



Brussels, 11 October 2013

## **Summary report of the 27<sup>th</sup> Experts Group Meeting – European e-Justice Portal**

**PARTICIPANTS: 24 MEMBER STATES (LU, PT, ES AND HR WERE EXCUSED),  
PUBLICATIONS OFFICE AND THE COMMISSION.**

### **1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

The European Commission (hereafter ‘the Commission’) welcomed Croatia and the other participants to the meeting. 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.

- Part 1 of Release 4 of the European e-Justice Portal (hereafter ‘the Portal’) went live at the end of May 2013 and part 2 went live on 21 September 2013. It contains 60+ enhancements as well as functionalities related to e-CODEX .
- The migration of 70% of the EJM civil web site content has been completed. The remaining 30% of the content needs to be revised by the EJM contact points.
- On e-CODEX, delays are due to constraints in the Commission’s data centre. The Commission noted that the plan is to have a working e-CODEX connection by mid to late March 2014. Communication with DG DIGIT is in progress in order to improve the collaboration process with the e-CODEX consortium. Concerning the development of the Digital Signature (DSS) Applet, the Commission commented that it is expected to be ready by the beginning of October 2013.
- On land registers, all comments regarding the terms of reference were taken on board and the project can start on 15 October at the latest.
- The on-going activities consist of improvements regarding e-CODEX, responsive web design, machine translations (the Commission intends to

finish the analysis by the end of October) and implementation of the cookies policy.

- Next year's release(s) will contain: migration of the ATLAS' communications, integration with the Commission's translation services, some e-CODEX related changes and Court Database functionalities.
- On the Find a Lawyer project, not all bar associations are participating and so, the Commission has asked non-participants to reconsider. The software is ready and 6 Member States are presently fully ready.
- On the Find a Notary project, 21 Member States are participating (all members of the CNUE). Work has been initiated to interconnect the notary public professionals in the UK and Ireland.
- Both Find a Lawyer and Find a Notary are subject to the adoption of Data Protection Decision which is still pending.
- On ECLI, some of the data providers are actively collaborating with COM and the Portal search engine's implementation is underway.

### **3. CONTENT ISSUES**

The Commission informed Member States about the specificities of part 2 of Release 4 that went live on 21 September 2013. Among the most important changes announced was that the Croatian language will be soon available in the Portal (frame of the Portal together with the first level content items, followed by the other content pages and dynamic forms).

Concerning future migration of the ATLAS' communications, the Commission noted that the aim is to move away from the paper-based workflow into a direction of online encoding of data via the Portal's Content Management System (CMS). The new workflow would also contain automatic notifications and automatic triggering of translations. The Commission noted that to this end the CMS needs to be modified and this will constitute part of the next Release.

On specific content items, the Commission noted that:

- a. a content work plan, containing 10 items in total, will be discussed in the Working Party,
- b. there will be no contractors engaged in the update process of the victims' and defendants' rights factsheets anymore,
- c. there will be no specific content update exercise run by the Commission anymore – Member States are responsible for their content and should revise it whenever necessary. In this regard, Member States will soon start to receive content expiration notifications concerning pages requiring an update.

#### **4. FIND A LAWYER/FIND A NOTARY**

The Commission made a presentation on the FAL/FAN project. For both the FAL and FAN, the Geonames third party product is used allowing multi-lingual city matching and searching for the nearest lawyer.

FR asked whether it is possible to have information in FAL and FAN on non-EU languages lawyers might speak as well. The Commission explained that there are no technical constraints in this regard but this issue also has political implications.

#### **5. COURT DATABASE**

The Commission referred to the fruitful meeting of experts on the Court database model and business rules, which took place at the beginning of the summer 2013 and briefly presented the documents delivered by the contractor. Concerning the timing, the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the project – implementation analysis – has just finished and the second phase is expected to be launched at the end of October 2013. The Commission is preparing the Terms of Reference which will be disseminated to the Member States in due course. The construction phase should finish at the end of spring 2014 and the Member States will be closely involved. The Commission expects to launch the Court Database functionality by May/June 2014.

The Commission also gave a presentation of the system's architecture, in particular a glossary which will contain descriptions of different court types per Member State. The implementation of the glossary will follow the implementation of the insolvency registers glossary. The classification required by the ECLI system will be mandatory, the rest will be optional.

UK asked the Commission when it is expected to provide the data and the Commission replied that this is planned for May 2014.

As for the future functionalities relying on the data of the Court database, the Commission explained that a primary focus is given to the ATLAS related functionalities i.e. finding a competent court for the European civil instruments and auto-completion in the dynamic forms. For these purposes, merely data pertaining to the European instruments will be required. On top of that the Commission presented its intention to implement at a later stage a "Find a court" feature. This functionality would require the data concerning all courts of the Member States. The Commission noted that an implementation similar to the "Court finder" developed by the UK is planned. It was agreed that the Member States will be given 2 weeks to provide their opinion on the future "Find a court" functionality.

#### **6. COURTS AUTHORITY TABLES**

The Commission briefly presented the topic and passed the floor to the Publications Office which gave a general presentation on the concept of Authority Tables. Authority Tables consist of controlled vocabularies providing values for specific metadata elements and are used to harmonise information for traceability reasons and also for making available this information to the public. The content of Authority Tables is meant to be offered as open data and they could provide a history of the concepts as well.

Afterwards, the Commission provided a description of the planned Courts Authority Table and clarified that the Court Database project does not depend upon the creation of such a table, but it could benefit from it. The Commission informed experts about their responsibilities and the fact that it would be the Publications Office which would perform the technical work on the creation and maintenance of the table. On the other hand, the required data would have to be provided by the Member States who would also need to appoint a dedicated contact point responsible for the exchange of correspondence with the Publications Office.

The Commission gave also a presentation on a draft structure of the authority table. In this context, several delegations took the floor:

- NL asked about including historical data, the baseline for this exercise and also about the definition of a court – thus, whether a tribunal or other judicial authority could be included in the table, and raised potential future problems relating to the maintenance of the table and a probable lack of trust;
- HU opposed the idea to create such a table due to an unfavourable high cost/benefit ratio;
- DE raised a question on the communication between the Commission and the Publications Office;
- IT posed a question on how these lists could be synchronised and who would be responsible for them;
- UK requested to add a summary to the working document;
- RO asked for clarifications on how the authority table relates to the Court Database and suggested to add some use cases to the working document.

The Commission concluded the topic and promised to issue the revised version of the working document, based on the comments raised by the Member States. The document will be disseminated to the Member States which will be asked to provide, within a month, their agreement on the future courts authority table.

## **7. STATISTICS AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

The Commission gave a presentation on the amount of visits to the Portal and informed Member States that a document with the statistics will be uploaded in the CIRCABC.

UK raised the point of future promotional actions concerning e-CODEX related functionalities in the Portal and the need to promote only the e-Justice Portal instead of two separate entities: e-Justice and e-CODEX. The Commission took note of it.

## **8. RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN**

The Commission gave a presentation of the prototype of the responsive web design (RWD). Several Member States took the floor and expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes produced so far.

NL and BE asked clarifications about the dynamic forms to which COM explained that the forms will be available only in desktop mode. RO questioned the

implementation of ECAS in this version and whether this is already available in RWD, COM explained that it was a central service of the Commission and that it already supported mobile devices. The UK proposed to do some usability testing of the mobile version of the site. BE raised the problem with high resolution screens and the lack of a possibility to switch from one version of the Portal to another. The Commission promised to address all the points during the construction phase.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Commission announced that the next meeting will take place in December 2013 and that a Land Registers meeting is to be scheduled as well.