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EU training networks & structures

Dedicated to excellence in European judicial training, EJTN is the principal platform and promoter for the training and exchange of knowledge of the European judiciary. It represents the interests of over 120,000 European judges, prosecutors and judicial trainers across Europe in various training fields such as EU civil, criminal and commercial law, linguistics and societal issues. EJTN's vision is to help fostering a common legal and judicial European culture. Its mandate is to help build a European area of justice and to promote knowledge of the European Union legal systems, thereby enhancing the understanding, confidence and cooperation between judges and prosecutors within EU Member States. Further, EJTN identifies training needs and develops training standards and curricula, coordinates judicial training exchanges and programmes, disseminates training expertise and know-how and promotes cooperation between EU judicial training institutions.

The year 2015 witnessed continuing growth of the Network, allowing EJTN to train 5032 judges and prosecutors, from all EU Member States, through 1815 exchanges and 84 seminars. This is a growth of 14.38% in the number of training days offered compared to the previous year's figures. This success was complemented with the further widening of EJTN's activities portfolio.

EJTN's recent evolution opened new possibilities to further develop, not only reinforcing its core endeavours, but also forging new partnerships, particularly through the signing in June 2014 of the Memorandum of Understanding with several European judicial networks and associations.

Finally, EJTN's achievements were lauded in the Council Conclusions 'Training of legal practitioners: an essential tool to consolidate the EU acquis' (2014/C 443/04), where it was stated that, at EU level, the EJTN *is best placed to coordinate, through its Members, national training activities and to develop a cross-border training offer for judges and prosecutors.*

2016: towards the future

EJTN's key outcomes can be represented as follows:

Further strengthened the Network, with reference to the objectives set in the 2011 EC Communication and in the EU Justice Agenda for 2020 by increasing the number of training activities, broadening the scope of trainings - adding new fields of law as well as non-legal trainings for judges and prosecutors and last but not least increasing their quality by subjecting them to the extensive evaluation process and liaising with numerous partners when developing training activities;

Improved coordination and assistance to national training institutions, Members and Observers, so as to facilitate and enhance their training offers by significant development of the EJTN Catalogue and Catalogue+ as well as by organizing networking platforms and training events;

Increased performance across existing financial and methodological means as well provided expertise and know-how through EJTN's networking by offering activities devoted to identification and dissemination of best training practices and training methodology.

These outcomes contribute to the strategic goals set for the period 2014–2020:

To continue to foster mutual trust between judges and prosecutors from different European legal systems;

To increase the level of knowledge of EU law among the European judiciary;

To assure high standards of quality of European judicial training and promote high standards of quality for national judicial training.

To foster the early development of a judge's and prosecutor's European profile;

To strive towards an increased networking function of EJTN;

To strive towards a more effective external cooperation;

In the interest of maintaining judicial independence, to reinforce as far as possible, the primacy of the role of EJTN in all areas of judicial training at the EU level.

EJTN ACTIONS

Judicial exchanges

Through immersion in a foreign judicial environment, judicial exchanges can lead to exchanges of best practices, expertise and knowledge and to a stronger feeling of belonging to a common judicial culture.

The Exchange Programme has registered an exponential growth since its **creation in 2005**. In 2015, EJTN proudly celebrated 10 years of the Exchange Programme for Judicial Authorities. The number of beneficiaries and participating countries as well as the types of activities offered is in continuous growth: at its beginning, in 2005, the EU judges and prosecutors taking part to the exchanges were 169; in 2015 they were 1815.

Along the years, a wider spectrum of exchange opportunities has also been developed, so to diversify the proposed training actions and meet different needs of the judiciaries:

Short-term exchanges in the courts of the EU Member States (1 to 2 weeks);

Long-term training periods (from 3 to 12 months) at the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights and EUROJUST;

Specialised exchanges: a recent innovation involving exchanges between judges and prosecutors specialised in various areas of law, such as environmental law, refugee law, labour law or competition law.

Professional exchanges and study visits on counter terrorism and radicalization: another new type of exchange introduced from 2015, in reply to crescent needs and priorities of EU magistracies;

Bilateral exchanges between courts or prosecutor's offices of the EU Member States, also launched in 2015, where a group of practitioners from the same court/prosecutor's office visit together a court/prosecutor's office of another EU Member State with a view to develop experiences, best practices and develop cooperation

Exchanges for judicial trainers focusing on training methodology, including best practices identified in the report drafted by EJTN within the pilot project on European judicial training, which was proposed by the European Parliament in 2012 and executed by the European Commission in 2013-2014.

EJTN intends to further develop its offer of exchanges for the EU judiciary with the introduction, as of 2016, of exchanges specifically dedicated to court presidents and heads of prosecutor's offices of the EU Member States.

AIAKOS Programme

This programme offers two week exchanges (one week abroad and one week at home with foreign colleagues) for mixed groups of national and foreign judicial trainees or newly appointed judges and prosecutors to other European initial training schools, courts and prosecution offices.

The main aim of this project is to raise the awareness of the beneficiaries for the European dimension of their (future) work and to foster mutual understanding of different European judicial cultures and systems. In 2015, 401 EU future judges and prosecutors took part to the AIAKOS Programme.

Study Visits

Two to five days study visits to the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights, Eurojust and European institutions in Brussels allow judges, prosecutors and trainers from all across Europe to familiarize themselves with the functioning of these institutions, as well as to exchange expertise, experiences and best practices.

In 2015, nearly 400 judges and prosecutors took part in EJTN study visits.

Training workshops and seminars

Criminal Justice Seminars

Mutual trust and confidence form the foundation of an effective application of criminal justice within the European Union area. Judicial training within the criminal justice field ensures smooth cross-border cooperation, recognition of judgments in criminal matters as well as practitioners' confidence in each other's Criminal justice systems.

In this area, EJTN promotes innovative training models (learn by doing) through the Criminal Justice Seminars, aiming to reinforce a better understanding about the current EU legal framework of criminal justice to enable practitioners to cooperate with each other across borders.

The reinforcement of the cooperation between different European bodies and EJTN is the bedrock of projects developed by EJTN in the field of criminal justice. The role of EJM and Eurojust at EJTN seminars is that of main actors that foster judicial cooperation in criminal matters. The cooperative JIJs seminars with CEPOL, and in

collaboration with the JIJs Network, enable judicial and law enforcement officials to improve cross-border cooperation in complex investigations. In addition, EJTN and the European Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (The Genocide Network) implemented together a successful training programme on core international crimes and its impact in the EU.

Procedural Safeguards in Criminal Proceedings in the EU seminars (a new set of seminars to be implemented in 2016) are aimed at offering a better understanding and providing an overview of criminal defence rights under EU law through a set of Directives designed to strengthen procedural safeguards (interpretation and translation, information and access to a lawyer).

In 2015, more than 400 participants took part to Criminal justice seminars.

Linguistics Project

EJTN is focusing special attention to designing linguistic projects for the training of the EU judiciary in legal English and legal French. Each year since 2011, several legal language seminars on judicial cooperation in criminal/civil matters have been organised in various EU Member States. The courses aim at developing both the legal and linguistics skills of the participants by combining legal information and language exercises in a practical and dynamic way.

They aim also at creating the conditions for establishing direct contacts between legal practitioners of the different EU Member States in order to promote a common European legal culture.

EJTN's 2015 Linguistics Programme offered a rich array of training opportunities for Europe's judiciary: besides the linguistic training on judicial cooperation in criminal/civil matters, it included linguistics training in human rights and eLearning training modules.

In addition to the seminars, the Linguistics Programme delivered an updated Handbook addressing both the English and French vocabulary associated with criminal law.

The Linguistic handbook is available in electronic format [here](#).

The milestone of 1000 judges and prosecutors trained in linguistics activities since the implementation of the first linguistic seminar (that took place in February 2011) was reached in 2015, a year which saw the participation of more than 300 European legal practitioners from over 20 EU Member States to the EJTN's Linguistics Programme within the civil, criminal and human rights fields.

Administrative Law Project

The Administrative Law Sub-Working Group is the expression of EJTN's commitment to addressing the training needs of all judicial practitioners across Europe, offering a set of trainings in fields as diverse as EU public procurement, asylum law, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), human rights and access to justice, tax law, and much more. At these trainings, participants learn more about their counterparts across Europe while discussing key legal issues with leading experts in the corresponding fields. In addition, the European Court of Human Rights offers participants the opportunity to attend a Grand Chamber hearing and discuss the outcome of different proceedings with current and former court officials. In 2015, the Administrative Law SWG joined forces with partners – from the Association of Judges for Mediation (GEMME), the Association of European Administrative Judges (AEAJ) and the International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ) co-organizing high-quality trainings in human rights, ADR, and asylum law. The project also received the support of current and former European Commission, ECHR and CJEU officials, as well as the Council of Europe's HELP Programme, to deliver trainings based on peer-exchanges and practical exercises. With a view to increasing the outreach of its activities, the Administrative Law SWG remains committed to annually podcasting at least two of its trainings. 2015 brought with it both a podcast on public procurement and EU asylum law training.

In 2015, over 200 judges, prosecutors and judicial trainers attended the Administrative Law SWG training actions.

Civil Justice Project

The CiLaw project aims to improve judicial cooperation in civil law matters and focuses on the development of the participating countries' legal systems and judicial culture as well as the main aspects of EU law. The key topics of the civil law seminars are family law, company law, European procedural law and commercial law.

The Civil Law project offers two-day long training activities aimed at judges and prosecutors across the 27 EU member States.

Within the scope of the Civil Law seminars, future actions will involve pursuing a broader spectrum of fields, so as to give a more complete offering for the training needs of EU justice professionals. The EJTN Civil Law SWG implements further pod-castbased seminars in 2016 as well, granting all interested EU professionals free access to the training programmes. Under the framework of cooperation with EJTN project partners and always seeking new training challenges, Civil Law SWG plans to cooperate with the European Association of Judges for Mediation (GEMME) in implementing the successfully-repeated training event on European Civil Procedure in Family Law matters.

During 2015 239 EU magistrates took part to Civil law seminars.

Judicial Training Methods

The Judicial Training Methods (JTM) actions were officially inaugurated in 2015 and the opportunities leading to the creation its Working Group replied to the following needs:

Sharing good judicial training practices among EU justice professionals, while setting up new approaches towards knowledge and training delivery, The need to combine judicial training with the quality of justice.

The JTM can be seen as a *fil rouge* with all the other implemented EJTN actions since its aim consists of proposing the most efficient and concrete training methodologies as well as strengthening the dissemination of best practices, which are essential requirements for any judicial training action.

In 2015, the works of the WG JTM were arranged according to three topical themes and three main fields of action: Evaluation/assessment, Craftsmanship and Leadership.

With clear focus on the tools, it has updated the [EJTN Handbook on Judicial Training Methodology in Europe](#) (formerly known as the Training the Trainers Handbook – published in 2013), to be more easily shared and accessible. Moreover, evaluation questionnaires and a manual on training assessment have been drafted to favor the exchange of best practices among national training institutions.

In its first year of action there have been 131 participants to JTM actions.

Themis Competition for the European judiciary

The EJTN THEMIS Competition is open to judicial trainees from across Europe and aims to foster an exchange of views and develop new approaches on topics related to international civil and criminal cooperation, human rights and judicial deontology. The main objective of the THEMIS Competition is to bring together future magistrates from different European countries in order to enable them to share common values, exchange new experiences and discuss new perspectives in areas of common interest.

This competition is organised by EJTN every year and it is open to judicial trainees from all training institutions that are Members or Observers of EJTN.

Teams of three judicial trainees, accompanied by one teacher/tutor, may enrol in the Competition which consists of four semi-final rounds and a grand final.

The winner and runner up of each semi-final will enter the grand final. The prize for the winning team is a one-week study visit, organised and financed by EJTN, in any European judicial institution. The topics of the semi-finals and the grand final are different; in 2015, they concerned International Cooperation in Criminal Matters, International Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters (European Family law), International Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters (European Civil procedure), Judicial Ethics and Professional Conduct, Right to a Fair Trial (Art 47 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and Art 6 ECHR).

In 2015, 44 teams entered the THEMIS competition for the overall number of 164 participants.

Catalogue

The EJTN General Catalogue has existed since 2003. It is a catalogue of training activities organised and selected by EJTN's Members and offered to the entire judiciary of the EU Member States. In 2015, 16 judicial institutions offered 216 seminars for the General Catalogue of the EJTN. The main topics covered by the General Catalogue included professional practices, societal issues, linguistics, judicial skills, human rights, forensics, European international law, criminal law, civil law and administrative law. The total number of foreign participants in the 2015 General Catalogue programme was 1407.

Catalogue+ of training activities in all Member States

The purpose of this project is to give European magistrates the opportunity to attend a training course organised by the judicial training institutions that are Members of EJTN. In 2015, 17 judicial institutions participated in the project, each of them organising a seminar on a topic of law. In total, 280 places were offered to foreign participants. As a measure of success of the programme, there was a 72% rate of uptake of the total number of training places being offered, reaching 206 foreign participants. Additionally, 1251 national participants took part in the Catalogue+ seminars offered by their respective national training institutions. For the year 2015, a total of 1457 magistrates received training.

Counter terrorism seminars

Launched in 2015, it's a comprehensive training programme on Countering Terrorism and Radicalisation to Violent Extremism.

EJTN has been expanding for over a decade to meet the challenges facing the European judiciary. The pressing need for joint and coordinated action and training programmes focused on the root causes of violent extremism and the prevention of radicalisation, as well as judicial and law enforcement cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the exchange of best practices on the investigation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorist offenders, have been repeatedly stressed by a number of recent high-level statements, and, unfortunately, highlighted by recent events across Europe. It was in this context that the European Commission entrusted the EJTN, together with its Members and partners, with the development of a comprehensive training programme on Countering Terrorism and Radicalisation to Violent Extremism, to be implemented between September 2015 and May 2016 and tailored to the needs of the relevant stakeholders and practitioners across the EU. This project provides judges, prosecutors and other justice sector professionals with a unique forum to exchange experiences and best practices with their counterparts across Europe, to discuss the most recent legal developments and challenges in the prosecution and adjudication of cases involving foreign terrorist fighters and other violent extremist offenders, and to address issues of radicalisation and the mechanisms for its prevention and detection.

In its first year of action, more than hundred EU magistrates attended Counter-terrorism seminars.

E-Tools

EJTN invests in developing various eTools in order to broaden the reach of judicial training opportunities as well as to provide necessary resources to those who manage judicial training programmes and content.

There is an ever-present need to disseminate judicial training and knowledge

across a wider reach. There is also a need to improve the administrative efficiency of managing judicial programmes and their participants. Equally important, those parties

planning or producing judicial training opportunities need access to information and contacts in order to work effectively. E-Tools cater to all of these needs.

EJTN has made available many types of eTools. These include various online platforms, an online programme application system, eLearning and blended learning courses, podcasts and webinars and a collection of virtual resources. Examples:

A Networking platform, which forms an essential virtual collaboration space for those working on EJTN's projects. It also houses several essential tools such as the expertise database and the Exchange of information on EC calls platform

EJTN maintains 4 eLearning courses, which are freely open to all

Podcast and webinars.

EJTN Partners:

European Commission

Court of Justice of the European Union

European Court of Human Rights

Council of Europe

Cepol

European Asylum Support Office

Eurojust

Genocide Network – European Network for Investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes

Joint Investigation teams

Network of the Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the European Union (ACA- Europe)

European Judicial Network (EJN)

International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ)

Association of European Competition Law Judges (AECJL)

European Association of Judges for Mediation (GEMME)
European Association of Labour Court Judges (EALCJ)
European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment (EUFJE)
European network of Prosecutors for the Environment (ENPE)
Network of Public Prosecutors or equivalent institutions at the Supreme Judicial Courts of the Member States of the European Union (NADAL)
Association of European Administrative Judges (AEAJ)
International Association for European Cooperation on Justice and Home Affairs (EUCOJUST)
Max Plank Institute

Past milestones

Founded in 2000, the EJTN is a non-profit international organisation.

1999: Informal meetings held between some of the heads of judicial training institutions in the EU.

2000: Creation of the European Judicial Training Network (Charter of Bordeaux).

2003: Becomes a Belgian non-profit making international organisation and acquires legal status.

2004: Undertakes organisational reform to ensure proper financial capacity and welcomes judicial training institutions from new EU Member States.

2005: Establishes a permanent Secretariat in Brussels.

2006: Awarded authority from the European Commission for the implementation of the first annual Exchange Programmes of the Judiciary.

2008: Celebrates key milestones in number of completed judicial exchanges and available training Catalogue offerings.

2009: Recognised as key stakeholder in furthering EU e-Justice strategy.

2010: Launch of EJTN's first own training programmes

2012: Representing continued robust growth, the mark of 2400 participants was surpassed on EJTN's various training activities (excluding those of the EJTN Catalogue).

2013: European Commission lauds EJTN's achievements by confirming its paramount role in judicial training, i.e. Regulation (EU) 1382/2013 granting EJTN an operating grant for the period 2014/2020 under the new EU Justice Programme

2014: EJTN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 12 European networks and associations for future cooperation in the area of judicial training

EJTN's fundamental importance within the sphere of European judicial training is recognized by the Council of the European Union.

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Related link

[Website of EJTN](#)

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