



MINUTES

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

2 July 2025

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

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

II. ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEES

The Commission presented the Rules of Procedure for the Steering Committees by example of the Rules of Procedure for the Special Group Taking of Evidence Steering Committee. On Point 2 of the Rules of Procedure the Commission added that currently one in-person meeting is planned, but generally meetings are to be held online.

The Commission presented the [website](#) for Taking of Evidence (ToE) and Service of Documents (SoD) Regulations on the Commission website where information and the agendas and summary minutes of the meetings of the Steering Committees will be published.

There were no questions. The Rules of Procedure were adopted for both Steering Committees.

III. PARTICIPATION OF OBSERVERS

The Commission explained that members of the Steering Committees can only be representatives of the Member States and therefore suggested to give the following organisations an observer status in the Committees, so that they can participate in the meetings: eu-LISA, CNUE, CCBE, UEHJ, EUBF.

One committee member thought that eu-LISA should rather be considered an expert or participant due to its importance for the decentralised IT system. Some other Member States agreed. A discussion on the possible status of eu-LISA ensued, with Member States suggesting different statuses and explaining their worries.

The Commission explained that in accordance with Article 25(1)(e) of the Service of Documents and Taking of Evidence Regulations the official members can only be representatives nominated by Member States. Therefore, it is not possible to make eu-LISA an official member. An expert cannot participate on a permanent basis in Steering Committees, experts can be invited on an *ad hoc* basis for specific points on the agenda of a meeting only. It is not possible for eu-LISA to be both an observer and an expert. eu-LISA has already appointed representatives for their observer status. These appointed representatives cannot also be experts, however, other people from eu-LISA could be experts if needed. Some further discussion followed, with a Member State proposing that eu-LISA could be declared an observer for the moment and then further discussions could be held with the Agency also present with regards their status.

The Commission asked separately whether anyone had any objections against the observer status of eu-LISA, CNUE, CCBE, UEHJ, EUBF and them joining the meeting after the break. No one raised objections.

eu-LISA, CNUE, CCBE, UEHJ, EUBF were invited by the Steering Committees to attend as observers.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES FOR TECHNICAL MATTERS

The Commission explained that there has been a weekly meeting on technical matters regarding the SoD and ToE decentralised IT systems every Wednesday morning. The Commission suggested to transform these meetings to sub-Committee meetings. The Steering Committees would deal with the high-level questions, while the sub-committee could discuss the technical details and one could refer specific matters for discussion to the other. The decision will be taken strictly by the Steering Committees, based on the opinion of the technical sub-committee.

If committee members agree, the Commission proposed to circulate the list of participants of the weekly technical meetings. These participants have agreed for their name to be circulated. The Member States could then either confirm or exchange the participant(s) for their Member State. In case there is no reaction from Member States to the list, it would be assumed that the Member State agrees that the prior participant can also join the Sub-Committee.

The Commission asked if anyone opposed the establishment of a sub-Committee for technical matters. There was no opposition. The Steering Committees decided to establish a sub-Committee on technical matters.

V. OVERVIEW OF SOD AND TOE FRAMEWORK

The Commission presented the e-CODEX Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2022/850) and highlighted that discussions on the e-CODEX system do not fall under the mandate for these Steering Committees. It also presented Regulation (EU) 2020/1783 on the Taking of Evidence and Regulation (EU) 2020/1784 on Service of Documents.

The Commission explained that the main topic for discussion is the decentralised IT-system and therefore explained the system as well as certain IT components used within the system. It highlighted that since 1 May 2025 it is obligatory to use the decentralised IT-system and that there are only narrow exceptions for this obligation.

The Commission also presented the Implementing Regulations - Regulation 2022/422 on the Taking of Evidence and 2022/423 on the Service of Documents. The latter was amended under Regulation 2024/1570 to include Danish specificities. Lastly, the Implementing Decisions - Decision 2025/919 on Taking of Evidence and 2025/921 on the Service of Evidence – were presented.

There were no questions by committee members.

VI. OVERVIEW OF THE SOD AND TOE DECENTRALISED IT SYSTEMS

The Commission presented the Reference Implementation (RI) as a part of the decentralised IT-system. It highlighted that there are two basic workflows each for Service of Documents and Taking of Evidence. Beyond the main workflows exceptional cases can be created in extraordinary circumstances (SODX and TOEX). All authorities in the Courts Database (CDB) need to have the right pair of instruments and competences assigned to them to be able to create and send a case or take other actions. The Commission demonstrated the Reference Implementation.

One committee member explained that one of the key priorities for them is user-friendliness. They asked if it was possible to create a banner in the RI interface for instances where there is a connectivity problem between the RI and the CDB. The Commission is adding this to the list of change requests.

Another committee member requested the possibility to send a form in two languages and asked when it would be possible to sign the forms in the RI, instead of downloading the form to sign it. They also mentioned that their users are receiving many notifications about cases even if they have already finished their task.

The Commission explained that there are differences in digital signatures in Member States which makes it complicated to provide the option of all digital signatures within the RI. However, all these issues will be discussed in the technical sub-Committee meeting.

Another committee member asked where information on the downtime of the RI will be published. Regarding the CDB, they highlighted that there have been requests sent out where the receiving authority was not able to receive it because the authority in question was not live. They mentioned

that the SODA request can also be sent to the Central Body, but the Central Body is not a Receiving Agency and therefore requested this option to be deleted. Regarding notifications, it noticed that the receipt of the Form K does not lead to a notification to the Transmitting Agency. Moreover, the Reviewer or Sender that is assigned to a case gets a notification, but is not notified when the case is being moved to the review/sending phase.

The Commission explained that the inclusion of the Central Body for receiving SODA and TOEA requests was discussed at length in prior meetings of the Implementing Committees and Member States found it important to include the Central Body. Additionally, both the SoD and the ToE Regulations allow request to be sent to the Central Bodies in exceptional cases. Therefore, the possibility to send request to the Central Body needs to remain. The solution found in prior discussions was to include the Central Body as the last authority in the list of competent authorities. Regarding the notifications, the Commission is aware of these issues and has added them to the list of future improvements. Regarding the planned maintenance, the Member States plan their own maintenance and therefore need to announce this, but if the Commission is informed of the maintenance, they will forward that information to other Member States. Regarding planned maintenance of the CDB and e-CODEX, the Commission will inform Member States.

The Commission carried on presenting the Confluence pages on SoD and ToE. The Commission demonstrated the Confluence portal. The Confluence pages are not publicly available as they are only for the national technical experts. Access needs to be granted by the Commission and the Commission reminded that there is sensitive, non-public information on these pages, which is why access should be restricted to a limited number of trusted national experts.

The Commission reiterated their contact points for support:

- For issues with the Reference Implementation regarding installation and configuration, technical issues, confluence pages and requests about business aspects please contact: JUST-SOD-TOE-SUPPORT-TEAM@ec.europa.eu
- For issues with the Reference Implementation regarding legal inquiries please contact: JUST-A2-CIVIL-JUSTICE@ec.europa.eu
- For issues with e-CODEX regarding the access to the e-CODEX system please contact: e-codex@eulisa.europa.eu
- For issues with e-CODEX regarding connector issues and gateway issues troubleshooting please contact: e-codex-support@eulisa.europa.eu

Another committee member asked whether sending the forms in different languages goes against the Service of Documents and Taking of Evidence Regulations, since requests are supposed to be sent in the official language of the Member State and if the Regulations would need to be amended.

The Commission did not see the need to amend the Regulations. Generally, the Member States can decide in which language they want to receive the request. If a Member State receives a form in a language they don't accept, it is for them to refuse the request.

Another committee member took the floor to explain that Member States need the specifications, meaning the data schemas and business process models from eu-LISA to create their own interoperable systems. They asked whether these specifications will be found on the Confluence page as well. The Commission noted that this is something to discuss with eu-LISA, for today the Commission can only present what has been provided.

One committee member reported that their IT team finds it difficult to figure out which point of contact is the right point of contact between e-CODEX and the RI and asked if requests sent to the wrong contact point are being forwarded to the right contact. The Commission explained that these requests are indeed forwarded, and the contact points try to update each other on incoming requests as much as possible.

The Commission shared a draft priority list of reported issues with the decentralised IT system, which will be worked on in the following months. At the next meeting the Commission wants to present to the Steering Committees the full list of reported issues / change requests. In the meeting after that the Member States will be asked to share their priorities on these issues. Once the priorities are established, the technical team will do an analysis on the time frame needed to solve the issues. The Commission will then explain when which features will be implemented at what time. The speed of delivery will depend on budget availability and the prioritisation.

The Commission also presented the RI release roadmap for 2025 and 2026. It started out by explaining the versioning legend. The first digit of the release version indicates a major release linked to a specific instrument or product milestone. The second digit is used for significant updates, while the third digit is used for minor fixes and incremental updates. Next year on 1 February 2026 release V4.0.0 is planned. On 4 May 2026 an update of the user interface is planned (release V4.1.0). Another milestone will be the go live date of the eEvidence, EPOC and EPOC PR on 18 August 2026. Overall, the goal is to have less releases but to include as many changes as possible in each release to make the update process as simple as possible for Member States.

The Commission will plan the changes according to the priorities set by the Steering Committee but will align them with the set release dates. The planning will be transparent and will allow all technical experts in the Member States to be part of this process. Some of the changes will require an upgrade from V3.2.2. to V4.0.0., which will lead to a period where the decentralised IT system would need to be updated in all Member States.

One committee member agreed with the Commission that the decentralized IT system is a shared effort and highlighted the importance of interoperability. Member States should bring their system owners and experts to these meetings, especially interoperability experts. It is important for the Member State to think about interoperability with every step.

The Commission welcomed this point and explained that the SoD and ToE Regulations serve as a road opener, and it is important to advance together.

Another committee member agreed and asked about possible releases, before the 1 February 2026. The Commission reiterated that this depends on the priorities which the Steering Committees set. Intermediate releases are possible but also depend on the will of the Member States.

VII. MEMBER STATES DEPLOYMENT STATUS UPDATE

The Member States reported on their progress. Ten Member States are (partially) live now. The Member States that are live reported that everything works well, and they are sending and receiving messages. 12 Member States reported presumed (partial or full) go-live by the end of July or early August, four others hope to go live within September. Three Member States reported that they will go live at a later point.

VIII. NEXT STEPS AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The next Steering Committee meetings will be tentatively on the 23 July, 3 September and 21 October 2025. Presumably, the meeting on 21 October 2025 will be in person. The meeting on 23 July 2025 will be a half day meeting held in the afternoon.

The Commission asks Member States to check who their participants in the weekly technical meetings are and to inform, if needed, of amendments to the list of nominations for the technical sub-Committee.

The Commission reiterates the need for Member States to go live in a timely matter and expects Member States to be live by September. The Commission will reach out to Member States not live by then and will expect a written plan on the process to assess further actions.

If Member States have a topic, they would like to discuss with the Steering Committees they can reach out to the Commission by e-mail (JUST-A2-CIVIL-JUSTICE@ec.europa.eu).

Lastly, the Commission came back to the observer status of eu-LISA, reiterating the points made above. The Commission asked eu-LISA on their opinion. eu-LISA appreciated the explanation of the differences between the observer and expert status given by the Commission and will discuss this further internally and report back to the Commission.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Commission

Austria

Belgium

Bulgaria

Cyprus

Czechia

Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Lithuania
Luxemburg
Netherlands
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Spain
Sweden
eu-LISA
CCBE
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