

What are the objectives of the CEPEJ?

In setting up the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) at the end of 2002, at the initiative of the European ministers of Justice who met in London (2000), the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe wanted to establish an innovative body for improving the quality and efficiency of the European judicial systems and strengthening the court users' confidence in such systems.

The CEPEJ is made up of representatives of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe and is entrusted with the following missions:

- to propose to the states pragmatic solutions as regards judicial organisation, taking fully into account court users,
- to enable a better implementation of the Council of Europe's standards in the justice field ("normative after sale service"),
- to contribute toward relieving the case-load of the European Court of Human Rights by providing states with effective solutions to prevent violations of the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time (Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights).

The CEPEJ is also a privileged interlocutor of the European and international legal community, namely through cooperation with professional organisations which have been granted observer status, as well as with its networks of pilot courts and of judicial training institutes (Lisbon Network).

In the Action Plan adopted at their 3rd Summit (Warsaw, May 2005) the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member states decided to develop the evaluation and assistance functions of the CEPEJ in order to help member states to deliver justice fairly and rapidly.

What does the CEPEJ?

The CEPEJ develops concrete measures and tools aimed at policy makers and judicial practitioners in order to:

- **analyse the functioning of judicial systems and orientate public policies of justice:** the CEPEJ has set up a continuous evaluation process of the functioning of judicial systems in all the European states, on a comparative basis. This unique process in Europe enables, through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, to have a detailed photography of the functioning of justice and to measure its evolution. This tool for in-depth analysis enables to orientate public policies of justice.
- **have a better knowledge of judicial timeframes and optimize judicial time management:** CEPEJ has been developing practical tools aimed at professionals for a better knowledge and improvement of the situation of judicial timeframes and time management in courts in the European states, as well as concrete tools aimed

at professionals (Compendium of best practices, Judicial time management Checklist). Its SATURN Centre for the study and analysis of judicial time aims to become a European observatory of timeframes of proceedings.

- **promote the quality of the public service of justice:** beyond the efficiency of judicial systems, the CEPEJ aims to identify the elements which constitute the quality of the service provided to users in order to improve it and aims to develop innovative measures (Checklist for promoting the quality of justice and the courts, Handbook for conducting satisfaction surveys aimed at court users).

- **facilitate the implementation of European standards:** the CEPEJ analyses the impact in the member states of the existing European standards in the justice field (access to justice, execution of court decisions, e-justice, mediation, etc.) so as to propose measures which contribute to improving their implementation.

- **support member states in their reforms of court organisation:** the CEPEJ is entrusted with giving targeted cooperation to the states which request it in the framework of their institutional and legislative reforms and for organising their justice system.

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The CEPEJ also contributes specific expertise to the debate about the functioning of the justice system in order to

- **provide a forum for discussion and proposals:** the CEPEJ is entrusted with identifying problems and areas which can be improved in (watching and alerting role) and to organise and participate in exchanges on the functioning of justice.
- **get the users closer to their justice system:** the CEPEJ is at the initiative, together with the European Commission in Brussels, of the European Day of Justice. It has been celebrated each year on 25 October and enables the public, through various events organised by judicial institutions in the European states, to get better acquainted with their justice system and its functioning. Within the framework of this Day, a European Prize: "the Crystal Scales of Justice" has been created in 2005, aimed at highlighting innovative and effective practices carried out within courts to improve the functioning of justice.

For more information

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