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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE
(CEPEJ)**

NETWORK OF PILOT COURTS

1st meeting

BUCHAREST, 5 - 6 APRIL 2006

MEETING REPORT

Secretariat of the CEPEJ

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1. The Network of Pilot courts of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) held its 1st meeting in Bucharest, Romania, on 5 – 6 April 2006, within the framework of the Romanian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the High Council of Magistracy of Romania. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Eberhard DESCH, President of the CEPEJ.
2. The agenda and list of participants appear in Appendices I and II to this report.

Opening of the meeting

3. In their opening addresses, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Mr. Ion CODESCU, and the Vice-President of the High Council of Magistracy, Mr. C. DELIORGA, underlined the importance of judicial reforms to develop a State governed by the Rule of Law and stressed the specific role of courts and judges to improve the quality and efficiency of judicial systems. They commended on the work achieved by the CEPEJ and confirmed their support to the Commission.
4. On behalf of the participants, Mr. Eberhard DESCH expressed his warm thanks to the Romanian authorities for having organised this first meeting of the Network in Bucharest and noted with satisfaction the strong support given by the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the ongoing work of the CEPEJ in general, and the setting up of a Network of Pilot Courts in particular.
5. On behalf of the Director General of Legal Affairs, Mr. Guy DE VEL, the Secretary of the CEPEJ, Mr. Stéphane LEYENBERGER, stressed that, as an innovative body in charge of contributing to improve the functioning of judicial systems in the 46 member states of the Council of Europe, the CEPEJ had to work in close and regular cooperation with the courts to ensure that its work remains in line with the concrete reality of the day to day functioning of judicial systems. He noted the diversity of courts and judicial professions represented in the Network, and indicated that they would have to play an essential role to provide the CEPEJ with first hand information, good practices and ideas and to serve as test bed for some measures to be proposed by the CEPEJ.

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ): an innovative body established to improve the quality and efficiency of the European judicial systems

6. The President of the CEPEJ, Mr. Eberhard DESCH, introduced the objectives working methods and ongoing work of the CEPEJ. He underlined in particular that the CEPEJ was not a scientific commission but an instance responsible to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to contribute to improve the quality and efficiency of the justice systems of the member states by means of concrete tools.

The outline of his presentation appears in appendix III to this Report.

7. He invited the Pilot courts to play an active role in their countries to celebrate the **European Day of Justice**, co-organised by the European Commission and the Council of Europe each year on 25 October. Courts were encouraged to initiate specific events to get the citizens closer to their justice system. All information on this Day can be found on: www.coe.int/CEPEJ.
8. Within this framework, Mr DESCH encouraged in particular the Pilot courts to participate in the **European Prize for innovative practices contributing to the quality of justice: "The Crystal Scales of Justice"**. He noticed that the first winner of this competition was a member of the Network (Court of Appeal of Rovaniemi, Finland), who made available to the participants a specific booklet introducing the "Quality Project in court" awarded in

2005. All information on the second edition of the Prize can be found on: www.coe.int/CEPEJ (deadline for submitting entries: 31 August 2006).

The CEPEJ Network of Pilot courts: to facilitate the implementation and realisation of CEPEJ work by the legal professionals

9. Mr John STACEY (CEPEJ member in respect of the United Kingdom) indicated the expectations of the CEPEJ vis-à-vis the members of the Network to provide it with substantiated and detailed information on the functioning of their courts, comment on the work of the CEPEJ and serve as laboratory to trial some measures to be proposed by the CEPEJ. He insisted in particular on the high and immediate expectations of the CEPEJ as regards the implementation of its Framework programme on judicial timeframes.
10. It was made clear that the members of the Network represented their own courts and were not national representatives, though they were appointed by the relevant authorities of their countries.
11. A *tour de table* enabled the representatives of all courts to introduce themselves, underline their own expectations as members of the Network and confirm their position with respect to the cooperation with the CEPEJ.
12. Some participants underlined that, considering the diversity of the courts in the Network, it might be difficult to apply similar solutions to all courts. However the participants agreed that common issues and generalised trends could be the basis for a constructive and useful cooperation among the members of the Network and between the Network and the CEPEJ. Each Network member was invited to focus on the fundamental elements taken from their practices which would be of interest for all courts and to leave the elements narrowed to the local and national practice.
13. They agreed on the usefulness to organise regular exchanges of information, with the support of the CEPEJ Secretariat.
14. Some participants stressed the need to establish a proper balance between civil justice and criminal justice systems while addressing the functioning of courts.
15. Many delegations confirmed their availability for serving as test beds for measures defined by the CEPEJ, within the limits of the national procedural norms. Several courts were already conducting national pilot projects.

Some of them noticed that they had to seek for prior authorization by their Ministry of Justice or High Council of Justice – such support was already confirmed by some ministries.

A few delegations indicated that their legislation would not allow them to fulfil such a task.

16. The following topics were namely raised as issues to be further considered within the framework of the Network:
 - liability of judges for delays in judicial proceedings,
 - access to courts,
 - execution of court decisions,
 - use of IT for improving court efficiency,
 - role and powers of single judges,
 - quality benchmarks for courts,
 - dialogue with lawyers and bar associations,
 - dialogue with court users.

Implementing the CEPEJ Framework-Programme: “A new objective for judicial systems: the processing of each case within an optimum and foreseeable timeframe”

17. The Chairman of the CEPEJ Task Force on timeframes of proceedings (CEPEJ-TF-DEL), Mr Alan UZELAC (CEPEJ member in respect of Croatia) introduced the Framework Programme, which many Pilot courts had already commented on, as well as the ongoing work of the Task Force.
18. The recently adopted "Time management Checklist" was explained and made available to the participants, who were invited to promote this practical tool designed to help justice systems to collect appropriate information and analyze relevant aspects of the duration of judicial proceedings with a view to reducing undue delay, ensure effectiveness of the proceedings and provide necessary transparency and foreseeability to the users of the justice systems.
19. Mr UZELAC stressed that very little concrete information was available as regards lengths of proceedings. Therefore the Task Force had initiated the drafting of two studies on:
 - the situation of judicial timeframes in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights,
 - time management in the courts of Nordic countries.

These reports would be available in the course of the year and be used by the CEPEJ for further activities in this field.

20. Several courts acknowledged that they had to cope with main difficulties as regards timeframes of proceedings.
21. Some participants stressed the need to fill the gap between theoretical speeches on the length of proceedings and the day to day functioning of courts, where the concrete concerns of the users should be taken into account.
22. Ms Valeria DUMITRACHE, Chief Inspector at the Judiciary Inspection of Superior Council of Magistracy of Romania introduced the priorities of her Council as regards length of proceedings and the remedies that were being set up.

Preparation of the Compendium of best practices for implementing the lines of action set out in the Framework Programme on timeframes

23. The contribution of the Pilot courts to the implementation of the CEPEJ Framework Programme was presented as the first (but not unique) concrete field of cooperation between the CEPEJ and the Network.
24. Useful information provided by the courts while commenting on the Programme had been compiled by the Secretariat and will be used in view of preparing a Compendium of best practices.
25. The scientific expert of the CEPEJ, Mr Marco FABRI, explained the main orientations chosen to elaborate the Compendium, which should be a practical tool for policy makers and judicial professionals responsible for court management.
26. He underlined that "best practices" meant: "court practices successfully applied in a specific context (locally) and containing elements of potential interest for other courts".

27. On the basis of the Framework Programme, representatives of Pilot courts were invited to share their views and concrete practices ¹as regards:

a. the management of timeframes (in particular Lines of Action 3, 4, 7 and 12 of the Framework Programme)

- The representative of the First instance court of Torino (Italy) introduced the "Strasbourg Programme" especially designed to cope with excessive length of proceedings, successfully applied as regards *inter alia* the organisation of hearings (for instance obligation to motivate requests for postponement), the organisation of the work between judges, replacement of the experts who do not respect the determined deadlines, etc.
- The need for establishing benchmarks was underlined by several courts (Court of Appeal of Rovaniemi, Finland; District Court of Midhordland Tingrett, Norway; District court of Nova Gorica, Slovenia).
- The organisation of the administrative support to judges was referred to as an essential issue to be addressed (Commercial court of Barcelona, Spain).
- Several delegations (in particular First instance court of Linz, Austria; District Court of Esbjerg, Denmark; High Court of Dublin Ireland; the Departmental Court of Arges, Romania; the Central London Civil Justice Centre, United Kingdom) insisted on the efficient support of IT for case management, but they acknowledged that IT had not helped reducing lengths of proceedings.
- Criteria and modalities for the prioritisation of cases to be addressed by the courts were discussed in particular:
 - several participants noticed that, though there were no formal criteria, they were guided by social factors (for instance to give priority to divorce cases vis-à-vis commercial issues, if needed),
 - other noticed that colour had been attributed to the files according to their sensitivity.

b. judicial procedures (in particular Lines of Action 8, 9, 10 11 and 13),

- Some participants noticed that, in some countries, judicial timeframes were provided by the law imposing obligations which might be too strict for the quality of judicial work.
- The role of judges entrusted with the preparation of hearings and regular assessment of the proceedings with lawyers (*mise en état*) was stressed as a successful practice in several courts (in particular First instance court of Angoulême, France; First instance court of Monaco).
- The representative of the London Civil Justice Centre (United Kingdom) insisted that proceedings should be organised so that civil proceedings were not regulated by the litigants but remained in the hands of the judges (timeframes and deadlines to be decided by the judges).

¹ This document does not aim to report exhaustively on the practices that have been described in the course of the discussion. A selection has been made, with a view to preparing the "Compendium of best practices". **These points can be revised or completed in a revised version of the report, according to the amendments indicated by the participants.**

- The use of telephone hearings and videoconferences was suggested as an efficient way of saving time and money (London Civil Justice Centre, United Kingdom).
- The representative of the First instance Court of Angoulême (France) indicated some procedures used in criminal matters:
 - the *traitement en temps réel*, where the officers of judicial police can notify immediately to the person concerned the procedure chosen by the prosecutor (usually reached on the phone),
 - the introduction of the prosecutor's delegate entrusted to remind the law for petty offences.
- In some member states (Greece for instance), the law has provided for sanctions against parties who manifestly make an abusive use of the procedure

c. the role of stakeholders (in particular Lines of Action 5, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18)

- The representative of the Court of Appeal of Rovaniemi (Finland) introduced its Quality projects in courts which consists in organising systematic discussions among the judges and between the judges and the stakeholders (lawyers, public legal aid attorneys and prosecutors) so that the decisions are well reasoned and justified that the services provided by the court are affordable to the individual customers; a coordinator for quality is charged to support working groups for quality, to implement the training, to maintain contacts with the various constituencies, and to edit the Report on Quality distributed every year to all the courts in Finland and to the various stakeholder groups.
- Organised consultation with lawyers was underlined as a key issue by several delegations, in particular the proceedings contract (*contrat de procédure*) in the French system.
- The representative of the First instance court of Linz (Austria) indicated that lawyers had an internet access to their files, where they can check their evolution.
- The representative of the London Civil Justice Centre (United Kingdom) indicated that regular and detailed statistics were made available to the public. Several other courts indicated that the publication of data was mandatory.
- The administrative court of Turku (Finland) indicated that the citizens can directly contact the court to know the state of affairs of their cases, through an e-mail address and a telephone number (court staff having a direct access to the IT case management system).
- Several delegations raised the issue of the confidentiality of the cases and the need to guarantee that information is only given to the parties concerned (need to verify the identity of the persons requesting information).
- The representative of the First instance court of Lyon (France) explained that specific measures had been taken as regards victims in criminal proceedings, in particular through the setting up of a specific Bureau attached to the Prosecutor's Office entrusted with the support to victims (information, explanation on the procedure, etc.).

Pilot court cards

28. Mr Marco FABRI suggested that, within the framework of the on-going process aiming at preparing a Compendium of good practices, and in order to map the information made

available by the Pilot courts, "pilot court cards" could be created (see Appendix IV). They would be used as one main source for designing the Compendium.

29. The Secretariat proposed the following procedure to fulfil the individual cards:

- a. the Secretariat would itself fill the individual cards with the information already available from the pilot courts;
- b. the Secretariat would sent these prepared cards to the pilot courts so that they could correct and complete them;
- c. Pilot courts which had not yet submitted information on their practices were invited to do so using the Pilot court card.

30. In addition, it was proposed that each representative of pilot courts indicates in writing to the Secretariat the main difficulties that he/she encountered in the daily management of his/her individual court.

Perspectives for the cooperation of the Network with the CEPEJ

31. The Vice-President of the CEPEJ, Mr. André POTOCKI (CEPEJ member in respect of France) noticed the new trend towards a European judicial culture among national courts and stressed the importance for the CEPEJ to cooperate with national courts in this context, indicating that judicial reality should first of all evolve at the court level.

32. Mr POTOCKI invited the Pilot courts to make concrete proposals as regards the cooperation between the Network and the CEPEJ, in the light of this constitutive meeting. In the light of the discussion, the participants agreed on main elements for the functioning of the Network and the cooperation with the CEPEJ. These elements appear in Appendix V to this report.

33. On behalf of the Romanian Minister of Justice, Mr. Cristi DANILET, Advisor to the Minister and member of the CEPEJ in respect of Romania thanked the participants and reiterated the support of his government in the work of the CEPEJ and its cooperation with the Network of Pilot Courts.



34.



5 April 2006

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE
(CEPEJ)**

NETWORK OF PILOT COURTS

**1st meeting
Bucharest, 5 - 6 April 2006
organised within the framework of the Romanian Presidency
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,
in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice
and the Superior Council of Magistracy of Romania**

AGENDA

Wednesday 5 April

Chairperson: Mr Eberhard DESCH (Germany), President of the CEPEJ

9.00 Registration of the participants

9.30 **Opening of the meeting**

- Mr. Ion CODESCU, State Secretary, Ministry of Justice of Romania
- Mr. C. DELIORGA, Vice-President of the Superior Council of Magistracy of Romania
- Mr Stéphane LEYENBERGER, Secretary of the CEPEJ

9.45 **The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ): an innovative body established to improve the quality and efficiency of the European judicial systems**

- General introduction by Mr Eberhard DESCH (Germany) President of the CEPEJ
- Discussion

Members of the Network have the opportunity to pose any question regarding the organisation and work of the CEPEJ

10.30 Break

11.00 **The CEPEJ Network of Pilot courts: to facilitate the implementation and realisation of CEPEJ work by the legal professionals**

- Introduction by Mr John STACEY (United Kingdom), CEPEJ member and expert of the CEPEJ-TF-DEL
- Tour de Table

Members and representatives of the Pilot Courts are invited to express their views and visions of the role of the Network both as a tool to exchange information and to serve as “test pilots” to try out certain measures developed by the CEPEJ

12.30 Break

14.00 Implementing the CEPEJ Framework-Programme: “A new objective for judicial systems: the processing of each case within an optimum and foreseeable timeframe”

- General introduction by Mr Alan UZELAC (Croatia), President of the CEPEJ Task Force on Timeframes of Proceedings (CEPEJ-TF-DEL) and member of the CEPEJ Bureau
- Discussion

Members of the Network have the opportunity to comment on the Framework-Programme

16.00 Break

16.15 The importance to identify causes and remedies for excessive duration of judicial proceedings

- Ms Valeria DUMITRACHE, Chief Inspector, Judiciary Inspection of Superior Council of Magistracy of Romania

16.30 Preparation of the Compendium of best practices for implementing the lines of action set out in the Framework Programme on timeframes

- Introduction by Mr Marco FABRI (Italy), CEPEJ Scientific expert
- Tour de Table

Members and representatives of the Pilot Courts are invited to introduce the measures implemented within their own respective courts which could be selected as best practices in the Compendium

18.00 End of the session

19.30 Reception hosted by the Ministry of Justice and the High Council of Magistracy

Thursday 6 April

9.00 Preparation of the Compendium of best practices for implementing the lines of action set out in the Framework Programme on timeframes (continuation) /

- Exchange of views between the CEPEJ-TF-DEL, the scientific experts and the participants

Members of the Network have the opportunity to pursue the introduction of their practices and dialogue with the CEPEJ experts on their expectations vis-à-vis the Compendium

11.00 Break

Chairperson: Mr André POTOCKI (France), Vice-President of the CEPEJ

11.30 **Perspectives for the cooperation of the Network with the CEPEJ**

- Tour de table

Members and representatives of the Pilot Courts are invited to present their views and ideas on further cooperation with the CEPEJ

12.30 **Conclusions**

- Mr André POTOCKI (France), Vice-President of the CEPEJ
- Mr. Cristi DANILET, Advisor to the Minister of Justice, Member of the CEPEJ in respect of Romania

Appendix II

List of participants

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Appendix III

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ): an innovative body established to improve the quality and efficiency of the European judicial systems

Outline of the presentation by Eberhard DESCH, President of the CEPEJ

- Before discussing the collaboration between the CEPEJ and the Pilot courts, it is essential to situate this cooperation in its specific context.

Why?

- The Council of Europe is the common European house of human rights and the rule of law for 46 European states and 800 million Europeans citizens. Therefore the proper functioning of the judiciary is an essential issue for the Council of Europe, as a pillar of the rule of law and an essential way to guarantee and safeguard individual freedoms and fundamental rights.
- The CoE has been dealing with questions relating to the independence and impartiality of the judiciary and to the rights to a fair trial within a reasonable time (Article 6 of the ECHR). The CoE's action is based in particular on the legal instruments adopted by the Committee of Ministers in the field of the independence, efficiency and fairness of justice, in particular:
 - the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the conclusions of the Conferences of European Ministers of Justice,
 - Recommendation No R (94)12 of the Committee of Ministers on the independence, efficiency and the role of judges,
 - the European Charter on the statute for judges,
 - the Opinions of the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE).
- In this context, and following the conclusions taken by the Minister of Justice in London in 2000, the Committee of Ministers set up the CEPEJ in 2003 on three main objectives:
 - to contribute to the proper implementation of the CoE's normative framework as regards judicial organisation ("normative after sale service"),
 - to draw lessons from the Human Rights Court's case law related namely to Article 6, to propose solutions to decrease the number of complaint as well as to prevent these complaints,
 - to take into account the users of justice (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, clerks, but also citizens) while developing public policies on justice.
- In the Action Plan adopted at the Third Summit (Warsaw, 16 - 17 May 2005), the Heads of State and Government of CoE member states decided to develop the evaluation and assistance functions of the CEPEJ in order to help member states deliver justice fairly and rapidly.

What?

- CEPEJ is a unique body for all European States to assess the efficiency of judicial systems and propose concrete solutions, towards an increasingly efficient service to the citizens.
- CEPEJ has its own status, which gives it an interesting flexibility to organise its work. It reports directly to the Committee of Ministers.

- It is composed of:
 - representatives of the 46 CoE member states,
 - International and European institutions as observers: European Commission, World Bank,
 - Representatives of the international and European judicial professional associations, as observers (including European Association of Judges, MEDEL, European Federation of Administrative judges, Consultative Council of the Bars of Europe, European Union of Rechtspfleger, International Union of Bailiffs).

How?

- Apart from its plenary sessions (twice a year), where main orientations are decided and decisions are taken, the CEPEJ is mainly working through working groups. Its status also invites it to set up professional network – in this context that the Network of pilot courts has been set up.

The ongoing works of the CEPEJ

1. To evaluate judicial systems on a regular basis and analyse the results

- Evaluation of judicial systems of the Member States thanks to the collection and analysis of judicial data through an Evaluation Scheme. This study aims at identifying concretely main trends of European judicial systems and defining priority working lines for the CoE in order to improve justice efficiency within the member states.
- 2004: successful pilot exercise on 40 member states. It was a European first: no such exercise had ever been conducted in the justice field, containing precise and argued information, with detailed figures, where can be found comparative tables on key areas for understanding the functioning of the judicial systems.
- The CEPEJ is currently in the process of repeating the exercise, on the basis of a revised Scheme drawn up in the light of the problems encountered during the pilot exercise. The report is due to be adopted by the CEPEJ in July and published next autumn.

2. To develop practical measures to promote the implementation of Council of Europe instruments and improve the functioning of judicial systems in the member states

- Implementation of the Framework Programme: “A new objective for judicial systems: the processing of each case within an optimum and foreseeable timeframe”.
- To facilitate the effective implementation of the instruments and standards of the Council of Europe regarding mediation: a working group is assessing the impact in member states of the relevant recommendations of the CM and advocating specific measures to facilitate their effective implementation.
- Other issues to be addressed in the coming years, according to the Mid-term programme;
 - execution of court decisions;
 - court management (including IT, remedies to dysfunctions in court, assessment of the quality of the judicial work);
 - legal aid.

3. To support member states in the smooth functioning of their justice system and their judicial reforms

- The CEPEJ is meant to provide technical assistance to any CoE member which so request in order to improve the organisation and functioning of their justice systems.

For instance:

- territorial organisation of courts in the Netherlands,
- mediation issues in Malta,
- length of proceedings and case backlogs in Croatia and Slovenia,
- execution of court decisions against public authorities in the Russian Federation.

4. To contribute specific expertise to the debate about the functioning of the justice system

- Conferences and seminars on matters of major relevance to the organisation and functioning of the judicial system.
- European Day of Civil Justice, co-organised with the European Commission, aiming to establish this Day as a key date in member states' legal calendar (25 October), so as to raise public awareness of judicial systems and sensitise policy-makers and legal professionals to user needs and wants.
- In this context: European Prize for innovative practice contributing to the quality of civil justice, the "Crystal Scales of Justice" award, which aim to highlight and spread best practices.

Appendix IV

Pilot Court Card		State Member								
Court	Type of court	Jurisdiction	Judges	Non-judge staff			Cases addressed per year			
				Total	Judicial assist.	Other staff	Civil (incl. family and commercial law)	Administrative	Criminal	Other

TIMEFRAMES	State policies	Court policies	Judge' s practices
Line of Action 3: Improving the foreseeability of the timeframes.			
TIMEFRAMES	State policies	Court policies	Judge' s practices
Line of Action 4: Defining and monitoring standards for an optimum timeframes for each type of case.			
TIMEFRAMES	State policies	Court policies	Judge' s practices
Line of Action 7: Allowing adjustment of timeframes.			
TIMEFRAMES	State policies	Court policies	Judge' s practices
Line of Action 12: Setting up a procedure to revive a pending case.			

PROCEDURES	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 5: Developing information and communication strategies.			
PROCEDURES	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 8: Acting on the number of cases dealt with by the court by ensuring an appropriate use of appeals and other applications.			
PROCEDURES	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 9: Acting on quality of proceedings.			
PROCEDURES	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 10: Defining priorities in case management.			
PROCEDURES	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 11: Organising trials to reduce waiting time, while paying special attention to victims and witnesses.			
PROCEDURES	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 13: Making more flexible the rules on territorial jurisdiction of first instance courts.			

STAKEHOLDERS	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 14: Involving the relevant categories in the administration of the courts.			
STAKEHOLDERS	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 15: Developing the training of judges and prosecutors and, more generally, all the professions concerned.			
STAKEHOLDERS	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 16: Setting up "contracts of objective" between courts and lawyers – Organising the relationships with lawyers.			
STAKEHOLDERS	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 17: Improving the monitoring of compliance with the time-limits by judicial experts.			
STAKEHOLDERS	State policies	Court policies	Judge's practices
Line of Action 18: Involving judicial professions in the efforts towards optimum and foreseeable timeframes.			

Appendix V

Main elements for the functioning of the CEPEJ Network of Pilot Courts

1. Role of the Network

1.1 A forum of information

- Pilot courts are privileged addressees of the information on the work and achievements of the CEPEJ (vertical information). They are invited to disseminate this information within their national networks.
- Within the Network, Pilot courts must be able to communicate and cooperate exchange views, request information, etc. (horizontal information).

1.2 A forum of reflection

- The Network should be consulted on the various issues addressed by the CEPEJ, beyond the specific issue of judicial timeframes.
- A proper balance between civil and criminal justice should be maintained as regards the functioning of justice systems.
- Spontaneous reflections, proposals and comments by the Pilot courts to the CEPEJ are encouraged.

1.3 An area of implementation

- Some Pilot courts can be proposed to trial at local level some specific measures proposed by the CEPEJ, according to modalities jointly agreed.

2. Working methods

- Exchanges and reflections within the Network focus on common problems and transposable solutions.

Considering the diversity of the courts involved in the Network, some reflections can be developed within specific clusters defined either according to the kind of courts or according to geographical criteria. However the reflection should remain transparent and be of benefit to all members of the Network.

- Exchanges between judicial practitioners, who represent their courts and do not commit their governments, must keep an informal nature as far as possible.
- Being a member of the Network is a project for the whole court, where judges, prosecutors and administrative staff attached to the court, and possibly the local bar association, should be involved. Subsequently the representatives of the courts in the Network are invited to organise appropriate information and consultation within their courts.
- The Network's members are invited to have regular contacts with the member of the CEPEJ in respect of their country.

- Pilot courts are encouraged to participate actively in the European Day of Justice (25 October) and to the European Prize for innovative practices contributing to the quality of justice: 'The Crystal Scales of Justice'.

3. Working means

- The Secretariat of the CEPEJ is the main interlocutor of the members of the Network. In order to facilitate contacts, each Pilot court is invited to appoint one specific contact person to the Secretariat.
- The CEPEJ Web site (www.coe.int/CEPEJ) is a key tool for acceding to the CEPEJ documents, exchanging information and, as far as possible, developing exchanges, through the Secretariat of the CEPEJ.

A restricted and secured area is reserved to the members of the Network within this Web site for any specific issues regarding the life of the Network.

- Subject to available budget, the Network can meet regularly.