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President of the CEPEJ-SATURN wg of the CEPEJ  
Activity Report (June 2024-December 2024)  
CEPEJ Plenary Meeting (Strasbourg, 3-4 December 2024)

<p>7 Judicial time management (CEPEJ-SATURN)</p>	<p>Presentation of the ongoing work by Giacomo OBERTO (Italy), President of the CEPEJ-SATURN</p> <p>Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services</p> <p>Database of backlog reduction practices</p> <p>Case-weighting tool</p> <p>Study on workload measurement in judicial systems</p> <p>Tool to analyse the timeframes according to the steps of the civil procedure</p> <p>Meeting of the Network of pilot courts of the CEPEJ</p> <p>Tool on effective court management</p> <p>Cooperation activities in the field of judicial time management (presented by project managers)</p>	<p><b>Working documents</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Draft Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Draft Explanatory Note for the Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)21</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Database of backlog reduction practices (on-line)</p> <p><b>Background documents</b></p> <p>Report of the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)18</p>
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The CEPEJ-SATURN wg held its 37th meeting in Strasbourg on 29th and 30th October.

## 1. Case-weighting tool

This work is a follow up of an important study realised in 2020 on the subject of Case weighting in courts, approved by the Plenary and published in our web site (a study which was followed in 2023 by a parallel work on case weighting in prosecutorial offices).

During its April meeting in Mechelen:

- The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the draft outline for the case-weighting tool (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)1).
- Following the reflection by Dimitrije Sujeranovic, scientific expert, the Working Group agreed on the following points:
- the terminology,
- the structure of the tool,
- the methodology and the
- timeline for the future work.

The CEPEJ-SATURN agreed to use the term “case-weighting system” referring to the CEPEJ Glossary (CEPEJ(2020)Rev1).

The CEPEJ-SATURN agreed

- to follow a similar approach as for the development of the Backlog Reduction Tool.
- To this end, it instructed Dimitrije Sujeranovic (Serbia), scientific expert, to prepare a first draft by the end of June 2024.
- The Secretariat proposed to also ask a judge coming from a State having already implemented a case-weighting system, to contribute to the drafting of this tool, as scientific expert. Therefore the Group tasked its member Sabine Mateijka to assist the expert, as Austria is one of the countries which already implemented some forms of case weighting.
- On-line meetings were convened during the summer to discuss the draft case-weighting tool and provide directions for its further elaboration,

- a finalised draft was prepared for the last SATURN meeting in October 2024.

During its **October meeting** in SXB:

- The CEPEJ-SATURN thoroughly discussed the **draft tool**, that was prepared by **Dimitrije Sujeranovic** (Serbia), scientific expert, **based on comments** provided by the Task force composed of Francesco Depasquale (Malta), Sabine Matejka (Austria) and the Secretariat. The Working group expressed its appreciation for the quality of the preliminary draft.
- It was decided that the subject be confined **only to courts** (and not extended to prosecution offices).

The **discussions** focused on refining the **structure** of the future tool and outlining the steps necessary to develop a case-weighting system.

The CEPEJ-SATURN revised the proposed structure, organising it into **key chapters**:

- **introduction**,
- **concept and objectives** of case-weighting,
- **detailed steps** for its **development and implementation**,
- **monitoring** and periodical **review**.

The draft tool outlines **seven distinct steps** for **establishing** a case-weighting system and concludes with **twelve recommendations** for setting up and maintaining such a system.

To enhance clarity and its usability, the draft tool includes **practical examples** presented in tables, designed to assist the beneficiaries in collecting relevant data and effectively implementing case-weighting.

The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to **continue its examination** of the **draft tool**, focusing on the detailed elaboration of the steps for development of case-weighting as well as its implementation, and monitoring. It was decided to develop the tool for courts, with the possibility of its adaptation for prosecution services in a later phase. Additionally, the Working Group also agreed to revisit the definition of case-weighting and to **hold further discussions on-line**, with a first **on-line meeting** to be scheduled by the **end of January 2025**.

## 2. Time **Management Checklist for public prosecution services**

The checklist is a **tool for collecting data and information useful for analysing the length of proceedings under the responsibility of prosecution and take appropriate measures to prevent delays in criminal proceedings**.

The checklist and its explanatory note were based on **similar documents adopted by CEPEJ in 2023 regarding courts**, at the same time reflecting the specificity of prosecutorial work.

During the meeting in Mechelen in April this year:

The Group appointed three scientific experts

- o Christian de Valkeneer (Belgium),
- o Joan Rascagneres (Andorra) and

- o José Manuel Santos Pais (Portugal)
- They presented
- o a draft note (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)14)
  - o and a preliminary proposal for revision of the Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)15).
- These proposals aimed to
- o provide indicators for the analysis of the length of proceedings for public prosecution services
  - o based on the Time Management Checklist designed mainly for the courts (CEPEJ(2023)5) while Taking into account the specificity of the role of prosecutors, the CEPEJ-SATURN decided to
  - o mandate José Manuel Santos Pais, scientific experts, to develop the main draft Time Management Checklist for public prosecution services,
- Which would apply mainly to criminal proceedings before extending it possibly to civil proceedings.

### During the October meeting in SXB

- The CEPEJ-SATURN had an exchange of views, also with the Expert in charge (José Manuel Santos Pais, connected online), on the draft Time Management Checklist and its Explanatory Note with a view to their possible adoption by the Group.
- The Group and the Expert took in charge as well some questions raised by some members of the CCEP, as the Secretariat had sent the draft checklist and draft notes to them for comments.
- The discussion within the CEPEJ-SATURN focused on the comments received from the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE) which were consulted on the Checklist (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)25).
- The CEPEJ-SATURN welcomed the cooperation with the CCPE that allow to adapt the Checklist to the needs of prosecutors. The modalities of such a consultation were agreed upon with the Bureau of the CCPE in May 2024.
- The comments concerned mainly the indicators relating to the role of the prosecutor in the trial phase.
- The Working group decided to present the Checklist and its Explanatory Note for adoption by CEPEJ at this plenary meeting in December 2024 after integrating the CCPE's comments.

## STRUCTURE OF THE CHECKLIST

### 7 INDICATORS

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|-------------------------|--|
| <b>INDICATOR ONE:</b>   | <b>EVALUATING THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AND THE SANCTION AND SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE PROSECUTOR</b> |
| <b>INDICATOR TWO:</b>   | <b>ELABORATING CASE CATEGORIES AND CASE WEIGHTING</b>  |
| <b>INDICATOR THREE:</b> | <b>MONITORING PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES AND TRIAL PHASE</b>   |

**INDICATOR FOUR: MONITORING SANCTION AND SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES**

**INDICATOR FIVE: ESTABLISHING TIMEFRAMES / STANDARDS FOR THE DURATION OF PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS AND SANCTION AND SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES**

**INDICATOR SEVEN: USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) AS A TOOL FOR TIME MANAGEMENT OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

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**INDICATOR ONE: EVALUATING THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AND THE SANCTION AND SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE PROSECUTOR**

#	Question	Answer	Comment/NA/NAP
1.a.	Does the prosecutor/prosecution service track the duration of the case from the opening of an investigation, through the different case events, until the end of the intervention of the prosecution in the judicial proceedings (e.g. judgment, execution of the judgment, execution of an alternative prosecution, etc.)?	Yes/No	
1.b.	Does the prosecutor /prosecution service track the duration of the case from the opening of an investigation until the end of the prosecution, even if a case is transferred to another prosecutor with different material or territorial jurisdiction?	Yes/No	
1.c.	Does the prosecutor assign a unique case number from the initial act (case filed with the prosecutor for the first time) to the final court decision, including enforcement procedures?	Yes/No	
1.d.	Is the original date of filing of the case still used for calculating the duration of the proceedings, when cases are merged or separated?	Yes/No	

**INDICATOR TWO: ELABORATING CASE CATEGORIES AND CASE WEIGHTING**

#	Question	Answer	Comment/NA/NAP
2.a.	Is there a categorisation of cases according to the nature of the legal dispute? If yes, which categories are used?	Yes/No	
2.b.	Is there a categorisation of cases according to their complexity? If yes, how is the degree of complexity defined?	Yes/No	
2.c.	Is there a categorisation of cases according to	Yes/No	

	their estimated duration? Which criteria are used for defining such duration?		
2.d.	Does the public prosecution service use any form of case weighting methodology to evaluate the complexity of cases?	Yes/No	
2.e.	Does the public prosecution service use information and communication technology (ICT) to implement the case weighting methodology?	Yes/No	
2.f.	If such ICT tools exist, whether at a central, regional or local level, are they interconnected or even centralized?	Yes/No	

**INDICATOR THREE: MONITORING PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES AND TRIAL PHASE**

#	Question		Answer	Comment/NA/NAP
3.a.	Does the prosecutor have the competence to decide whether or not to prosecute?		Yes/No	
3.b.	Does the prosecutor have the competence to use alternatives to prosecution? Which ones are available?			
3.c.	Does the prosecutor collect data on the following procedural steps both at the preliminary investigation stage and during the trial phase:			
	1.	<p>Date of the opening of preliminary investigations.</p> <p>Please indicate whether in your country a law enforcement agency is entitled to initiate preliminary investigations and whether such initiation is to be reported to the prosecution service or may be conducted independently.</p> <p>Please, also indicate whether such opening is immediately communicated to the defendant or whether there are exceptions (for instance, in money laundering, organised or white-collar crime cases).</p>	Yes/No	
	2.	<p>Date of request and receipt of expert reports (autopsy, ballistics, medical-psychological evaluations, etc.) as well as decisions of other authorities which condition the development of the criminal proceedings (e.g. decisions by other domestic courts, responses to requests for international co-operation involving foreign or international judicial or law enforcement bodies).</p>	Yes/No	

	3.	Date of opening of a formal criminal investigation  (if applicable)	Yes/No	
	4.	Duration of police custody	Yes/No	
	5.	Duration of security measures (e.g. pre-trial detention, house arrest, etc.)	Yes/No	
3.d.		Do you organise meetings with the services responsible for investigations, other relevant agencies and/or the investigation judge? If yes, in which circumstances, in relation to what categories of cases and how frequently?	Yes/No	
3.e.		Does the prosecutor always represent their case in the court? If not, does this affect the length of the criminal proceedings?	Yes/No	
3.f.		Does the prosecutor use these data to calculate the duration of the various procedural steps for most categories of cases?	Yes/No	
3.g.		Does the prosecutor collect data on the date of the hearings of the parties and other participants to the proceedings (e.g., victims and witnesses). Is such data collected even in very complex cases involving the intervention of many individuals?	Yes/No	
3.h.		Are the data on the duration of the various procedural steps available to the parties of court proceedings and/or their representatives?	Yes/No	
3.i.		Are the data on the duration of the various procedural steps available to the public?	Yes/No	
3.j.		Is information related to procedural steps used by the prosecutor/prosecution service for planning purposes, in order to identify and prevent undue delays, accelerate proceedings, and improve their effectiveness?	Yes/No	
3.k.		Is there an estimate of expected or maximum time, defined by law, procedural rules or internal guidelines for the prosecution, that is needed to accomplish particular procedural steps?	Yes/No	

**INDICATOR FOUR: MONITORING SANCTION AND SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES**

#	Question	Answer	Comment/NA/NAP
4.a.	1. Is there a guilty plea procedure?	Yes/No	

	2.	If so, does this procedure involve a judge and within what time limit?  If no guilty plea exists in your legal system, what are the possible consequences of a confession by the defendant?	Yes/No	
4.b.	1.	Does the prosecutor have the competence to conclude a legal settlement?	Yes/No	
	2.	If so, does this procedure involve a judge, for which purpose and within what timeframe?	Yes/No	
4.c.	1.	Are there alternative procedures to prosecution?  If so which alternative procedures to prosecution are available?	Yes/No	
	2.	Are they entrusted to bodies/staff subordinated to prosecution authorities ("délégués du procureur")?	Yes/No	
	3.	Does this procedure involve a judge, for which purpose and within what time limit?	Yes/No	
	4.	Is the victim entitled to bring the case before a prosecutorial office or court when a prosecutor refuses to pursue the case? In which circumstances?	Yes/No	
4.d.		Does the prosecution service receive a notification when a judgment becomes final? If so, when?	Yes/No	
4.e.		Does the prosecution service receive information from the court (or other entities, such as the probation service) regarding the enforcement of criminal sanctions or alternative sentences?	Yes/No	

**INDICATOR FIVE: ESTABLISHING TIMEFRAMES / STANDARDS FOR THE DURATION OF PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS AND SANCTION AND SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES**

#	Question	Answer	Comment/NA/NAP
5.a.	Are there any national framework timeframes/standards established by law, procedural rules or internal guidelines of the prosecution that define the duration of preliminary investigations and other case events?	Yes/No	
5.b.	Do they cover all categories/stages of criminal proceedings, including in the enforcement of	Yes/No	

	decisions and/or sanction and settlement procedures?		
5.c.	Is there a mechanism in place for the prosecutor/prosecution services to monitor the duration of preliminary investigations and criminal proceedings?	Yes/No	
5.d.	Is there an estimate of the time needed by the investigative authorities to process a case (time employed by investigators/ judicial staff/other staff) for each category of case?	Yes/No	
5.e.	Is there a mechanism in place for the prosecutor/prosecution service to monitor the execution and duration of sanction and settlement procedures?	Yes/No	
<b>Predictability of the length of proceedings</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Comment/NA/NAP</b>
5.f.	Are users and the general public informed of the expected duration of criminal proceedings?	Yes/No	
5.g.	Does the prosecution service provide the public with data on the type and duration of their intervention in criminal proceedings?	Yes/No	
5.h.	Does the prosecution service use any organisational or innovative methods to expedite case handling (e.g. making use of experts from various fields or establishing specialised departments)?		

**INDICATOR SIX:                      DIAGNOSING DELAYS AND MITIGATING CONSEQUENCES**

<b>#</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Comment/NA/NAP</b>
6.a.	Can delays be clearly determined by the person or department in charge of monitoring of the proceedings?	Yes/No	
6.b.	Does the prosecutor use electronic automatic notifications for deadlines and timeframes?	Yes/No	
6.c.	Are there any measures available to the prosecutor to mitigate the impact of situations in which significant delays occur?	Yes/No	
6.d.	Are there mechanisms available for the parties to complain during the proceedings regarding unreasonably lengthy durations of certain procedural steps of the responsibility either of prosecutors or judges?	Yes/No	



6.e.	Does a responsible person or office have a duty to inform the prosecutor, competent authority or office of undue delays of the proceedings?	Yes/No	
6.f.	Can the responsible person take steps to mitigate current delays or prevent future ones and speed up the proceedings?	Yes/No	
6.g.	Is it possible to impose sanctions against parties/lawyers/experts who delay proceedings (e.g. admonition, replacement, fines, cost decisions)? Which types of sanctions may be imposed (disciplinary, penal, other) and by whom?	Yes/No	
6.h.	Are the data on these sanctions collected?	Yes/No	
6.i.	Does the prosecutor periodically review all cases and decide on the need to revive or terminate suspended proceedings?	Yes/No	
6.j.	Is there any communication strategy in place which supports internal, external, or crisis communication, namely in situations of significant delays in case resolution?	Yes/No	

**INDICATOR SEVEN: USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) AS A TOOL FOR TIME MANAGEMENT OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

<p><i>The prosecutor may best achieve proper time management by the use of ICT for the purpose of monitoring time analysis, court performance and strategic planning.</i></p>			
<b>ICT as a tool for case registration, monitoring of duration and backlogs in judicial proceedings</b>			
#	Question	Answer	Comment/NA/NAP
7.a.	Does the prosecutor/prosecution service use an electronic case-management system?	Yes/No	
7.b.	Does the prosecutor/prosecution service use electronic communication (e-filing) with courts and the parties to exchange documents?	Yes/No	
7.c.	Does the prosecutor/prosecution service collect data on the duration of the various procedural steps via the electronic case-management system?	Yes/No	
7.d.	Does the electronic case-management system collect data on pending cases?	Yes/No	

7.e.	Does the electronic case-management system collect data on backlogs? Is this data about backlogs available in electronic form to prosecutors?	Yes/No	
7.f.	Is information about the stages of the case available in electronic form to parties (for example, dates of hearings, location of the file)?	Yes/No	
<b>ICT as a tool for statistical processing, improvement of efficiency and planning in the area of timeframes</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Comment/NA/NAP</b>
7.g.	Do ICTs enable production of statistical reports? If so, are such reports automatically produced?	Yes/No	
7.h.	Are the statistical reports available in electronic form to users?	Yes/No	
7.i.	Are statistical reports on the duration of proceedings and delays regularly used for case-management within the prosecution service?	Yes/No	
7.j.	Does the prosecutor use standard electronic templates for the drafting of prosecutorial documents?	Yes/No	
7.k.	Does the prosecutor use videoconferencing in judicial proceedings?	Yes/No	
7.l.	Is Artificial Intelligence (AI) used by the prosecutor/prosecution service?	Yes/No	

### 3. Database of backlog reduction practices

In June 2023, the CEPEJ adopted the Backlog Reduction Tool (CEPEJ(2023)9FINAL).

The tool contains a non-exhaustive list of measures to address the backlog. It was proposed to complement it with the establishment of a Database of backlog reduction practices.

The idea of the Database is based on a Concept Note examined by the CEPEJ at its last plenary meeting in December 2023 (CEPEJ(2023)15).

The concept note outlines the guiding principles for publishing practices in the database and the procedures of its management.

The detailed principles for publication are structured around criteria of relevance, implementation and evidence based. Practices must directly relate to measures taken by a State, court, or another actor to combat backlogs. Whenever possible, submitted practices should be accompanied by supporting evidence.

During the meeting of the CEPEJ-SATURN in Mechelen, Lidija Naumovska, from the Secretariat of the CEPEJ, presented a prototype of a Database composed of

- charts and graphs representing domains of intervention (legislative, operational, resources, training),

- areas of application (e.g. court management, digitalisation of judicial systems, justice actors),
- levels of application (judge, court, system),
- and implementing authority (e.g. Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court).
- The prototype could also include an interactive map with countries that submitted backlog reduction practices.
- The map would be interlinked to the list of individual practices with their detailed description.

The CEPEJ-SATURN examined the draft form for collecting information on backlog reduction practices (CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)3). The draft form had been tested by collecting selected practices from the following countries: Croatia, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland and the Netherlands.

The CEPEJ-SATURN also discussed the way in which submissions of practices received from States would be dealt with.

In this regard, Daniel Schmidt, from the Secretariat of the CEPEJ, shared the experience of the CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST with the Resource Centre on Cyberjustice and Artificial Intelligence.

The CEPEJ-SATURN approved the prototype and the form subject to the agreed modifications and decided to set up a Task force in charge of reviewing backlog reduction practices received before their submission to the CEPEJ-SATURN, which would decide on their publication.

The Task force is composed of Giacomo Oberto (Italy), Francesco Depasquale (Malta) and Dimitrije Sujevanovic (Serbia), and is assisted by the Secretariat.

The Task Force and the Secretariat finalised the form and reviewed selected practices for the prototype.

The Database prototype was presented to CEPEJ members during the plenary meeting in June 2024. Following the presentation, the Secretariat began collecting the practices and sent a request to member States for their submission. Practices were gathered using an electronic form finalised by the Task Force, established for this purpose at the SATURN meeting in April 2024. A total of 56 practices were submitted by Andorra (2), Belgium (11), Croatia (17), France (5), Georgia (1), Germany (1), Hungary (2), Italy (1), Lithuania (1), Romania (5), Slovenia (4), Sweden (3), and Türkiye (3). The quality of submitted practices varied significantly, and thus would necessitate a thorough review before publication.

During the October meeting in SXB:

- Lidija Naumovska, from the Secretariat of the CEPEJ, presented a revised and updated version of the prototype of a Database.
- The CEPEJ-SATURN agreed on the next steps to finalise the Database. To this end, the Secretariat, in collaboration with Emilie Hoareau (France), scientific expert, will review all submitted practices and publish the selected ones in the Database.
- The Database is expected to be made public during this CEPEJ plenary meeting in December 2024, alongside the announcement of a second call for submissions. Practices will be collected at regular intervals and examined during SATURN meetings, that will decide on their selection and publication.

#### 4. Tool to analyse the timeframes according to the steps of the civil procedure

- During its April meeting in Mechelen:
- The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on the
  - Concept Note entitled: Which way forward for the tool on the length of the steps of the civil procedure? (Document (CEPEJ-SATURN(2023)11REV) and the
  - compilation of contributions from the Task Force on the steps of the civil procedure (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)10).
- The Task Force
  - was set up following a call for expressions of interest to which nine Pilot Courts replied positively.
  - It held two on-line meetings on 5 October 2024 and on 23 November 2024, respectively.
- The Concept Note

- outlined the possible objectives of the activity,
  - specified the possible methods of data collection and outputs expected to be delivered by the Task force.
- The compilation provided detailed description of the steps of the civil procedure in the relevant pilot courts.
- The CEPEJ-SATURN discussed
  - how to further proceed with a view to develop a tool that would provide timeframes for different steps of the civil procedure.
  - The information submitted by the Pilot Courts provided a good basis for a first analysis,
  - which could be complemented by additional desk research in order to have a first overview of the situation in the relevant pilot courts with regard to each step of the civil procedure, the legal deadlines, the reasons for delays and the measures taken to remedy them.
- The future tool could provide recommendations for measures to be taken to reduce/improve the length of each of the agreed steps of the civil procedure based on the experiences from the respective Pilot Courts.
- Marco Fabri (Italy) and Carolina Mancuso (Italy), scientific experts,
  - informed the CEPEJSATURN that they would not be able to continue working on this theme in the future.
- The CEPEJ-SATURN thanked them for the important work already done in this framework and proposed to Pawel Wrzaszcz to prepare a first analysis of the information received so far from the Pilot Courts with suggestions on how to proceed further.
  - This first analysis may be followed by interviews and additional legal research.
  - The possibility of enlarging the sample of Pilot Courts in the future was also mentioned.
  - The future steps would be discussed in a later stage depending on the results of the analysis.

During its October meeting in SXB:

1. The CEPEJ-SATURN had an exchange of views on the preliminary draft analysis prepared by the expert in charge Pawel Wrzaszcz.
2. The preliminary report was structured around the various stages of civil proceedings, as defined in the questionnaire developed in co-operation with pilot courts prior to its dissemination.
3. The report contains the analysis of qualitative and (real or estimated) quantitative data regarding national legislation and of court practices submitted by nine CEPEJ pilot courts.
4. The report also contains concluding remarks for each stage of civil proceedings together with suggestions for the next steps for further work.
5. The CEPEJ-SATURN thanked the scientific expert for drafting the first analysis. The summary information on legal deadlines and estimated duration of each procedural step in the relevant countries were particularly appreciated.
6. The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to continue working on this theme in two main stages. In the first stage, it was agreed to share the analysis with the nine participating CEPEJ pilot courts to verify the accuracy of the submitted information and the preliminary analysis. Consultations in writing will be most likely accompanied by joint or individual interviews to collect complementary information. In parallel, research on the existing legislation in the countries of the pilot courts involved and beyond should be carried out to complete the analysis.
7. The Working group supported the view that an additional expert, preferably scholar or academic in civil law, should be involved to assist in any further process.
8. In a second stage, the Working group suggested to extend the analysis to more countries involving additional pilot courts from different geographical regions to achieve a more representative overview. Following this information gathering, a comparative legal analysis should be performed to identify

variations in the duration of individual sages of civil proceedings and to draw well-founded conclusions.

### Example:

#### I. STAGE II - Filing a response to the legal action by the defendant

	Deadlines prescribed by laws/regulations (in days)	Estimated duration of the procedural step (in days)
Italy	120	120
Poland	no shorter than 14	14/30
Finland		60
Germany	28	49
Portugal	30	30
Slovak Republic		15
Slovenia	30	30
United Kingdom	28	28

## 5. Study on workload measurement in judicial systems

During its April meeting in Mechelen:

- The CEPEJ-SATURN exchanged views on
  - the draft concept note and
  - the draft questionnaire on workload measurement tools in judicial systems (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)2), developed by Alexandre Palanco (France), scientific expert, based on the previous questionnaires on case-weighting to ensure consistency of approach.
- The Concept Note
  - sets out the scope, context, working methods and data collection.
  - Discussion focused on the draft questionnaire and the need to adjust the introductory part using the term “workload” as defined in the CEPEJ Glossary (CEPEJ(2020)Rev1).
- The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to
  - follow the same approach as for the reports on case-weighting in courts and in public prosecution services drawn up in 2020 and 2023 respectively.
  - It asked the scientific expert to revise the draft questionnaire in the light of the comments made orally or in writing by the members and instructed the Secretariat to discuss it in Workshop 1 on workload measurement tools at the 17th Meeting of Pilot Courts on the following day for their possible comments.
- Subsequently, it was agreed to finalise the draft questionnaire and disseminate it to national contact points.
  - The replies would serve as a starting point for the analysis of the functioning of existing methods of measuring workload in courts.
  - They would be followed by interviews and consultations during the drafting of the study.
  - The Network of the CEPEJ Pilot Courts could play an important role in sharing their experiences in this regard.

During its October meeting in SXB:

- The CEPEJ-SATURN had an exchange of views on the questionnaire and way forward with the two experts in charge: Alexandre Palanco and Ana Krnic-Kulusic.

- The questionnaire has been based on the previous questionnaires on case-weighting to ensure consistency of approach. Instead of the initial plan to focus broadly on judicial systems, the Working group decided to narrow down the scope focusing only on courts at this stage.
- The questionnaire has been structured around four main sections to explore the functioning and characteristics of the existing workload measurement tools.
- The CEPEJ-SATURN instructed the Secretariat to disseminate rapidly the detailed questionnaire via google form to the contact persons nominated by the CEPEJ members following the presentation of the draft questionnaire at the CEPEJ plenary meeting in June 2024. The Secretariat has received nominations from 27 member States. The replies will be useful for preparation of a future study analysing the existing workload measurement tools. It agreed that a first analysis would be prepared for the next meetings of the CEPEJ-SATURN and the CEPEJ Network of pilot courts to be held in April 2025.

## 6. Meeting of the Network of pilot courts of the CEPEJ

The 18th Meeting of the Network of pilot courts will be held in Strasbourg on 10th April, 2025 and will be opened by Mr Gianluca Esposito, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe.

During its meeting in October, the CEPEJ-SATURN had a discussion on preparation of the said meeting.

- The meeting will be opened in plenary; subsequently, 3 workshops will be organised, followed by a final meeting in plenary session.
- The three workshops will be on
  - Potential effects of the use of AI on court efficiency (SATURN and CYBERJUST)
  - Quality of jurisdictional debate (QUAL)
  - Improving work-life balance in the judiciary (all CEPEJ working groups)
- During the Plenary in the afternoon a presentation of database on backlog reduction practices will take place, as well as a presentation on the on-going work on workload management tools.

## 7. Tool on effective court management

- During its April meeting in Mechelen:
- Based on the Note prepared by the Secretariat (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)13),
  - the CEPEJ-SATURN had a first exchange of views on the feasibility of developing a tool to improve worklife balance in the judiciary.
  - The members shared some practices existing in their jurisdictions (e.g. parttime work, teleworking, the right to disconnect, support for on-the-spot health facilities and activities and well-being surveys in courts).
- Although the gender dimension plays a role within this theme, members considered that a number of practices aimed at guaranteeing work-life balance apply indiscriminately to men and women.

- Any possible future tools should therefore apply to all staff members irrespective of their gender.
- Considering the richness of shared practices, the CEPEJ-SATURN decided to
  - first collect the existing practices among themselves before
  - possibly extending it to other actors, such as CEPEJ Pilot Courts.
- A future tool could take the form of guidelines designed for courts based on collected practices.
  - This tool may include guidelines to conduct well-being surveys in the courts/prosecution services that may be supplemented by
  - a checklist or indicators to measure well-being among the staff working in the judiciary.

During its **October meeting** in SXB:

- The CEPEJ-SATURN had an exchange of views on the subject with the **Expert Ms Aurélie Grenot-Devedjian**.
- The Expert explained that the work should **not** aim at **issuing guidelines**, but at a **tool**, which could start with a **general questionnaire**, maybe followed by a **checklist**; also a **database** of **good practices** could be of use.
- The Working Group examined a **revised Concept Note** (Document CEPEJ-SATURN(2024)24) prepared by Aurélie Grenot-Devedjian (France), scientific expert, which outlines specific themes for a potential future possible tool aimed at enhancing effective court management.
- **Discussions** centered on two areas:
  - the **structure** of **court governance** and
  - **human resource management**.
- A **methodology** for developing the **potential tool** was proposed, starting with
  - **collection** of **court management models** and **practices** through a **questionnaire**.
  - The collected information would serve as a **basis** for a **comprehensive study**, potentially leading to
  - the creating of **guidelines** on effective court management.
  - The theme may be addressed during the **joint meeting of all CEPEJ Working Groups, scheduled for October 2025**.
  - The Group agreed that this study needs the contribution of **various stakeholders**, like the **CCJE**, the organism representing the **Rechtspfleger**, etc.
- The CEPEJ-SATURN decided to **continue the reflection** on this subject during its next meeting in April and then in October.

## **8. Cooperation activities in the field of judicial time management (presented by project managers)**