



European Network of Councils
for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

Réseau européen des Conseils
de la Justice (RECJ)

1. Projects 2023-2024

The General Assembly in Ljubljana adopted the [ENCJ 2023-2024](#) work plan which includes the set-up of several projects.

1. Project on the Independence and Accountability & Quality of the Judiciary

Coordinators: Rvdr Netherlands and CSM Italy

The project will continue the work on both parts (see also the 2022-2023 report). The proposed activities, for 2023-2024 are:

For Independence and Accountability

1. The outcomes of the indicators will be discussed in small dialogue groups of members and observers in the period from October 2023 until March 2024 with the purpose to analyse the outcomes together, to set priorities for improvement plans and to generate ideas for improvement.
2. Improvement plans will be developed to address weaknesses and/or to build on strengths in the period from January until June 2024.
3. One or more of the following issues will be examined: selection of judges, political affiliation of judges, independence and position of Constitutional Courts in the framework of independence and accountability.

For Quality

1. The dialogue groups of members and observers on independence and accountability will be extended to quality of judiciary, using both sets of indicators as a starting point. This will be done in the period from October 2023 until March 2024 with the purpose to analyse the outcomes together, to set priorities for improvement plans and to generate ideas for improvement.
2. One or more of the following selected areas of quality that proved to be complicated or controversial will be further explored to find common ground and to raise awareness of the possibilities for improvement in these areas. These areas are digital case filing and digital procedures (indicator A4), the availability of appeal (indicator B10), best practices on access to courts for disabled and vulnerable people will be shared (indicators B15 and B16).
3. As to the quality indicators, the outcomes will be analysed against existing, external data about quality of justice for their use in the indicator system.
4. The schematic overview of quality related activities of Councils for the Judiciary will be kept up to date.



For Court users' survey

Possible further development of the mentorship programme. Possibility for an EU-wide survey will be further explored. Work on the ENCJ Court user survey model to include quality aspects may be carried out.

2. ENCJ Digital Justice Forum

Coordinators: Rvdr Netherlands and Sodni Svet Slovenia

The Forum aims to:

- Provide a network for the exchange of information and advice for national experts dealing with digitization;
- Promote dialogue on challenges and opportunities – balancing efficiency and access to justice and independence;
- To monitor developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence and the challenges and opportunities it may provide for the judiciary;
- To exchange best practices and developments on national level;
- To provide a judicial perspective on e-Justice to the European Commission;
- To liaise with CEPEJ Cyberjustice working group, CCBE, Unit E-Justice DG JUST EC.

One or two in-person meetings and several online meetings will be organised. The Forum will aim, among other things, to keep the group members up to date with the upcoming EU legislation in the field. ENCJ Members and Observers are kindly requested to register for the forum even if they participated in previous years.

3. Working group internal organization

Coordinators: ENCJ President

There will be no separate project group, meetings with ENCJ Members will be organised in the framework of meetings of the other ENCJ Projects.

4. Project on the Attractiveness of the judicial career

Coordinators: HRJ/CSJ Belgium and TP Latvia

Across Europe the judiciaries face trouble in attracting candidates to be appointed as judges. Issues that will be taken into account are the representativeness of the judiciary and how to ensure that the judiciary reflects the society it serves in all its diversity, professional working environment and remuneration standards for judges.

Continuation of the project that was started last year. Registration is open to Councils with new formations and new Observers.

5. ENCJ Lunch seminars

Coordinators: ENCJ President and Sudna Rada Slovakia

To promote mutual knowledge and trust among the ENCJ Members and Observers, especially in times of remote meetings, the ENCJ started to organise regular online lunch seminars. On 3rd Tuesday of the

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month a seminar around a central theme is organized. External speakers and other stakeholders are invited to join. The seminars aim to discuss issues of common interest, for example, national practices or recent developments.

The character of the lunch seminars is informal. Six lunch seminars are foreseen for the year 2023-2024.

Continuation of organizing the ENCJ lunch seminars. Invitations to register will be sent to the ENCJ Members and Observers before every lunch seminar.

2. Registration

Registration for the projects is now available through the ENCJ website.

The first meeting of the project on Independence, Accountability and Quality of the Judiciary will take place in the beginning of October in Brussels (at the ENCJ premises).

More details will follow in due course.

The deadline for registration is **Friday 8 September 2023**.

To register go to www.encj.eu. Log in with username **ENCJ** and password **network*** and click on the link **projects**.

Project team members

To enable fruitful meetings and constructive dialogue we remind the Members of what was decided at the General Assembly in Lisbon. The participation per ENCJ Member Institutions to the IA&Q project and the Digital Justice Forum is limited to maximum 2 participants. For the other projects the limit is set at 1 participant per ENCJ Member.

In the interest of the well-functioning of the projects Members are kindly requested to ensure that the same representatives participate in the project team during the entire year. Please ensure that representatives have the relevant competences to contribute to the work of the project team.

3. Rules of reimbursement

In 2023 the following rules of reimbursement apply.

The ENCJ has been selected to be rewarded an operating grant under the new Framework Partnership Agreement 2022-2025 with the European Commission. The eligible countries for this grant are the EU Member States minus Denmark.

Twice per year the ENCJ Members will be invited to send in their reimbursement requests relating to the ENCJ project teams and organs (July and December) Members have to use the reimbursement form provided by the ENCJ Office. The requests will have to be sent to the Office before the end of the year.

The European Commission has decided on a new set of rules for the calculation of the costs for travel/accommodation and subsistence (meals). The new calculation (meaning the amount that the ENCJ will be eligible to for the subvention) is based on unit prices set by the [European Commission](#).

Supporting documents that ENCJ needs to keep for the calculation of the units and for reporting to the European Commission are:



- For travel: registration forms and signed participants lists (indicating the place of origin) to justify the travel unit costs
- For the accommodation costs: proof for the number of nights (agenda & travel connections) as this unit cost is per night spent for the meeting
- For subsistence cost: the agenda and programme of the event and the list indicating the number of participants to justify the number of units per day (24hrs)

Therefore, participants always need to make sure that they signed the list of participants.

Without the signature reimbursement will not be possible.

Project team meetings

Travel

The ENCJ will reimburse the costs for travel for 1 participant per ENCJ Member per activity. The reimbursement will be calculated on the basis of the unit costs for travel set by the European Commission (annex). The ENCJ will not make any travel arrangements.

Accommodation

The reimbursement will be done on the basis of the unit costs set by the European Commission (annex). For one day meetings (even if spread over two days) in principle 1 night will be reimbursed unless more nights are needed because there are no available flights (the burden of proof lies with the ENCJ Member).

In order to claim reimbursement for any night, it is necessary to prove that travelling on the date of the event was impossible. It is for the ENCJ Members who register for the event to prove that there were not any reasonable flights. Flights requiring traveling late/ in the middle of the night are not seen as reasonable.

Screenshots of the flights schedule websites (for example Skyscanner) can be used to prove that an extra night was necessary. Please note that written explanations are not sufficient. Requests with no supporting documents will not be accepted.

Meals/Subsistence

ENCJ will pay for the meals provided to the hosting institution. The amounts will be calculated on the basis of the unit costs for subsistence set by the European Commission. The amounts are calculated on the basis of the number of participants per 24 hours, for longer meetings the amount will be rounded off to the closest full day (24hrs).

