



Brussels, 13 June 2013

Summary report of the 26th Experts Group Meeting – European e-Justice Portal

PARTICIPANTS: 24 MEMBER STATES (ALL APART FROM PORTUGAL, ESTONIA AND GREECE), CROATIA, PUBLICATIONS OFFICE, COUNCIL SECRETARIAT GENERAL AND THE COMMISSION.

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The European Commission (hereafter ‘the Commission’) welcomed the participants to the meeting and the agenda was adopted with no comments.

2. EUROPEAN E-JUSTICE PORTAL STATE OF PLAY

The Commission gave a state of play overview of the various on-going e-Justice activities.

- Release 4 of the European e-Justice Portal (hereafter ‘the Portal’) was to go live on 28 May 2013. The new on-line forms were being migrated from the Judicial Atlas web site and were to be made available gradually.
- The work towards the integration of the Portal with e-CODEX would start soon and would proceed throughout the course of the summer. The Commission noted that it tentatively had planned the go-live of the related functionalities in the Portal for September 2013.
- Work on ECLI was also on-going within the relevant sub-group. The Commission again extended an invitation to all Member States to join this project.

3. NEW RELEASE OF THE PORTAL

The Commission made a live presentation of Release 4 of the Portal and answered a number of questions from participants, in particular:

- SK asked about cooperation with the Your Europe Portal – the Commission replied that discussions with DG MARKT are on-going;

– the UK asked about deletion of translations from the MS "To-do lists" – the Commission replied that this has been already requested and will be implemented in the next release.

Representatives of the Member States welcomed new developments and expressed their satisfaction with the changes carried out in the scope of Release 4.

It was agreed that the Portal's statistics shall be included in the agenda of all future meetings.

4. CONTENT ISSUES

The Commission raised several content related issues:

- annual content revision exercise

Member States were informed that, unfortunately, some of them had not yet finalised the agreed annual content revision exercise. The following Member States were named: BG, NL, PL, RO, LT, IT, ES and HU. In addition, some of the Member States had not even started the exercise, namely: CY, DK, FI, FR and EL. The Commission recalled that the final reminder was announced in the last Working Party meeting and as a consequence, the Commission would now proceed with the formal letters addressed to the Ministries of Justice. The following tour de table revealed that several Member States (BG, NL, PL, LT, HU and FI) finalised the exercise but did not officially confirm that all the prerequisites were met. The Commission promised to get in contact with all those Member States.

- updates of the victims' factsheets

The Commission inquired whether the Member States would be in favour of dealing with the future updates of the victims' factsheets by themselves – without any assistance of the external contractor. All participants agreed.

- new content pages pertaining to EPO and small claims payment methods

The Commission announced that it will soon disseminate a new content template pertaining to the pages on EPO and small claims payment methods. These pages are planned to go live together with the e-Codex release.

- support for Internet Explorer 7.0

The Commission asked whether as from the next release, the Portal's Back Office should support IE 7.0. Several Member States confirmed that they still use version 7.0 (or older) and that the support needs to be maintained.

- corrections by Portal Administrators of the layout specific issues on Member States pages

Due to some Word related issues, Member States often face some layout problems which are difficult to fix without a specific HTML expertise. Therefore, the Commission offered to take care of those issues by itself (MS would be automatically notified), subject to the Member States' approval. All the Member States welcomed this initiative and provided their agreement.

- update of the MS communications pertaining to specific civil instruments

The Commission asked the Member States to verify the up-to-dateness of their communications, pertaining to specific instruments in civil and commercial matters, officially submitted to the Commission. An email on this issue will follow.

5. RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN (RWD)

The Commission made a presentation on the principles of RWD and their application to the European e-Justice Portal, including some mock-ups under different resolutions. NL commented that it was pleased to see this work coming up and that it was very relevant as their national judicial staff were receiving iPads to work on. NL also added that the "target group" section of the content might be hidden in case of very low resolution (smartphone) and only one column should be kept. BE asked if there was a different layout when using a smartphone in landscape or portrait, to which COM explained that it was a design decision to be taken. SK added that the introduction text should probably be hidden as well for small resolutions.

The Commission concluded that RWD will be further discussed during the next experts meeting.

6. INTERCONNECTION OF LAND REGISTERS

The Commission offered a brief overview of the Terms of Reference for a Land Register Interconnection study that were presented in the Working Party (document 8824/13 EJUSTICE 31) and thanked the delegations for all the comments already provided. Before opening the floor for discussions, the Commission also explained that the request from some of the Member States to include a per-Member State cost estimate in the study could not be accommodated due to its magnitude, stating at the same time that the costs for the Member States that were not already connected to EULIS would be similar regardless of the alternative chosen for interconnection.

Following a question from SI, the Commission clarified that a participation in the interconnection would not offer the citizens or the participating Member State free access to the information in the other interconnected land registers. The interconnection is meant as a public service for which the Commission itself would not charge, but Member State-specific fees for access would still apply. The Commission stressed that this project does not aim to change the national legislation related to Land Registers in any way, but simply to provide additional and more convenient means of access to what is already available.

LU and BE raised the point that the Terms of Reference are insufficiently clear with respect to the organisations that are meant to be covered by the study. Both Member States indicated that they have multiple organisations that deal with land register topics (Cadastre, Land Register, Mortgage Register, etc.) and that they would like to know which are to be involved. In reply, the Commission stated its interest in covering as many of these organisations as the Member States are willing and able to involve in the study (either directly or by proxy), the end goal being to ensure as complete a domain analysis as possible. The Commission also agreed to amend the Terms of Reference to this effect.

Addressing a follow-up question from BE, it was clarified by the Commission that the Terms of Reference would not go through a further round of discussion in the Working Party, in order to ensure a timely project start. It was added that all written comments provided by BE had already been examined and they would be included in the final version of the Terms of Reference.

DE stated that, due to legal obstacles, it would not be able to participate in this study.

In reply to NL, the Commission mentioned that the Experts' Group was expected to play its usual role in relation to the project, namely to assist in all areas where domain expertise is required.

Following concerns of HU that both the business and implementation analyses are pursued in parallel, the Commission clarified that this is done in order to avoid further delays in an already long-standing project from the agreed upon e-Justice Roadmap, but that the implementation analysis would be flexible enough to ensure that any outcome of the business analysis, as well as further decisions from the Working Party, can be accommodated.

RO raised the point that intermediating e-Payment to national providers seemed to be a horizontal concern for many upcoming projects, and that it was high time the problems were addressed. The Commission indicated its intention to do so once it had some preliminary suggestions as a result of the upcoming Land Register Interconnection study.

7. MACHINE TRANSLATION (MT) – IMPLEMENTATION DECISION

The Commission presented mock-ups of the integration of MT in the European e-Justice Portal, and commented that in the defined use cases, new content was not encompassing the migrated EJM content. HU remarked that the Council document didn't mention the translation of attachments, to which COM replied that they included it as the document refers to "content" and it was presented as such previously, but that indeed the term "content" could be discussed in this case. HU also asked if the quality indicator would be present from start; COM replied that DGT didn't plan to make it available on the go-live, but later, so it would probably not be included in the first release. SK asked if it would be possible to translate only the text that was changed in the new version of a page; COM explained that it was technically easy to send only that part to the MT engine, the issue being to merge it back at the right location in the previous version of the professionally translated content; this option was being explored but would need help from DGT.

AT commented that this was a good effort and it was definitely better than nothing, but expressed some reserve as to the quality and that the disclaimer should be drafted carefully. The Commission replied that MS will be involved in the exact wording of the disclaimer. PL noted that some feedback could be collected from the user directly; NL commented that it would be a good idea but the user should be made aware of what this feedback would be used for. HU asked if it would be possible to only use language pairs of a certain quality level that was provided by DGT; the Commission replied that it was a possible solution for quality issues.

8. DSS APPLET

The Commission presented a demo version of the DSS applet to be used for signing in the context of e-CODEX. Signing a PDF document using a certificate stored in a file was successfully demonstrated. The presentation was followed by a Commission report on the state of play of the Distributed User Acceptance Testing, on-going in the two months prior to the meeting, following the call for testing launched during the February 26th, 2013 Experts' Meeting. It was indicated that the

response to the call for testing was rather limited and, consequently, that problems might appear in production with some of the smart cards that were not tested. The Commission announced that the testing environment would be kept online until the end of June and that a full report on the smart card coverage achieved would be provided to the group via email afterward.

NL clarified that it had no solutions for smart cards that it could test with, while the UK asked whether testing using certificates stored in files was useful, to which the Commission answered in the affirmative.

9. COURT DATABASE

The Commission gave an overview of the project and briefly described the questionnaire which had been disseminated to the Member States. Subsequently, the Commission posed a question concerning the need for translations of the court names. In the Commission's understanding there is no business case for it and translations of the court types together with translations of the court types' descriptions shall be sufficient. DE endorsed the Commission's position and also asked for the differentiation concerning types of courts in order to clearly categorise them. NL also agreed not to translate courts' names and suggested to limit the length of the description allowing at the same time a link towards a complete description located on the content pages. In addition, NL added that the type of the court should allow defining multiple levels of courts. The Commission summarised the discussion by announcing that no courts' names will be translated.

Subsequently, the Commission's contractor carrying out the court database implementation analysis – ARHS - gave a presentation on the content of the questionnaire. The presentation raised many concerns related to the logical data model and specific fields of the questionnaire. Consequently, having in mind the complexity and importance of the project, the decision was taken to withdraw the questionnaire and to organise an ad-hoc meeting of national court databases administrators (ten Member States volunteered to participate).

10. FIND A LAWYER/FIND A NOTARY

The Commission gave a state of play overview of progress made on both projects. Work was on-going with a target completion date in September 2013. The Commission then gave a presentation of several screenshots and explained the planned system behaviour.

BE suggested to have the current user language as the first selection in the language selector.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Carsten Schmidt, from the e-CODEX Consortium, gave a presentation on the state of play of the e-CODEX project, indicating that the project was on track and pointing out that the first end-to-end tests were already successfully completed between piloting Member States.

The Commission announced that the next meeting will take place in September 2013.