



15 November 2024

CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)7

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

Working group on the quality of justice (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL)

37th meeting - 14-15 october 2024
(Lisbon, Portugal)

Hybrid meeting

MEETING REPORT

1. Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Quality of Justice (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL) of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) held its 37th meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, on 14 and 15 October 2024 at the invitation of the Portuguese Ministry of Justice.
2. The meeting was opened by Lidia JACOB, Director General of Justice Policy at the Portuguese Ministry of Justice, and chaired by João ARSENIO DE OLIVEIRA (Portugal). The agenda and list of participants are attached to this report as appendices I and II respectively.
- 2. Piloting the assessment tool for the operationalisation of the European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems and their environment**
3. Matthieu QUINIOU (France), scientific expert and member of the CEPEJ's Artificial Intelligence Advisory Board (AIAB), presented the progress of the piloting phase of the tool for assessing AI systems in the judicial sector (Document CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)1).
4. The AIAB has selected four piloting systems:
 - an anonymisation tool, "Open data for court decisions" (France),
 - a speech-to-text "textualization" tool (Spain),
 - a tool for automatically assigning criminal trials, GIADA2 (Italy)
 - a solution for audio recording, transcription and the generation of minutes, "Salme" (Estonia).
5. The first workshop bringing together all the representatives of these systems took place on 16 September 2024, and will be followed in November by individual practical workshops per system to help complete the self-assessment questionnaires. The expert's first report is due in January 2025.
6. Matthieu QUINIOU informed the members of CEPEJ-GT-QUAL that the work concerning the evaluation of the impact of AI tools, in terms of efficiency of the judicial system, carried out by CEPEJ-GT-SATURN could eventually allow, in connection with the assessment tool of AI systems in the judicial sector, a joint assessment of the risks on human rights and fundamental principles, and of efficiency.

3. Assessing the quality of the judges' work

7. Nina BETETTO (Slovenia) presented the revised draft guidelines on assessing the quality of judges' work (Document CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)2rev5).
8. João ARSENIO DE OLIVEIRA thanked the expert and praised her work. The members of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL approved, with minor amendments, the Guidelines and decided to send the document to the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) for comments before submitting it to the CEPEJ at its next plenary meeting scheduled for 3 and 4 December 2024, with a view to their adoption.

4. Quality of the judicial debate

9. Wim DAVID (Belgium) presented the draft document on the quality of the jurisdictional debate (Document CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)5) and explained that the term "jurisdictional" debate should be used rather than "judicial" since the tool would apply to both judicial and

administrative justice. The members of the Working Group proposed that the tool should not apply to criminal justice.

10. Gilles ACCOMANDO (France) suggested that specific national judicial features should be taken into account and noted the importance of holding a discussion with judges and lawyers and consulting the Consultative Council of European Bars and Law Societies (CCBE).
11. The members agreed that the tool should define a limit to the length of written pleadings and judgments, taking into account the current tendency to prepare lengthy documents, subject to the outcome of the CCJE and CCBE consultations on this issue.
12. With the support of the Secretariat, Wim DAVID was charged of preparing a questionnaire to be sent to the CEPEJ Network of Pilot Courts to collect additional information, revise and adapt the document possibly in the form of guidelines. This first version of the guidelines will be discussed at an *ad hoc* online meeting of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL to be held in January 2025, following which the document will be sent for comments to the CCJE and CCBE, with a view to being discussed and approved at the next meeting of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL scheduled for the end of March 2025.

5. Joint work with other CEPEJ working groups: improving work-life balance in the judiciary

13. The Secretariat presented the note on work-life balance in the judicial system (Document CEPEJ(2024)3) and the approach proposed by the Secretariat to set up an *ad hoc* Working Group composed of one member from each CEPEJ working group. The Secretariat invited the members of the Working Group to share the existing good practices in their countries in order to feed the reflections on this topic.
14. Stergios KOFINIS (Greece) agreed to represent the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL in the *ad hoc* working group, if the CEPEJ confirms in December that it will be set up by 2025.

6. Sustainability in the courts and judicial administration

15. Úna MURPHY (Ireland), Head of Climate Action at the *Court Service of Ireland*, presented its Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2024.
16. The members of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL stressed the importance of this subject and explored the potential approaches that could be adopted within the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL. As a first step, the members decided to find an expert who would develop a Compendium of good practices (based on a questionnaire to be shared with the CEPEJ Pilot Courts Network). In parallel, the revision of the relevant chapter of the CEPEJ Guidelines on the organisation and accessibility of courts (buildings) (Document CEPEJ(2014)15) will be considered.

7. Review of satisfaction survey methodology

17. Vincent DELBOS (France) presented the methodology proposed to carry out the analysis of the implementation of the CEPEJ Manual on court user satisfaction surveys (Document CEPEJ(2016)15) on which he is working in cooperation with Annie KENSEY (France). An online questionnaire and interviews with selected representatives of courts having applied the CEPEJ methodology and staff in charge of cooperation within the CEPEJ Secretariat will be conducted in November-December 2024. The analysis should thus be finalised in January 2025; on the basis of the results and recommendations, the Handbook could be revised in 2025.

18. The members of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL approved the proposed approach, stressing the need to revise the manual in order to modernise the proposed methodology and adapt the questionnaire to current needs.

8. Other work themes

Access to justice

19. Taking into account the elaboration of several guidelines and tools by other competent services of the Council of Europe, the Secretariat informed the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL of the difficulties in the development of the Toolkit to facilitate access to justice for vulnerable persons and more particularly on the preparation of the tool on the participation of children in judicial proceedings (document CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)10). Noting the importance of continuing the work on access to justice, the Secretariat proposed a new, broader approach, namely the development of a checklist for courts and judicial authorities that would recall the basic principles of access to justice and cover the various components of access to justice (access to information, accessibility, legal aid, etc.) as well as, in a cross-cutting manner, the contributions of the digitalisation of justice to this issue. This checklist could then be completed by a toolbox dedicated to specific vulnerable groups. After discussion, the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL decided to go ahead with the Secretariat's proposal.

Translation and interpreting in legal proceedings and court files

20. Stergios KOFINIS recalled the concept note on translation and interpretation in legal proceedings and court files (Document CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)7), and stressed the need to ensure quality control and appropriate training for court interpreters and translators. The current challenges they face with the exponential use of artificial intelligence systems for translation and interpretation in courts across Europe will need to be taken into account.
21. The members of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL agreed to prepare a document recalling the general principles aimed at ensuring the quality of interpretation and translation in courts, with a chapter more specifically devoted to developments relating to IA and agreed that this work should be carried out in collaboration with the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST.

Mediation

22. Maria OLIVEIRA (Portugal), scientific expert, informed the members that there was no added value in continuing the revision of the mediation grid (Document CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)3) and that carrying out a study on the harmonisation of mediation statistics would not lead to results that would be useful for making substantial revisions to the mediation grid.
23. The members of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL decided to continue the work on family mediation. Maria OLIVEIRA was asked to reflect on the development of a Guide and Compendium of good practice on the place of children in family mediation and to present the preliminary work at the next meeting.

9. Other business

24. An *ad hoc* online meeting is scheduled for 13 January 2025 at 3pm CET to discuss the revised guidelines on the quality of judicial debate.
25. The next CEPEJ-GT-QUAL meeting will take place on 27 and 28 March 2025 in Strasbourg

Appendix 1

AGENDA

Opening of the meeting

1. Welcoming words by Ms. Lidia Jacob, Director General for Justice Policy, Ministry of Justice, Portugal

Adoption of the agenda

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Piloting of the Assessment Tool for the operationalisation of the European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial Systems and their environment

2. - Discussion on ongoing work, participating systems and further steps of the piloting

Expert in charge: Matthieu Quiniou (France, online)

Concept note on piloting of the assessment tool
CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)1

Assessment Tool for the operationalisation of the European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial Systems and their environment
CEPEJ(2023)16final

European ethical Charter on the use of Artificial Intelligence in judicial systems and their environment
CEPEJ(2018)14

WORKING DOCUMENT

Draft guidelines on evaluation of the quality of the work of judges
CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)2rev5

Evaluation of the quality of work of judges

3. - Discussion on the latest version of the guidelines with a view of their approval

Expert in charge: Nina Betetto (Slovenia, online)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

How to assess the quality of the work of judges: comparative analysis
CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)11PROV2

Questionnaire on the evaluation of the quality of the work/performance of judges
CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)1rev3

<p>Quality of the jurisdictional debate</p>	<p>WORKING DOCUMENT</p>
<p>4. - Discussion on the draft document</p>	<p>Draft document on the quality of the jurisdictional debate CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)5</p>
<p><i>Expert in charge: Wim David (Belgium)</i></p>	<p>BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</p> <p>Concept note on the quality of judicial debate CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)9</p>
<p>Joint work with other CEPEJ working groups: Improving Work-life balance in the judiciary</p>	<p>WORKING DOCUMENT</p>
<p>5. - Discussion on the joint work with other working groups of the CEPEJ and the research note</p>	<p>Research note on Improving Work-life balance in the judiciary CEPEJ(2024)3</p>
<p>Sustainability within the courts and judicial administration: discussion on the work forward</p>	<p>BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</p>
<p>6. - Presentation and discussion on the Courts Service Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2024 with Ms Úna Murphy, Head of Energy Resources, Sustainability Unit, Court Service (Ireland)</p>	<p>Concept note on sustainability within the courts and judicial administration CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)6</p> <p>Courts Service Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2024</p>
<p>Revision of the satisfaction surveys methodology</p>	<p>WORKING DOCUMENT</p>
<p>7. - Presentation and discussion on the proposed approach</p>	<p>Analysis of the implementation of the CEPEJ manual on court user satisfaction surveys - Methodology CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)6</p>
<p><i>Expert in charge: Vincent Delbos (France)</i></p>	<p>BACKGROUND DOCUMENT</p> <p>Terms of reference of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL</p>
<p>Other topics of work: discussion on the work forward</p>	<p>BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</p>
<p>8. - Facilitating the access to justice for vulnerable people - Translation and interpretation in judicial proceedings and court files</p>	<p>Terms of reference of the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL</p> <p>Concept note on Toolbox on access to justice for vulnerable people and first tool on children CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)10</p>

Concept note on translation and interpretation in judicial proceedings and court files
CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2023)7

9. Any other business

Appendix 2

List of participants / Liste des participants

MEMBERS / MEMBRES

Gilles ACCOMANDO, Magistrate, Director of the Paris Court of Appeal Bar Training School, FRANCE, e-mail: g.accomando@efb.fr

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SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS / EXPERTS SCIENTIFIQUES

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INVITED PARTICIPANTS / PARTICIPANTS INVITÉS

Rinor HOXHA, Senior Legal Officer within the Ministry of Justice, Kosovo ¹

Lidia JACOB, Director General for Justice Policy, Ministry of Justice, Portugal

Úna MURPHY, Head of Energy Resources, Sustainability Unit, Court Service, Ireland Online

OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS

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¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence".

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