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The aim of the CEPEJ is to contribute to improving the quality of justice and the efficiency of its functioning in the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe.



Editorial

The economic and financial crisis keeps on making the headlines. It affects many member states of the Council of Europe. How do they cope with it? Various recovery plans and important budget cuts are mentioned. Yet, the effects of the economic crisis on judicial systems are hardly ever evoked within the public debate.

Last March, the CEPEJ asked member states to describe the effects of economic crisis on the 2009/2010 judicial budgets. The first comments have been included in its fourth [evaluation report of European judicial systems - Edition 2010](#) (based on 2008 data): Efficiency and quality of justice.

Member states have different approaches. While many states undertake judicial budget cuts (salaries and operating costs are reduced or frozen), others fear that such a reduction might only intensify the crisis. Some states have even planned to increase the number of court staff following the increase in civil and criminal litigation because of bankruptcies and employment dismissal cases as well as a precarious social situation. Finally, other member states fear a reduction in revenue drawn from commercial and land registries.

Now comes the time to give further thought to the consequences of the economic and financial crisis on judicial systems and expand the debate by providing possible solutions.

I hope you enjoy reading our newsletter!

Barbara SCHERER
CEPEJ special Advisor

File: The consequences of the economic and financial crisis on the functioning of judicial systems

4 countries give details about the effects of the crisis

The data presented in this report concern the year 2008. But, the financial and economical crisis intervened meanwhile. In order to provide the most complete information, the CEPEJ asked, during the evaluation exercise, three complementary questions to member States in order to evaluate actual and future impact of the crises on the budgets of the judicial system. 25 member States or entities answered these questions.

► [Extract concerning the crises - Evaluation report of European judicial systems](#)



4 CEPEJ members have accepted to reply more generally to the question. These are representatives of the Czech Republic, of Spain, of the Netherlands and of United Kingdom. You will find their position in the next pages.

Effects of the economic crisis on the functioning of the judicial system in the Czech Republic



The economic crisis expresses itself first of all by cutting down the judicial budget and savings in the judicial sphere.

In the budget for 2010 the expenses of 22,067,742,000 CZK* for the whole justice system were approved (of which 13,882,239,000 CZK for justice and 8,185,503,000 CZK for prison service). It is about 185,069,000 CZK less than in 2009.

During this year under the government decrees the amount of 1,023,264,000 CZK (4,67% of the approved expenses) from the approved budget were tied. At the end of the year the government – depending on the economic situation – will decide whether at least part of these tied resources will be released. The Ministry of Justice searches in reserves but these measures have an unfavourable impact on the management of the whole budget chapter ([more](#)).

* [Exchange rate on 01/01/2010: 1 EUR = 26,300 CZK]

Ivana BORZOVÁ
Ministry of Justice
Czech Republic
CEPEJ Member

The effects of the economic crises on the Spanish judicial system*



The current economic crisis has affected all aspects of Spanish society, including Justice. The quarterly collection of statistical data on court performance by the Spanish Council of the Judiciary (CGPJ) shows that the most immediate consequence of the crisis has been a sustained increase in the number of incoming court cases (9,048,852 in 2009 up by 5,7% from 2008, which already saw an increase of 6,7% from 2007). The court system has been most affected in the civil/commercial and labour areas, while criminal justice remained more stable. Incoming civil cases increased by 18,5% in 2009, on top of an 17,8% increase in 2008. Similarly, labour justice also suffered increases for 2 consecutive years. The impact was specially marked in 1st Instance Social Courts, where incoming cases increased by 17,4% in 2009 and 32% in 2008. For the period 2008-2009, there has therefore been a 15,23% and 13,4% increase in the workload of civil and labour magistrates respectively ([more](#)).

* The statistical information referred to in this article can be found in the Annual Reports 2008/2009 of the Spanish Council of the Judiciary (CGPJ), as well as in the Statistical Bulletins "Justice Data" Nos. 15, 17, 18, and 22 published in the CGPJ site: www.poderjudicial.es

Elsa García-Maltrás
Senior Public Prosecutor
Spanish member of CEPEJ

To face the crises in the Netherlands



On 30 September 2010 the new coalition government Rutte-Verhagen presented its strategic action programme Freedom and Responsibility. It announced a budget cut in public expenditures of 18 billion Euros to be carried out between 2011 and 2015. This is nearly 10 % of the total budget of Dutch national government. In 2011, the budget for the judiciary was 935 million Euros and for legal aid, it amounted to 482 million Euros. These budgets have continued to rise in the last decades. Several measures are introduced to keep the budget in control as well as to improve and innovate within the Dutch judicial system ([more](#)).

Frans van der DOELEN
Programme Manager, Department of the Justice System
Ministry of Justice, The Netherlands
Dutch Member of the CEPEJ

Justice in the United Kingdom hardly affected by the crisis



Among the largest member states the UK is probably one of the hardest hit by the economic crisis. Following the recent general election an emergency budget was introduced where it was announced that public spending would be dramatically reduced. The cuts would be applied across nearly all Government Departments and the Ministry of Justice has been asked to reduce its costs by 23% over four years which amounts to £500 million each year for the next four years.

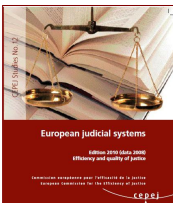
The Ministry of Justice has just produced a plan to achieve these savings which fall into five areas:-

1. Introducing a rehabilitation revolution:
 2. Reforming of sentences and penalties:
 3. Reforming courts, tribunals, legal aid and work with others in the delivery of criminal justice:
 4. Assuring better law:
 5. Reforming how we deliver our services:
- ([more](#))

John STACEY
Head of international Development of justice administration
International Directorate
Ministry of Justice of the United Kingdom
Vice-President of the CEPEJ

Ongoing activities: what's new?

Evaluation of judicial systems



The 2010 edition of the Evaluation report of European Judicial systems has been published during the European Day of Civil Justice, at the main event which took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia), on 25 October 2010.

- ▶ [Evaluation report of European Judicial systems](#)
- ▶ [Overview of the report](#)
- ▶ [Press review](#)
- ▶ [Order the report](#)

Timeframes of proceedings



The SATURN Centre for judicial time management continues its work aiming to establish a permanent European Observatory of judicial timeframes, through analysis of qualitative and quantitative data available in member States, and by testing tools on Pilot courts. It has also set up a coaching protocol, allowing interested Courts to be guided in the implementation process of CEPEJ tools and measures in the field of timeframes.

- ▶ [More information...](#)

Quality of Justice



The Working Group on Quality of justice will test the use of the handbook for conducting satisfaction surveys aimed at Court users in a significant number of courts. It will support the courts in the operating of results of these surveys and investigate about the possibility of drawing gradually conclusions of such surveys at the level of the Council of Europe. This handbook, which has been adopted by the CEPEJ last September, includes methodological information and model questionnaires aimed for courts wishing to assess the users' perception of public service provided. In addition, the Working group finalized

a report on "Contractualisation of judicial processes," prepared by the scientific expert Julien Lhuillier; this report should be approved at the next plenary meeting of the CEPEJ, on 9 and 10 December 2010. Finally, the Study "Quality management in courts and in the judicial organisations in 8 Council of Europe member States", led by the expert Philip Langbroek, with the participation of other researchers, has been published under the series "The CEPEJ Studies".

▶ [More information...](#)

European Day of Civil Justice (EDCJ)



The main event of the European Day for Civil Justice at which the CEPEJ, co-organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, took place in Ljubljana, on 25 October 2010, at the invitation of the Slovenian Ministry of Justice, Mr Aleš ZALAR.

A seminar on European co-operation in civil matters has been organised. The 4th Evaluation report on European judicial systems has been published on this occasion, event which has been part of the Crystal Scales Prize awarding ceremony.

The Council of Europe's Deputy Secretary General as well as eminent personalities from the judicial world participated in this event.

The audio records of the presentation of the report as well as comments from Ministries of Justice who were present, powerpoint presentations of the seminar and presentations of selected projects of the Cristal Scales of justice are available on the internet website.

▶ [More information...](#)

2010 Prize Crystal Scales of Justice



The Crystal Scales of Justice Prize has been awarded to the Administrative Tribunal of Yambol (Bulgaria) its project: "[Everyone is equal before the law, but not everyone is equal before the language](#)" / [Promoting clear communication between the Courts and citizens](#)." Three other projects have been awarded with a special mention:

- "[Young drivers who are confronted with stories of severe road accidents presented by people of the same age are less likely to engage in risky and reckless driving](#)", by the Regional Court of Linz and FMG

Amor, Austria;

- [New way of systematic management of delay reduction projects in courts - combining external expertise and internal participation](#), University of Technology and Ministry of Justice, Finland

- [Automated system for enforcement of authentic documents \(COVL\)](#), Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia

▶ [More information...](#)

Publications



▶ [Evaluation report of European Judicial systems](#)

▶ [Handbook for the conducting of court user satisfaction surveys in Council of Europe member States](#)

▶ [Quality management in courts and in the judicial organisations in 8 Council of Europe member states](#) / A qualitative inventory to hypothesise factors for success or failure by Philip M. Langbroek (Research director, the Netherlands)

Readers corner

You wish to react to an article published in this issue or to suggest us topics to be approached? Please send us your suggestions by e-mail to the following address: cepej@coe.int.

Forthcoming events

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| - 16th CEPEJ plenary meeting (Strasbourg) | 9-10 December 2010 |
| - 17 th meeting of the Bureau of the CEPEJ (Strasbourg) | 21 January 2011 |
| - 12 th plenary meeting of the Lisbon Network | 17 February 2011 |
| - 9 th meeting of the GT-QUAL working group | 16-18 February 2011 |
| - 9 th meeting of the Pilot Group of judicial time management (SATURN) | 19-20 May 2011 |