

NORWAY

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

CCPE QUESTIONNAIRE

Generally, our impression is that the international co-operation in Europe has improved vastly over the last years. In our experience, the inevitable exceptions to this are not found in specific types of cases or letters of request. When we do encounter problems, it seems to us that this most often is due to the "human factor", i.e. the competence and willingness of the individual prosecutors and police officers handling the requests.

In general, the co-operation seems to run more smoothly in Europe than in many countries outside Europe. However, there are obvious differences also within Europe. It is our experience that the co-operation works best when the case is handled by Eurojust or the European Judicial Network (EJN). In such cases, the information exchange runs smoothly between the involved countries, and unnecessary duplication of investigation is avoided. Moreover, coordination by Eurojust is a great advantage in the increasing number of cases that need to be investigated simultaneously in several countries. This experience leads us to believe that further development of the cooperation between the prosecution services in Europe should draw as heavily as possible on Eurojust and the EJN and their experience. Rather than trying to duplicate Eurojust and/or the EJN, those organisations should be encouraged to extend their cooperation with "third states", by entering into operational agreements, establishing contact points etc.

The CCPE should also call upon the Directors of Public Prosecutions (DPPs) to urge the prosecutors of their countries to handle requests of legal assistance speedily and thoroughly. The CCPE could also play a role in assisting the prosecution services in Europe by developing teaching material, training packages etc. for handling letters of requests. There is an obvious need to improve the general knowledge of how legal assistance can be obtained abroad and how a request for assistance should be handled domestically. Quite frequently, we see imprecise and unclear letters of requests (both from our own prosecutors and from abroad).

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to a problem most prosecution services face in their daily work with letters of request: The translation of requests and the necessary documents is very costly and time-consuming. If the CCPE could take an initiative in order to make all European countries accept requests in English, it would be highly appreciated. This would be a very important step forward in the practical work with assistance across the borders.

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