

Conclusions by the Hungarian Presidency

Conference of Ministers of Justice

“Digital technology and artificial intelligence – New challenges for justice in Europe”

5 October 2021, Gödöllő, Hungary

organized by the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers and the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has provided a solid base for the protection of European values regarding the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law since 1949. Currently we are facing unprecedented changes in European societies, which are being driven and amplified notably by technological developments. As regards the challenges of digitalisation in the field of judiciary, no member state can tackle them on its own. Therefore, the Conference of the Ministers of Justice held by the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of Europe has created a platform for discussion on ensuring the effective functioning of our judicial systems in the digital age, while at the same time, protecting the human rights of individuals, in particular the rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of Europe, on the basis of the fruitful discussions at the Conference of the Ministers of Justice, hereby

1. **DECLARES** its high regard and appreciation for the work accomplished by the Council of Europe in the last 70 years and its work to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Also **DECLARES** its commitment to continue supporting all ongoing initiatives and work to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between the Council of Europe Member States on the use of digital tools in the field of justice, in particular within the framework of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) and also on the legal framework for the development, design and application of artificial intelligence in the Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI).
2. **CONCLUDES**, that every initiative and best practice that can help facilitate more efficient judicial procedures through the use of electronic means and artificial intelligence-based applications, including both domestic procedures and cross-border cooperation between judicial authorities of the Member States of the Council of Europe, are of utmost value.
3. **CONCLUDES** that in spite of the different constitutional and legal traditions of the Members States there is a genuine need for a common approach on overcoming challenges raised by the rapid technological development and finding practical solutions related to the digitalisation of justice.
4. **UNDERLINES** that a human-centred approach on the use of digital tools and artificial intelligence, which preserves and safeguards the substantive elements of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in a digital world, must be at the heart of a well-functioning and efficient justice system.
5. **NOTES** that as a result of the high-level experts’ Roundtable on New Means of Communication for International Cooperation in Criminal Matters held on 4 October 2021 within the framework

of the Hungarian Presidency, experts from the Council of Europe Member States agreed that an informal platform should to be set up in the cooperation framework of Council of Europe Member States. This initiative would be of utmost value.

6. INVITES, accordingly, the future Presidencies to organise IT Roundtable discussions annually, providing a forum for a continuous and in depth exchange of views between the Member States on regulatory and IT best practices that could help to overcome technical compatibility problems and facilitate the widespread use of new communications means in the area of international judicial cooperation.
7. INVITES the future Presidencies of the Council of Europe to follow up the initiative brought forward by the Hungarian Presidency, and continue the discussion among Ministers of Justice on further challenges and achievements related to the digitalisation of justice as well as to promote the Member States ongoing cooperation by sharing best practices.