



Strasbourg, 24 May 2024

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)18

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

**WORKING GROUP ON JUDICIAL TIME MANAGEMENT  
(CEPEJ-SATURN)**

36<sup>th</sup> meeting, 9 - 11 April 2024

## **MEETING REPORT**

Report prepared by the Secretariat  
Directorate General I - Human Rights and the Rule of Law

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Working Group on judicial time management of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ-SATURN) held its 36<sup>th</sup> meeting in Mechelen/Malines, Belgium, on 9 and 11 April 2024. Giacomo Oberto (Italy) was re-elected as President of the CEPEJ-SATURN for 2024-2025 and chaired the meeting. The meeting was organised together with the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Network of the CEPEJ Pilot Courts held on 10 April 2024 (see item 2 of this report).
2. Francesco Depasquale, President of the CEPEJ, thanked the former members – Vassilis Androulakis (Greece) and Ivana Borzova (Czech Republic) - and the former scientific expert - Marco Fabri (Italy) - for their contribution to the CEPEJ-SATURN and commended them for their work and dedication during the past years. He also thanked Milan Nikolic, former co-secretary of the CEPEJ-SATURN, for his contribution to the elaboration of CEPEJ tools.
3. The agenda and the list of participants are attached to this Report as Appendices I and II respectively.

## **2. MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF THE CEPEJ PILOT COURTS**

4. The CEPEJ Pilot Courts met on 10 April 2024 in Mechelen/Malines, Belgium, upon the invitation of the President Bart Willecx of the Court of first instance of Antwerp that is also a CEPEJ Pilot Court. The CEPEJ-SATURN, that coordinates the Network's activities, participated in the meeting. 35 Pilot Courts from 28 countries took part in the meeting together with numerous representatives of the Belgium judicial community. The Pilot Courts exchanged views on the following topics: backlog reduction practices, the evaluation of the quality of judge's work, the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in judicial system, workload measurement tools in courts and the evaluation of judicial systems, all of which are different topics reflected the work of the various CEPEJ Working Groups.
5. The meeting was open by Paul Van Tigchelt, Minister of Justice of Belgium and the President of the CEPEJ. During different workshops, the Pilot Courts exchanged their practices in the above areas, challenges they are facing and possible solutions to address them. Examples mentioned were the introduction of court-annexed conciliation that help to reduce judicial backlog, work-sampling methods to measure the workload, criteria for evaluation of judges and risks related to the current use of some generative AI tools in courts. The CEPEJ-STAT database containing data resulting from the evaluation of European judicial systems was also shown. Paul Dhaeyer, President of the Commercial Court of Brussels, Belgium, presented, together with the moderators of the different workshops, the conclusions of the meeting.

## **3. CASE-WEIGHTING TOOL**

6. The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the draft outline for the case-weighting tool (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)1). Following the reflection by Dimitrije Sujeranovic, scientific expert, the Working Group agreed on the following points: the terminology, the structure of the tool, the methodology and the timeline for the future work. Experts and justice professionals use different terms for case-weighting (e.g. case-weighting methodology, case-weighting formula, weighted caseload, case-weighting system). Considering the differences in terminology in use, the CEPEJ-SATURN agreed to use the term "case-weighting system" referring to the CEPEJ Glossary (CEPEJ(2020)Rev1).
7. The CEPEJ-SATURN decided at this stage to structure the tool around four core chapters: (i) introduction, (ii) problem diagnosis and areas of intervention, (iii) development of the case-weighting formula and implementation of the weighting formula, and (iv) recommendations. The introductory

chapter should contain a list of questions that states should ask themselves when developing case-weighting (e.g. what is the purpose? what budget do you have? what are your possibilities for regular evaluation? what obstacles do you face?).

8. The CEPEJ-SATURN agreed to follow a similar approach as for the development of the Backlog Reduction Tool. To this end, it instructed Dimitrije Suđeranovic (Serbia), scientific expert, to prepare a first draft by the end of June 2024. The Secretariat proposed to also ask a judge coming from a State having already implemented a case-weighting system, to contribute to the drafting of this tool, as scientific expert. On-line meetings could be convened to discuss the draft(s) of the future case-weighting tool and provide directions for its further elaboration, with a view to prepare a finalised draft ready for the next SATURN meeting in October 2024.

#### **4. STUDY ON WORKLOAD MEASUREMENT TOOLS IN JUDICIAL SYSTEMS**

9. The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the draft concept note and the draft questionnaire on workload measurement tools in judicial systems (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)2), developed by Alexandre Palanco (France), scientific expert, based on the previous questionnaires on case-weighting to ensure consistency of approach. The Concept Note sets out the scope, context, working methods and data collection. Discussion focused on the draft questionnaire and the need to adjust the introductory part using the term “workload” as defined in the CEPEJ Glossary (CEPEJ(2020)Rev1).

10. The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to follow the same approach as for the reports on case-weighting in courts and in public prosecution services drawn up in 2020 and 2023 respectively. It asked the scientific expert to revise the draft questionnaire in the light of the comments made orally or in writing by the members and instructed the Secretariat to discuss it in Workshop 1 on workload measurement tools at the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Pilot Courts on the following day (see item 2 above) for their possible comments. Subsequently, it was agreed to finalise the draft questionnaire and disseminate it to national contact points. The replies would serve as a starting point for the analysis of the functioning of existing methods of measuring workload in courts. They would be followed by interviews and consultations during the drafting of the study. The Network of the CEPEJ Pilot Courts could play an important role in sharing their experiences in this regard.

#### **5. DATABASE OF BACKLOG REDUCTION PRACTICES**

11. In June 2023, the CEPEJ adopted the Backlog Reduction Tool (CEPEJ(2023)9FINAL). The tool contains a non-exhaustive list of measures to address the backlog. It was proposed to complement it with the establishment of a Database of backlog reduction practices, based on a Concept Note examined by the CEPEJ at its last plenary meeting in December 2023 (CEPEJ(2023)15). The Concept Note sets out the structure, the methodology of data collection, the criteria for publication and the steps for the development of the Database.

12. Lidija Naumovska, from the Secretariat of the CEPEJ, presented a prototype of a Database, composed of charts and graphs representing domains of intervention (legislative, operational, resources, training), areas of application (e.g. court management, digitalisation of judicial systems, justice actors), levels of application (judge, court, system), and implementing authority (e.g. Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court). The prototype could also include an interactive map with countries that submitted backlog reduction practices. The map would be interlinked to the list of individual practices with their detailed description.

13. The CEPEJ-SATURN examined the draft form for collecting information on backlog reduction practices (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)3). The draft form had been tested by collecting selected practices from the following countries: Croatia, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland and the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> No significant difficulties were reported in filling in the form, except for collection of evidence showing a measurable impact of a practice on the reduction of backlogs. The CEPEJ-SATURN also discussed the way in which submissions of practices received from States would be dealt with. In this regard, Daniel Schmidt, from the Secretariat of the CEPEJ, shared the experience of the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST with the Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence.

14. The CEPEJ-SATURN approved the prototype and the form subject to the agreed modifications and decided to set up a Task force in charge of reviewing backlog reduction practices received before their submission to the CEPEJ-SATURN, which would decide on their publication. The Task force will be composed of Giacomo Oberto (Italy), Francesco Depasquale (Malta) and Dimitrije Sujeranovic (Serbia), and will be assisted by the Secretariat. Their first task is to finalise the form and review selected practices for the prototype that may be presented at the forthcoming CEPEJ plenary meeting in June 2024.

## **6. TOOL TO ANALYSE THE LENGTH OF THE STEPS OF THE CIVIL PROCEDURE**

15. The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the Concept Note entitled: Which way forward for the tool on the length of the steps of the civil procedure? (Document (CEPEJ-SATURN(2023)11REV) and the compilation of contributions from the Task Force on the steps of the civil procedure (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)10). The Task Force was set up following a call for expressions of interest to which nine Pilot Courts replied positively. It held two on-line meetings on 5 October 2024 and on 23 November 2024, respectively. The Concept Note outlined the possible objectives of the activity, specified the possible methods of data collection and outputs expected to be delivered by the Task force. The compilation provided detailed description of the steps of the civil procedure in the relevant pilot courts.

16. The CEPEJ-SATURN discussed how to further proceed with a view to develop a tool that would provide timeframes for different steps of the civil procedure. The information submitted by the Pilot Courts provided a good basis for a first analysis, which could be complemented by additional desk research in order to have a first overview of the situation in the relevant pilot courts with regard to each step of the civil procedure, the legal deadlines, the reasons for delays and the measures taken to remedy them. The future tool could provide recommendations for measures to be taken to reduce/improve the length of each of the agreed steps of the civil procedure based on the experiences from the respective Pilot Courts.

17. Marco Fabri (Italy) and Carolina Mancuso (Italy), scientific experts, informed the CEPEJ-SATURN that they would not be able to continue working on this theme in the future. The CEPEJ-SATURN thanked them for the important work already done in this framework and proposed to Pawel Wrzaszcz to prepare a first analysis of the information received so far from the Pilot Courts with suggestions on how to proceed further. This first analysis may be followed by interviews and additional legal research. The possibility of enlarging the sample of Pilot Courts in the future was also mentioned. The future steps would be discussed in a later stage depending on the results of the analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Croatia (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)4), France (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)5), Italy (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)6), Latvia (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)7), Poland (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)8), the Netherlands (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)9).

## **7. TIME MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST FOR PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICES**

18. The scientific experts – Christian de Valkeneer (Belgium), Joan Rascagneres (Andorra) and José Manuel Santos Pais (Portugal) – presented the draft note (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)14) and the preliminary proposal for revision of the Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)15). This proposals aimed to provide indicators for the analysis of the length of proceedings for public prosecution services based on the Time Management Checklist designed mainly for the courts (CEPEJ(2023)5) while taking into account the specificity of the role of prosecutors. The experts underlined that prosecutors do not have always control over the duration of criminal proceedings due to their reliance on other actors, such as the police.

19. The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to mandate José Manuel Santos Pais, scientific experts, to develop the main draft Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services, which would apply mainly to criminal proceedings before extending it possibly to civil proceedings. Other scientific experts may comment on the draft Checklist. The indicators from the Checklist for the courts are highly relevant and will be used for the drawing up of the Checklist for prosecutors. The new indicators could be added to reflect fully the role of prosecutors, such as sanctions and settlements.

## **8. POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE'S TOOLS ON COURT EFFICIENCY**

20. Matthieu Quiniou (France), member of the CEPEJ Artificial Intelligence Advisory Board, (AIAB) presented the draft concept note on potential effects of the use of artificial intelligence's tools on court efficiency (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)12).

21. The draft concept note suggested three methods:

- *Method 1 (Overall Efficiency Measurement)* envisaged to strengthen the CEPEJ evaluation of judicial systems by analysing the possible correlation between the use of AI tools and efficiency and by adjusting the questionnaire for the next 2026 evaluation cycle to enhance the questions concerning the deployment and usage of AI tools;
- *Method 2 (Granual and Incremental Efficiency Measurement)* provided for the comparison of efficiency of a pilot jurisdiction using an AI tool versus a jurisdiction not using it, or alternatively the comparison of AI tools among themselves within different pilot jurisdictions, of distinct AI systems but addressing the same objective and field of application;
- *Method 3 (Joint Risk and Efficiency Measurement)* envisaged to join the assessment for operationalisation of the AI Charter to be carried out by the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL. The assessment tool for operationalisation of the AI Charter adopted by the CEPEJ in December 2023<sup>2</sup> will be piloted in selected areas of applications of AI tools (e.g. anonymisation, speech-to-text and decision-support) in the second half of 2024.

22. The CEPEJ-SATURN agreed to begin with the implementation of *Method 3*. It instructed Matthieu Quiniou to develop a questionnaire with indicators adapted to each field of application of AI systems as identified in the CEPEJ Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence. In parallel, the information received in the framework of the evaluation of judicial systems would be analysed to see whether any conclusions can be drawn on the use of AI and efficiency (*Method 1*).

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<sup>2</sup> Please also see the 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) and the Note on the implementation of a Pilot Phase for the Evaluation Tool of AI Systems in the Judicial Sector (CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)1).

## **9. TOOL TO IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE JUDICIARY**

23. Based on the Note prepared by the Secretariat (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)13), the CEPEJ-SATURN had a first exchange of views on the feasibility of developing a tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary. The members shared some practices existing in their jurisdictions (e.g. part-time work, teleworking, the right to disconnect, support for on-the-spot health facilities and activities and well-being surveys in courts). Although the gender dimension plays a role within this theme, members considered that a number of practices aimed at guaranteeing work-life balance apply indiscriminately to men and women. Any possible future tools should therefore apply to all staff members irrespective of their gender.

24. Considering the richness of shared practices, the CEPEJ-SATURN decided to first collect the existing practices among themselves before possibly extending it to other actors, such as CEPEJ Pilot Courts. A future tool could take the form of guidelines designed for courts based on collected practices. This tool may include guidelines to conduct well-being surveys in the courts/prosecution services that may be supplemented by a checklist or indicators to measure well-being among the staff working in the judiciary.

## **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

### *i) Effective court management methods*

25. The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the feasibility of launching a reflection process on effective court management methods. Aurélie Grenot-Devedjian (France), scientific expert, presented a draft note (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)17) that included reasons in support of further consideration of this theme. It could concern the management of budgetary, human and material resources, the status of presidents of courts, the role of middle management, collegial management bodies and training and evaluation within courts. The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to continue the reflection on this proposal at its next meeting and asked the scientific expert to further elaborate on the various existing methods that could be considered in that framework.

### *ii) Newsletter*

26. As a follow-up to the meeting of the Network of the CEPEJ Pilot Courts, the possibility of reactivating the preparation and dissemination of a CEPEJ Newsletter was discussed to keep the Network informed about CEPEJ activities.

### *iii) Next meeting of the CEPEJ-SATURN*

27. The next CEPEJ-SATURN meeting will be held in Strasbourg on 29 - 30 October 2024.

## ANNEX I

### AGENDA

**9 April 2024 – 9:00 – 17:00<sup>3</sup> - Court of First Instance, Mechelen Division, Keizerstraat 20, Mechelen**

#### **9:00 - Opening of the meeting**

1.
  - a. Designation of the President of the Working group
  - b. Presentation of the members and scientific experts of the Working group
  - c. Adoption of the agenda

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#### **9:15 - Meeting of the CEPEJ Network of pilot courts**      **WORKING DOCUMENTS**

2. Preparation of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of pilot courts  
Draft agenda of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CEPEJ Network of pilot courts  
CEPEJ-pilot courts(2024)E/OJ/1

Draft list of participants

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#### **9:30 - Case-weighting tool**

##### **WORKING DOCUMENTS**

3. Exchange of views on the draft outline for the case-weighting tool and a follow up  
*Expert in charge: Dimitrije Šujeranović*  
Draft outline for the case-weighting tool  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)1

##### **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Report on case-weighting in public prosecution services  
Report on case-weighting in judicial systems

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#### **11: 00 - Study on workload measurement tools in judicial systems**      **WORKING DOCUMENTS**

4. Exchange of views on the draft concept note and preliminary draft questionnaire for a study on workload measurement tools in judicial systems  
*Expert in charge: Alexandre Palanco*  
Draft concept note on the study on workload measurement tools in judicial systems  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)2

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<sup>3</sup> The meeting on 9 April will be followed by a guided tour of the city of Mechelen.

#### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Case-weighting in public prosecution services (Part IV: alternative systems to case-weighting)

Report on case-weighting in judicial systems  
(pp. 7 – 18)

**9 April 2024: 14:00 – 17:00 Court of First Instance, Mechelen Division, Keizerstraat 20, Mechelen**

#### 14:00 - Database of backlog reduction practices

#### WORKING DOCUMENTS

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| 5. | a. Exchange of views on the draft form for collecting information on backlog reduction practices | Draft form for collecting information on backlog reduction practices |
|    | b. Exchange of views on the contributions of practices from the selected Member States           | CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)3EN<br>CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)3FR                       |
|    | c. Exchanges of view on the prototype of the database of backlog reduction practices             | Contribution - CROATIA<br>CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)4                        |

*Participation of Lidija Naumovska and Daniel Schmidt, Secretariat of the CEPEJ (on-line)*

Contribution – France  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)5/EN/FR

Contribution – ITALY  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)6

Contribution – LATVIA  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)7

Contribution – POLAND  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)8

Contribution – the NETHERLANDS  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)9/EN

Prototype of the database of backlog reduction practices

#### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Concept note on the establishment of the Database of Backlog Reduction Practices  
CEPEJ(2023)15

Backlog Reduction Tool  
CEPEJ(2023)9FINAL



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**15:15 - Tool to analyse the length of the steps of the civil procedure**

**WORKING DOCUMENTS**

6. Exchange of views on the theme, in the light of the contributions from the pilot courts, and a follow up

*Experts in charge: Marco Fabri, Carolina Mancuso and Ruth Straganz-Schröfl (on-line)*

Contributions from the Task force composed of pilot courts on the detailed summary steps of civil proceedings

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)10  
Concept paper: which way forward for the tool on the length of the steps of the civil procedure?  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)11REV

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Questionnaire on analysing the length of civil proceedings  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2021)11REV

Brief information on the length of the various steps of the civil proceedings  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2023)8

Data based on the replies to the questionnaire on the analysis of the length of civil proceedings  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2023)6

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**16:15 - Time management checklist for public prosecution services**

**WORKING DOCUMENTS**

Draft note  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)14

Draft preliminary proposal for the revised Checklist  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)15

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

7. Exchange of views on possible indicators and questions of the future Checklist for prosecutors

*Experts in charge: Joan Rascagneres and José Manuel Santos Pais (on-line) and Christian de Valkeneer*

Time Management Checklist for courts  
CEPEJ(2023)5

Explanatory Note for the Time Management Checklist for courts  
CEPEJ(2023)6

11 April 2024: 9:30 am – 12:00 am

8. Visit to the pilot court – the Court of First Instance – Antwerp Division  
[Bolivarplaats 20, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium](#)

11 April 2024: 14:00 pm – 17:00 pm - Court of First Instance of Antwerpen - Antwerpen Division, Bolivarplaats 20, 2000 Antwerpen

**WORKING DOCUMENTS**

**14:00 - Potential effects of the use of artificial intelligence's tools on court efficiency**

9. Exchange of views on the draft concept note  
*Expert in charge: Matthieu Quiniou (on-line)*
- Draft concept note on potential effects of the use of AI tools on the efficiency of justice  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)12REV

**REFERENCE DOCUMENT**

Operationalisation of AI Ethical Charter  
CEPEJ(2023)16FINAL

Pilot Assessment Tool AI  
CEPEJ-GT-QUAL(2024)1

**15:00 - Tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary**

**WORKING DOCUMENTS**

Draft note  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)13

**REFERENCE DOCUMENT**

10. Exchange of views on the feasibility of elaborating, in co-operation with other CEPEJ Working groups, a tool to improve work-life balance in the judicial system
- 2024 – 2025 activity program of the CEPEJ  
CEPEJ(2023)13FINAL

**16:00 - Other business**

**WORKING DOCUMENT**

11. a. Tool for efficient court management Draft note
- b. Follow-up to the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Network of CEPEJ pilot courts
- REFERENCE DOCUMENT**  
Report of the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting  
CEPEJ-SATURN(2023)14

## ANNEX II

### List of Participants / Liste des participants

#### **Members of the SATURN Working Group on Judicial Time Management (CEPEJ-SATURN) */Membres du Groupe de travail SATURN pour la gestion du temps judiciaire (CEPEJ-SATURN)***

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#### **Deputy Members of the SATURN Working Group on Judicial Time Management (CEPEJ-SATURN) / *Membre suppléant du Groupe de travail SATURN pour la gestion du temps judiciaire (CEPEJ-SATURN)***

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### SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS / EXPERTS SCIENTIFIQUES

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**SECRETARIAT**

**Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) – European Commission for the Efficiency  
of Justice /**

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**Muriel DECOT**, Executive Secretary of the CEPEJ

**Eva KONECNA**, Secretary of the CEPEJ-SATURN / Responsible for the CEPEJ Network of pilot courts

**Sara RADOVICKA**, CEPEJ Assistant

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