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Publication of the 2020 edition of the CEPEJ evaluation report on judicial systems



The CEPEJ's evaluation report on European judicial systems, published on 22 October 2020, contains quantified, commented and analysed data on the functioning of the judicial systems of 45 European states and 3 observer states (Morocco, Israel and Kazakhstan), allowing to measure the efficiency and quality for each of them.

It was officially presented at the Online Conference of Ministers of Justice, organised under the Greek Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 9 November 2020 and was sent to all the Ministers of Justice of the States that participated in the evaluation exercise.

→ [Special file](#)

N° 19 – March 2021

EDITO



Dear subscribers to the CEPEJ Newsletter,
Dear members,
national correspondents,
representatives of pilot courts and observers to the CEPEJ,

2020 was a groundbreaking year. The sanitary crisis threw up a complex range of challenges for most public sectors, and especially for the courts and judicial services in the Council of Europe member States. The CEPEJ was mobilised early on for guidance and comparative information between the States and confirmed its role as a point of reference in the field of efficiency of justice in Europe and further afield.

2020 was also my 12th and last year as Head of the Justice and Legal Co-operation Department. It has been an enormous pleasure to work to support the CEPEJ during this long period, and to oversee the Secretariat. Thanks to the CEPEJ members and Presidents, and to the remarkable commitment and expertise of its Secretariat, the CEPEJ has continued to evolve, while at the same time maintaining its central place on the core issues.

I am particularly pleased with the dynamic 2020 version of the Report on the Evaluation of Judicial Systems. I wish the CEPEJ, its members and experts, and my colleagues in the Secretariat, every success in the future.

Hanne Juncher

**Former Head of the Justice and Legal Co-operation Department (until December 2020)
Executive Secretary, Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and Head of the Action against Crime Department (since January 2021)**

What does 2021 hold in store for us ?

Overview of the priorities of the CEPEJ Working Groups

CEPEJ-GT-EVAL **Evaluation of** **judicial systems**



The CEPEJ-GT-EVAL will prepare the 2022 cycle of evaluation of judicial systems aiming at collecting 2020 data from participating member and observer States. Three other data collections in the framework of a collaboration with the European Commission (EU Justice Scoreboard; Western Balkans Dashboard; Dashboard Eastern partnership countries) will be carried out and will lead to CEPEJ reports. Studies on legal professionals will complement the evaluation report - 2020 cycle - and a protocol for the use and transmission of CEPEJ data will be prepared.

→ [More information](#)

CEPEJ-GT-QUAL **Quality of judicial** **systems**

The CEPEJ-GT-QUAL will continue its work on a possible operational follow-up of the CEPEJ Charter on AI, on the basis of a feasibility study adopted at the CEPEJ plenary meeting in December 2020. The various possibilities will be explored by the CEPEJ-GT-QUAL in 2021. Furthermore, the ongoing work on "the centrality of the user in judicial proceedings", "the simplification of language with litigants" and "ensuring gender diversity in the judiciary" will be finalised with the adoption of guidelines and/or a good practice guide for the 47 Member States at the CEPEJ plenary meetings in 2021. Work on mediation and training on CEPEJ tools on quality of justice will be carried out in parallel.

→ [More information](#)

CEPEJ-SATURN **Judicial** **timeframes**

The CEPEJ-SATURN working group on judicial time management will work on dashboards for courts, on the modification of the guidelines on judicial time management to include lawyers, court staff, Rechtspflegers, judicial experts and bailiffs, and on the case weighting system for which guidelines will be prepared in order to facilitate its implementation, following the Report on case weighting in judicial systems adopted by the CEPEJ in 2020. The CEPEJ-SATURN will also focus on the development of training programmes on CEPEJ tools related to judicial management.

→ [More information](#)

CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST **Artificial** **intelligence and** **cyberjustice**



The CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST will prepare tools for the appropriate use of new technologies and/or artificial intelligence mechanisms in judicial systems. These tools will concern in particular online court hearings, online dispute resolution as well as online enforcement of court decisions, in accordance with the roadmap and work plan adopted by the CEPEJ in December 2020.

→ [More information](#)

Cooperation programmes

The information about the cooperation programmes co-funded by the European Union does not necessarily reflect the view of the European Union

What are the results achieved in 2020? (Programmes that ended in 2020)

Malta: Supporting the efficiency of Justice in Malta

December 2018 - December 2020

The activities were carried out with funding by the European Union via the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the European Commission's DG Structural Reform Support

Support to the development of the Court Administration Agency: CEPEJ experts drafted a report including recommendations on the future development of the Agency and specific recommendations as regards good practices from other European member States were presented by CEPEJ experts.

South Programme III: Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean

March 2018 – February 2020

The activities were carried out by the CEPEJ in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme South Programme III, co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

Training on strategic planning tools and techniques as well as on good administrative and budgetary management practices has been provided for the institutions of judicial governance in Morocco: the CSPJ and the PMP.

Training on judicial communication,

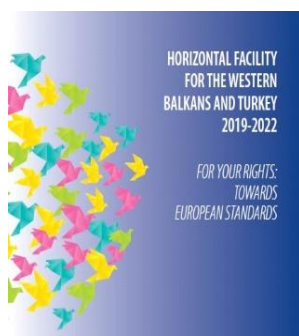
particularly in times of crisis, and the use of social networks has been organised for the Tunisian pilot courts and representatives of the judicial press.

Reinforcement of networking and peer-to-peer exchanges, with a regional dimension, was offered through regular participation of partners in CEPEJ working group meetings. A new and fruitful cooperation has been developed with the Egyptian Council of State. Following a fact-finding mission to identify priorities for intervention, capacity-building activities have started to improve the day-to-day

functioning and working methods to reduce procedural delays in the administrative justice system. A user satisfaction survey was conducted with the support of the President of the Council of State, who announced that such surveys would be introduced in his jurisdiction.



What are the expected results in 2021? (Ongoing programmes)



Albania: Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice in Albania (SEJ III)

May 2019 – May 2022

The activities are implemented in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey II", co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

- Targeted training of the staff of the High Judicial Council and the court administration staff on the new unified methodology for data collection and reporting;
- finalisation of the new internal rules applicable to all courts in application of Law 115/2016 on efficiency and quality of justice;
- implementation and monitoring of the new judicial map;
- support to the piloting of the online communication of the Tirana District Court and Bar Association through expertise on IT and legal aspects;
- support to the CJH and the pilot courts in conducting additional satisfaction surveys and implementing them as a permanent tool for improving court management.

Azerbaijan: Strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan

March 2019 – August 2021

The activities are implemented in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme "Partnership for Good Governance II" co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

- Development of an action plan for the implementation of the roadmap on the dissemination of the CEPEJ efficiency and quality tools in all courts, including a streamlined use of audio and video recording in court proceedings;

- support to national authorities in the preparation and publication of a progress report on judicial reforms;
- development of a training curricula on court management for the Justice Academy and organisation of capacity building activities for court managers;

➤ support to legal and institutional modernisation of the national enforcement system by providing advice on the introduction of the private bailiff's system and expertise on the new enforcement legislation, as well as delivering capacity building activities to the institutions of the reformed enforcement system.

Georgia: Enhancing the accountability and the efficiency of the judicial system and the professionalism of lawyers

January 2020 – November 2021

The activities are implemented in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme "Partnership for Good Governance II" co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

➤ Piloting of non-judge staff appraisal system at the Supreme Court;
 ➤ elaboration of a strategy and action plan for the Supreme Court;
 ➤ expertise in establishing criteria for prioritising cases and support in monitoring the backlog and age of pending cases, as well as on the methods of preventing and combating unreasonable delays;



➤ needs assessment for the creation of a statistics module within the Georgian judiciary, integrating CEPEJ tools and indicators.

Kosovo*: Strengthening the Quality and Efficiency of Justice in Kosovo (KoSEJ II)

May 2019 - May 2022

** 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*

The activities are implemented in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey II" co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

➤ Conductions of a comprehensive assessment of the use of IT in the courts for a cleaner picture of the state of play and proposal of new IT solutions in accordance with CEPEJ Cyberjustice tools and standards;

➤ development of mechanisms to improve the quality and reliability of data generated by the case management system;
 ➤ support to the implementation of the pilot project on electronic summons at court level;
 ➤ extension of the electronic summons project to other courts following the evaluation of progress in the Pristina District Court;
 ➤ development of new modules on the collection and analysis of judicial statistics for the Justice Academy;
 ➤ design of new courses for presidents, judges and court staff.

Latvia: Strengthening the access to justice in Latvia through fostering mediation and legal aid services, as well as support to the development of judicial policies and to increased quality of court management

September 2019 – June 2021

This project is funded by the European Union through the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the European Commission's DG Structural Reform Support

➤ Development of specific recommendations for the final report on mediation, including the lessons and results of the pilot project with a view to develop the use of mediation;
 ➤ evaluation of the results of the pilot project on legal aid and development of recommendations for strengthening legal aid provision;
 ➤ drafting concept notes on the further development of ICT tools and on the use of artificial intelligence in courts;
 ➤ provide guidance on judicial statistics recommended by the CEPEJ and introduction of performance indicators to assess the impact of judicial reforms;
 ➤ completion of the training on court management for judges and court staff implemented by the Judicial Training Centre.

Malta : Establishing a digital strategy for the Maltese justice sector

May 2020 – May 2021

This project is funded by the European Union through the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the European Commission's DG Structural Reform Support

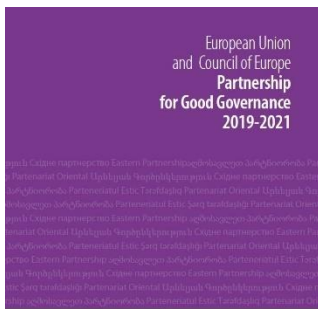
➤ Discussion of the assessment report and recommendations of the CEPEJ experts;
 ➤ co-drafting of the Digital Justice Strategy and its Action Plan;
 ➤ presentation of the strategy to the Ministry of Justice, Equality and Governance.

Morocco: Improving the functioning of justice in Morocco based on the tools developed by the CEPEJ - phase II

November 2020 – December 2021

The activities are implemented in the framework of the Neighborhood Partnership of the Council of Europe with Morocco 2018-2021

➤ Support to the Ministry of Justice on the digitalisation of justice, on the human, legal and technical aspects of the process;
 ➤ support to the Presidency of the Public Prosecution Services on the design of monitoring tools for prosecution services, optimisation of working practices in two pilot prosecution offices and communication between the Presidency and its partners, including the judicial police.



#strongertogether



Republic of Moldova: Support to further strengthening the efficiency and quality of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova (PGGII)

November 2019 – October 2021

The activities are implemented in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme "Partnership for Good Governance II" co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

- Presentation and discussion of an assessment report on the communication strategy of the Superior Council of the Magistracy;
- improvement of the national regulatory framework for the digitisation processes;
- Training on communication for judges and staff responsible for court communication;
- stocktaking and recommendations to improve access to courts for victims of discrimination, persons with disabilities, women, children and other vulnerable groups.

Slovak Republic: Continued support to a well performing Slovak judiciary

September 2019 – November 2021

This project is funded by the European Union through the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the European Commission's DG Structural Reform Support

- Expert report with recommendations on the alignment of the judicial map reform with CEPEJ methodologies and tools, followed by a round table on this topic with relevant stakeholders;
- experts recommendations on the implementation and improvement of the case weighting system as well as on the introduction of timeframes;
- workshop on the implementation of the CEPEJ tools for court management and good practices;
- workshop on the standardisation of court decisions with a view to improving the delays of their adoption, as well as their comprehensiveness and quality.

South Programme IV: Regional Support to Reinforce Human rights, Rule of Law and Democracy in the Southern Mediterranean

March 2020 – February 2022

The activities are implemented in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme South Programme IV, co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

- Strengthened cooperation with the Egyptian Council of State and introducing CEPEJ tools, dashboards, performance indicators and others, for the benefit of administrative courts;

- preliminary contacts with Lebanon for cooperation to improve the efficiency of their judicial system;
- organisation of regional-scale activities on issues of common interest, such as judicial inspection services;
- discussion on innovative working methods and digitalisation of courts as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Spain: Promoting cyberjustice in Spain through management change

June 2020 – September 2021

This project is funded by the European Union through the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the European Commission's DG Structural Reform Support

- Support to the Ministry of Justice working group on the electronic case file;
- support to ensure the adaptation of the judicial organisation to digital change;
- support on the priorities and main challenges of the Ministry of Justice in the areas of digital transformation of justice, management of cyberjustice projects and development of the regulatory framework for digitalisation processes.

Tunisia: Improving the functioning, performance and access to justice in Tunisia (AP- JUST)

January 2019 – December 2021

The activities are implemented in the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe project AP-JUST, co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

- Support to the court of cassation for the revision of texts relating to its internal organisation;
- support to the General Inspectorate for better performance by using European expertise in data transfer and their exploitation of inspection techniques;
- preparation of 4 continuous training modules for practising magistrates in cooperation with the Superior Institute for Magistrates;
- cooperation with the National Bar Association through training courses on "The lawyer and judicial time" and "The remote trial";
- finalisation of the handbook of good practice on judicial expertise with the Ministry of Justice, legal experts and magistrates.

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2020 publications

– [Declaration on lessons learnt and Challenges faced by the judiciary during and after the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)

– [European judicial systems - CEPEJ Evaluation Report - Evaluation cycle 2020](#)

Part 1: [Tables, graphs and analysis](#)

Part 2: [Country Profiles](#)

Part 3: [CEPEJ-STAT database](#)

– [Case weighting in judicial systems - CEPEJ Studies No. 28](#)

– [The time parameter within article 5 ECHR - Towards reasonable timeframes for judicial proceedings -Research on the European Court of Human Rights case-law pertaining to the requirement for reasonable time of proceedings in the ambit of article 5 ECHR](#)

– [Time requirements arising from Articles 5 and 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights - Implementation manual for criminal cases](#)

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

www.coe.int/cepej

Launch of the “Crystal Scales of Justice Prize” awarding innovative practices contributing to the efficiency and the quality of justice

The objective of this Prize is to identify and highlight innovative practices in the organisation of courts and procedures and the functioning of the judicial system in general. These are practices that have been recently implemented, are easily applicable to other countries or institutions and whose effectiveness can be measured. The competition is open to courts, bar associations, NGOs or any other body competent in judicial matters in a Council of Europe member or observer state. Applications must meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the rules and be sent to the CEPEJ (cepej@coe.int), preferably by electronic means, by **31 March 2021**. The award ceremony should take place in Slovenia, at the invitation of the Supreme Court and under the patronage of the Slovenian Ministry of Justice, on 1 October 2021.

→ [More information](#)



The European Day of Justice in 2020



The European Day of Justice is jointly organised by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. It is celebrated around 25 October each year. In total, 23 events were organised in 17 different countries in 2020. Some events lasted a whole week. The Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNUE), for example, organised for the 4th time the "Notaries of Europe" open days. The public concerned by these events are citizens, legal professionals, law students, primary school pupils and students and public decision makers.

The CEPEJ welcomes the commitment of the different institutions and public authorities in the celebration of this event. More than 120,000 internet users have been reached via social networks.

Think already about the European Day of Justice in 2021!

→ [Report of the events organised to celebrate the European day of Justice in the Council of Europe members States](#)

→ [More information](#)



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