Prize “The Crystal Scales of justice”

The European prize for innovative practice contributing to the quality of civil justice

2008 Edition

Rules of the Prize
Application form

For information, please go to the following websites:

  (European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters - European Commission)

- [www.coe.int/CEPEJ](http://www.coe.int/CEPEJ)  
  (European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice/CEPEJ - Council of Europe)
Preamble

In the context of the European Day of Civil Justice, declared jointly by the European Commission and Council of Europe, a European prize for innovative practices in civil justice organisation and procedures is awarded in an effort to discover and highlight innovative and effective practices, in respect of the conduct of civil proceedings in the courts of Europe and concerning court organisation, in order to improve the operation of the public system of civil justice.

Article 1 – Competition conditions

In order to be able to participate in the competition, initiatives must be put forward by a court, a Bar, an association of legal professionals or any other body with judicial responsibilities in a member state of the European Union or of the Council of Europe.

The initiatives concerned must have been introduced in order to improve the public system of justice, particularly for the users of justice. They must therefore be innovative practices and their results must be measurable.

An initiative which has not been shortlisted cannot be presented for another edition of the competition. The court, the Bar, the association of legal professionals or any other body with judicial responsibilities can present several initiatives for the same edition of the competition.

Article 2 - Organisation of the competition

The competition is jointly organised by the European Commission’s Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security and the Council of Europe’s Directorate general of Human rights and legal affairs of the Council of Europe (hereafter “the organisers”).

Article 3 - Entries

The applications shall be submitted, preferably electronically, or by post, to one of the addresses indicated below. The deadline for the applications is 1 June 2008.

Prix Balance de Cristal
European Commission
DG Justice, Freedom and Security
Unité C1
B - 1049 BRUXELLES
E – mail : jls-coop-jud-civil@ec.europa.eu
Fax: (32) 22.99.64.57

or
The applications shall be submitted, preferably, in English or in French or, where this is not possible, in one of the other official languages of the European Union.

The applications must be presented as follows:
1) An application form duly filled in, in accordance with the attached model,
2) A summary of the initiative, in accordance with the attached model,
3) If necessary, a limited number of annexed documents can be included. If those are in an original language other than English or French, a brief summary in English or French should be presented.

**Article 4 – Composition of the jury**

The jury is composed of 10 members and 1 President, appointed by the organisers.

**Article 5 – Selection procedure of the projects**

The applications which fulfill the conditions of these rules will be transmitted to the members of the jury by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

The jury will meet in September in order to proceed with the selection of prize-winning projects.

The organisers will send to the members of the jury the application files as soon as possible after their reception. Each member of the jury shall transmit to the organisers, electronically and prior to the meeting of the jury, a list of the projects, which, according to him/her, should be pre-selected (a maximum of 10 projects).

On the basis of this, the organisers should establish a list of 10 pre-selected projects. This list will be sent to the members of the jury two weeks prior the meeting. The members of the jury shall respect the secrecy of the composition of this list.

During the meeting, the jury will proceed with the examination of the 10 pre-selected projects. Among these 10 projects, the jury will proceed with the selection, by secret ballot, of 4 projects, specifying an order of preference.

When counting the votes, on each ballot paper, the project which comes in 1st place will receive 4 points, the project placed in 2nd place will receive 3 points, the project placed in 3rd place will receive 2 points and the one in 4th place will receive 1 point. When counting the points, a new vote by simple majority can be done in order to decide between two projects with the same number of votes.
The project which has received the highest number of points will be awarded the Prize “Crystal Scales of Justice”. The three other projects will be given a “special mention” by the jury.

The decisions of the jury cannot be appealed against.

The members of the jury are to remain silent on the debate until the award of the Prize or of the special mentions.

**Article 6 – Criteria for eligibility and selection of the projects**

The jury must ensure that the projects fulfill the following criteria of eligibility:
- deal with civil judicial procedures or court organisation,
- deal with innovative practices effectively implemented,
- have improved the functioning of the public service of civil justice,
- can be applied to other jurisdictions or states.

During the selection of the eligible projects, the jury must also ensure:
- the compliance with the objectives of the Prize,
- the quality of the projects,
- the balance between the different legal systems,
- the balance in the themes dealt with by the projects.

**Article 7 - The prize**

The "Crystal Scales of Justice" Award will be presented to the winner by the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the context of the European Day of Civil Justice during a prize-giving ceremony (generally held during the last week of October).

Representatives of the shortlisted institutions or organisations will be invited to attend this ceremony.

The organisers undertake to arrange appropriate publicity for the prize-winning initiative, as well as for any schemes highly commended by the jury, among the competent institutions in member states.

**Article 8 - Cancellation of the competition**

The organisers reserve the right to cancel the competition at any time. If this happens, participants will be individually informed as quickly as possible.