



CEPEJ NETWORK OF PILOT COURTS 16th MEETING

*Poland, Lublin
30 March 2023*

Opening speech by Francesco Depasquale, President of the CEPEJ

Dear Deputy Minister of Justice, Dr Romanowski,

Dear President of the District Court of Lublin-East, Dr Mielnik,

Dear Dean of the faculty of Law of Lublin, Dr Herbert,

Dear colleagues,

My dear friends,

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for us, at the CEPEJ, to welcome you all for the 16th meeting of the Network of pilot courts which this year is being held in the beautiful city of Lublin.

I have to thank the District Court of Lublin-East, and particularly my great friend Pawel as well as Dr Mielnik, President of the District Court of Lublin-East, and the Ministry of Justice, for giving us the opportunity to meet in this amazing city of Lublin both to renew our friendships as well as to exchange our experiences and learn from each other by meeting again in person as a Network.

I confess that were it not for the persistence and determination of Pawel and Anna, considering the fact that such a meeting was postponed twice, once due to Covid and another time due to the hostilities taking place in the neighbouring country of Ukraine, this meeting would have never been able to take place.

So I want here, once again, to express my gratitude and thanks to Pawel and Anna for their determination and great work and organisation, and I look forward to this important meeting.

I would also like, at this stage, to thank the interpreters, who will be patiently following us and interpreting into French and English languages, and whose contribution is essential for the better understanding of all our great work.

As you are certainly all aware, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, better known as CEPEJ, which was set up by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in September 2002, has as its principle goal, the promotion and improvement of the efficiency and functioning of justice in member States, which goal is attained through the development and implementation of tools and guidelines intended to promote the instruments adopted by the Council of Europe from time to time.

It is in view of such goals and objectives that the CEPEJ values greatly the pilot court Network as we consider the courts to be a very important partner in all our work.

The Network is a platform for sharing innovative and effective practices, for reflecting on difficulties and developments of judicial systems in Europe and for discussing and developing the implementation and testing of the tools produced by the various Commissions and Experts of CEPEJ.

It is an undisputed fact that the CEPEJ would not be the same without you, the pilot courts, since you provide that essential link with judicial practitioners and day-to-day practice, which link is needed to assure that our work is both relevant and effective!

The CEPEJ, in fact, produces many tools and guidelines on a great variety of topics, and mentioning them here would be impossible due to time constraints.

Many tools are developed specifically for courts to implement, as a result of which, the input from pilot courts is essential to us all both during the tools' development as well as their implementation and testing in practice.

As a result, meetings, like the one of today, are important to us for consultation on the tools under preparation.

At today's meeting, many relevant issues will be discussed, these being themes which are topical for the judiciary in today's world.

Who, amongst us, can say that they are not experiencing what most European judicial systems are encountering, namely the ever increasing number of incoming cases and increasing workload. How should one tackle these difficulties and what are the solutions being adopted amongst Member States? It is in this forum that we would very much like to hear your views and experiences in fighting backlogs, evaluating the performance of judges and potential measures to ease up excessive workload in the courts.

We also wish to reflect together with you on the future role of pilot courts in the work of the CEPEJ. This should consider not only the way how you can help the CEPEJ but more importantly how CEPEJ can be useful and relevant in your work. We would therefore welcome all new ideas which could be shared on how to reinforce cooperation with the pilot courts, both amongst themselves as well as between the pilot courts and the CEPEJ.

This meeting should also serve for us to provide you feedback on your input following requests we make. To this effect, we were indeed very happy to see the great number of replies you sent to our questionnaire on the length of the various steps of the civil

proceedings. I believe the Secretariat, who I would like to both thank and commend for their great work and without whom we would certainly never succeed in our goals and dreams, will share with you the preliminary feedback on the information received and possible way forward.

I wish you all a great meeting, hoping that you will end up this meeting convinced, more than before, that CEPEJ is there to help you all out and that together we may work to render Justice more efficiently and effectively to provide the service the citizens demand and expect out of us – Justice within a Reasonable Time.

Thank you and have good day!