



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR JUSTICE AND CONSUMERS

Directorate A: Civil and commercial justice  
Unit A.2: Civil justice

## **MINUTES**

### **SIXTH JOINT MEETING OF THE TAKING OF EVIDENCE STEERING COMMITTEE AND THE SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS STEERING COMMITTEE**

**9 December 2025**

#### **I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

The Commission welcomed everyone and introduced the Commission members joining this meeting. The Commission presented the agenda, and the Committee adopted the agenda.

#### **II. MEMBER STATES' DEPLOYMENT AND GO-LIVE STATUS UPDATE**

Each Member State provided an update on their deployment and go-live status, sharing the potential issues that they are facing.

Currently, 20 Member States are in production:

- 13 Member States have all authorities live
- 7 Member States have some authorities live
- 7 Member States don't have any authorities live

Each of the present Member States provided an overview of their deployment status and shared information on any issues. In addition, the representatives of the Member States were requested to provide statistics on the total number of users in the SoD&ToE production environments and the number of requests dealt with since the Member State went live, including Service of Documents and Taking of Evidence requests sent and received. The Commission seeks to understand the traffic volume in each Member State. A Committee member raised a concern regarding the continued submission of cases outside the decentralized IT system. In response, the Commission emphasized that Member States' authorities are obligated to utilize the decentralised IT system, with the

exception of extraordinary circumstances where alternative means of submission may be employed. The Member State representatives were kindly requested to take proactive measures to raise awareness among their respective authorities regarding this obligation.

Furthermore, it was clarified that if a Member State has authorities listed in the Court Database (CDB) with the requisite instrument and competence, it indicates that they are receptive to receiving specific case types. For instance, if an authority possesses the instrument SD (Service of Documents) and competence AAS (Assisting Authority) in the CDB, it signifies that this authority is eligible to receive SODB cases and this should also be in line with the relevant notification under Article 7(1) of the Service of Documents Regulation. If needed, the Member States should consult the general data mapping between the CDB and Reference Implementation (RI).

One Committee member revisited a previously reported issue concerning the downloading of files with titles containing diacritical characters, which remains unresolved. The technical team is continuing to work on finding a solution to this problem.

A question was raised regarding the calculation of the 7-day deadline, prompting a clarification from the Commission. The Commission explained that there is a fundamental distinction between the two Regulations (2020/1783 and 2020/1784). Specifically, for Service of Documents, as required by Article 10(1) and Recital 18 of the Regulation, an immediate automatic acknowledgement of receipt is required, which has been implemented in the RI. The deadline calculation commences when this automatic acknowledgement is sent. In contrast, for Taking of Evidence, no automatic acknowledgement of receipt is necessary according to Article 9 of the Regulation, but the 7-day deadline begins when the case is received by the requested authority.

The Commission further emphasized that the time limits are calculated based on the Regulations, which utilize calendar days, rather than working days, as the basis for calculation. This ensures consistency and clarity in the application of the deadlines. In addition, in calculating the periods and time limits provided for in the Regulations, Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 1182/71 [\(9\)](#) should apply, not the national rules.

Additionally, one Committee member reported an issue with a Request for direct taking of evidence (TOEL) due to the unavailability of the receiving authority. This matter highlights the importance of all Member States ensuring that authorities are properly designated for all areas in their territory and available to receive requests in a timely manner.

### **III. PRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND USE OF THE REFERENCE IMPLEMENTATION**

A representative from Portugal delivered a comprehensive presentation on the national implementation of the Reference Implementation (RI), sharing valuable insights into the lessons learned and future expectations.

The presentation highlighted that, as of 2024, several key infrastructure components were partially implemented, laying the groundwork for further development and integration.

- Servers
- Databases
- Endpoints
- Certificates
- CDB (ongoing)
- Connectivity (ongoing)

The Portuguese representative provided a detailed timeline of the national implementation of the Reference Implementation (RI). Key milestones included:

- January 2025: The Domibus Connector and Domibus Gateway were successfully prepared, marking an important step in the implementation process. Previous support with setting up [iSupport](#) was considered very helpful.
- February 2025: The RI backend, RI frontend, and Keycloak were initialized for installation. The User Manual, in conjunction with the Installation Guide, played a crucial role in facilitating a thorough understanding of the deployment process and ensuring its proper execution.
- March 2025: The team focused on networking, mutual Transport Layer Security (mTLS), full-stack testing, and accessing the external endpoint. However, connecting to the Central Database (CDB) posed significant challenges.
- April 2025: The team made significant progress, creating users and user groups, preparing the production environment, and conducting extensive testing. Ultimately, a successful go-live was achieved in time for 1 May 2025, and the system effectively exchanged several messages, marking a major milestone in the implementation process.

The team met the following challenges:

- Multiple technologies
- Different teams
- Compliance with the Ministry's guidelines/infrastructure
- Tight deadlines
- Authentication/authorization
- Security issues
- Internal/external environments
- mTLS

For the installation / deployment Portugal struggled most with the mTLS, at the same time for the e-CODEX setup the prior knowledge from iSupport was helpful. They emphasised that during the process they also familiarised themselves on the technical side with the RI's user manual to better understand needs of the national setup.

Lessons learnt:

- technical configuration deep dive necessary
- important to start testing early, especially for endpoints
- important to reach out to COM / Support team and other Member States

It was mentioned that the Support Team was helpful and collaborative. The team also obtained help from eu-LISA.

Expectations for the future are related to:

- file sizes
- certificates
- other instruments

The Commission expressed its appreciation for the presentation and inquired about the version of the RI used by Portugal, specifically whether an intermediate version or only the production version was utilized. The Portuguese representative confirmed that one of the previous versions of the RI was used prior to going live.

The second part of the presentation was focused on the business background and context of Portugal's implementation. Initially, Portugal had considered developing its own national implementation, with the intention of creating a solution for the courts. However, in November 2024, it was decided that building and using a national implementation was not feasible, and instead, Portugal would need to adapt to the RI.

The presentation highlighted that, in Portugal, a range of entities act as Transmitting Agencies, including not only courts but also bailiffs, notaries, and registrars. The courts successfully went live in May 2025, while bailiffs are currently part of the JODES project. Notaries and registrars are still pending implementation. It is worth noting that courts and bailiffs also serve as Receiving Agencies.

To ensure a smooth rollout, Portugal conducted a series of training sessions. In January 2025, five Commission organised "train the trainer" sessions were participated by three experts who shared their knowledge with other users at the later stage. In April 2025, these experts developed training materials for court staff, including a manual that outlined the basic features of the RI. This manual was designed to facilitate training and ease the use of the RI. Two weeks before going live, five training sessions were conducted for 88 users, using a 3-hour session format. Following the initial training, the same model was extended, and at the time of the presentation, 653 users had access to the RI. They have identified over 7000 potential users of JUDEX (some of them dealing with criminal matters only).

Cases in total:

- Outgoing cases: 77
- Incoming cases: 96

The Commission highlighted that training sessions are not only a technical challenge, but also a business one and requested for sharing the presentation.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION PAPER: MESSAGE SIZE – FILE FORMATS**

The Commission mentioned background of topic regarding max file size and file formats which have been discussed on the recent two Steering Committee meetings.

##### **1. Max message (file) size**

As a follow-up to the discussions held in the last Steering Committee, the topic was discussed with the Technical Sub-committee and the outcomes of those discussions are the following recommendations:

- The agreed solution is to impose limit for all Member States;
- The preferred size is 100 MB, however, regarding feedback from eu-LISA, the proposal is to start with 25 MB limitation for the message size which is a baseline to start working on;
- Further discussion regarding the situation when message/file exceeds limit (to be addressed to the Technical Sub-committee).

One Committee member expressed concern that the current 25 MB limit for message size may be too low, given operational constraints and the risk of fragmenting messages or documents. They inquired about the timeline for implementing a higher limit. The Commission replied that there is currently no planned timeline for this implementation. Eu-LISA clarified that the current e-CODEX Connector is not capable of handling messages larger than 25 MB. However, when the Connector is updated, it is expected to be able to manage larger messages, with a target limit of 100 MB.

One Committee member asked how the limitation would be achieved, whether through reconfiguration for the RI / NI or Gateway configuration, and how the system would handle messages that exceed the limit. The Commission suggested that these technical details should be addressed by the Technical Sub-committee. They emphasized that any changes to the system should be implemented in a way that informs users in advance if a message size is about to be exceeded, allowing them to edit the message accordingly. Furthermore, any updates should be introduced without disrupting the day-to-day functioning of the system.

Several Committee members expressed support for increasing the limit to 100 MB, with one member suggesting that, although 100 MB is the preferred limit, the current 25 MB limit should be tested since it is already achievable for the Connector and some Member States.

One Committee member inquired whether any testing had been done with larger message sizes, and the Commission replied that no such testing had taken place. The member also questioned whether there is a real need for a 100 MB limit.

One Committee member asked about the procedure for handling messages that exceed the size limit, and the Commission suggested that this would be addressed by the Technical Sub-committee.

A discussion ensued about how to handle messages that exceed the size limit, with one member suggesting that a SODX/TOEX message could be sent. However, the Commission advised against

this approach, as it would create a new, separate case. Instead, they recommended using a free text message to send additional text or attachments when a message size exceeds the limit.

Finally, one Committee member expressed support for increasing the limit to 100 MB and suggested allowing audio and video formats to be sent through the system.

One Committee member mentioned that the receiver of a case should be aware of the necessity of compiling the files received at different moments in time (some files can come with the main form, while others can be sent afterwards via a service message). A convention for such a procedure should be defined. The Commission replied that this approach should be discussed with the Technical Sub-committee.

One Committee member noted that there may be national restrictions on file sizes, either in terms of message size or file type. It is possible that messages will be exchanged with metadata that links to the actual files. A question was raised as to whether there could be a message exchange where only the metadata of the actual files would be transferred from outside of e-CODEX. The Commission replied that further discussion regarding messages that exceed the limit will be conducted with the Technical Sub-Committee. There needs to be an agreement on how the files that exceed the limit should be sent (inside or outside the system, etc.). Additionally, there are RI instances with lower limits. Currently, five RI instances have a maximum capacity of less than 25 MB. The question to the Member States was whether they would be able to manage with an increase in their limit to 25 MB.

One Committee member replied that their current national limitation is 20 MB, but they will be willing to extend the limitation up to 100 MB if it is required.

One Committee member replied that there are some national restrictions on message size and file types, as defined by legal regulations.

It was concluded to have a general limit for file / message size. The Committee would prefer 100 MB, but it was decided that for the time being the limit would be 25 MB as eu-LISA advised against larger limit due to the limitations of the e-CODEX Connector. Once the Connector has been updated, the Committee would come back to the question of raising the limit. The Technical Sub-committee would continue discussions on how exactly to put the limitation in place (some Committee members pointed out that it should be done in a user-friendly way on the side of the sender) and how to deal with situations where the limit needs to be exceeded. The outcome of the discussions in the Technical Sub-committee would be reported back at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

## **2. File type**

As a follow-up to the discussions held in the last Steering Committee, the topic was discussed with the Technical Sub-committee and the outcomes of those discussions are the following recommendations:

- Whitelist strategy (meaning a list of allowed file types);

- The Technical Sub-committee would continue working on the list of file types.

The Commission proposed a list of file types to be allowed. The list was based on the discussions in the Technical Sub-committee. Three Committee members proposed additions to the list and one Committee member emphasised that the list should be more restrictive.

One Committee member commented that a file type for compressed archives would be necessary.

Another Committee member said that their files and systems have been switched to open source recently, so the Technical Sub-committee should be consulted whether open source formats should be included as well or should those files be transferred to other formats (if possible).

A Committee member replied that there are some national restrictions on message size and file types, as defined by legal regulations.

It was concluded to have a whitelist of allowed file types. The Technical Sub-committee would continue discussions on the specific list, but the preliminary list could be: PDF/A, TXT, RTF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, PNG, GIF, BMP, TIFF, WEBP, MP3, MP4, WAV, MOV, MKV, MPEG, PPT, PPTX, ZIP, 7Z, TAR, RAR. The outcome of the discussions in the Technical Sub-committee would be reported back at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

## **V. UPDATE OF PLANNED CHANGE REQUEST / IMPROVEMENTS (EFFORTS, PLANNING, RELEASE DATES)**

The Commission provided a summary of the updated ranked improvements. Several remarks on the calculations were shared during the last Steering Committee meeting. The ranking table now includes an additional column, 'average', which makes the results slightly different from the aggregated results.

The Commission is still reviewing the requirements and possible solutions for some of the improvements. Additionally, some of the improvements are horizontal (not specific to SoD and ToE) and need to be discussed with a broader audience. Further investigation and coordination are required. The 4Corner architecture and several other improvements will be included in Release 4.0.

The Commission explained that a joint effort with MS in Technical Sub-committee to present the next items in the next Steering Committee:

- Tentative proposal on when maximum file size implementation could be started.
- List file types that RI will allow. If possible, also an estimate when implementation could be started.
- Planning for Release 4.0 activation.

The Commission has also presented a plan for the next releases, including timelines.

Regarding the FinalRecipient, one Member State suggested that a big bang approach for Release 4.0 may not be necessary. There was a multilateral meeting between some Member States to

discuss this topic, during which it was raised that the implementation proposed for the next release is not aligned with e-CODEX. eu-LISA has confirmed that the flexibility of e-CODEX aligns well with the design and development approach in the RI.

The Commission presented a list of change requests submitted since the last Steering Committee meeting:

### **1. Displaying text labels from eJustice Portal in the RI.**

The idea is to show extra information from the CDB in the RI that explains, for instance, that a particular type of case should be sent to a specific authority as it works now on e-Justice Portal.

A Committee member from the Member State that raised this topic provided further explanations for why it was specifically relevant to their Central Body. The Member State reported that a significant number of requests are inappropriately addressed to Central Bodies, when this should be only done in exceptional cases. This issue has been confirmed during the meeting by other Member States.

The Commission explained that the issue with implementing these notifications is that they are not stored in the CDB, but in the e-Justice Portal, which does not have any connection with the RI. CDB stores only codes of error messages that are being sent to the e-Justice Portal and translated to text rules displayed on the user interface to the e-Justice Portal's user once a particular set of parameters is selected (Member State, instrument, competence, postal code etc.). In order to implement the text rules in the RI to work similarly to the e-Justice Portal, changes in CDB (and potentially in the e-Justice Portal) would be required. Although the topic requires an in-depth business and technical analysis, currently it is known that there are constraints e.g. the CDB does not support translations (which are supported by the e-Justice Portal), and this improvement would only make sense if a user could see the notification in a language they understand (similar to the e-Justice Portal, where notifications are displayed in the language of the user's application session).

The Commission opened the floor to Committee members to share their views on the importance of this feature and asked whether a notification in English would be sufficient. One Committee member said that messages in English might be not convenient for the practitioners because they are not obliged to speak English.

The Commission shared the view that in the current RI implementation, Central Bodies are listed at the end of the list of authorities to encourage users to select a Receiving Agency / Requested court as their first choice. A request can be addressed to a Central Body only in exceptional cases. Inappropriate addressing is not an issue of only the decentralised IT system, as requests have often been wrongly addressed to Central Bodies even when forms were sent using the e-Justice Portal. A generic information message could be added to the RI search tool to inform users that a request can be addressed to a Central Body only in exceptional cases.

The Committee member from the Member State that raised the topic commented that this problem might be specific to their country due to its unique structure. They would appreciate it if the Commission could find a solution to display the notification in the RI. A potential solution will be further investigated.

Another Committee member supported the idea of providing generic information to users to check whether the receiving authority is correct and competent to accept the request, as their Central Body had received numerous misdirected requests.

The Commission will investigate potential ways to implement this improvement and include it in the next ranking. It is likely that providing information in a single language will be considered.

One Committee member stated that either of two solutions would be welcome and acceptable: a pop-up with a notice to the user or additional information in the search results.

## **2. Change contact support notification**

The change request was to elaborate on a 'Contact support' section with additional information in the RI. From the RI's perspective, this could be implemented. The idea would be to add extra information for some Member States, such as a dropdown list with multiple contact points for various geographical locations. This additional information would be useful for users who require assistance.

The Committee member from the Member State that raised this requirement explained the background and rationale behind this need. Furthermore, support contact details could also vary depending on the specific instrument.

## **3. Export of forms in Word format**

This requirement is driven by national specifics for the purpose of requesting translations. The Commission explained that this requirement was defined as horizontal for the purposes of the functionalities of the RI and so far it has not been considered a high priority "must-have" feature.

A Committee member from a Member State which requested the change provided explanation that judicial authorities use service providers and professional translators to produce translations of documents. The practitioners shared their feedback that it would be easier to provide translations when the relevant documents are in Word format.

The Commission proposed that users could externally convert PDFs into Word format and asked the Committee member whether they have considered it as an easy and fast solution. The Commission also opened floor for other Committee members to share their views whether an opportunity to download a file in a Word format would be expected also by them. The Committee member of the Member State which raised that topic replied that initial feedback from their working group of practitioners was that PDF format is not sufficient for those activities, but they can check what are the possibilities of file conversion at their side.

A Committee member supported the request as it simplifies collaboration with external translators and not all authorities will be able to transfer PDF file to Word format internally.

Another Committee member also expressed their support for the proposed improvement as well as the forms on e-Justice Portal could also be available in Word format.

#### **4. Extend character limit in section 5.2. SoD Form A**

The reason for extending the character limit of this field from 1000 to 5000 characters is that describing the method of service often requires more space, and accuracy is crucial for successful delivery. However, a potential issue with implementing this change is that it would require simultaneous updates to all RI instances. The limits are not imposed in XSDs, therefore potential change would be applied only in the RI. Moreover, the Commission pointed out that character limitation in the RI is more extensive than on the e-Justice Portal (256 characters), prompting the Commission to request clarification and ask whether any other Member State had encountered a similar problem.

The Committee member that raised the ticket explained that exceeding the current limit would be beneficial for using eTranslation to assist in the translation of the national provisions. The Commission responded that machine translation does not replace the necessity to provide translations under the Regulation. Two Committee members supported the proposal. One Committee member supported the Commission on this, but at the same time emphasised that raising the limits may be helpful to be able to include relevant provisions in the field instead of as an Annex.

#### **5. Reference number – PDF editable (SoD Form L)**

The SoD Form L is a form that must be generated by the Receiving Agency and attached to the documents to be served on the Addressee. Currently, Section II of the form is prefilled by the RI, but the 'Reference number' field remains empty, as it cannot be prefilled based on information from other forms. For traditional service methods, such as postal delivery, the Reference number can be filled in manually after the file is generated and printed. However, for electronic service, there is no way to fill in this field within the RI, forcing users to employ a workaround: generating the file, printing it, manually filling in the Reference number on the paper copy, and then uploading a scanned version. This process is inconvenient and cumbersome. The current limitation is that the RI does not support editable PDFs, making it impossible to fill in the Reference number field electronically. The Commission emphasized that with the implementation of other civil instruments to the RI and the EEAP, the editability of SoD Form L becomes more and more important. The topic needs to be investigated from the technical point of view.

## **6. Marking a request which has no users assigned and Differentiation of cases: visible by default or by assignment**

By default, a user with a Supervisor role can view all cases within their authority. Additionally, a Supervisor can be assigned to specific cases, which is necessary for performing internal workflows related to subforms. However, the RI can only determine whether a case has been assigned to anyone or not; it does not recognize the specific roles that a user has been assigned to a case.

One possible immediate solution is to introduce an additional marker for cases that are not assigned to any user, similar to the existing notifications with the same scheduler, if feasible. Another option is to add a filter (assigned/unassigned), as initially suggested. Otherwise, the entire RI would require a significant overhaul.

The Commission noted that implementing such an improvement would necessitate massive and time-consuming structural changes. This topic will be kept in a backlog but would not be included in the upcoming ranking.

## **7. Adding a case link to the e-mail notification**

A request was made to add a direct link to the relevant case in the e-mail notifications sent from the RI, such as new case notifications or deadline notifications. Currently, after receiving a notification, a user must log in and manually search for the case. Adding a link to the notification is technically feasible, but it would require changes to the logic on both the backend and frontend of the RI. From a technical standpoint, this improvement can be implemented and will be included in the ranking for future developments.

## **8. SoD Form K point 1.3 should be optional**

The modification has already been implemented and released.

## **9. Improving filtering by date & time**

Currently, the ordering of cases in the RI is based solely on the date, without considering the specific time of receipt / creation. The proposed idea is to also take into account the time and apply ordering by time. This improvement will be included in the ranking for future development.

## **10. Banner informing that CDB is unavailable**

When there is no connection between the RI and CDB, due to CDB unavailability or communication issues, users are unable to log in to the RI. Displaying a banner on the login page is not a viable option, as it could potentially introduce a vulnerability.

There is another scenario where a user is already logged in to the RI, but the communication with CDB is disrupted. In this case, the RI backend sends an exception to the RI frontend, and a generic

error message "Something is wrong" is briefly displayed on the GUI (for a few seconds). It is possible to implement a banner or, more suitably, a pop-up with a generic text, such as "Connection with CDB is currently unavailable. Please try again in a few minutes". A pop-up might be a more appropriate solution than a banner because issue with a banner is that it would require user action to hide it once the connection is re-established (and since there is no action from a user, the banner would be visible all the time, even when connection between RI and CDB is restored).

One Committee member commented that information might be displayed not only when connection with CDB is down but also when an RI instance of a certain Member State does not work properly (e.g. scheduled maintenance activities). The Commission replied that this can be registered as a new request.

## **11. Statistics to be displayed by authorities**

Currently, the RI has a feature that allows a user with the 'Statistics Handler' role to generate statistics for the RI implementation (all authorities that use the same instance of the RI). The RI gathers information about the data authorities send and receive. To enable a user to generate a report per authority, additional implementation would be required (creating or adjusting reports to meet new requirements). An in-depth backend analysis will be necessary. Moreover, reconsidering the Statistics Handler role is inevitable.

A Committee member from the Member State that requested this change explained that they would appreciate it if every competent authority and the Central Body could generate its own statistics regarding the number of incoming and outgoing cases, which is not necessarily related to any specific role. More granular statistics are needed than those that exist currently (statistics for the RI instance). The Commission asked whether other Member States would also require statistics by authority, which can currently be generated by the RI instance. The Commission suggested that an improvement could be made to allow users to select whether statistics should be generated for the RI instance or for a specific authority (or for a set of authorities). The topic needs to be investigated to define what solutions would be needed and what is technically feasible.

One Committee member inquired about the signature module. The Commission replied that this topic is being investigated, but so far, no solution that meets all requirements has been found. This topic will be referred to the Technical Sub-committee.

The Commission proposed preparing an EUSurvey and distributing it to Steering Committee members in December. The results of the new ranking will be shared at the next Steering Committee meeting (29 January 2026). The Commission would like to establish a sufficient timeframe for Member States to discuss and collaborate on the ranking internally. Some Committee members suggested that a period of three weeks should be sufficient.

## **VI. PLANNING OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meetings are planned online for 29 January 2026 and 11 March 2026.

The Commission highlighted that there are also weekly meetings of the Technical Sub-committee (on Wednesdays).

## **VII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

One Committee member mentioned that if there are extra topics to be discussed on the Technical Sub-committee (like FinalRecipient) it should be highlighted in the agenda. The Commission agreed that the agenda would be updated regularly before the meeting of the Sub-committee.

One Committee member requested whether there might be more details provided in an EUSurvey to clarify the background for the Member States. The Commission will check the possibilities.

## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Commission

Austria

Bulgaria

Croatia

Cyprus

Czechia

Denmark

Finland

France

Germany

Greece

Hungary

Ireland

Latvia

Lithuania

Luxemburg

Malta

Netherlands

Poland

Portugal

Romania

Slovakia

Spain

Sweden

EUBF

UEHJ

eu-LISA