European e-Justice Portal
A Connecting Europe Success Story

The European e-Justice Portal

Over 10 million citizens are involved in cross-border judicial procedures each year. That means a far greater need for cooperation between different national judicial systems, and improved access to information on the judicial process in different European countries. The European e-Justice Portal facilitates this cooperation by providing information and access to justice services across the EU.

What is the European e-Justice Portal?

The European e-Justice Portal is a one-stop-shop for citizens, businesses and legal professionals across Europe. Whether a prosecutor in Amsterdam needs to connect with a judge in Luxembourg, a Spanish entrepreneur wants to consult land registries in Belgium, or a Greek citizen needs to look for a lawyer in Ireland, the European e-Justice Portal provides a wealth of legal information and access to legal services.

What are the benefits?

- **Citizens** can access legal information in their own language, or find a legal practitioner in another country.
- **Legal professionals** can consult registers and access legal databases and contact colleagues in other countries, eliminating the need to physically send information or requests.
- **Businesses** can access a wealth of legal information in their own language and access legal means across borders.

How do the Building Blocks fit in?

- **eSignature** enables legal professionals, judges, citizens and businesses to create and validate electronic signatures.
- **eID** will allow users to legally authenticate themselves to the platform from anywhere in the EU through the eIDAS network.
- **eDelivery** provides a secure and reliable solution to electronically exchange information between citizens, businesses, governments and judicial authorities.
- **eTranslation** and its [machine translation service](#) has already translated three years’ worth of work for human translators into 24 official EU languages for judicial entities and users across Europe.

Why was the project set up?

The European e-Justice Portal was introduced to improve citizens’ access to justice, to facilitate procedures within the EU and to make the resolution of disputes or the punishment of criminal behaviour more effective.

The project is grounded in a core principle – citizens should be able to enjoy the same access to civil and criminal justice in other Member States as they do in their native country.

How was the European e-Justice Portal implemented?

The first step to building the success of the European e-Justice Portal was to ensure Member States could collaborate and transmit data between one another. That meant interoperability – Member States should not build IT systems independently of each other.

According to Marc Jorna, Head of Unit at DG Justice and Consumers, there’s a need for ongoing collaboration. Marc says, “It is critical that we don’t create barriers between the Member States’ IT systems as each country is stepping up their efforts to digitise their processes and procedures in the justice domain. If everyone starts building their own IT system then they will not be able to communicate with each other and that will be a big problem.”

"If everyone starts building their own IT system then we will not be able to communicate with each other and that will be a big problem."

Marc Jorna, Head of Unit at DG Justice and Consumers
The next stage was identifying functionalities that were easy to implement and would ensure the system was compliant with EU regulation.

- **The identities of users had to be legally authenticated.** eIDAS requires Member States to allow citizens from other Member States to use their own electronic IDs to access their online services, which would require investment and know-how.
- **The system needed legally acceptable electronic signatures.** Electronic signatures would need to be created but also validated.
- **Messaging had to be secure and reliable.** End users and legal professionals would need to exchange information between judicial systems.
- **Users needed legal information in their native language.** Marc explains that “the European e-Justice Portal contains a wealth of legal information but in some areas we had three years’ worth of work for human translators”.

The CEF building blocks became a key component in the evolution of the European e-Justice Portal from the beginning, explains Marc. “Five years ago, the Commission and the Member States sat together and agreed that the European Justice domain needed modernising, we asked ourselves, which areas would we tackle first? This is how it all began, and the building blocks are a key component of our strategy.”

Through **eID**, users will be able to legally authenticate themselves to the platform from anywhere in the EU. This functionality means platform administrators can safely provide different levels of access to different users.

The use of **eSignature** allows legal professionals, judges, citizens and businesses to create and validate electronic signatures. Marc explains how the building blocks ensure the project complies with EU regulation. “With CEF eSignature we have a solution that is ready to use, the building blocks are putting the law into practice.”

Adopting **eDelivery** enables the connection of the judicial systems of the Member States by providing a common standard for their message exchange system. Where documents and data used to be exchanged physically, eDelivery provides a secure and reliable solution to electronically exchange information between citizens, businesses, governments and judicial authorities.

**eTranslation** translated three years’ worth of work for human translators into 24 official EU languages at a lower cost, so it could be made available to judicial entities and end-users all over Europe. Bogdan Dumitriu, the IT Policy Officer on the project, highlights that the use of the CEF building blocks provides a financial benefit to the project, but what the project team really values is that the building blocks take away the burden of deploying and maintaining key parts of the system. “For us, the fact that the CEF building blocks handle the development, maintenance, infrastructure and support of these key functionalities of our system is great, we can focus on where we can add the most value, dealing with issues relating to the justice domain.”

**What are the results?**

The European e-Justice Portal is delivering faster and more accessible digital public services in the domain of justice to the 10 million citizens involved in cross-border judicial procedures each year.

**Citizens and businesses** have access to a wealth of legal information in their own language and can find legal assistance across Europe. As of the 4th quarter in 2016, 14,000 visitors accessed the European e-Justice Portal’s ‘Find a Lawyer’ service alone.

**Legal professionals** can use the portal to submit claims in the name of their clients in an electronic fashion, directly to the competent courts in Member States.

Marc explains how the portal will help change the way the legal system works, “With upcoming developments in e-Justice, a prosecutor in Amsterdam will be able to fill out a mutual legal assistance request electronically, send it to the judge in Luxembourg over a secure channel in order to obtain, also electronically and securely, the evidence he needs in a criminal investigation. We are becoming so much more efficient in the judicial system.”

**Explore More Success Stories and Content**

**Business Register Interconnection System**

A Connecting Europe Success Story Business Register Interconnection System (BRIS) Photo by rawpixel.com The Business Register Interconnection System provides a single point of access via the European e-Justice Portal, through which citizens, businesses an...
Context Broker's smart services are making the city of Eindhoven a safer place

Context Broker’s smart services are making the city of Eindhoven a safer place. Context Broker enables the use of IoT data to predict and prevent hostile behaviour and noise pollution on the city’s biggest party street, Stratumseind, to keep the city festi...