



European
Commission

THE 2016 EU JUSTICE SCOREBOARD

Fact sheet | April 2016

Věra Jourová

Commissioner for Justice,
Consumers and Gender Equality



Directorate-General for
Justice and Consumers



The *EU Justice Scoreboard* is an information tool contributing to the European Semester process by providing data on the quality, independence and efficiency of justice systems in all EU Member States. It is part of an open dialogue with Member States, with the aim of helping them achieve more effective justice systems.

The Scoreboard provides information on the functioning of civil, commercial and administrative justice systems since they play a key role in creating an investment-friendly environment, restoring confidence, providing greater regulatory predictability and sustainable growth.

The fourth edition of the Scoreboard is published at a time when a number of Member States are taking measures to improve their justice systems. The *2016 EU Justice Scoreboard* presents a comprehensive overview of the functioning of national justice systems. It introduces new quality indicators, for example on standards, training, surveys and legal aid, while the indicators on independence now include new Eurobarometer surveys. The Scoreboard now provides a deeper insight into certain areas, such as electronic communication.

The key findings of the *2016 EU Justice Scoreboard* give insight into the three priority areas that need to be addressed.



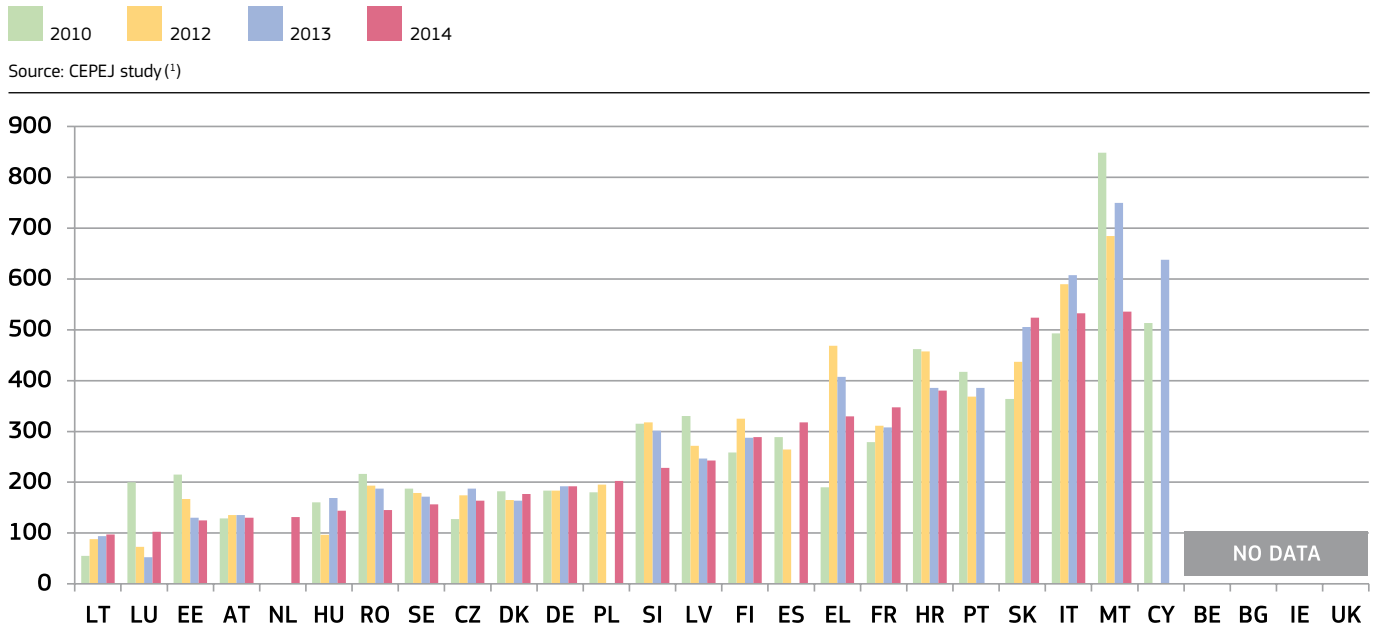
See the complete
**2016 EU Justice
Scoreboard at:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/
justice/effective-justice/
scoreboard/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/scoreboard/index_en.htm)

1. Efficiency of justice systems

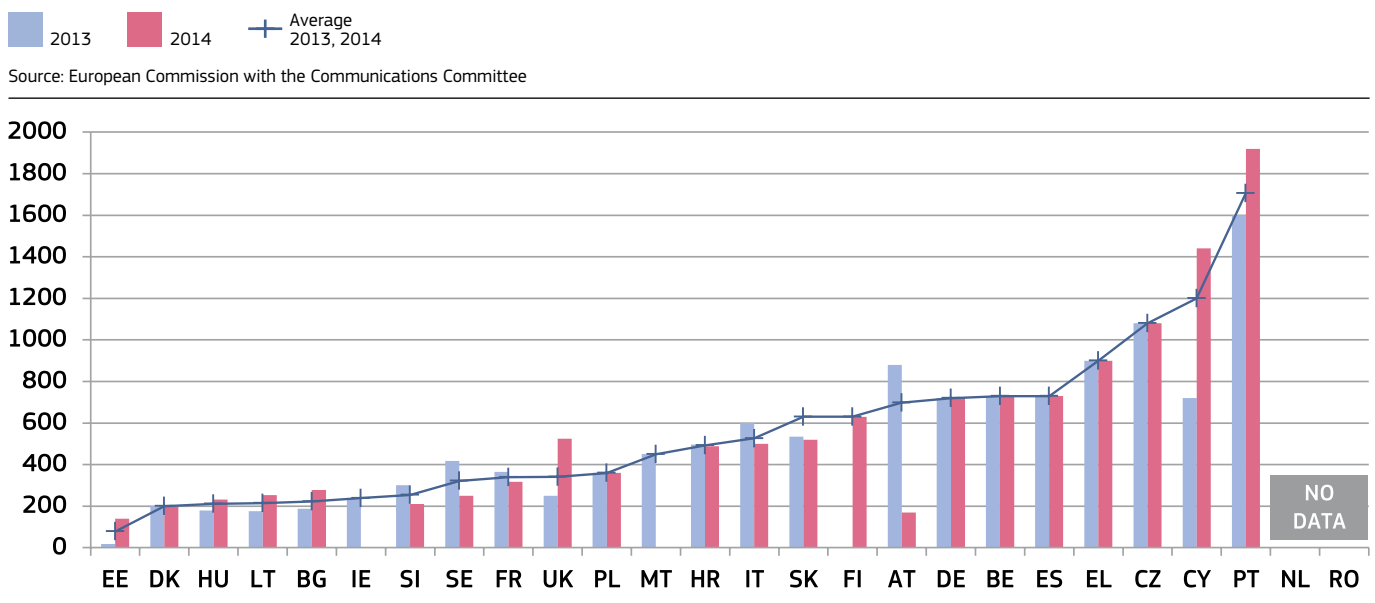
Timeliness of judicial decisions is essential to ensure the smooth functioning of the justice system. The 2016 Scoreboard reveals some positive signs. The length of litigious civil and commercial cases has in general improved.

Figure 1 Time needed to resolve litigious civil and commercial cases (first instance/in days)



The Scoreboard contains more detailed information on efficiency, including the time needed for courts to resolve disputes in specific areas of law e.g. in the area of electronic communications law, which complements the general data on the efficiency of justice systems.

Figure 2 Electronic communications: Average length of judicial review cases against decisions of national regulatory authorities applying EU law on electronic communications⁽²⁾ (first instance/in days)



(1) For further methodological and country-specific information see the *2016 EU Justice Scoreboard*.

(2) No cases were identified in this period in LU and LV, no cases in FI for 2013, no cases in IE and MT for 2014. The number of relevant cases of judicial review varies by Member State. For further methodological and country-specific information see the *2016 EU Justice Scoreboard*.

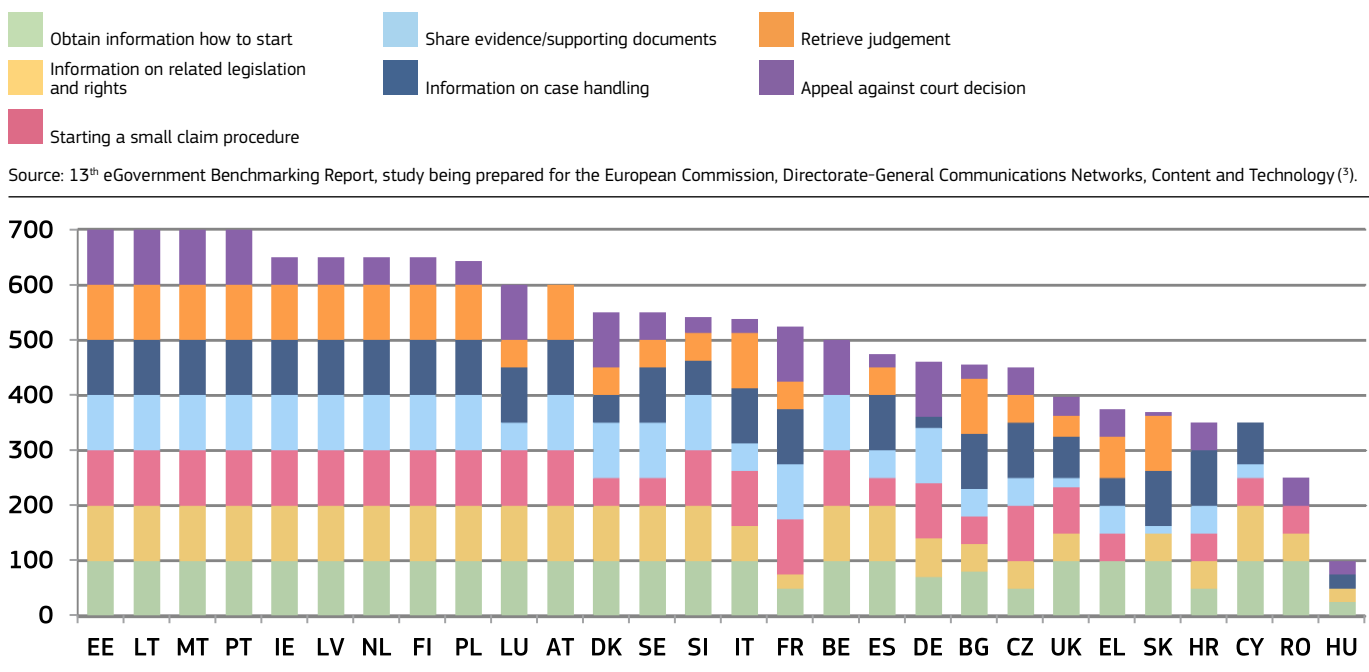
2. Quality of justice systems

Effective justice systems require not only timely decisions but also quality. Easy access, adequate resources, effective assessment tools and appropriate standards are key factors that contribute to the quality of justice systems. The 2016 Scoreboard confirms that the situation varies significantly across the EU, but also that many Member States are making particular efforts in these areas.

Online small claim proceedings

Efforts to enhance the use of ICT have continued but there is scope for improving online small claims procedures that enable citizens to make better use of their consumer rights.

Figure 3 Benchmarking of small claims procedures online



Source: 13th eGovernment Benchmarking Report, study being prepared for the European Commission, Directorate-General Communications Networks, Content and Technology⁽³⁾.

(3) Data concern 2015. Member States only received 100 points per category if the service was fully available online through a central portal. They received 50 points if only information on the service as such was available online. For further methodological and country-specific information see the 2016 EU Justice Scoreboard. To be published at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/newsroom/reports-studies-etc/all>

Training

Judicial training, including in judicial skills, is also important in contributing to the quality of judicial decisions and the justice service delivered to citizens.

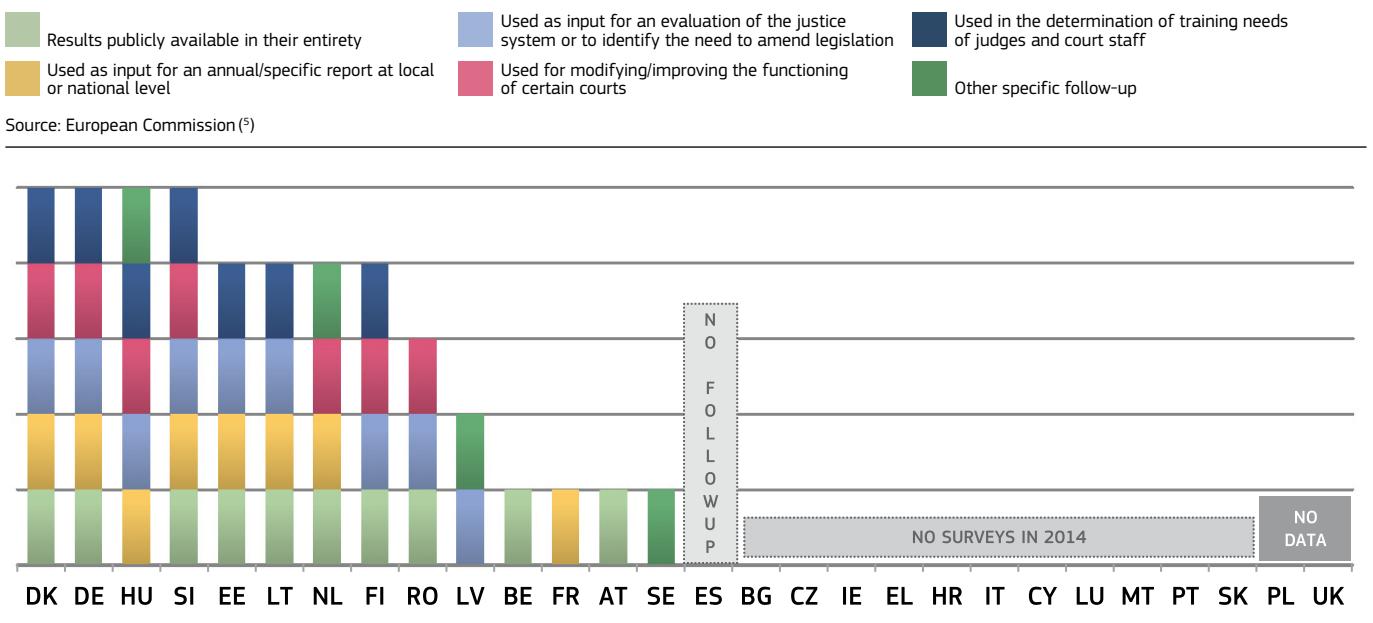
Figure 4 Percentage of continuous judicial training activities on various types of judicial skills



Assessment tools

Improving the quality of justice systems requires tools to assess their functioning, e.g. surveys and the follow-up given to them are indispensable to assess how justice systems operate from the perspective of legal professionals and court users.

Figure 5 Follow-up of surveys conducted among court users or legal professionals in 2014



(4) Data concern 2014 and have been collected in cooperation with the European Judicial Training Network, which represents EU Judicial training institutions. Continuous training on “judgecraft” includes activities such as conducting hearings, writing decisions or rhetoric. The table shows the distribution of continuous judicial training activities (i.e. those taking place after the initial training period to become a judge) in each of the four identified areas as a percentage of the total. For further methodological and country-specific information see the *2016 EU Justice Scoreboard*.

(5) The data concern 2014 and have been collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems. For further methodological and country-specific information see the *2016 EU Justice Scoreboard*.

Quality standards

Standards can drive up the quality of justice systems. In most Member States the areas covered by standards appear to be the same, however there are still significant differences as regards their content and implementation.

Figure 6 Specific standards in selected aspects related to the justice system



(6) The data concern 2015 and have been collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems. The lighter column corresponds to the total number of Member States that defined other standards in the selected areas. Standards on case processing time include civil, commercial and administrative cases. For further methodological and country-specific information see the *2016 EU Justice Scoreboard*.

3. Independence

Judicial independence is a fundamental requirement, which is vital for upholding the rule of law, the fairness of judicial proceedings and the trust of citizens and businesses in the legal system. The Scoreboard shows the perceived judicial independence, as well as information on legal safeguards for certain situations where independence is at risk (i.e. in case of transfer of judges without their consent, dismissal of judges, allocation of incoming cases within a court, and withdrawal and recusal of judges).

Figure 7 Perceived independence of courts and judges among the general public

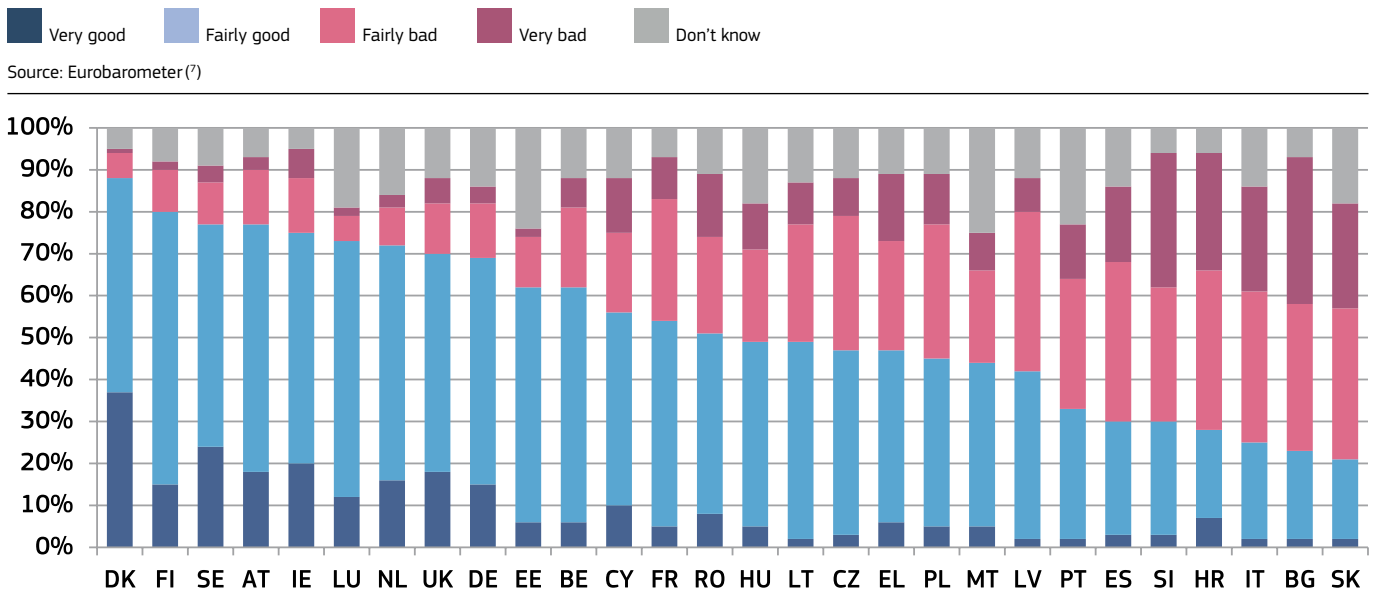
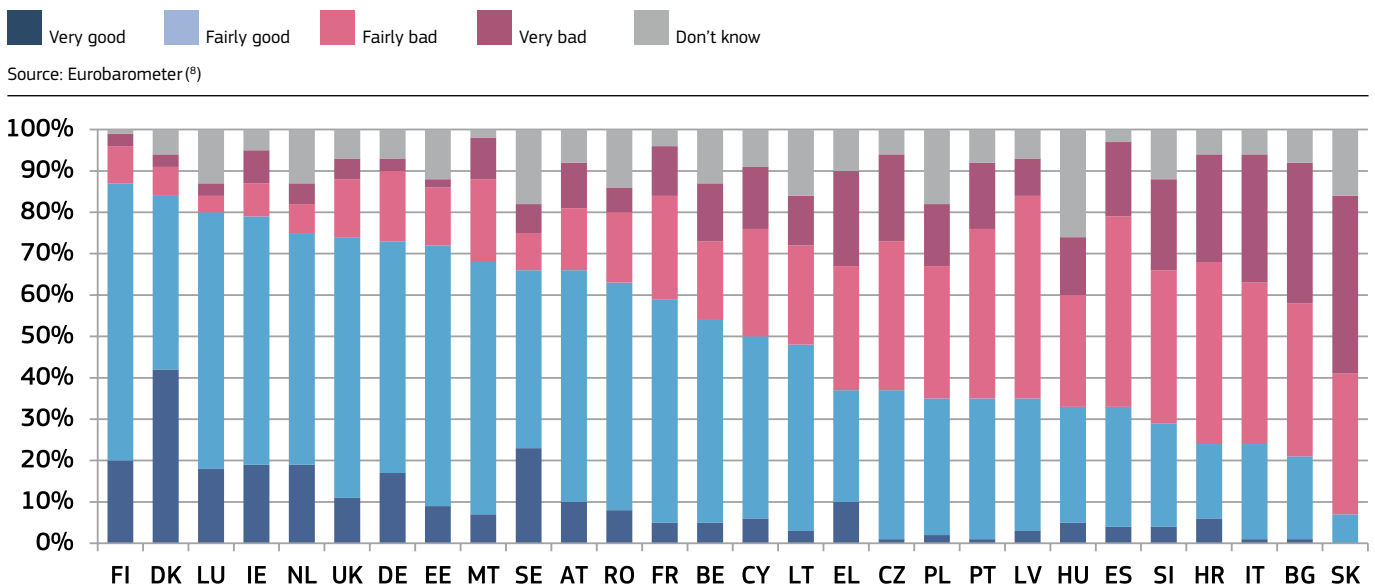


Figure 8 Perceived independence of courts and judges among companies



(7) Eurobarometer survey FL435, conducted between the 24 and 25 February 2016; replies to the question: 'From what you know, how would you rate the justice system in (our country) in terms of the independence of courts and judges? Would you say it is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?', available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/scoreboard/index_en.htm

(8) Eurobarometer survey FL436, conducted between 25 February and 4 March 2016; replies to the question: 'From what you know, how would you rate the justice system in (our country) in terms of the independence of courts and judges? Would you say it is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?', available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/scoreboard/index_en.htm

