



Strasbourg, 25 November 2024

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)26

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

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

37th meeting, 29 - 30 October 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 (CEPEJ-SATURN) of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) held its 37th meeting in Strasbourg on 29 and 30 October 2024. The meeting was chaired by Giacomo Oberto (Italy), Chairperson of the CEPEJ-SATURN.

2. The agenda and the list of participants are attached to this Report as Appendices I and II respectively.

2. CASE-WEIGHTING TOOL

3. The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the preliminary draft case-weighting tool (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)20) that was prepared by Dimitrije Sujeranovic (Serbia), scientific expert, based on comments provided by the Task force composed of Francesco Depasquale (Malta), Sabine Matejka (Austria) and the Secretariat. The comments were provided in writing or orally during a series of on-line meetings held between June and September 2024. The Working group expressed its appreciation for the quality of the preliminary draft.

4. The discussions focused on refining the structure of the future tool and outlining the steps necessary to develop a case-weighting system. The CEPEJ-SATURN revised the proposed structure, organising it into key chapters: introduction, concept and objectives of case-weighting, detailed steps for its development and implementation, monitoring and periodical review. The draft tool outlines seven distinct steps for establishing a case-weighting system and concludes with twelve recommendations for setting up and maintaining such as a system. To enhance clarity and its usability, the draft tool includes practical examples presented in tables, designed to assist the beneficiaries in collecting relevant data and effectively implementing case-weighting.

5. The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to continue its examination of the draft tool, focusing on the detailed elaboration of the steps for development of case-weighting as well as its implementation, and monitoring. It was decided to develop the tool for courts, with the possibility of its adaptation for prosecution services in a later phase. Additionally, the Working Group also agreed to revisit the definition of case-weighting and to hold further discussions on-line, with a first on-line meeting to be scheduled by the end of January 2025.

3. STUDY ON WORKLOAD MEASUREMENT TOOLS IN JUDICIAL SYSTEMS

6. The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the draft detailed questionnaire on workload measurement tools in the courts (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)11REV2). The questionnaire was developed by Alexandre Palanco (France), scientific expert, following the comments received during and after the last SATURN meeting. The questionnaire has been based on the previous questionnaires on case-weighting to ensure consistency of approach. Instead of the initial plan to focus broadly on judicial systems, the Working group decided to narrow down the scope focusing only on courts at this stage. The questionnaire has been structured around four main sections to explore the functioning and characteristics of the existing workload measurement tools.

7. The CEPEJ-SATURN instructed the Secretariat to disseminate rapidly the detailed questionnaire via google form to the contact persons nominated by the CEPEJ members following the presentation of the draft questionnaire at the CEPEJ plenary meeting in June 2024. The Secretariat has received nominations from 27 member States. The replies will be useful for preparation of a future study analysing

the existing workload measurement tools. It agreed that a first analysis would be prepared for the next meetings of the CEPEJ-SATURN and the CEPEJ Network of pilot courts to be held in April 2025.

4. DATABASE OF BACKLOG REDUCTION PRACTICES

8. The Secretariat presented the updated prototype and the Concept Note of the Database on backlog reduction practices (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)23) to CEPEJ-SATURN. The Concept Note outlined the guiding principles for publishing practices in the Database and the procedures for its management. The detailed principles for publication are structured around criteria of relevance, implementation and evidence based. Practices must directly relate to measures taken by a State, court, or another actor to combat backlogs. Whenever possible, submitted practices should be accompanied by supporting evidence. However, the evidence-based principle is not mandatory, as States may face challenges in explicitly linking backlog reduction to specific measures. These principles will be regularly updated to reflect insights gained from new submissions and ongoing experience with the Database.

9. The Secretariat informed CEPEJ-SATURN that the Database prototype was presented to CEPEJ members during the plenary meeting in June 2024. Following the presentation, the Secretariat began collecting the practices and sent a request to member States for their submission. Practices were gathered using an electronic form finalised by the Task Force, established for this purpose at the SATURN meeting in April 2024. A total of 56 practices were submitted by Andorra (2), Belgium (11), Croatia (17), France (5), Georgia (1), Germany (1), Hungary (2), Italy (1), Lithuania (1), Romania (5), Slovenia (4), Sweden (3), and Türkiye (3). The quality of submitted practices varied significantly, and thus would necessitate a thorough review before publication.

10. The CEPEJ-SATURN agreed on the next steps to finalise the Database. To this end, the Secretariat, in collaboration with Emilie Hoareau (France), scientific expert, will review all submitted practices and publish the selected ones in the Database. The Database is expected to be made public during the upcoming CEPEJ plenary meeting in December 2024, alongside the announcement of a second call for submissions. Practices will be collected at regular intervals and examined during SATURN meetings, that will decide on their selection and publication.

5. TOOL TO ANALYSE THE LENGTH OF THE STEPS OF THE CIVIL PROCEDURE

11. The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the preliminary report on the length of the stages of civil proceedings (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)22) prepared by Pawel Wrzaszcz (Poland). The preliminary report was structured around the various stages of civil proceedings, as defined in the questionnaire developed in co-operation with pilot courts prior to its dissemination. The report contains the analysis of qualitative and (real or estimated) quantitative data regarding national legislation and of court practices submitted by nine CEPEJ pilot courts. The report also contains concluding remarks for each stage of civil proceedings together with suggestions for the next steps for further work. The CEPEJ-SATURN thanked the scientific expert for drafting the first analysis. The summary information on legal deadlines and estimated duration of each procedural step in the relevant countries were particularly appreciated.

12. The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to continue working on this theme in two main stages. In the first stage, it was agreed to share the analysis with the nine participating CEPEJ pilot courts to verify the accuracy of the submitted information and the preliminary analysis. Consultations in writing will be most likely accompanied by joint or individual interviews to collect complementary information. In parallel, research on the existing legislation in the countries of the pilot courts involved and beyond should be carried out to complete the analysis. The Working group supported the view that an additional expert, preferably scholar or academic in civil law, should be involved to assist in any further process. In a second stage, the Working group suggested to extend the analysis to more countries involving additional

pilot courts from different geographical regions to achieve a more representative overview. Following this information gathering, a comparative legal analysis should be performed to identify variations in the duration of individual sages of civil proceedings and to draw well-founded conclusions.

6. TIME MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST FOR PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICES

13. José Manuel Santos Pais (Portugal), scientific expert, presented the revised Time Management Checklist for the public prosecution service (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)15) and its Explanatory Note (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)21). The Checklist is a tool for collecting data and information useful for analysing the length of proceedings under the responsibility of prosecution and take appropriate measures to prevent delays in criminal proceedings. The Checklist and its Explanatory Note were based on similar documents designed for courts that were adopted by CEPEJ in 2023, but, at the same time, reflecting the specificity of the prosecutor's work and their reliance on other actors, such as the law enforcement agencies.

14. The discussion within the CEPEJ-SATURN focused on the comments received from the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE) which were consulted on the Checklist (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)25). The CEPEJ-SATURN welcomed the cooperation with the CCPE that allow to adapt the Checklist to the needs of prosecutors. The modalities of such a consultation were agreed upon with the Bureau of the CCPE in May 2024. The comments concerned mainly the indicators relating to the role of the prosecutor in the trial phase. The Working group decided to present the Checklist and its Explanatory Note for adoption by CEPEJ at its forthcoming plenary meeting in December 2024 after integrating the CCPE's comments. It was also suggested to draw on this example of co-operation to replicate it to other Council of Europe bodies.

7. POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE'S TOOLS ON COURT EFFICIENCY

15. The CEPEJ-SATURN discussed the follow-up work outlined in the Secretariat's Concept Note on Artificial Intelligence and Efficiency of Justice (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)19), focusing on exploring the efficiency of AI use in courts. This work will be undertaken in collaboration with the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST and the CEPEJ-GT-EVAL. The Concept Note included a proposed methodology, a potential way forward, and suggestions for AI tools to be used as case studies in the research. The primary goal is to develop a practical Checklist to assist judicial authorities in assessing the potential impact of AI tools on court efficiency prior to their acquisition or implementation (ex-ante). Alternatively, the project may produce an evaluation tool designed to measure the impact of AI tools on court efficiency after deployment (ex-post).

16. Alejandro Fernandez Munoz (Spain), a member of the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST, informed the SATURN members about the outcomes of the March 2024 discussions within this Working Group. These discussions highlighted support for examining whether and how AI tools have improved efficiency. This work could provide valuable insights for authorities preparing business plans to justify the development or introduction of AI tools in their national court systems. Alternatively, it could aid in establishing a baseline, which is essential for measuring the impact of AI tools on efficiency.

17. The CEPEJ-SATURN approved the proposed methodology for appointing experts to research practical cases involving the implementation of AI tools in courts. The group reviewed the proposed AI tools and solutions for the study, which were pre-selected by the Secretariat from the CEPEJ Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and AI. In coordination with the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST, it was suggested to focus on AI applications in the following areas: (i) decision support systems (Germany and Kazakhstan), (ii) transcription and translation tools (Spain and Slovenia), (iii) prediction of litigation, (iv) anonymisation tools (France), and possibly (v) triaging and allocation of cases. To conduct the research, the appointed

experts will interview representatives of authorities at the central and/or court level involved in the decision-making, development, or implementation of the selected AI systems. The CEPEJ-SATURN instructed the Secretariat to select these experts, who will draft a detailed research design along with interview questions, to be reviewed at upcoming meetings of CEPEJ-SATURN and CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST. The CEPEJ-GT-EVAL should be involved in the whole process.

8. TOOL TO IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE JUDICIARY

18. Based on the revised Concept Note prepared by the Secretariat (Document CEPEJ(2024)3), the CEPEJ-SATURN had a second exchange of views on the feasibility of developing a tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary. The Secretariat highlighted that the work on this theme is a joint effort involving all working groups of CEPEJ and informed the members of the discussion held in these groups as well as some collected practices (e.g. Belgium, France, and Italy). The Working Group suggested that the tool should encompass not only judges but also non-judicial court staff and prosecutors, with a focus on working conditions and workplace well-being. In this context, the group took note of the regular well-being assessments conducted among judges, court managers, and non-judicial staff at the Namur Court of First Instance in Belgium, using a specially designed questionnaire. Additionally, the importance of human resource management and the availability of management tools and training of court managers was emphasized as crucial for fostering good working conditions.

19. The Secretariat informed the members of the decision to establish an *ad hoc* working group that will be composed of members nominated by each working group and tasked with the development of the possible future tool. The CEPEJ-SATURN nominated Sabine Matejka (Austria) as a member of the *ad hoc* Working Group. Furthermore, it was proposed to include this theme at the next meeting of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot Courts.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

i) Effective court management methods

20. The Working Group examined a revised Concept Note (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)24) prepared by Aurélie Grenot-Devedjian (France), scientific expert, which outlines specific themes for a potential future possible tool aimed at enhancing effective court management. Discussions centered on two areas: the structure of court governance and human resource management. A methodology for developing the potential tool was proposed, starting with collection of court management models and practices through a questionnaire. The collected information would serve as a basis for a comprehensive study, potentially leading to the creating of guidelines on effective court management. The theme may be addressed during the joint meeting of all CEPEJ Working Groups, scheduled for October 2025.

ii) Meeting of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot Courts

21. The CEPEJ-SATURN discussed the organisation of the forthcoming 18th meeting of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot Courts that will be held on 10 April 2025 in Strasbourg (France). The members preliminary agreed on the format and the themes for discussion. It was suggested that three workshops are organised in the morning covering the following topics: i) work-life balance in the judiciary; ii) potential effects of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on court efficiency; and iii) quality of judicial debate, all of which reflect the work of the Working Groups of the CEPEJ. They should be as usual consulted to draft the programme of the next meeting. The presentation of the Database on backlog reduction practices and the on-going work on workload management tools could be discussed at the afternoon plenary session of the Network's meeting.

iii) Next meeting of the CEPEJ-SATURN

22. The next CEPEJ-SATURN meeting will be held in Strasbourg on 9 and 11 April 2025, together with the 18th Meeting of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot Courts.

ANNEX I
Draft Agenda

CEPEJ-SATURN-OJ(2023)2REV

Strasbourg, 23 October 2024

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

Working Group on judicial time management

(CEPEJ-SATURN)

37th meeting – 29 and 30 October 2024

Strasbourg, Agora G05, 9.30 am – 5.30 pm

DRAFT AGENDA

Documents can be found in the [collaborative space](#).

[Link to the videoconference](#) - Meeting ID : 694 6443 9187 - Password: 664569

29 October 2024

Opening of the meeting

1.
 - a. Family photo
 - b. Adoption of the agenda
 - c. Information by the Secretariat

Case weighting tool

2. Exchange of views on the preliminary draft case weighting tool and way forward
Experts in charge: Dimitrije Šujeranović and Sabine Matejka
(29 October 2024 – 9.30 am – 12.30 am)

WORKING DOCUMENT

Preliminary draft case weighting tool

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)20

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Report on case-weighting in judicial systems (Study No.28)

Report on case-weighting in public prosecution services

WORKING DOCUMENTS

Draft Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)15

Draft Explanatory Note for the Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)21

Compilation of CCPE comments

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)25

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Time Management Checklist for courts

CEPEJ(2023)5

Explanatory Note for the Time Management Checklist for courts

CEPEJ(2023)6

Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services

3. Exchange of views on the draft Time Management Checklist and its Explanatory Note with a view to their possible adoption
Expert in charge: José Manuel Santos Pais
(29 October 2024 – 2.00 pm – 3.00 pm)

Tool to analyse the length of the steps of civil procedures

4. Exchange of views on the preliminary draft analysis and way forward
Expert in charge: Pawel Wrzaszcz
(29 October 2024 – 3.00 pm – 5.00 pm)

WORKING DOCUMENT

Preliminary draft analysis

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)22

REFERENCE DOCUMENT

Concept paper: which way

forward for the tool on the length of the steps of civil procedures?

CEPEJ-SATURN(2023)11REV

Questionnaire on analysing the length of civil proceedings

CEPEJ-SATURN(2021)11REV2

Study on workload measurement tools in judicial systems

5. Exchange of views on the questionnaire and way forward
Experts in charge: Alexandre Palanco and Ana Krnic-Kulusic
(29 October 2024 – 5.00.pm – 5.30 pm)

WORKING DOCUMENTS

Questionnaire on workload measurement tools in the courts

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)11REV

List of contact persons

REFERENCE DOCUMENT

Concept note on the study on workload measurement tools in judicial systems

CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)2

30 October 2024

Potential effects of the use of Artificial Intelligence's tools on court efficiency

6. Exchange of views on the concept note and way forward
Participation of Alejandro Fernandez Munoz, member of the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST
Joint work with the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST
(30 October 2024 – 9.30 am – 10.30 am)

WORKING DOCUMENT

Concept note on Artificial Intelligence and the efficiency of justice
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)19

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Concept note on the use of AI's tools on court efficiency
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)12REV

Draft questionnaire on (potential) effects of the use of AI's tools on court efficiency
CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)16

<p>Database of backlog reduction practices</p> <p>Exchange of views on the establishment of the on-line Database of Backlog Reduction Practices</p> <p>7. <i>Participation of Lidija Naumovska, Secretariat of the CEPEJ, and Emilie Hoareau, scientific expert</i> (30 October 2024 – 10.30 am – 11.00 am)</p>	<p>WORKING DOCUMENT</p> <p>Note on the Database of backlog reduction practices (on-line)</p> <p>CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)23</p> <p>REFERENCE DOCUMENT</p> <p>Concept note on the establishment of the Database of backlog reduction practices</p> <p>CEPEJ(2023)15</p>
<p>Tool to improve work-life balance in the judiciary</p> <p>8. Exchange of views on the updated concept note and way forward</p> <p><i>Joint work with other CEPEJ working groups</i> (30 October 2024 – 11.00 am – 12.00 am)</p>	<p>WORKING DOCUMENT</p> <p>Concept note on improving work-life balance in the judiciary</p> <p>CEPEJ(2024)3</p>
<p>Any other business</p> <p>9. a. Tool on effective court management Exchange of views on possible future work on effective court management <i>Expert in charge: Aurélie Grenot-Devedjian</i></p> <p>b. 18th Meeting of the Network of pilot courts Discussion on preparation of the next meeting of pilot courts (30 October 2024 – 12.00 am – 13.00 am)</p>	<p>WORKING DOCUMENT</p> <p>Concept note on effective court management – proposal for future topics</p> <p>CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)24</p> <p>REFERENCE DOCUMENT</p> <p>Report of the 36th meeting</p> <p>CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)18</p>

ANNEX II

List of Participants / Liste des participants

MEMBERS / MEMBRES

Francesco DEPASQUALE, The Honourable Mr Justice, Superior Courts, (President of the CEPEJ / Président de la CEPEJ), Valletta, MALTA

Mitja KOZAR, Judicial councilor, District Court of Maribor, Maribor, SLOVENIA

Giacomo OBERTO, Judge, First instance court of Torino (civil court), Turin, ITALY

Sabine MATEJKA, President, District Court, Floridsdorf/Vienna, AUSTRIA,

Pawel WRZASZCZ, Head of Land and Mortgage Register Department, District Court of Lublin, POLAND

Ivan CRNCEC, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, Zagreb, CROATIA

SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS / EXPERTS SCIENTIFIQUES

Aurélie GRENOT-DEVEDJIAN, Head of the Evaluation and Prospective Division, Directorate of Judicial Services, Ministry of Justice, FRANCE (on-line)

Christian DE VALKENEER, President of the Court of First Instance of Namur-Dinant, BELGIUM (absent)

Dimitrije ŠUJERANOVIĆ, Justice reform expert, Belgrade, SERBIA

Alejandro Fernandez MUÑOZ, Expert, Madrid, SPAIN

Jose Manuel SANTOS PAIS, Expert (online)

Alexandre PALANCO, Expert (online)

Ana Krnic KULUSIC, Expert (online)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

SECRETARIAT

Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) – European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice /
Direction générale des droits humains et l'Etat de droit (DGI) – Commission européenne pour l'efficacité de la justice
E-mail : cepej@coe.int

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

Sara RADOVICKA, CEPEJ Assistant