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from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Working Party on Legal Data Processing (e-Justice)

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Subject: List of existing projects in the field of e-justice

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In June 2007 the Council asked the Working Party on Legal Data Processing (e-Justice) to list the existing projects in the area. In December 2007 the Council took note that work on listing the projects was underway and would be finalised by June 2008.
2. A number of projects were listed in the study of the situation concerning the use of information and communication technology in Member States' judicial system prepared by the European IT Academy of Law.¹ In addition, the Working Party on Legal Data Processing (e-justice) has invited various bodies to present their e-justice related projects at its meetings in 2007-2008.

¹ 9083/07 JURINFO 13

3. Section II of this note aims to provide an overview of some of the existing projects at the EU level in the field of e-justice. This list is not exhaustive and may be supplemented in the course of work.
4. The list distinguishes between three different categories, firstly, EU sites and databases, secondly, sites and databases maintained by associations and professional organisations, and thirdly, international sites and databases. However, this division is not clear-cut and should only be seen as a way of structuring the paper.
5. The Working Party on Legal Data Processing (e-Justice) had an exchange of views on this list at its meetings on 26 February 2008 and 24 April 2008. The list has been revised on the basis of these discussions.

II. LIST OF PROJECTS

1. EU sites and databases

In the European Union there are already a large number of cross-border projects concerning the use of information and communications technology in the field of justice.

1.1. Internet portal: EUR-Lex

EUR-Lex (formerly Celex) offers direct free access to European Union legal texts, including the Official Journal, relevant treaties, legislation, legislative proposals and case law.

See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>

1.2. Internet portal: N-Lex

N-Lex is a common access portal for sources of national law. It allows users to search national sites using a single uniform search template.

The portal was developed by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities together with the EU Member States. Although at present operating on a trial basis (since 28/04/06), N-Lex is already accessible.

See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/n-lex/>

1.3. Internet portal: PreLex

The PreLex Internet portal is the database on inter-institutional procedures between the Commission and other institutions. In particular, PreLex provides information on the current state of play in the legislative procedure and monitors the work of the various institutions involved (European Parliament, Council, ESC, Committee of the Regions, European Central Bank, Court of Justice etc.).

See: <http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/apcnet.cfm>

1.4. European Parliament, Council of the European Union and European Commission document registers

The European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission have established freely accessible Internet registers enabling all EU citizens to search for those institutions' documents. The three document registers stem from Article 255 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, which gives any citizen of the Union a right of access to such information.

See: [European Parliament document register](#)

See: [Council of the European Union document register](#)

See: [European Commission document register](#)

1.5. Internet portal: European Judicial Network in civil matters

The website contains information about the Member States' legal systems, Community law and international law on various aspects of civil and commercial law.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/civiljustice/index_en.htm

1.6. Internet portal: European Judicial Atlas in civil matters

The Atlas provides users access to information relevant for judicial cooperation in civil matters. The Atlas enables to identify the competent courts or authorities, to fill in on-line forms, to change the language of the form once it has been filled in, and to transmit the forms electronically.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/judicialatlascivil/

1.7. Internet portal: European Judicial Network in criminal matters

The European Judicial Network in criminal matters is designed, as a network of national contact points, to promote cross-border judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

See: <http://www.ejn-crimjust.europa.eu/>

The European Judicial Network in criminal matters includes:

(1) Atlas (see: http://www.ejn-crimjust.europa.eu/atlas_advanced.aspx);

The Atlas enables to identify the locally competent authority to receive the request for mutual legal assistance and provides a fast and efficient channel for the direct transmission of requests.

(2) *Fiches Belges* (see: http://www.ejn-crimjust.europa.eu/fiches_belges.aspx);

The *fiches belges* contain the essential points of the national legislation of the Member States as regards 8 different investigative measures. Each "fiche" is divided in three main sections: scope and alternative measure, competent body, and, practical details. The "fiches belges" provide practical information on what is possible in the framework of mutual legal assistance. The information in the "fiches" is intended for contact points and local judicial authorities to enable them to draw up requests for judicial cooperation.

(3) *Solon* (see: <http://solon.ejn-crimjust.europa.eu/>).

Solon is the glossary containing terms relevant for judicial cooperation in civil matters. SOLON will be integrated into the IATE database in the near future.

1.8. Eurojust, the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit

Eurojust is composed of 27 National Members, one seconded from each Member State in accordance with its legal system being a prosecutor, judge or police officer of equivalent competence.

Eurojust has developed certain ICT tools to empower judicial cooperation and coordination through Eurojust. These include:

- the EPOC software (that is used as the Eurojust Case Management System) and a project to connect it to selected national authorities and enable the exchange of structured information and
- the secure connection projects aimed at enabling secure communication between Eurojust, the Member States and privileged partners (e.g. Europol);

In addition Eurojust is participating in R4eGov and criminal records projects.

See: <http://eurojust.europa.eu/>

1.9. Internet portal: ADR Database

The ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) Database website is an on-line database containing names and contact details of arbitration bodies responsible for out-of-court settlement of consumer disputes in the EU.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/redress/out_of_court/adrd_b_en.htm

1.10. Electronic network: International networking of criminal records

Since the spring of 2003, a number of Member States have been working together on a project for the international networking of criminal records, aimed at providing secure electronic communication between EU Member States' national criminal records. The idea behind the project is that swift, efficient exchange of information between national criminal records in Europe is required if effective action is to be taken against cross-border crime. By December 2007 the project had 12 member States participating. There are plans to bring in other EU Member States.

See (in German):

http://www.bundesjustizamt.de/cln_048/nn_258844/DE/Themen/Register/Rechtshilfe/Rechtshilfe_node.html?_nnn=true

1.11. Electronic communication: Epoline

Epoline is a project designed to allow electronic communication with the European Patent Office. Using a number of on-line products and services provided by the European Patent Office (EPO), applicants, patent agents and other users from the European Community can communicate with the EPO electronically. In particular, Epoline makes possible on-line filing of patent applications and searching in the Register of European Patents.

See: <http://www.epoline.org>

1.12. Electronic database: Eurovoc

Eurovoc is an on-line multilingual thesaurus covering all areas of European Community work and used to index documents and enquiries in the European institutions' documentation systems. Eurovoc is currently used by the European Parliament, the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, national and regional parliaments in Europe, national administrative authorities and a variety of European organisations.

See: <http://europa.eu/eurovoc/>

1.13. Electronic procedure: European order-for-payment procedure

Regulation (EC) No 1896/2006 creates a European order for payment procedure. This procedure is largely based on multilingual standard forms. Currently a pilot project for the electronic procedure is being prepared between the EU Member States.

1.14. Electronic network: SOLVIT

SOLVIT is an on-line alternative dispute resolution mechanism in which EU Member States work together to solve without legal proceedings problems caused by the misapplication of Internal Market law by public authorities. There is a SOLVIT centre in every European Union Member State (as well as in Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). SOLVIT Centres can help with handling complaints from both citizens and businesses. They are part of the national administration and are committed to providing real solutions to problems within ten weeks. Using SOLVIT is free of charge.

See: <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/>

2. Websites and databases maintained by professional organisations and other associations

2.1. Electronic database: EBR and Brite

The European Business Register (EBR) is a network of currently 19 business registers (as a rule, these are register operators). EBR is organised as a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG).

The purpose is to link the data and information on companies officially collected in the members' home countries (by them) in one standard information system. To this end, the members provide EBR with the data and information that have been entrusted to them via an online service. The aim of the EBR portal is to enable this data and information to be made available through a multilingual interface and standard reports. EBR's services are intended to make the internal market more transparent and to improve the situation of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The aim of the Brite (Business Register Interoperability Throughout Europe) project is to establish a European business register. Using information and communications technology, it is intended to make individual EU Member States' business registers interoperable.

See: <http://www.ebr.org>

See: <http://www.briteproject.net>

2.2. Electronic database: EULIS (European Land Information Service)

The aim of the EULIS project is to establish a cross-border European land register portal providing worldwide access to European land and property information. The EULIS Network is made up of Land Information Systems of different countries, all connected to each other via the internet and the EULIS Portal.

See: <http://www.eulis.org>

2.3. The Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts

The Network develops a Common Portal of jurisprudence which will allow its members to search in all national case-law databases. As from January 2007, a prototype database is available with five pilot countries: Germany, Portugal, France, Ireland and England and Wales. The access to the search in the national case-law databases is open to the public but the restricted access (members only) provides additional tools for translation and access to private databases.

See: <http://www.reseau-presidents.eu/rpcsjue/>

2.4. The Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the European Union i.n.p.a.

The Association is composed of the Court of Justice of the European Communities and the Councils of State or the Supreme administrative jurisdictions of each of the Member States of the European Union.

The Association maintains a DEC-NAT databank on case law and a JURIFAST system for rapid information on case law. There is also a forum for members and links to national members.

See: <http://www.juradmin.eu/>

2.5. European Judges and Prosecutors Organisation

The European Judges and Prosecutors Association (EJPA) is a network of judges and prosecutors for contacts and exchanges on relevant topics.

See: <http://www.amue-ejpa.org>

2.6. The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) is the representative organisation of more than 700,000 European lawyers through its member bars and law societies from 31 full member countries, and 6 further observer countries.

See: <http://www.ccbe.eu/>

2.7. European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA)

The ECBA consists of specialist defence lawyers in the member countries of the Council of Europe. Membership is open to all lawyers, whether practicing or in academic life, who support those aims. Its website aims to give access to relevant information, laws, treaties and preparatory documents. At the members-section of the website lawyers can ask questions, look for lawyers they need in member-state countries, take part in committees preparing documents for several European projects, etc. The site provides for a discussion board which is open for registered users.

See: <http://www.ecba.org>

2.8. The Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNUE)

The Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNUE) is an association representing the notarial profession at the European level. The CNUE includes civil law notaries of all EU Member States familiar with this institution: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Croatia has observing member status.

See: <http://www.cnue.be>

The CNUE has developed the following ICT-based projects to facilitate its activities.

- European Network of Registers of Wills Association

The European Network of Registers of Wills (ENRW) is a network enabling the interconnection of existing national or local registers of wills. Through ENRW a notary can query a foreign register via his own national register. The foreign register queried then replies to the notary via his national register. ENRW now counts eight members (France, Belgium, Slovenia, Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Latvia and the region of St. Petersburg), four more having expressed their will to join the association (Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Estonia).

- Platform for the verification of electronic signatures issued by civil law notaries

In 2006 the CNUE started to develop a verification platform that is designed to allow all European civil law notaries to identify notarial electronic signatures from other countries as such. For the moment four countries (Spain, Germany, Italy and France) take part in the project. The system allows a civil law notary to verify over the internet whether:

- the signature is formally consistent;
 - the certificate has been revoked;
 - the certificate has expired;
 - the signature comes from a notary
- and thus to verify the source and integrity of the document.

2.9. European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

The ENCJ consists of national institutions in the Member States of the European Union which are independent of the executive and the legislature, and which are responsible for the support of the judiciaries in the independent delivery of justice. The Ministry of Justice, in member states where institutions as specified above do not exist, may be granted observer status. A working group on e-justice has been set up.

See: <http://www.encj.eu>

3. Relevant websites of international organisations

3.1. Hague Conference on Private International Law

With almost 70 Member States representing all continents, the Hague Conference on Private International Law is a global inter-governmental organisation, developing and servicing multilateral legal instruments in the field of private international law.

The Conference website presents general information concerning the Hague Conference as well as detailed and updated information on the Hague Conventions: text of the Conventions, full status reports, bibliographies, information regarding the authorities designated under the Conventions on judicial and administrative co-operation, explanatory reports, etc.

See: <http://www.hcch.net>

(i) INCADAT

INCADAT, the International Child Abduction Database, is a special initiative which provides easy access to many of the leading judicial decisions taken by national courts around the world in respect of the 1980 Hague Convention on international child abduction.

See: <http://www.incadat.com>

(ii) E-apostille

The Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (Hague Apostille Convention) facilitates the circulation of public documents executed in one State party to the Convention and to be produced in another State party to the Convention. It does so by replacing the cumbersome and often costly formalities of a full legalisation process with the mere issuance of an Apostille (also called Apostille Certificate or Certificate).

In April 2006 the Hague Conference together with the National Notary Association (NNA) launched the electronic Apostille Pilot Program (e-APP) to develop operational and secure software models for the issuance and use of electronic apostilles (e-apostilles) and the operation of electronic registers of apostilles (e-Registers). More information about the Apostille Convention and the e-APP can be found on the “Apostille Section” of the Hague Conference’s website.

3.2. Council of Europe

The web resources of the Council of Europe are extensive. Its Legal Affairs Directorate provides access to information among others to the adopted legal instruments, committees, events and documentation. Websites of national institutions, European and international organisations are also available. From among committees users can accede to the sites of the European Committee on Legal Cooperation and to Convention based committees such as the one which deals with judicial cooperation in criminal proceedings.

The website provides access to the Treaties section where the latest signatures and ratifications can be consulted and to the website of the European Court of Human Rights

See: <http://www.coe.int>

See: <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr/>

3.3. World Trade Organisation

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The WTO has 151 members. The most important functions of WTO are to administer WTO trade agreements, to give forum for trade negotiations, handling trade disputes, monitoring national trade policies, to provide technical assistance and training for developing countries, to cooperation with other international organizations, etc. Its internet site gives access to the documents on-line service of the organisation where the updated versions of all the WTO Agreements are available. Furthermore, dispute settlement annual reports and concrete cases can also be consulted on the site.

See: <http://www.wto.org>

3.4. UNIDROIT

The International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) is an independent intergovernmental organisation to study needs and methods for modernising, harmonising and co-ordinating private and, in particular, commercial law as between States and groups of States. Its website provides access to adopted texts and status reports, all UNIDROIT documents and publications. UNIDROIT maintains the UNILAW database (access to updated information regarding uniform law conventions and other instruments) and UNILEX (case-law and bibliography on Un Convention on Contract for the International Sale of Goods (CISG) and on the UNIDROIT Principles of International Commercial Contracts).

See: <http://www.unidroit.org/>
<http://www.unilex.info/>

3.5. UNCITRAL

The website of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law contains links to UNCITRAL texts and documents. UNCITRAL also maintains a system for collecting and disseminating information on court decisions and arbitral awards that have emanated from the work of the Commission (Case Law on UNCITRAL texts - CLOUT).

See: <http://www.uncitral.org/uncitral/en/index.html>
