

PRESENTATION OF THE COMPARATIVE MULTILINGUAL LEGAL VOCABULARY (VJM)

07.02.2020

VJM IN A NUTSHELL

A collection of multilingual terminological entries found in multiple domestic legal systems (24 languages and 30 EU legal systems) resulting from comprehensive comparative legal research carried out by the lawyer-linguists of the Directorate General for Multilingualism (DGM, previously "Directorate General for Translation") and the terminologists of the "Projects and Terminological Coordination" Unit of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The terminological entries contain detailed information, namely definitions (adapted to each legal system), notes on comparative law, legal references (legislation, case law and academic legal writing from national, EU and international legal systems), the different designations of a concept (in the same language and for the legal systems which are sometimes different), a clear indication of the origin of a term (functional equivalent or formulation - circumlocution), warning notes (legal false friends, risk of confusion, obsolete terms), concept trees allowing to see the semantic relationships between concepts at a glance, etc.

A BRIEF HISTORY

At the end of 2008, the Publications Office of the European Union (PO) proposed that the Directorate General for Translation (DGTrad) of the Court of Justice of the European Union should contribute to the creation of a comparative multilingual legal vocabulary (hereinafter referred to as "VJM") for the various domestic legal systems of the Member States of the European Union, within the framework of the interinstitutional project *e-Justice*.

Available in 24 languages, VJM would allow lawyers and EU citizens to have access to a multilingual documentary tool for indexing and searching the documentary tools of national legal databases.

In order to respond based on concrete factors; DGTrad conducted a feasibility study and began working on VJM in March 2009. In this context, DGTrad proposed to produce an atypical controlled vocabulary, which would meet two requirements: finding information (the documentary need) and understanding it (the terminological need). The subjects that have been systematically covered are immigration law (rights of aliens), family law and criminal law.

The lawyer-linguists working on the project conducted extensive comparative legal research (concerning national, EU and international law), which required a detailed analysis of the different legal concepts specific to each legal system, as well as of the different designations of a concept within each system in legislation, case law and academic legal writing.

This comparative legal analysis has produced a coherent and hierarchically structured set of terminological entries containing terms accompanied by reliable references, contexts, various notes (historical notes, comparison of laws, evolution of concepts, caution on the use of terms,

etc.), definitions, comparative law summary notes contexts, semantic relations, etc. In addition to the terminological entries, a common concept tree is available for each domain.

In June 2010, DGTrad submitted the report on the feasibility study to the PO. This report and a summary of the conclusions were presented in November 2010 to the e-Law Group (e-Justice Training) of the Council.

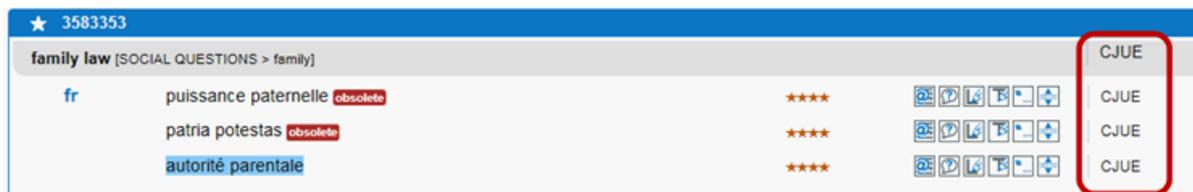
This project has numerous benefits, especially with regard to the translation of Member States' urgent requests for preliminary rulings. As a matter of fact, the work done allows lawyer-linguists to save time as well as to provide high-quality translations thanks to greater harmonisation of legal terminology in translations. Therefore, the importance of pursuing the project and expand it —if conditions allow to other legal domains which are frequently subject of proceedings before the courts of the European Union is now firmly established throughout DGM.

At present, VJM contains about 1 400 terminological entries: 250 in the domain of immigration law (rights of aliens), 450 in family law, 420 in criminal law (about half of the entries in criminal law are under review) and about 280 entries in other domains.

This vocabulary can be used by anyone (citizens, legal professionals, students, linguists, terminologists, translators) wishing to understand a concept. It can also be useful for translation and drafting purposes.

HOW TO ACCESS THE TERMINOLOGICAL ENTRIES?

The family law, immigration law (rights of aliens) and criminal law collections are accessible from the public terminological database [IATE](#) (InterActive Terminology for Europe). By clicking on the entry number you can display all the details of the entry (concept in relation to the term, conceptual tree, definition, term, context, etc.). It should be noted that all terminological entries of the Court of Justice are indicated in IATE by the acronym CJUE.



The screenshot shows a search result in the IATE database. The search criteria are 'family law' and '[SOCIAL QUESTIONS > family]'. The results are listed in a table with columns for language (fr), term, status (obsolete), quality (4 stars), and actions. The 'CJUE' label is highlighted in a red box.

Language	Term	Status	Quality	Actions	Source
fr	puissance paternelle	obsolete	★★★★	[Icons]	CJUE
	patria potestas	obsolete	★★★★	[Icons]	CJUE
	autorité parentale		★★★★	[Icons]	CJUE



For more information, [contact the team](mailto:Terminologie@curia.europa.eu) (Terminologie@curia.europa.eu) in charge of the project at the Court of Justice of the European Union.