Strasbourg, 5 December 2023

CEPEJ(2023)13FINAL

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE (CEPEJ)

2024 – 2025 Activity Programme of the CEPEJ

Adopted by the CEPEJ in accordance with Article 7.5 of its Statute
1. The Committee of Ministers has entrusted the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) with the mission of working with member States to promote effective implementation of Council of Europe instruments concerning the organisation of judicial systems, promoting justice as an efficient public service functioning with quality and taking the users of the justice system into account, and helping to disencumber the European Court of Human Rights by offering member States effective solutions prior to legal proceedings, preventing violations of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

2. Under Article 2 of its Statute, contained in the Committee of Ministers’ Resolution Res(2002)12, the CEPEJ is required to:
   ▪ examine the results achieved by the different judicial systems, using common statistical criteria and means of evaluation,
   ▪ analyse problems and areas for possible improvements, and
   ▪ identify concrete ways of improving the evaluation and functioning of member States’ judicial systems, regard being had to the specific needs of each State.

3. The independence and efficiency of justice remain among the key strategic priorities of the Organisation as set out in the four-year strategic framework 2022-2025 of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in particular the tasks concerning the “independence, efficiency and resilience of the judicial systems of our member states” and the “artificial intelligence and the broader impact of digital transformation and the use of new technologies on human rights, democracy and the rule of law”, in accordance with Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe. This programme is also in line with the Council of Europe Contribution to the United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development goals – Goal 16: Access to justice.

4. The CEPEJ’s activity contributes to the implementation of the “Council of Europe Plan of Action on Strengthening Judicial Independence and Impartiality” adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 April 2016 following the report by the Secretary General “on the state of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe”.

5. This activity programme is designed around six areas of responsibility vested in the CEPEJ:
   a. developing tools for analysing the functioning of justice and ensuring that public policies of justice are geared towards greater efficiency and quality,
   b. obtaining an in-depth knowledge of the timeframes of proceedings for reaching optimum and foreseeable judicial time,
   c. promoting quality of judicial systems and courts,
   d. developing targeted co-operation at the request of a member or partner State and promoting among the stakeholders in the member or partner States the implementation of the measures and the use of the tools designed by the CEPEJ,
   e. analysing, developing and disseminating relevant tools on emerging issues of cyberjustice and artificial intelligence in judicial systems as regards the efficiency and quality of judicial systems,
   f. strengthening relations with users of the justice system, as well as national and international bodies.

6. It includes co-operation programmes (including Joint programmes with the European Union) for promoting the concrete implementation of the CEPEJ methodology and tools by justice decision-makers and in courts, as an integral part of the CEPEJ’s own activities. Such activities offer a genuine added value in the field of justice to the member States and non-member States seeking for closer co-operation with the Council of Europe.

7. Where appropriate, the activities will be carried out in co-operation with the relevant Council of Europe committees, as well as the observers to the CEPEJ.

8. The activity programme is implemented according to available budgetary resources (ordinary budget and other budgetary resources), under the CEPEJ’s overall authority, in accordance with the responsibilities laid down in Resolution Res(2002)12. Within its responsibilities, the CEPEJ Bureau prepares the ground for this work and issues the necessary guidance.
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<th>General responsibilities of the CEPEJ (a)</th>
<th>To develop tools for evaluating and analysing the functioning of justice and ensuring that public policies of justice are geared towards greater efficiency and quality</th>
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| **Specific objectives**              | To have a detailed knowledge of European judicial systems and the evolution of the day-to-day functioning of the courts, in order to facilitate the reform process in the member States and beyond  
  To develop tools to measure the efficiency and quality of justice, notably relevant indicators or indexes  
  To provide expertise for the analysis of the functioning of judicial systems to better assess efforts made in the field of judiciary reforms and to strengthen mutual confidence between the judicial systems of member States, in particular as regards efficiency, quality and accountability of the judicial systems |
| **Tasks**                            | Implementation of the 2024 evaluation cycle (2022 data) in the member States and volunteer observer States (including notably Israel and Morocco) making sure to strengthen the role of CEPEJ national correspondents  
  Preparation and adoption of the evaluation report of judicial systems (Edition 2024) structured around specific issues (budget, professionals, access to justice and users of the courts, efficiency and quality) and enrichment of the CEPEJ-STAT database to be more interactive for the user  
  Continue cooperation with professional organisations with observer status by initiating specific studies prepared by these organisations on the basis of CEPEJ data (2022 data)  
  Promotion of the 2024 evaluation report highlighting European trends and country fiches. Raising awareness among CEPEJ members and national correspondents on the need to ensure adequate visibility of the report in their states  
  Co-operation with the European Commission consisting of the preparation of an annual Study, based on the CEPEJ methodology, evaluating the functioning of judicial systems, to be used for the preparation of the "EU Justice Scoreboard"  
  Co-operation with the European Commission consisting of the preparation of an annual Study, based on the CEPEJ methodology, evaluating efficiency, quality and accountability of Western Balkans ("Justice Dashboard WB") and EaP judicial systems ("Justice Dashboard EaP") |
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Means of the CEPEJ to accomplish its tasks:

4 plenary meetings of the CEPEJ

4 meetings of the Bureau of the CEPEJ

5 meetings of the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL (other online meetings can be organised as needed)

4 meetings of the CEPEJ-SATURN (other online meetings can be organised as needed)

4 meetings of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL (other online meetings may be organised as necessary)

4 meetings of the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST (further online meetings can be organised as needed)

2 meetings of the CEPEJ Network of National Correspondents (further online meetings can be organised as needed)

2 meetings of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot courts

Online meetings of the CEPEJ European Cyberjustice Network

Ad hoc visits of a CEPEJ-GT-EVAL / Secretariat delegation to the member states when needed for data collection

Peer review visits (5 maximum with 3 experts)

Participation of representatives of the CEPEJ and the CEPEJ Secretariat in various fora to present the various CEPEJ tools

CEPEJ-COLLECT and CEPEJ-STAT

Specific cooperation programmes in collaboration with other partners (including the EU)

2 training meetings for CEPEJ experts

Skills and availability of CEPEJ experts

CEPEJ means of communication: website, presence on social networks

European Day of Justice

Crystal Scales of Justice Prize and Junior Crystal Scales of Justice Prize (jury meetings and prize-giving event)
1. Tasks

In accordance with article 7.2.b of Appendix 1 to Resolution Res(2002)12, and under the authority of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Working Group on evaluation of judicial systems (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL) is instructed to implement the common tool set up by the CEPEJ which aims at evaluating in an objective manner the functioning of the judicial systems, as well as developing tools to measure the efficiency and quality of justice, notably relevant indicators or indexes.

In order to fulfil its tasks, the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL shall in particular:

a. determine and follow the implementation of the 2024 evaluation cycle of the European judicial systems (2022 data), in particular the national judicial data collection and processing and prepare the draft evaluation report, to be adopted at the 42th plenary meeting of the CEPEJ;

b. make proposals for the appropriate use of the results achieved by the evaluation exercise that constitutes the basis of the Report “European judicial systems - 2024 edition” through the identification of orientations and trends observed among judicial systems, so that these results may be used in a concrete and fruitful manner in public policies of justice;

c. pursue the development of the interactive CEPEJ-STAT database;

d. ensure the proper information and communication regarding the Edition 2024 of the Report at the level of the different member and observer states, in particular by making CEPEJ members and national correspondents aware of the need to ensure good visibility of the Report, in particular for the public;

e. assess the impact of the Report;

f. initiate, follow and approve specific studies using the data of the 2024 cycle (2022 data), with a view to publishing them;

g. continue providing support to the CEPEJ national correspondents in their various tasks, enhancing their role and ensuring specific training on the tools developed by the CEPEJ in the framework of evaluation;

h. organise the 2026 evaluation cycle (based on 2024 data), by advising in due time the national correspondents, organising the concrete modalities for data collection and processing as well as anticipating the structure and the outline of the next Report so as to guide the data processing;

i. coordinate and supervise the preparation of the CEPEJ Study supporting the annual publication of the “EU Justice Scoreboard”, consisting in collecting and analysing data on the functioning of the judicial systems of the European Union Member States, following the established CEPEJ methodology;

j. coordinate and supervise the preparation of the CEPEJ Evaluation report by collecting and analysing data on the functioning of the judicial systems in Western Balkans Beneficiaries (exercise known as the European Union – CEPEJ “Dashboard Western Balkans”);

k. coordinate and supervise the preparation of the CEPEJ Evaluation report by collecting and analysing data on the functioning of the judicial systems in Eastern Partnership Beneficiaries (exercise known as the European Union – CEPEJ “Justice Dashboard Eap”);

l. ensure the coherence of the processes of all evaluation exercises described above;

m. organise the implementation of the peer review co-operation process on judicial statistics aiming to support member States in improving the quality of their judicial statistics and developing their statistics system, facilitate the exchange of experiences between national judicial statistics systems, sharing good practices,
identifying common indicators, facilitating knowledge transfer, and contribute to ensuring the transparency of the CEPEJ process for evaluating European judicial systems and to improving the process;

n. organise ad hoc visits to member States in which difficulties have been observed in respect of the data submitted;

o. in co-operation with the other CEPEJ Working Groups, carry out a reflection on the feasibility (i) to develop indicators and/or indexes for measuring the quality of justice as well as (ii) to prepare a tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary;

p. take into account in its work the identified needs arising from the implementation of relevant cooperation programs and actively contribute thereto.

2. Composition

The CEPEJ-GT-EVAL shall be composed of 6 members of the CEPEJ or experts, as well as possibly 2 substitute members, proposed by member States through their CEPEJ members and appointed by the CEPEJ Bureau, with an in-depth knowledge in the field of the evaluation of judicial systems. Their travel and subsistence expenses are to be borne by the budget of the Council of Europe. Other experts appointed by the member States might participate in its work, at their own expenses.

The relevant Council of Europe and European Union bodies may be represented to the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses.

The non-governmental organisations granted observer status with the CEPEJ may be invited by the Bureau to participate in the work of the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL, if the Bureau considers their attendance relevant for the quality of the work.

3. Working structures and methods

The CEPEJ-GT-EVAL will organise 5 meetings and evaluation visits can be organised in some member or observer States participating to the evaluation cycle (on States request and subject to budgetary availability).

In carrying out its terms of reference, the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL may in particular be supported by the Network of national correspondents entrusted with the coordination of the answers to the evaluation Scheme.

It will also coordinate its work with the work of the other CEPEJ’s working groups (CEPEJ-SATURN, CEPEJ-GT-QUAL and CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST)

It may also seek the advice of external experts and have recourse to studies by consultants.

4. Duration

These terms of reference expire on 31 December 2025.
1. Tasks

According to article 7.2.b of annex 1 to Resolution Res(2002)12, and under the authority of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Working group on judicial time management (CEPEJ-SATURN) is instructed to collect and share information on time management relevant for courts and public prosecution services and to develop tools, to improve its efficiency in order to enable member States to implement policies aiming to prevent violations of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and in particular the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time.

In order to fulfil its mandate, the CEPEJ-SATURN shall in particular:

a. develop guidelines allowing the implementation of a system of case weighting;

b. develop a tool enabling to analyse the timeframes according to the steps of the civil procedure;

c. develop a Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services;

d. develop a Database of backlog reduction practices;

e. study potential effects of the use of AI tools on court efficiency, in cooperation with the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST;

f. elaborate a Study on workload measurement tools in judicial systems;

g. in co-operation with the other CEPEJ Working Groups, carry out a reflection on the feasibility (i) to develop indicators and/or indexes for measuring the quality of justice as well as (ii) to prepare a tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary;

h. take into account in its work the identified needs arising from the implementation of relevant co-operation programs and actively contribute thereto.

2. Composition

The CEPEJ-SATURN is composed of 6 members of the CEPEJ or experts, as well as possibly 2 substitute members, proposed by member States through the CEPEJ members and appointed by the CEPEJ Bureau, with an in-depth knowledge in the field of judicial timeframes and judicial time management. Their travel and subsistence expenses will be borne by the budget of the Council of Europe. Other experts appointed by the member States might participate in its work, at their own expenses.

The relevant Council of Europe and European Union bodies may be represented on the Steering group without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses.

The non-governmental organisations granted observer status with the CEPEJ may be invited by the Bureau to participate in the work of the Working group, if the Bureau considers their attendance relevant for the quality of the work.

3. Working structures and methods

The CEPEJ-SATURN will hold 4 meetings (subject to budgetary availability).

In carrying out its terms of reference, the CEPEJ-SATURN may rely on the CEPEJ Network of Pilot courts.

It will also coordinate its work with the work of the other CEPEJ's working groups (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL, CEPEJ-GT-QUAL, CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST).

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1 Study and Analysis of judicial Time Use Research Network
It may also the advice of external experts and have recourse to studies by consultants.

4. **Duration**

These terms of reference expire on 31 December 2025.
1. **Tasks**

In accordance with article 7.2.b of Appendix 1 to Resolution Res(2002)12, and under the authority of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Working Group on quality of justice (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL) is instructed to develop means of analysis and evaluation of the work carried out within judicial systems as well as tools, with a view to enhancing within Member States the quality of the public service of the justice system, in particular vis-à-vis the expectations of the justice professionals and users.

In order to fulfil its tasks, the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL shall in particular:

a. continue to develop and promote the principles of the European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems and their environment, by:
   i. further operationalising the Charter’s principles, including by overseeing the testing if needed be of the relevant tool,
   ii. remaining engaged in contributing to the work of the Advisory Board on Artificial Intelligence (AIAB) under its authority and that of CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST;

b. develop a tool on evaluation of the quality of the work of judges;

c. develop a tool on the means to ensure the quality of judicial debate at each stage of the proceeding (including exchanges of written procedural documents and court decisions);

d. prepare a Study on means to raise awareness and promote sustainability practices within the courts and judicial administration;

e. develop a tool on translation and interpretation in judicial proceedings and their impact on the quality of judicial services, in co-operation with the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST;

f. consider the development of a toolkit on access to justice for vulnerable people, starting with guidelines for legal professionals on participation of children in judicial proceedings aimed at contributing to operationalising child-friendly justice;

g. further promote mediation within Member States and, more broadly, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) by:
   i. developing a practical guide to raise awareness on the participation of children in mediation processes (in civil, family, and restorative justice matters) and/or,
   ii. enhancing the means of collecting statistics on mediation within Member States, in cooperation with CEPEJ-GT-EVAL;

h. consider the updating of the Handbook for conducting satisfaction surveys aimed at Court users in the Council of Europe’s member States or the Guidelines on the creation of judicial maps to support access to justice within a quality judicial system;

i. in co-operation with the other CEPEJ Working Groups, carry out a reflection on the feasibility (i) to develop indicators and/or indexes for measuring the quality of justice as well as (ii) to prepare a tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary;

j. take into account in its work the identified needs arising from the implementation of relevant cooperation programs and actively contribute thereto.

2. **Composition**
The CEPEJ-GT-QUAL is composed of 6 members of the CEPEJ or experts, as well as possibly 2 substitute members, proposed by member States through the CEPEJ members and appointed by the CEPEJ Bureau, with an in-depth knowledge in the field of operation of courts, analyse of judicial practice and, when necessary, mediation. Their travel and subsistence expenses will be borne by the budget of the Council of Europe. Other experts appointed by the member States may participate in its work, at their own expenses.

The relevant Council of Europe and European Union bodies may be represented to the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses.

The non-governmental organisations granted observer status with the CEPEJ can be invited by the Bureau to participate in the work of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL, if the Bureau considers their attendance relevant for the quality of the work.

3. **Working structures and methods**

The CEPEJ-GT-QUAL will organise 4 meetings.

In carrying out its terms of reference, the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL may rely on the CEPEJ Network of Pilot courts. It will also coordinate its work with the work of the other CEPEJ’s working groups (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL, CEPEJ-SATURN, CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST).

It may also seek the advice of external experts and have recourse to studies by consultants.

4. **Duration**

These terms of reference expire on 31 December 2025.
1. Tasks

In accordance with article 7.2.b of Appendix 1 to Resolution Res(2002)12, and under the authority of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Working Group on cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence (CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST) is instructed to develop tools with a view to offer a framework and safeguards to member States and justice professionals willing to create or use ICT (information and communication technologies) and/or Artificial Intelligence (AI) mechanisms in judicial systems, in order to improve the efficiency and quality of justice.

In order to fulfil its tasks, the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST shall in particular:

   a. develop a tool on the electronic publication of judicial decisions with a view to emerging opportunities and risks of new technologies;

   b. develop a tool on how to bridge the “Digital Divide” ensuring that increasingly digital justice services remain accessible for all;

   c. complement the CEPEJ Glossary with a “Tech” part containing the essential technical issues related to the digitalisation of justice;

   d. draft an ICT Training Curriculum for judges, ensuring the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary in an increasingly digital judicial environment;

   e. prepare a Study on the use of Generative AI in the field of justice in view of its potential applied in controlled environments and its risks in uncontrolled settings;

   f. review the Guidelines on videoconferencing in judicial proceedings by adding a good practice compendium and updating the checklist;

   g. strengthen the Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence, through the development of promotional tools, an annual report and improvement of the data collection and review process;

   h. strengthen the European Cyberjustice Network (ECN) by extending the seminar series, and regular assessment of its member’s needs;

   i. contribute to develop a tool on translation and interpretation in judicial proceedings and their impact on the quality of judicial services provided to the users, in co-operation with the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL;

   j. contribute to develop the study on potential effects of the use of AI tools on court effectiveness and efficiency, in cooperation with CEPEJ-SATURN;

   k. in co-operation with the other CEPEJ Working Groups, carry out a reflection on the feasibility (i) to develop indicators and/or indexes for measuring the quality of justice as well as (ii) to prepare a tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary;

   l. take into account in its work the identified needs arising from the implementation of relevant cooperation programs and actively contribute thereto.

2. Composition

The CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST is composed of 6 members of the CEPEJ or experts, as well as possibly 2 substitute members, proposed by member States through the CEPEJ members and appointed by the CEPEJ Bureau, with an in-depth knowledge in the field of cyberjustice and AI applied in justice. Their travel and subsistence expenses will be borne by the budget of the Council of Europe. Other experts appointed by the member States may participate in its work, at their own expenses.
The relevant Council of Europe and European Union bodies may be represented to the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses.

The non-governmental organisations granted observer status with the CEPEJ can be invited by the Bureau to participate in the work of the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST, if the Bureau considers their attendance relevant for the quality of the work.

3. Working structures and methods

The CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST will organise 4 meetings.

In carrying out its terms of reference, the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST will coordinate its work with the work of the other CEPEJ's working groups (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL, CEPEJ-SATURN, CEPEJ-GT-QUAL). It will also coordinate its work with the one of the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) and the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI).

It may also seek the advice of external experts and have recourse to studies by consultants.

4. Duration

These terms of reference expire on 31 December 2025.