



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR JUSTICE AND CONSUMERS
Directorate A: Civil and commercial justice
Unit A.2: Civil justice

MINUTES

NINTH JOINT MEETING OF THE TAKING OF EVIDENCE STEERING COMMITTEE AND THE SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS STEERING COMMITTEE

16 April 2026

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

Currently, 23 Member States are in production:

- 18 Member States have all authorities live
- 5 Member States have some authorities live
- 4 Member States don't have any authorities live

Only the Member States that are not live yet and those that went live recently gave a status update. Since the previous Steering Committee meeting 2 new Member States went live. The Member States which are not live yet reported on their expected date to go in production. Only one Member anticipated the delay in the planned schedule. 2 Member States and 4 specific authorities should be in production during April. 2 Member States are planning to go-live in June. Some issues were encountered but solutions should be found soon.

Several Committee Members reported that the tests are being executed. Some Members reported different issues encountered during the installation. Concretely, one Committee Member reported issues with connectivity testing which might delay in their go-live date. The Commission reminded that the version 4.1.0 will be in production for all Member States probably in June and proposed bilateral meetings to Members which need support from the Commission. One Committee Member

asked if the above-mentioned version is relevant also for Members going live in the following month (meaning April-May) and the Commission clarified that version 4.1 is relevant for all Member States, but it is not mandatory for the protocol switch. Member States could make the protocol switch also with version 4.0.2.

One Committee Member asked if some Member States are facing issues with the lack of replies or delayed replies on the side of other Member States. The lack of central coordination or monitoring of the process, which is needed for the whole system, was also raised in relation to the protocol switch. The same issue was recognised by another Member which voted for some supervision. The Commission asked the Member States to inform them in case there are systemic problems with some specific Member States or authorities. The simplest solution should be to contact directly the specific Member State. The Commission also informed that substantive issues were solved with help of EJM Contact Points before the digitalisation. This should remain an additional possibility for solution also after digitalisation. At the same time, technical issues might be a different dimension of the problem. One Committee Member supported the Commission's suggestion that the solution already exists within the EJM and no new solution should be created. The Commission proposed to solve the issues of coordination within the Steering Committee. Another Committee Member pointed out that such discussion should be horizontal and some specific platform should be created in this regard. The Commission is open to investigate if there is any mechanism that could be put in place to help with similar issues.

III. PRESENTATION OF HUNGARY REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND USE OF THE REFERENCE IMPLEMENTATION

A representative of Hungary presented the practical and organisational aspects of implementation and deployment. The Ministry of Justice played significant role in the implementation as they ensured the coordination among the actors, helped with testing, managed the CBD and cooperated with the Commission. Hungarian Ministry of Justice went live on 30 April 2025, and other authorities went live with minor delay. The Guardianship authorities should hopefully go live in May 2026. All affected authorities had to install their own RI.

Authorities applying the Regulations in Hungary:

- Ministry of Justice
- Courts (administered by the National Office for the Judiciary)
- Notaries (autonomous organization, Chamber of Civil Law Notaries)
- Bailiffs (independent Hungarian Association of Judicial Officers)
- Guardianship authorities (within the government (Ministry of Interior)) – they only have limited number of requests as other requests that the guardianship authorities deal with were governed by other instruments (such as Brussels IIb)

Authorities made use of the Train-the-trainers (TTT) sessions organised by the Commission. Ministry of Justice organised internal training for colleagues and prepared online guide on SoD

which was amended with novelties regarding digitalisation. All judicial assistance related to written inquiries are answered with additional reference to digitalisation on SoD and ToE. In addition, courts provided their own training through the National office for judiciary. They informed courts through letters, created helpdesk and published information on their internal website. Notaries provided well organised trainings.

Hungary is still in the learning phase, however, the feedback received is rather positive. They still receive lots of requests on paper and reply to such requests through SODX. Ministry of Justice received numerous Forms A under both Regulations and was obliged to forward it to the competent court. There are also difficulties caused by the User manual being available only in English.

SODA are sent only by courts and notaries and are received only by the courts. The courts sent 172 SODA and SODB and received 486 SODA. The notaries sent 330 SODA and SODB. The Ministry of Justice received 13 SODA and 16 SODB. Under the TOE, the notaries sent 194 TOEA and TOEL. The courts sent 20 TOEA and TOEL and received 75 TOEA. The Ministry of Justice received 12 TOEA and 9 TOEL.

There are 7 authorised e-CODEX access points which are operated by the Ministry of Justice. The instances of the reference implementation are operated with different organisations and are directly connected to access points. The modalities of the cooperation are laid down in the memorandum of understanding. The reason is to ensure high availability, efficient load-balancing and robustness. Another reason was to meet the legal deadline. Another problem was the multitendency for which they created a specific project. The challenges related to multitendency have been bridged by the One AP – One RI approach. Multitendency was a challenge in the past which is now solved and sustainable. This year and next year major consolidation of e-CODEX landscape is planned within Hungary. There should be one access point for civil and one access point for criminal instruments. There will be a change of government in Hungary, which can influence the future approach.

One Committee Member asked about the coordination of numerous actors. Hungary answered that they do not have formalised platform for communication, and they are still looking for best ways to formalise it. They regularly hold round-tables.

IV. DECISION ON RELEASE 4.0

The Commission reminded the changes of RI allowing the installation of the EPOC instrument. The Commission released the new version of the protocol which requires “big bang action” as everyone has to go live with the new version at the same time. Old version and new version would not be able to communicate. The timeline was presented in the last Steering Committee. The rehearsal was held during the last weekend of March with the participation of 13 Member States coordinated by the Commission Support Team. Some Member States have not yet switched the protocol 3.0 in acceptance. Those Member States should do it in following days. The activation of the protocol in production is an important step. The protocol switch should be held on 6-8 June. 18 August the EPOC/EPOCPR will become applicable.

On Monday 8 June none of the implementations should be active for users. During the technical subcommittees lots of Member States expressed their preference for Monday instead of Sunday. The action required from technical teams is to deactivate the user interface at the end of Friday 5 June to prevent users to exercise actions on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. It is only the user interface preventing users to connect and execute operations, the system itself should run. Users must be notified at correct time. It might be too soon to do it now. The Commission will send the reminder on 1 and 4 June. Protocol switch will happen on Monday 8 June. By lunchtime the switch should be done for everyone, communicated and already tested. However, a margin of half day is left to react for unforeseen situations. Once the protocol switch is confirmed, the Commission will inform about the possibility of reactivation of the user interface. The Commission will provide detailed information.

The technical subcommittee will meet on 27 May 2026 and that meeting is the deadline for opposing the proposed dates of protocol switch as it has to be done at the same time. On 6-8 June 2026 the application will not be available due to the protocol switch and the practical users should be informed about it. The Steering Committee agrees to continue with the planned dates.

There was protocol switch exercise which was done in the acceptance interface. The Commission thanked Members for active participation. There was one Member State which made the protocol switch before the exercise in the acceptance interface. Another Member did not participate in the exercise as they implemented a solution which was compatible with both protocols at the same time. The rehearsal process and documentation on protocol switch were shared in December. Opportunities for feedback were provided during each Technical Subcommittee. There were some issues not related to the protocol switch. The Commission made some updates in documentation to include clear explanations of all retrieved fields.

In summary, the Steering Committee agreed on doing the activation of Protocol 3.0 on 8 June. The Members were asked to inform their practical users about unavailability of the system on 6-8 June as the system must be deactivated at the end of Friday (5 June). It was also agreed that the last moment to decide on a possible postponement is during the Technical Subcommittee meeting of 27 May.

V. PLANNING ON NEXT RELEASES

The Commission presented the incoming releases for 2026. First one will be the Release 4.1 which should be available on 21 May. It was repeated that there will be limited business upgrades (improvements) in subsequent releases due to the need to prioritise other essential updates, such as accessibility compliance, upgrade of UI framework and security enhancements. The Commission presented the list with change requests and their release dates.

One Committee Member raised the point sent to the Commission Support Team which advised the Member to raise it in the Steering Committee. It related to the issues with the SODA points 6.1 and 6.1.1. which was already mentioned in the past. The national courts suggested that SODA 6.1. (check box for service of judicial or extra-judicial documents) could be changed to allow the user to choose both options at the same time. This possibility is already allowed on the e-Justice portal. The necessity for this change was supported by another Member. The Commission replied that the request is not scheduled yet because the change requires a change of XSD and it can come only

with the protocol change. The workaround for users would be to use 6.1.4. The court could also mark the judicial document as the main document.

Another Committee Member raised a problem of lack of notifications which is urgent for users. The Commission will check with the security experts to see the impact.

VI. NOTIFICATIONS AND CASE CLOSURE

The Commission reminded the Members of the discussion paper for Steering Committee regarding this topic. The feedback from practitioners showed that the notifications for closed cases are still a pressing issue. The Commission looked into options and proposed a solution in the discussion paper. It was proposed that the deadline-related notifications would be still received for unanswered closed cases. The Commission discussed stopping all the notifications, but it seemed to cause more problems than the solution that is proposed by the Commission. Upon receiving or transmitting the following messages that conclude a workflow (SODA – Form F, Form K, SODB – Form C, TOEA – Form H, Form K, TOEL – Form M) when a case is closed, all deadline-related notifications would be discontinued. Other notifications would continue to appear and may be sent if further action is taken by the counterpart. It is important to note that while SOD Form K may reflect varied outcomes, under this approach it would not be possible to distinguish between these outcomes and the RI would uniformly cease all deadline notifications once SOD Form K is received. The Committee was asked whether the above proposal is suitable.

One Committee Member confirmed it as a good balance for Form K and asked about forwarding requests which should be added to the list. The Commission answered that in such cases the system should stop sending the notifications, but if it is not the case, the Commission will look into it and do not oppose to including them in the list.

Another Committee Member agreed that it is a good solution and asked about the competence of Supervisor which can in the current settings manually manage the deadlines. This competence should be preserved. It might be even useful to allow other roles to manage the deadlines to speed up the process. The Commission reminded the discussion on the competences for users where the Committee's decision was to limit this competence only to Supervisors. The Commission is open to consider the change, and the Members are invited to submit the request for change to discuss it within the Steering Committee. The Commission preliminarily confirmed that the competence to manually adjust the deadline will be uphold but will take a note of not affecting this competence. It seems that apart from the closed cases, it should be still possible.

In conclusion, the Steering Committee agreed that deadlines and notifications received within the RI should only stop for closed cases when an 'answer' has been sent or received (SoD Forms C, F, G or K; ToE Forms C, H, K or M).

VII. MAXIMUM FILE SIZE

The Commission reminded the Members that the topic was discussed in the last Steering Committee meeting where the Commission explained the situation. While the Steering Committee would be open to a bigger limit, due to the limitations of the e-CODEX connector, the system must enforce a maximum message size of 25 MB which was agreed in the Steering Committee last year. Attachments should be controlled at user interface level. Subsequently, the topic was discussed within the Technical Subcommittee.

The current state of play is unlimited file size. The recommendation of eu-LISA was that the message should not exceed 25 MB. If the size is overcome, the message can cause the delay in delivering other following messages or not be delivered at all. eu-LISA is working on the solution to overcome this limitation. The solution would be probably delivered in 2026. The Members are asked to notify the users of the 25 MB limitation even though the user interface is currently not preventing them from sending bigger files.

The users would be allowed to attach a file of 25 MB, which would mean that file size limit could be 20 MB, PDF limit 4 MB and XML limit 1 MB. Subsequently, file limit could be easily increased modifying the parameter value but needs to be done in a coordinated way. Target implementation date is November 2026. The Steering Committee will discuss again the file size in the meeting in October as the e-CODEX Connector rewrite should be available and tests will be ongoing. Hopefully, before its activation, the file size could be increased. When implementation is confirmed, the Steering Committee could decide on the file size limit.

One Committee Member asked if the Committee has already agreed on the increased file size limit. The Commission answered that the decision was not yet taken and will be taken closer to the implementation date. The Member pointed out the relation with interoperability and asked if the limitation applies per message which was confirmed by the Commission.

Another Member asked if the message size is the package size. The Commission confirmed and explained that the size is calculated in total for PDF forms, file and XML message.

In summary, the limit of maximum message size of 25 MB (package size) needs to be implemented in the system as exceeding the size might cause the delay or non-delivery of the message. The implementation of the change is estimated to be finalised by November 2026. The Steering Committee will need to discuss it again before that (October 2026), depending also on the status of the e-CODEX Connector rewrite at that time. At the same time, eu-LISA is working on the solution to overcome this limitation in the future.

VIII. FILE FORMATS

The Commission reminded the Members that 20 November 2025 Steering Committee agreed to adopt whitelist of file formats. The Technical Subcommittee was tasked with proposing list of allowable file formats, but no consensus was reached. The Steering Committee on 11 March 2026 decided to create the EUSurvey to find the solution. Three solutions were proposed by the

Commission in the EUSurvey: status quo, blacklisting, whitelisting. The Commission received 22 votes. 19 Members voted for whitelisting. Top formats were PDF, PDF/A, PDF/A1, PDF/A2, PDF/A3, JPEG, JPG. Only 1 vote was blocking PNG, MP4, MP3, ZIP. Afterwards, there were some more problematic formats. The Commission can share the results of the survey with the Members. The Commission reminded the Members that after several months of discussion, the solution was still not found and opened the floor for reactions about the three options: leaving status quo, sending the topic of whitelisting back to the technical subcommittee or creating a blacklist including dangerous formats.

One Member insists on whitelisting with restricted set of universal file formats, such as PDF. Some flexibility was showed for PNG, JPG, MP3, MP4, but not for ZIP or other compressed formats. This should be the setting before the Committee reaches a decision.

Another 2 Members mentioned that the topic might be horizontal and wanted to limit the discussion only to SOD and TOE. They supported whitelisting but only based on the assumption that it is relevant only for SOD and TOE and more importantly not for criminal law instruments.

The Commission stated that the discussion is currently not horizontal and if the list is adopted, it can be adjusted in the future.

To conclude, the EUSurvey showed preference of whitelisting option, although without clear indication on the enumerated formats. It was agreed that the technical implementation work for a parameterised approach should begin and then the Steering Committee would be consulted one last time on the starting point of the allowed list (PDF + variations, JPEG, JPG, MP4, MP3 for now). These choices should not be considered horizontal and the discussion on allowed formats should probably be had per legal act.

IX. PRACTICAL SUBCOMMITTEE

The Commission informed the Members that the Practical Subcommittee was established as no Member was opposed to it. First meeting will be on 21 May (12.00-14.00). So far only 5 Member States have nominated their representatives. The list of representatives would be opened to amend through email notification. Those Members that have not notified the representatives should do it by 20 April 2026. The observers are welcome to attend the meeting. The Commission asks the Members to notify the Commission about the potential topics to discuss with a brief description by 8 May (for the first meeting).

X. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There will be a change in the leading role of the Commission Support Team.

The next meetings are scheduled for 2 July and 13 October and will be held for half day in an online form. The latter was moved from 15 October due to conflict with e-CODEX Advisory Group.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Commission

Austria

Bulgaria

Croatia

Cyprus

Czech Republic

Denmark

Finland

France

Germany

Greece

Hungary

Ireland

Italy

Latvia

Lithuania

Luxembourg

Malta

Netherlands

Poland

Portugal

Romania

Slovakia

Spain

Sweden

EUBF

eu-LISA