



Strasbourg, 20 February 2023

CEPEJ-GT-EVAL(2023)3

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE
(CEPEJ)**

**WORKING GROUP ON THE EVALUATION OF JUDICIAL SYSTEMS
(CEPEJ-GT-EVAL)**

44 meeting
2 and 3 February 2023

MEETING REPORT

Document prepared by the Secretariat

Directorate General I - Human Rights and the Rule of Law

INTRODUCTION

1. The Working Group on the Evaluation of Judicial Systems (CEPEJ-GT-EVAL) of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) held its 44th meeting on 2 and 3 February 2023, in Paris, under the chairmanship of Jaša Vrabec (Slovenia).
2. The agenda and the list of participants of the meeting can be found respectively in Annexes I and II to this Report.

II. INFORMATION BY THE MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP AND THE SECRETARIAT

3. The Secretariat informs the Working Group about the discussions held during the meeting of the Bureau of the CEPEJ on 16 January 2023, in particular concerning the content of the next European Judicial Systems Evaluation Report and the need to reinforce its visibility.
4. The members of the Group unanimously support the idea of a better visibility of the Report and mention the possibility of continuing to use social networks, to broadcast video clips targeted by themes/chapters of the Report or to present aspects/conclusions by country. More systematically inviting countries to promote the Report on the websites of their Ministries of Justice was also evoked.
5. The concrete use of the Report and its results by countries was also discussed. The Secretariat recalls that an evaluation of the use of the Report will be launched soon. It was also envisaged to devote a special workshop to this issue at the next meeting of national correspondents (18 October 2023).

III. 2024 EVALUATION CYCLE (2022 DATA)

a) Preparation of the questionnaire

6. The Evaluation scheme was adopted by the CEPEJ members during the CEPEJ plenary meeting held in December 2022, subject to amendments sent by CEPEJ members by mid-January and possible additional amendments made by the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL during its meeting in February 2023.
7. Different questions are discussed, namely those relating to legal aid recipients (Q20-0 to Q20-0-5); to certain statistical data disaggregated by gender (Q37-2), to possibilities of work arrangements for judges and prosecutors (e.g., working time, workload) (Q46-1-4, Q46-1-5, Q55-1-4, and Q55-1-5); to evaluation of judges/prosecutors (Q83-1-1 and Q83-3-1); to recruitment and initial training of judges and prosecutors (Q128-1 and Q130-1).
8. The updating of the part of the Questionnaire dealing with the use of information technologies (ICT) in the courts is discussed in depth and different amendments to these questions are adopted.

b) Preparation of the Explanatory note

9. The Group reviews the draft revised Explanatory note, considering the explanations for the new questions, but also clarifying, where necessary and in view of the previous data quality control phase, certain questions not modified in the new version of the Scheme (in particular, those relating to salaries, budgets, specialised courts, promotion of judges and prosecutors) in order to best ensure the comparability of the data collected.
10. The Group instructs the Secretariat to inform the national correspondents of the changes made in the Scheme and the Explanatory Note by e-mail, drawing their attention to the groups of issues most affected by the modifications. Similarly, the respective documents will be sent in "track changes" making any substantial amendments visible.

c) Timetable of the evaluation cycle

11. The Secretariat recalls that the collection of 2022 data for the 2024 evaluation cycle will be opened in March 2023.

12. The Secretariat is already inviting the members of the Working Group to propose experts who could be in charge of drafting the chapters of the 2024 Evaluation report.

IV. SPECIFIC STUDIES ON THE JUDICIAL PROFESIONS

9. The European Expertise and Expert Institute (EEEI) as well as the Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNUE) present the first version of their specific reports based on 2020 CEPEJ data.
10. The International Union of Judicial Officers (UIHJ) informs the Working Group that the draft is being finalized.
11. It is agreed that bilateral meetings would be held with the Secretariat in order to finalise the various studies which would then be submitted to the Group for adoption by written procedure.

V. COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

12. The Secretariat informs the Working Group of the progress of the cooperation activities with the European Commission (EC), in particular the CEPEJ study for the European Commission on the functioning of judicial systems in the member States of the European Union ("EU Justice Scoreboard"), the Western Balkans Dashboard ("Dashboard Western Balkans") and the Justice Dashboard for the Eastern Partnership countries ("Justice Dashboard EaP").

a. Study for the European Commission on the functioning of judicial systems in the member States of the European Union (Justice Scoreboard)

13. The Secretariat briefly recalls that the CEPEJ study for the EU Justice Scoreboard (2021 data) was submitted to the European Commission on 9 December 2022, for the first part consisting of 379 comparative tables, and on 13 January 2023, for the second part composed of country profiles and updated tables.
14. The Secretariat informs the Working Group about the ongoing discussions after the European Commission (DG-JUST) had contacted the CEPEJ Secretariat to know if some of the data collected and presented by the CEPEJ in the framework of the EU Justice Scoreboard could be used by EUROSTAT, in order to avoid a collection of the same data by two different organisations. EUROSTAT would like to replace some of its own data with CEPEJ data which it considers to be of better quality. This would concern data on first instance court cases. The Secretariat specifies that the use of CEPEJ data by EUROSTAT requires some contractual modifications which it is currently discussing with the Legal Advice Department.

b. Dashboard Western Balkans

15. For this Dashboard, the ongoing collection is based on 2022 data and the reports (first part of comparative tables and second part of country profiles) will be sent to the European Commission in June 2023. Specific support is provided to the project beneficiaries in coordination with the relevant CEPEJ bilateral projects.
16. The first phase of the project was closed in December 2022 and gave rise to an event bringing together the beneficiaries who were able to exchange views on the development of ICT and the use of CEPEJ data collected under the project for their own systems.

c. Dashboard Eastern Partnership countries

17. For this Dashboard, the current data collection (2nd cycle) is based on 2021 data and the reports (first part of comparative tables, second part of country profiles and third condensed part) will be sent to the European Commission in June 2023. Support missions to improve data collection and quality were organised in January 2023 in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.

18. The Secretariat informs the Working Group about the negotiations with the European Commission to have the same timeframe for the Justice Dashboard Eap as for the Western Balkans Dashboard, i.e., to collect the most recent data possible. These changes are related to the accession processes of three of the project's beneficiary countries (Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine).

VI. POTENTIAL UPDATE OF THE RECOMMENDATION CM/Rec(86)12 – CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK OF CEPEJ-SATURN

19. The President of the CEPEJ, Francesco Depasquale, (Malta), invites the members of the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL to contribute to a proposal which will be made by the CEPEJ to the CDCJ on a possible update of the Recommendation CM/Rec(86)12 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe *concerning measures to prevent and reduce the excessive workload in the courts*, prepared by the CEPEJ Working Group Saturn (CEPEJ-SATURN). Indeed, the Working Group SATURN suggests that the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL be consulted on : 1) the possible measures conducive to preventing and reducing the excessive workload in the courts on the basis of the information and analysis of the functioning of national judicial systems resulting from the evaluation cycles; 2) the update of the list of non-judicial tasks of which judges could be relieved (contained in the annex to the Recommendation) and possible new measures conducive to reducing the workload in the courts which can become part of the updated Recommendation (86)12.
20. The President of the CEPEJ specifies that proposals to update Recommendation CM/Rec(86)12 should be submitted to the Secretariat before the end of February 2023.

VII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. The Secretariat informs the Group that a data collection support mission will be organised in Greece at the end of February.

AGENDA / ORDRE DU JOUR

1.	Adoption of the agenda	
2.	Information by the members of the Working Group and the Secretariat	
		Working document
	Preparation of the 2024 evaluation cycle (2022 data)	Scheme for evaluating European judicial systems, 2024 cycle (2022 data) CEPEJ(2022)9rev
3.	a. Preparation of the questionnaire	
	b. Preparation of the Explanatory Note	Draft explanatory note, 2024 cycle (2022 data) CEPEJ-GT-EVAL(2022)15rev
	c. Timetable of the Evaluation cycle	
		Reference document Explanatory Note, 2022 cycle CEPEJ(2020)18rev
4.	Specific Studies on the judicial professionals (2020 data)	Draft from EEEI CEPEJ-GT-EVAL(2023)1
		Draft from CNUE CEPEJ-GT-EVAL(2023)2
	Cooperation with the European Commission	
5.	a. Study for the European Commission on the functioning of judicial systems in the member States of the European Union (Justice Scoreboard)	
	b. Dashboard Western Balkans	
	c. Dashboard Eastern Partnership countries	
6.	Potential update of the Recommendation CM/Rec(86)12 – contribution to the work of CEPEJ-SATURN	Reference document Recommendation CM/Rec(86)12
7.	Training on CEPEJ evaluation tools – HELP module	
8.	Any other business	43rd meeting report of the Working Group on evaluation of judicial systems CEPEJ-GT-EVAL(2022)10

List of participants / liste de participants**MEMBERS / MEMBRES**

CROATIA / CROATIE	Ms Martina VRDOLJAK Head of department for statistics, analytic and strategic development of Judiciary, Directorate for organisation of Judiciary, Ministry of justice apologised
GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE	Ms Simone KREß Judge, Vice-President of the Tribunal in Cologne
MALTA / MALTE	Ms Joanne BATTISTINO Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, The Law Courts
SLOVENIA / SLOVENIE	Mr Jaša VRABEC Head of the Office for Court Management Development, Supreme Court
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	Mr Juan Fernando ARMENGOT IBORRA Advisor, Directorate General for International Legal Cooperation and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Justice
SWITZERLAND / SUISSE	Mr Christophe KOLLER Researcher, Director ESEHA, Centre for counselling and comparative analysis
TÜRKİYE	Mr Seçkin KOÇER Judge and Head of Department, General Directorate for Strategy Development, Ministry of Justice Deputy member of the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL

PRESIDENT OF THE CEPEJ / PRESIDENT DE LA CEPEJ

MALTA / MALTE	Mr Francesco DEPASQUALE The Honourable Mr Justice, Superior Courts, Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs
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SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS / EXPERTS SCIENTIFIQUES

GREECE / GRECE	Ms Victoria MERTIKOPOULOU Advisor, EU and Competition, Regulatory, Compliance, Kyriakides Georgopoulos Law Firm online
FRANCE / FRANCE	Ms Sophie VAN PUYVELDE Adjointe au sous-directeur de la statistique et des études, Service de l'expertise et de la modernisation, Secrétariat général du ministère de la justice, France

PARTICIPANTS / PARTICIPANTS

EUROPEAN EXPERTISE AND EXPERT INSTITUTE / INSTITUT EUROPEEN DE L'EXPERTISE ET DE L'EXPERT (EEEI)	Mr Benoit DE CLERCK Co-president of EEEI Mrs Aurélie DARDENNE
COUNCIL OF THE NOTARIAT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (CNUE) / CONSEIL DES NOTARIATS DE L'UNION EUROPEENNE (CNUE)	Geertjan SARNEEL Notary, Notaris at Meijling & Sarneel Notarissen te Kapelle THE NETHERLANDS

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF BAILIFFS / <i>UNION INTERNATIONALE DES</i> <i>HUISSIERS DE JUSTICE ET OFFICIERS</i> <i>JUDICIAIRES (UIHJ)</i>	Mr Mathieu CHARDON Secrétaire Général
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SECRETARIAT / SECRETARIAT

Justice and Legal Co-operation Department / Service de la Coopération judiciaire et juridique

DGI – CEPEJ

Ms Christel SCHURRER Secretary of the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL / <i>Secrétaire du CEPEJ-GT-EVAL</i>
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