



Cross-border Digital Criminal Justice Second Newsletter

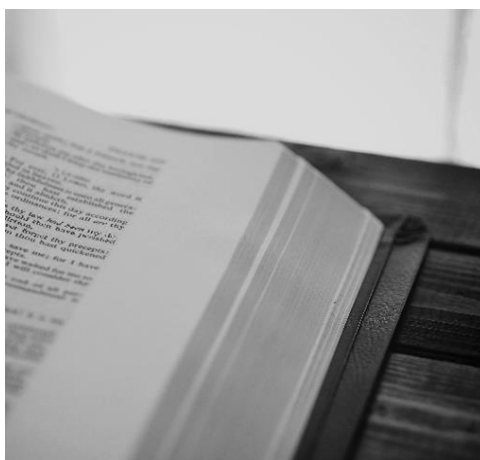
November-December 2019

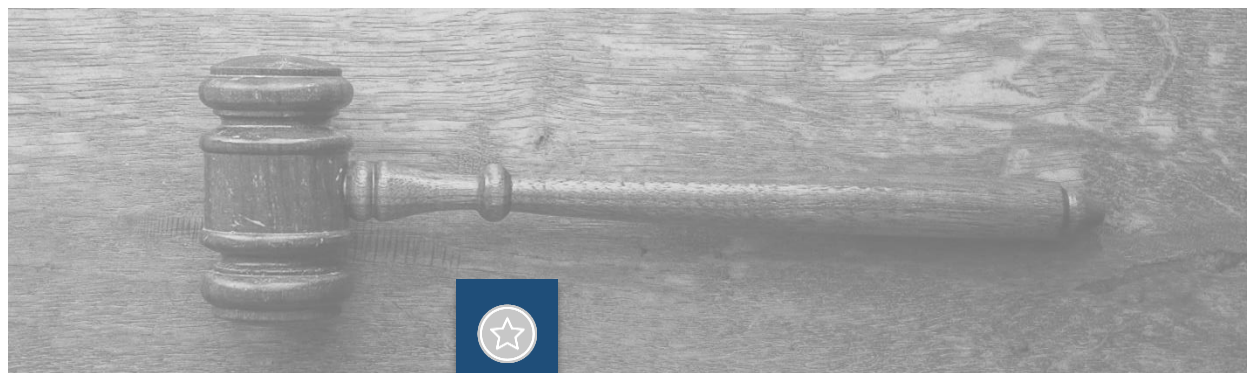


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In this issue:

- Status of the project
- Project's online space
- Key findings and takeaways
- Events





Introduction

Dear reader,

This second newsletter on Cross-border Digital Criminal Justice project brings you information regarding the wide range of activities conducted since the previous edition (September - October 2019).

Where we are today

The study's second phase is currently being finalised. In this phase, data was collected through **strategic interviews** with the European Commission DG Justice, Eurojust, and other agencies with a relevant mandate for the scope of the study.

An **online web-based survey** (targeting respondents from all 28 EU Member States) was launched on 28 October and was closed on 22 November.

In parallel, field visits in selected Member States (Croatia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Romania) also took place, with further interviews to be scheduled in France and Italy.

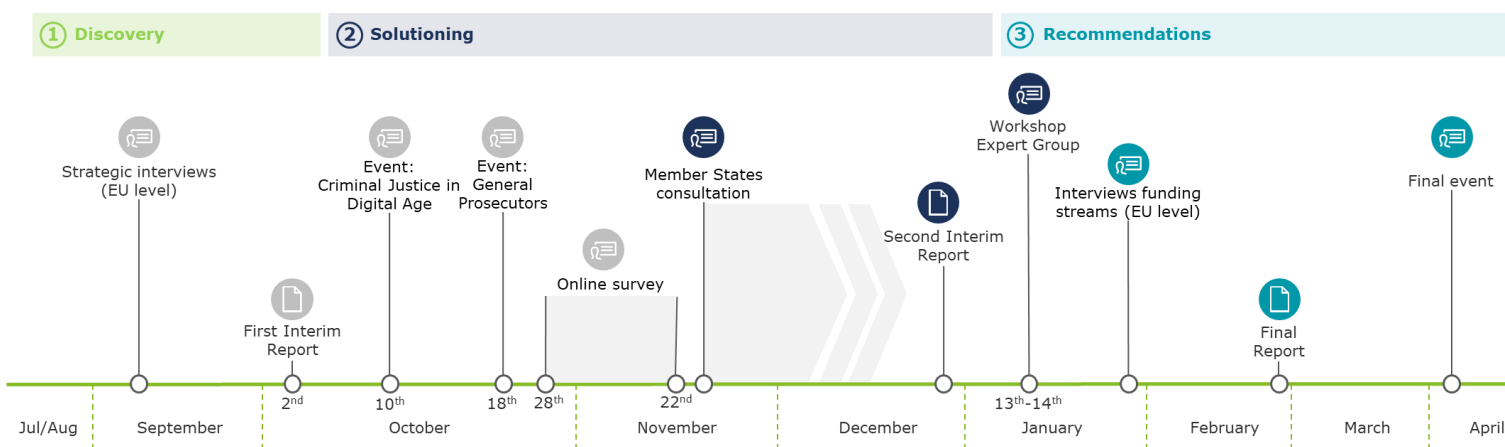
The key findings of these activities are provided below (section – Key findings and takeaways, p. 3).

An analysis of the legal and policy environment around cross-border cooperation and interoperability in the area of criminal justice was also carried out.

These activities have allowed for a mapping of the current issues faced by stakeholders involved in cross-border judicial cooperation, their business needs and key constraints (legal and technical), and to draw up potential solutions responding to these needs.

All findings are described in the **Second Interim Report**, which will be discussed with Member State representatives at an **Expert Group meeting** taking place on 13-14 January 2020. The Second Interim Report will be available in the Cross-border Digital Criminal Justice Confluence Space (in the section [Deliverables](#)) soon.

The timeline presented below provides the timeline of past and future activities on Cross-border Digital Criminal Justice.



Share your experience

As a stakeholder involved in cross-border cooperation in criminal justice, you are invited to share your experience and views on an online platform: the Cross-border Digital Criminal Justice Confluence Space.

How can one access the Confluence Space?

- Create your personal EU login ([here](#))
- Request access to the Confluence Space by sending an email to EU-DIGITAL-CRIMINAL-JUSTICE@ec.europa.eu
- We will then grant you access
- Enjoy our confluence Space [here](#)!

What can be found on the platform?

You will find a brief introduction to the study in the **About the project** section.

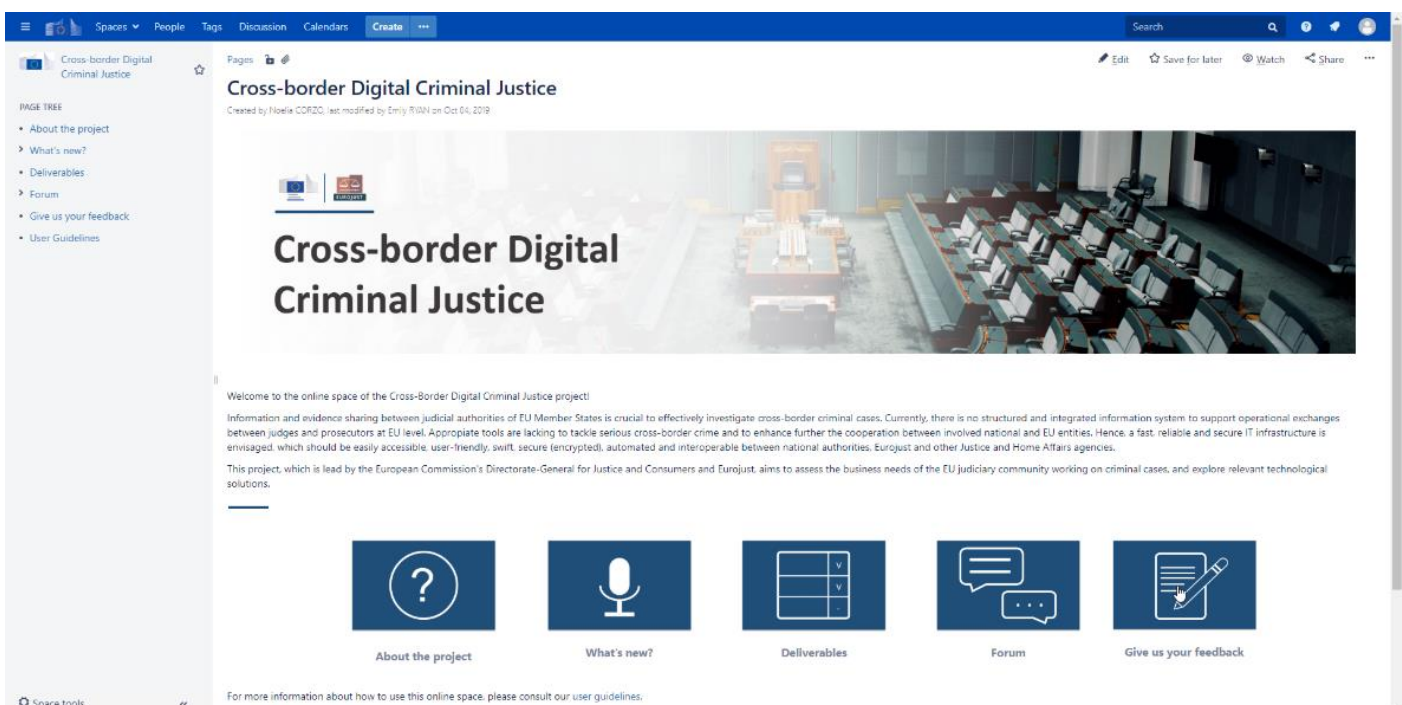
Through the platform you will be able to have direct access to materials produced during the study, such as all electronic newsletters, under **What's new?**

You will have access to the main outcomes of the study, i.e. the three reports (First Interim Report, Second Interim Report, and Final Report) under the **Deliverables** section. The Second Interim Report will be available there soon, and your feedback and views would be much appreciated.

You will be able to share your experience and exchange your point of view with us and other practitioners in the platform's **Forum**.

In addition, a permanent feedback form is available in the section **Give us your feedback**.

Finally, useful information is available explaining how to use the Confluence Space in the section **User Guidelines**.





Key findings and takeaways

Online survey

The survey was launched on 28 October and closed on 22 November. It was addressed to all Member States, in particular to four profiles of respondents:

- Policy officers in judicial authorities.
- Judicial practitioners (prosecutors, investigative judges and judges, National Members of Eurojust, EJM criminal contact points and JIT practitioners).
- IT officers in judicial authorities.
- Law enforcement officers.

The aim of the survey was to collect information about the needs of practitioners when cooperating in cross-border cases, the issues and challenges faced, the digital tools and communication channels used, as well as potential solutions.

According to the survey results, the most important difficulties faced by practitioners are:

- Difficulty in communicating with other countries, e.g. delay, or lack of response (as mentioned by 81% of the respondents).
- Lack of central database where it could be checked whether the investigated crimes/suspects have links to criminal proceedings in other countries (as indicated by 76% of respondents).
- Long delays in receiving replies that relate to sending requests and evidence by post (as expressed by 73% of the respondents).

As for the solutions, stakeholders indicated that the most needed are:

- Establishing a robust and secure channel for communications (80% of respondents)
- A central e-Evidence repository at EU level (as expressed by 78% of the respondents)
- One Stop-Shop portal (74% of respondents)
- A JIT collaboration platform (65% of respondents)
- The counter-terrorism register integrated in Eurojust CMS (62% of respondents)
- The Eurojust CMS revamped (52% of respondents)

If you did not have the chance to participate in this survey, you can still provide your views via the Confluence Space.

Interviews

In addition to the survey, we also conducted strategic interviews at EU level, as well as on-site interviews in selected Member States.

At EU level, we discussed with several Directorates-General of the European Commission (DG JUST, DG HOME, DIGIT), as well as EU agencies (Eurojust, Europol, Frontex, eu-LISA), and other EU bodies (the EPPO, OLAF). These interviews allowed us to map the different roles and interactions between these EU-level stakeholders, understand their needs, identify initiatives and ongoing projects at EU level, and map some solutions.

At national level, we conducted interviews in Croatia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Romania (and interviews in France and Italy are being scheduled). We discussed with the central authorities, prosecutors and investigative judges, judges, and law enforcement officers.

During these interviews, we confirmed the needs preliminary identified via the survey, as well as the issues and challenges faced in cross-border judicial cooperation. We also identified ongoing and planned national initiatives aiming to improve the cooperation. Lastly, we gathered Member States' initial preferences in relation to pre-identified solutions.



Events

Criminal Justice in the Digital Age

On 10 October 2019, Eurojust in cooperation with the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union organised the event [Criminal Justice in the Digital Age](#) in Brussels, at the Council's premises.

The event focused on the opportunities and challenges that the digital era has brought to the European judicial community and how new tools can ensure EU security and facilitate cross-border investigations. The audience was judicial practitioners, EU policy makers, civil society, IT and other experts, and the media.

The keynote speaker at the event and President of Eurojust, Mr Ladislav Hamran, drew special attention to the challenges and limitations faced by practitioners in cross-border cases. He highlighted the lack of structured and integrated exchange of information, which is currently exchanged in different formats, in different languages, via different channels, and in big amounts in some cases.

Mr Roland Genson, Director for Justice, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, stressed that while law enforcement services already have digital tools for



information exchange, there is a need to also facilitate judicial authorities with such solutions.

General Prosecutors event

The [14th Meeting of the Consultative Forum of Prosecutors General and Directors of Public Prosecutions](#) took place on 18 October 2019 in the Eurojust's premises, in The Hague. It was co-chaired by the Romanian and Finnish Presidencies along with Eurojust. The audience was Prosecutors General of the EU Member States. The General Prosecutors Event had three sessions:

1st session: How to ensure criminal justice in cyberspace?

The Consultative Forum:

- *acknowledged the increasing and global threat represented by cybercrime and the specific challenges*
- *encouraged Eurojust to facilitate the strategic dialogue between judicial authorities of the Member states on the significant technological trends*
- *agreed on the need for cooperation with service providers to improve access to e-evidence*
- *considered that prosecutors perspective should be taken into account by the EU legislator.*

2nd session: How to cooperate in the digital world?

The Consultative Forum:

- *agreed that an appropriate level of funding is required to deliver the necessary IT tools.*
- *emphasised the importance of strengthening Eurojust's central capacity to support secure and trusted exchange of information with the possibility to identify cross border phenomena.*

3rd session: What have we achieved together?

The Consultative forum signalled a need to increase awareness of the crucial role of judicial authorities in the EU security chain and the high quality support provided by Eurojust.

Meeting between DIGIT, DG JUST and Eurojust

On 27 November 2019, Director-General Gertrud Ingestad of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Informatics (DIGIT) met with Deputy Director-General Alexandra Jour-Schroeder of the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) and President Ladislav Hamran of Eurojust to discuss Digital Criminal Justice.

Ms Ingestad confirmed that Digital Criminal Justice is fully in line with the European Commission Digital Strategy, an initiative that proposes a vision to transform the Commission into a truly digital administration. Once the results of the study are known, DIGIT will therefore gladly assist in the efforts to hook into existing technological solutions wherever possible. DG JUST and Eurojust warmly welcomed this offer of support, as one of the key principles underpinning Digital Criminal Justice is the wish to avoid unnecessary duplications.

Upcoming events

Expert Group meeting

Date: 13-14 January 2020

Location: Centre Albert Borschette, Brussels

Audience: Member State experts

Description: During this meeting, the outcomes of the survey as well as the fieldwork conducted in Member States and the identified solutions will be presented. Participants will then be given the opportunity to give their views on the identified solutions.



Contact

Stay in touch

We share this newsletter every two months via the [Confluence Space](#).

For any enquiry related to Digital Criminal Justice, please provide your feedback in our [Confluence Space](#).

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