Following the call for expressions of interest with a view to setting up a group of experts on the property consequences of marriage and other forms of union and on succession and wills in the European Union ("PRM-III/IV"), these terms of reference provide information on the operation of PRM-III/IV.

Group of experts on the property consequences of marriage and other forms of union and on succession and wills in the European Union ("PRM-III/IV")

- Terms of reference -

1. The group of experts on the property consequences of marriage and other forms of union and on succession and wills in the European Union (PRM-III/IV) will carry out its activities in accordance with the rules set out in paragraphs 2 to 8 below.

2. The members of the PRM-III/IV group are appointed individually by the European Commission for a period of two years renewable. They will advise the Commission without regard for any outside instructions and will observe the conditions of confidentiality laid down in the Commission decision setting up the group of experts. The group of experts will carry out its activities in accordance with the rules of procedure adopted by the Commission to that end for PRM-III/IV. Members of the group of experts will not be paid for their work.

3. PRM-III/IV will provide long-term input to the Commission's work on the preparation of legal instruments relating to the property consequences of marriage and other forms of union and to succession and wills. This input will take the form of detailed practical comments on the work in hand, in particular on the documents submitted for opinion to PRM-III/IV experts depending on their fields of specialisation.

4. The PRM-III/IV meetings organised by the Commission will be held in the latter's premises in Brussels. PRM-III/IV's work may be divided into topics, and the experts into subgroups, each discussing a particular topic in the light of its members' specialisations. The Commission will decide on the distribution of work and subgroups in the light of the legislative timetable, the areas dealt with by PRM-III/IV and any comments by members of the group of experts and any other person or organisation interested in or consulted about the problems to be examined.

5. While the Commission acknowledges that all official Community languages are equal in importance, for practical organisational reasons the group's working languages will be English and French. For the same organisational reasons, the members of the group will examine the documents submitted to them in English or French and may make comments on those documents in English or French. Participants at meetings may agree, though, to add other Community languages for written and spoken communication, without the Commission supplying interpreting and translation infrastructure or services.

6. PRM-III/IV experts will examine the documents submitted to them in accordance with the guidelines and time limits set by the Commission, so as to ensure that the information provided by PRM-III/IV in return is practical, constructive, regular and presented in good
time. PRM-III/IV experts will verify the said documents and prepare detailed practical comments with a view to drafting instruments that meet the specific problems of citizens and are applicable in all the Member States (best solutions). PRM-III/IV experts are invited in particular to present examples and specific cases drawn from their fields of specialisation. The information provided by PRM-III/IV will be transmitted to the Commission.

7. The Commission will send out the invitations, draw up the agenda and chair PRM-III/IV meetings. Depending on the topic and the progress of research, the participants at PRM-III-IV meetings may include experts representing the Member States and any third party whom the Commission has decided to associate with the activities of PRM-III/IV.

8. Members of the group who do not attend its meetings or who do not make the required contribution may be excluded from PRM-III/IV. The Commission reserves the right to fill places which have become vacant as a result of exclusion or voluntary withdrawal from PRM-III/IV by applying the selection criteria set out in the call for expressions of interest.