in even-numbered years.



For further information

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all the members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights monitors the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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