



## From eJustice to European eJustice (Dijon, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008)

### Summary of discussions

Over 130 participants, judges and law officers, notaries, lawyers and computer experts from all over Europe came together on 2<sup>nd</sup> October at the *Ecole Nationale des Greffes* (French National School for Registrars) in Dijon for the conference entitled “**From eJustice to European eJustice**” organised by the French Ministry of Justice as part of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. During this one-day meeting, the participants worked around a dozen speeches on the technological and language obstacles to be tackled if we are to use information and communication technologies to support the European judicial area.

This conference was an opportunity to highlight the importance, for citizens and companies, of resolving problems at European level as regards incompatibility in technical standards and language-related misunderstandings accentuated by the specific nature of the judicial field. The aim was to identify the best method for developing cross-border electronic exchanges in judicial matters with a view to ultimately opening a European portal in January 2010. It should provide information on each Member State’s legal systems and useful contacts. Completing formalities on-line and, for professionals, consulting registers managed by Ministries of Justice should also be made possible.

Satisfied with the progress made in the discussions, Mr Francisco FONSECA MORILLO, head of the civil justice, fundamental rights and citizenship directorate of the European Commission made the following declaration at the end of the day: “This seminar was a successful overall review of the issue...” The adoption of a multi-year action plan should allow for completing truly European projects involving the Member States, Council, European Commission and European Parliament in the light of the discussions launched on the structure to set up.

Mr Joao Tiago SILVEIRA, Portuguese Minister of State in charge of Justice, presented the Internet tools set up in his country including “a Website aimed at judges to enable them to sign judgements directly and access electronic files or case law in real time” and “a Website aimed at lawyers to allow proceedings to be totally paperless”. According to Mr SILVEIRA, these examples have proved very useful and could quite easily be applied at European level.

Mr Tomas BOCEK, Czech Vice-Minister of Justice, announced that the Czech Presidency, following on from the French Presidency, “will continue this policy during this six-month period, with a focus on video conferences”.

At the end of the discussions, Mr Philippe ROUX-COMOLI, Chief of staff to the General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, pointed out that setting up such a portal was a real challenge which could be overcome thanks to the “driving force” of the European Commission, namely its “financial and human resources”. Mr ROUX-COMOLI also expressed his confidence in the “European eJustice” project, “as we all have the same objective: developing electronic projects likely to be shared by all European countries, to provide services to citizens, and to support European integration and accordingly the instruments involved in European judicial cooperation”.