

**53rd Plenary meeting of the
European Judicial Network
20-22 November 2019**

COVER NOTE

From: EJN Secretariat

To: EJN Contact Points

Subject:

EJN Work Programme 2021 and budget forecast*

The EJN Contact Points will find hereunder the forecasted EJN Work programme for 2021. It will be revised and amended where necessary in line with the upcoming organisational changes.

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The EJN Secretariat

According to Article 2 (8) of the Council Decision 2008/976/JHA of 16 December 2008 on the European Judicial Network (the EJN Decision), the EJN Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the European Judicial Network. The EJN Secretariat forms part of the Eurojust staff, but functions as a separate unit¹.

The functions that the EJN Secretariat carries out are as follows:

- Administration and general co-ordination of the EJN, with a view to enabling the contact points to fulfil their tasks;
- Setting up, maintenance and improvement of the EJN information system/website;
- Organisation of EJN meetings;
- Institutional relations of the EJN with other bodies and structures in the field of judicial co-operation in criminal matters;
- To fulfil its functions and to ensure proper administration of the EJN, the EJN Secretariat performs various administrative tasks such as translation of documents, ordering corporate material for EJN meetings, ordering catering and covering catering costs, covering postage and stationary costs where necessary, liaising with different Eurojust Units and service providers etc.

According to Article 11 of the EJN Decision, in order for the European Judicial Network to be able to carry out its tasks, the budget of Eurojust shall contain a part related to the activities of the EJN Secretariat.

¹ Article 48.1(b) of the Regulation 2018/1727 on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), replacing Council Decision 2002/187/JHA of 28 February 2002 setting up of Eurojust with a view of reinforcing the fight against serious crime, as amended by Council Decision 2003/659/JHA and by Council Decision 2008/426/JHA of 16 December 2008 on the strengthening of Eurojust.

OBJECTIVES FOR 2021

This EJN Work Programme identifies objectives for the year 2021. Each objective includes its main activities. The Work Programme further includes a budget estimate, allocating financial resources for each objective and activity.

As the administrative unit of the EJN, the Secretariat will continue during 2021 to focus on a sound management of the Network, the proper organisation of the meetings mentioned in the EJN Decision and the permanent enhancement of the EJN website, to tackle the legislative challenges and the needs of the judicial authorities dealing with judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

The EJN Secretariat will continue to work for the strengthening of the EJN's cooperation with partner networks and organisations and to extend its contacts in third countries, in the benefit of improving international judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

As a follow up of the Sixth round of mutual evaluations, the EJN Secretariat will continue to observe the compliance with all the recommendations regarding the EJN, including those addressed to the Member States. Moreover, the EJN Secretariat will ensure that the EJN is involved in relevant discussions at the EU level with direct impact on its work and will actively participate in the working groups of the Council of the European Union and the experts meetings organised by the European Commission.

The EJN Secretariat will continue to provide funding from the EJN budget to meetings organised in the Member States, as a method of improving awareness of the EJN and fostering regional judicial cooperation.

In order to ensure the proper organisation and financing of the meetings, the EJN Secretariat performs various administrative tasks in relation to invitations, registrations, budgetary matters, travel reimbursements and other arrangements necessary for each meeting.

Objective 1 – EJM meetings²

The foremost role of the EJM Secretariat is to ensure continuity to the EJM providing financial as well as administrative support. Ensuring the continuity of the work of the network is primarily fulfilled by the objective of organising meetings. The EJM meetings are essential for the network, being the *fora* where the strategic and administrative decisions are taken and the Contact Points meet each other to discuss practical issues specific to their activities and tasks. This objective will be achieved by five activities, as follows:

Activity 1.1 and 1.2 – Plenary meetings

The Contact Points of the EJM meet in plenary three times per year.

One Plenary meeting (the Regular meeting) will take place in February 2021 at the premises of Eurojust in The Hague. This meeting is financed by the EJM budget.

The other two Plenary meetings take place in the Member States holding the Presidency of the European Union Portugal and Slovenia. The organisation of these two meetings is a responsibility of the Presidencies and they are partially financed by the EJM budget.

Activity 1.3 – National Correspondents meeting (NCM)

According to Article 6 (1) of the EJM Decision, the EJM National Correspondents shall meet on an *ad hoc* basis at least once a year. These meetings are financed by the EJM budget. The 13th meeting of the EJM National Correspondents is planned to take place in October 2021 at the premises of Eurojust in The Hague.

Activity 1.4 – Tool Correspondents meeting (TCM)

According to Article 6 (2) of the EJM Decision, the EJM Tool Correspondents shall meet on an *ad hoc* basis at least once a year. These meetings are financed by the EJM annual budget. The 20th EJM Tool Correspondents meeting is planned to take place in March 2021 at the premises of Eurojust in The Hague.

² Complete information on the Objective 1 is provided in the EJM Document “Guidelines on the EJM Meetings”

Activity 1.5 – Other meetings

Meetings of the EJN Presidency Board

According to the Guidelines on the structure of the EJN, the EJN Presidency Board shall work closely with the EJN Secretariat in ensuring the continuity of the EJN activities. To that end the EJN Secretariat shall organise meetings of the EJN Presidency Board in order to decide on the agenda of the EJN meetings and on future activities and projects. In 2021, meetings of the EJN Presidency Board are planned to take place in connection to the three plenary meetings and the National Correspondents meeting. Additional ad hoc meetings may take place if deemed necessary.

Meetings of EJN working groups

EJN working groups, when set-up, meet on an *ad-hoc* basis when deemed necessary. If possible, these meetings should take place on the occasion of other EJN meetings where participants' travels are already covered.

In 2021 it is foreseen that the EJN working group on e-evidence, set up in August 2018 will continue its work, depending on the development of the three topics included in its mandate (implementation/application of the Regulation/Directive on e-evidence, Participation in the Sirius Project and update of e-evidence fiches in the *fiches belges*) and new demands.

Furthermore, depending on the development of the project on the Peer Evaluation of the EJN and other topics that may rise during the course of 2020 and 2021 other Working Group meetings may be organised.

Objective 2 – Administration and functioning of the EJN

Activity 2.1 – Follow up of the EJN Peer Evaluation

The EJN Secretariat will follow up together with the Contact Points to ensure the implementation of recommendations or other outcomes of the evaluation.

Activity 2.2 – Participation in EU legislative process and in the activities meant to improve the practical application of EU legal instruments for judicial cooperation

During 2021, the EJM Secretariat will continue to work closely with the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, the Commission and the European Parliament, both regarding draft legislation and the measures to improve the practical application of EU legal instruments for judicial cooperation in criminal matters (such as handbooks and guidelines, etc).

Activity 2.3 – Contribution to Projects/initiatives in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters

The EJM continues being involved in several EU projects or initiatives running with the support of the EU. During 2021, the EJM Secretariat and Contact Points will continue their involvement in projects, such as the Commission platform for digital exchange of evidence and other e-codex related projects, SIRIUS Platform, IPA (Western Balkans) and EuroMed.

Other projects may be added in the course of 2021 depending on the development and requests from Partners.

Objective 3 – Functioning of the EJM Contact Points

Activity 3.1 – Governance of the EJM - communication between the EJM Secretariat, EJM Presidency Board and EJM National Correspondents

For the proper planning and decision-making of the EJM activities, including the handling and coordination of the budgetary and financial issues of the EJM Work Programme, the EJM Secretariat will ensure regular and permanent communication between the EJM Secretariat, the EJM Presidency Board and the EJM National Correspondents.

Also, in accordance with Article 48.1(b) of the “Eurojust Regulation” in order to ensure the execution of the EJM Work Programme, the EJM Secretariat will liaise with the administration of Eurojust, including on financial, budgetary, organisational and administrative matters.

Activity 3.2 – Providing support for the organisation of EJN meetings in the Member States

According to the Guidelines on the EJN meetings, Regional and National EJN meetings may be organised in the Member States.

Regional meetings are necessary for the promotion of the EJN and the improvement of its functioning. The Regional meetings should also focus on problems which have a particular regional character.

National meetings are relevant to strengthen the links between the Contact Points and raising awareness of the EJN and its operational tools among members of the judiciary.

The EJN Secretariat will provide support to the organisation of Regional and National meetings during 2021, through a co-financing of such meetings, in accordance with the Guidelines on the EJN meetings.

Activity 3.3 – Language training for the EJN Contact Points

According to Article 2 (5) of the EJN Decision each Member State shall ensure that its Contact Points have adequate knowledge of a language of the European Union other than its own national language. The EJN Secretariat organises, each year, language training for the EJN Contact Points to support the Member States in meeting these requirements.

Activity 3.4 – Report on the activities and management of the EJN for 2021-2022

According to Article 13 of the EJN Decision, every second year the EJN shall report to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on its activities and management.

In order to fulfil this provision, the EJN Secretariat is collecting statistics of the operational cases of judicial cooperation handled by the EJN Contact Points, as well as other activities performed by them.

In 2021, the EJN Secretariat, taking on board contributions from the Contact Points, will work on the draft of the seventh report covering the period of 2021 and 2022.

The Secretariat will also produce internal reports to the network, based on the activities registered in the online reporting tool.

Activity 3.5 – Peer Evaluation of the EJN

Following the Sixth Round of Mutual Evaluations and the Conclusions of the 50th Plenary meeting of the European Judicial Network, in 2020 the EJN is going to perform an EJN peer evaluation. The aim is to assess the functioning

of the EJN and to identify possible areas of improvement.

In 2021 the EJN will follow-up on the outcome of the evaluation.

Activity 3.6 – Update of the EJN Contact Points’ lists

According to Article 7 of the EJN Decision, the EJN Secretariat and the Tool Correspondents makes available on the EJN website contact details of the Contact Points in each Member State, EU Candidate countries and EJN Associated countries. In addition, there are on the website contact details of contact points in third countries and members of other judicial networks which have established cooperation with the EJN.

The Tool Correspondents with the support of the EJN Secretariat will continue to update and file the lists of all the contact points/members of other judicial networks available on the website.

Activity 3.7 – Welcome package

In October 2018, the EJN Secretariat has updated the Welcome package on the EJN website addressed to newly appointed EJN Contact Points. The package contains information about the role of the Contact Points, the website and other useful information, valuable for the new Contact Point to know. Upon arrival of new EJN Contact Points, the EJN Secretariat/the National Correspondents provide them with the Welcome package and other information needed for them to fulfil their role.

Activity 3.8 – Drafting newsletters, activity reports and other documents

Twice per year, the EJN Secretariat is issuing the EJN Newsletter for the EJN Contact Points. When necessary reports and other policy documents related to the activities of the EJN will be drafted.

Activity 3.9 – Secure Telecommunications Connection

According to Article 9 of the EJN Decision the secure telecommunications connections is set up for the operational work of the EJN Contact Points. The EJN Secretariat maintains the connection and administers the setting up of accounts for new Contact Points users.

Objective 4 – Administration and enhancement of the EJM website

Activity 4.1 – Maintenance and enhancement and updates of the EJM website

According to Articles 7-9 of the EJM Decision the administration and maintenance of the EJM website represents a core task for the EJM Secretariat.

The EJM Secretariat will ensure the overall functioning and security of the EJM website and the proper functioning of the existing tools, *in particular* through support and technical management by the EJM website contractor and with the relevant units within Eurojust.

The EJM Secretariat is responsible for updating some parts of the website on a permanent basis; the Judicial Library (incl. status of implementation of EU Legal Instruments) and other information (News Section, About EJM, Info to CP's, EJM Meetings, Registry, Funding for EJM meetings, Partners section etc.).

The EJM Tool Correspondents have the responsibility to keep the information on their country and in the EJM Tools updated. The EJM Secretariat supports the work of the Tool Correspondents and continues to prioritise the permanent update of the e-tools and assess the needs for further developments in view of new legal instruments regarding judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

In 2021 the following activities will be prioritised (depending of the progress made in 2020):

- Integration/population of the Candidate Countries in the EJM website
- Update the website tools following structural/organisational changes in the Member States
- Migration of the Partner Section and Reporting tool into the ordinary structure of the EJM website. Currently these sections are handled via the EJM Forum section.
- Amendments of the Compendium (adding Annex B and C of the EIO Directive)
- Amendments of e-evidence fiches in the *fiches belges*
- Create an area/section for the instruments linked to the execution of the sentence

Other activities that will be performed depending on the available budget and human resources include:

- Adapt the website and tools in view of new instruments, e.g. in the area of EAW and e-evidence.

- Provide an inventory for EU Regional Networks – follow up of the Belgium Presidency 2010

Activity 4.2 – Collection of information for the Judicial Library and on the Status of Implementation of EU legal instruments

In accordance with the “Council Conclusions on the follow-up of the implementation of instruments implementing the principle of mutual recognition of judicial decisions in criminal matters” (3034th JUSTICE and HOME AFFAIRS Council meeting, Luxembourg, 7 and 8 October 2010) the EJM website should present information on the follow-up of these instruments in the Member States and by providing judicial authorities with relevant information for their day-to-day application.

The EJM Secretariat will continue to populate the Judicial Library and to collect information on the Status of implementation of EU legal instruments and will ensure that the information is regularly updated.

Activity 4.3 – Cooperation with the e-Justice Portal

In accordance with the Council Conclusions of October 2013 on cooperation between the EJM website and the e-Justice Portal, with a view of providing access to the EJM website through the European e-Justice Portal and to improve the functionalities of the EJM website (Council doc. 13407/13), the EJM Secretariat and the EJM Contact Points will continue cooperation with the Council e-Justice working group and the Commission.

Activity 4.4 – Cooperation with the Commission Digital Exchange System

In order to support direct contacts between competent authorities, the EJM Atlas will be linked with the Commission Digital Exchange System. The EJM will support the Commission with the setting up of the new system. As the Atlas, this project may require that other areas/tools may be linked to the platform as well, e.g. fiches belges, status of implementation.

Activity 4.5 – Provide direct and regular support to the EJM Tools Correspondents

In accordance with Article 4(5) of the EJM Decision, the Member States have nominated EJM Tools Correspondents who ensure that the information related to his or her Member State on the EJM website is up to date.

- In order to ensure that the EJM Tools Correspondents will have all information necessary to perform their tasks, the EJM Secretariat responds on a regular basis to the questions and requests from the EJM Tools Correspondents.

- The EJN webmaster will visit the Member States to assist the Tool Correspondents to better use the technical applications for the update of the EJN tools on the EJN website. The Tool Correspondents may also visit the EJN webmaster at the EJN Secretariat in The Hague for the same purpose.

Objective 5 – Increasing awareness of the EJN

Activity 5.1 – Activities to increase awareness of the EJN

The EJN Secretariat and the EJN Contact Points promote the EJN among practitioners in the Member States and other countries.

- The Secretary to the EJN and other members of the EJN Secretariat as well as EJN Contact Points will participate in different *fora* and give presentations about the EJN, including the EJN website and its tools for judicial cooperation

Activity 5.2 – Implementation of the EJN Awareness Policy

The EJN “Awareness Policy” was adopted in 2017. The policy enumerates a number of activities and measures for making awareness of the EJN, both for the EJN Contact Points and for the EJN Secretariat. It serves as a basis for further actions on making awareness of the EJN in 2021, including involvement in training as provided for in Article 4(3) of the EJN Decision.

In 2021 the implementation of the policy will continue.

Objective 6 – Cooperation between the EJN and other actors in the field of judicial co-operation

During 2021 the EJN Secretariat will continue to promote the privileged partnership between the European Judicial Network and Eurojust and the strengthening of the cooperation with the European Union’s institutions, especially the European Commission and the Council. The cooperation with the Council of Europe (through the Committee of experts on the operation of the European Conventions on Cooperation in Criminal Matters – PC-OC), the United Nations (especially with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) and with other

international organisations and bodies will remain a priority for the external actions of the EJC.

Particular attention will be paid to the cooperation with partner judicial networks in criminal matters, including the European Judicial Cybercrime Network (EJCNC), the JIJs and Genocide networks and the EuroMed project, having their Secretariats/support at Eurojust.

The EJC Secretariat will continue to be actively involved in projects which aim to create or develop new regional networks based on the EJC model.

The cooperation with the European Judicial Training Network, aimed to improve the training of judges and prosecutors on international judicial cooperation in criminal matters will continue during 2021.

In addition, the EJC Secretariat will continue to establish new contacts and extend the cooperation with third countries.

In order to offer opportunities to strengthen the operational cooperation, the EJC partners will be invited to attend the EJC plenary meetings taking place in the Member States. Also, where necessary, the travel costs of the missions by the Secretary to the EJC and the EJC Secretariat as well as EJC contact points will be covered.

Activity 6.1 – Cooperation between the EJC and Eurojust

According to Article 48.1(b) of the Regulation 2018/1727 on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), replacing Council Decision 2002/187/JHA³, Eurojust and the EJC shall maintain privileged relations based on consultation and complementarity. This principle was underlined in the Council Conclusions adopted by the Romanian Presidency on the ‘Synergies between Eurojust and the networks established by the Council in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters’.

In line with this principle, the EJC Secretariat is performing activities in cooperation with Eurojust, including as an actor of judicial cooperation in seminars and meetings and through participation of the EJC Secretariat or EJC Contact Points in Eurojust activities, in order to ensure awareness of the two entities and correct allocation of cases between the EJC and Eurojust.

³ Article 25a(1)(b) of Council Decision 2002/187/JHA of 28 February 2002 setting up of Eurojust with a view of reinforcing the fight against serious crime

Eurojust is invited to the EJN plenary meetings as ordinary participants or to give lectures or to act as chair or rapporteur in workshops. Where applicable, the EJN will continue cooperating with Eurojust regarding the follow up to the recommendations from the Sixth round of mutual evaluations.

Activity 6.2 – Cooperation between the EJN and the European Public Prosecutor’s Office

The EJN has identified possible areas of cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO), which is going to be established in 2020. In order to support the EPPO, the EJN may provide information to practitioners about the EPPO, participate and provide training, liaise with the EPPO Delegate Prosecutors and act as active intermediaries in the area of judicial cooperation.

Activity 6.3 – Cooperation with EU Networks

As per the Council Conclusions adopted by the Romanian Presidency in June 2019 on the ‘Synergies between Eurojust and the networks established by the Council in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters’, the following activities are foreseen:

- Periodic meetings of the Secretary to the EJN with the Heads of the JITs and Genocide Network Secretariats for discussions about issues of common interest and possibilities to deliver joint messages. Participation of the EJN Secretariat in meetings of these networks and vice versa.
- Cooperation with the European Judicial Cybercrime Network (EJCN) where applicable and participation by the EJN Secretariat in the meetings of the EJCN.
- Sharing of contact lists and access to the restricted section of the respective websites

Activity 6.4 – Cooperation with the European Commission, Council Secretariat and European Parliament

The following activities are foreseen:

- Consultations between the EJN Secretariat and representatives of the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council.
- Participation of the EJN Secretariat or EJN Contact Points in experts meetings organised by the Commission or in meetings in the Council.

- Participation of representatives from the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council and the European Parliament in EJM meetings.
- Strengthening the links between the EJM and the European Parliament.

Activity 6.5 – Cooperation with third countries and other networks and partners

In order to achieve the objective, meetings with or participation in meetings organised by partner institutions and organisations are foreseen, as follows:

- The EJM Secretariat liaises with the secretariats of other judicial networks to discuss about ways of cooperation, e.g. the sharing of contact details.
- The EJM Secretariat assesses the needs for and makes contact with the appropriate entities in third countries with the aim of establishing cooperation through the appointment of contact points.
- Participation of the EJM Secretariat or Contact Points in the steering committees, project team meetings and other meetings of Partner organisations, e.g. the SIRIUS Project (obtaining e-evidence from the US).
- Participation of the EJM Secretariat or Contact Points in EJTN and ERA meetings and training activities.
- Participation of the EJM Secretariat or Contact Points in meetings of partners, e.g. the SEEPAG annual meeting.
- Participation of the EJM Secretariat in the plenary meetings of the PC-OC in the Council of Europe.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The annex shows the 2021 budget forecast.



EU2019.FI



ANNEX: EJM SECRETARIAT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021 – BUDGET FORECAST	
OBJECTIVES & ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES	BUDGET
Objective 1: EJM meetings	
1.1 Organisation of the 56th and 57th Plenary meetings	70,000.-*
1.2 Organisation of the 42nd Regular meeting	29,000 .-
1.3 Organisation of the 13th National Correspondents meeting	17,000 .-
1.4 Organisation of the 20th Tool Correspondents meeting	17,000 .-
1.5 Organisation of Presidency board meetings and EJM Working Group meetings	12,000 .-
Objective 3: Functioning of the EJM contact points	
3.2 Providing support for the organisation of EJM meetings in the Member States	40,000.-
3.3 Language training for the EJM Contact Points	30,000.-
3.4 Report on the EJM activities	4,000 .-
Objective 4: Administration and enhancement of the EJM website	
4.1 Maintenance and enhancements and updates of the EJM website	167,000.-**
4.5 Provide support to the EJM Tools Correspondents	6,000.-
Objective 5: Increasing awareness of the EJM	
5.1 Activities to increase awareness of the EJM	3,000.-
Objective 6: Cooperation with other actors in the field of judicial cooperation	
Missions/Representation of the EJM	25,000.-
Organising meetings with other judicial networks and structures in order to develop cooperation	10,000.-
Ensuring the proper administration of the EJM	
Various administrative costs	5,000.-
GRAND TOTAL	435,000.-

* In line with the adopted ceiling by Eurojust College

** This figure may be adapted due to the introduction of a new methodology with in-house human resources for maintenance and development of websites hosted at Eurojust, including the EJM website .