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# GUIDELINES ON THE EUROPEAN JUDICIAL NETWORK MEETINGS

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## INTRODUCTION

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These Guidelines on the European Judicial Network Meetings provide non-binding guiding principles for the organisation and financing by the European Judicial Network Secretariat (hereinafter referred to as the “EJN Secretariat”) of EJN meetings.

Article 3 (b) of the Council Decision 2008/976/JHA of 16 December 2008 on the European Judicial Network (EJN)<sup>2</sup> (*hereinafter referred to as the “EJN Decision”*) states that the EJN shall organise periodic meetings of the Member States’ (*hereinafter referred to as “MS”*) representatives in accordance with the procedures laid down in Articles 5 and 6 of the EJN Decision. This obligation and the EJN traditions are also reflected in the non-binding **Guidelines on the Structure and Functioning of the European Judicial Network**<sup>3</sup> and the **EJN Manual**<sup>4</sup>.

Guidelines on European Judicial Network (EJN) Regional meetings were first adopted in June 2009<sup>5</sup>. The Guidelines on the EJN meetings, compiling all EJN meetings, were adopted in March 2011<sup>6</sup> and revised in December 2012<sup>7</sup>. New guidelines on the Meetings of the EJN were adopted in June 2014<sup>8</sup> and revised in January 2016 (hereinafter referred to as the “**Guidelines**”).

The EJN meetings are planned annually by both the EJN Presidency Board and the EJN Secretariat, approved by the EJN Contact Points (*hereinafter referred to as “CP”s*) and are part of the EJN Work Programme. Article 11 of the EJN Decision together with article 25a (b) of the revised Council Decision on the strengthening of Eurojust and amending Council Decision 2002/187/JHA setting up Eurojust with a view to reinforcing the fight against serious crime<sup>9</sup> provide for that EJN (*hereinafter referred to as the “Eurojust Decision”*) may draw on Eurojust budget in order for the EJN to be able to carry out its tasks. This means that the EJN Secretariat presents the meetings’ annual plan to Eurojust’s administration via the EJN Secretariat Unit Plan. All budget appropriations must be made,

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<sup>1</sup> EJN/2014/4 REV

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 130–134.

<sup>3</sup> EJN/2009/1 REV 2010 REV EJN/2016/3.

<sup>4</sup> EJN/2009/7.

<sup>5</sup> EJN Guidelines on regional meetings, EJN/2009/2

<sup>6</sup> Guidelines for the EJN meetings, EJN/2011/1.

<sup>7</sup> EJN/2009/1 REV

<sup>8</sup> EJN/2014/4

<sup>9</sup> OJ L 138, 4.6.2009, p. 14–32.

including grants awarded, in accordance with Eurojust financial rules<sup>10</sup> and EU financial rules applicable to Eurojust<sup>11</sup>.

Provided that the EJM budgeted funds for the meetings are not completely or in part executed within one calendar year, the financial allocation for the EJM meetings should be transferred for other budgetary purposes within the EJM budget for the same year. The Guidelines on the Structure of the European Judicial Network apply to such reallocations.

The Guidelines are divided in two sections: Section 1 provides for guidelines applicable to meetings organised by the EJM Secretariat, and in particular which are stated in the EJM Decision. Section 2 provides for guidelines applicable to meetings created by the EJM to enhance its operation, e.g. National and Regional meetings.

## SECTION I: MEETINGS ORGANISED BY THE EJM SECRETARIAT

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### 1. EJM MEETINGS IN THE HAGUE

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#### 1.1. THE REGULAR MEETING

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Plenary meetings within the meaning of Article 5(1) of the EJM Decision<sup>12</sup> that may be held at the Council in Brussels or at the premises of Eurojust in The Hague are commonly called the “Regular meeting” (*hereinafter referred to as “Regular meeting”*).

The Regular meetings are held once a year, in the beginning of the calendar year, at the Council of the European Union in Brussels or on the premises of Eurojust in The Hague. As agreed by the EJM and the General Secretariat of the Council (*hereinafter referred to as “GSC”*), it is recommended that this meeting is held in The Hague and organised by the EJM Secretariat. However, this does not preclude the possibility of holding the meeting at the Council in Brussels. Guidelines applicable for the organisation of the Regular meetings in The Hague will be applicable also when the Regular meeting is held in Brussels, to the extent that these do not contradict any conditions and practical arrangements relevant for the organisation of the meeting outside The Hague.

The Regular meeting is held in The Hague in February or March. The meeting is organised by the EJM Secretariat in close cooperation with the MS holding the Presidency (*hereinafter referred to as the “Presidency”*).

To this meeting are regularly invited:

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<sup>10</sup> College Decision 2014-1 on Financial Regulation applicable to Eurojust, the Eurojust Implementing Rules (College Decision on the Provisional Application of Implementing Rules to the Financial Regulation of Eurojust of 11 January 2007 and College Decision 2007-17 on the Extension of the Provisional Application of Implementing Rules to the Financial Regulation of Eurojust) and the Eurojust Control Framework - Internal Control Standards for Effective Management and Requirements of 15 December 2010.

<sup>11</sup> EU Financial Regulation and its Rules of Application: Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 [OJ L 298, 26.10.2012]. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union [OJ L 362, 31.12.2012].

<sup>12</sup> Plenary meetings of Article 5(1) have for purposes to allow the CPs to get to know each other and exchange experience, particularly concerning the operation of the EJM or to provide a forum for discussion of practical and legal problems encountered by the MS in the context of judicial cooperation, in particular with regard to the implementation of measures adopted by the European Union. According to Article 5(3) once a year, the meeting may be held on the premises of the Council in Brussels or on the premises of Eurojust in The Hague. Two CPs per Member States shall be invited to meetings organised on the premises of the Council and at Eurojust.

- a) 2 CPs per MS,
- b) 1 delegate from a candidate or accessing countries,
- c) 1 delegate from Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland,
- d) 1 extra CP from the Presidency to facilitate the chairing of the meeting,
- e) an extra CP from a MS if there is a handover to be made.

Depending on the topics of the meeting and upon request of the Presidency, could be invited:

- f) the GSC,
- g) the CP from the European Commission,
- h) *Ad hoc* participants,
- i) Eurojust,
- j) Up to 5 delegates from third countries and observers from other bodies sharing similar objectives in the field of international judicial co-operation in criminal matters.

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## 1.2. NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS MEETING (NCM)

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The NCM within the meaning of article 6(1) of the EJM Decision have for purpose to discuss administrative matters related to the EJM.

The NCM is organised on an *ad hoc* basis and at least once per year usually in October in The Hague at Eurojust. The meeting is organised by the EJM Secretariat in close cooperation with the Presidency.

To this meeting are regularly invited:

- a) 1 National Correspondent (*hereinafter referred to as "NC"*) per MS,
- b) 1 additional CP from the Presidency to facilitate the chairing of the meeting.

*Ad hoc* participants:

- c) 1 delegate from EU candidate or accessing countries,
- d) 1 delegate from Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland,
- e) 1 additional CP from a MS if there is a handover to be done.

Depending on the topics of the meeting and upon request of the Presidency, could be invited:

- f) The CP from the European Commission,
- g) The GSC,
- a) Eurojust,
- b) Other *ad hoc* participants.

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## 1.3. TOOL CORRESPONDENTS MEETING (TCM)

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The Tool Correspondent meeting within the meaning of article 6(2) of the EJM Decision has for purpose to deal with issues referred to in Article 4(5) of the EJM Decision.

The Tool Correspondents meeting is organised on an *ad hoc* basis and at least once per year usually in March in The Hague. The meeting is organised in close cooperation between the EJM Secretariat and the Tool Correspondent of the Presidency.

To this meeting are regularly invited:

- a) 1 Tool Correspondent (*hereinafter referred to as "TC"*) per MS,
- b) 1 additional CP from the Presidency to facilitate the chairing of the meeting.

*Ad-hoc* participants:

- c) 1 delegate from EU candidate or accessing countries,
- d) 1 delegate from Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland,
- e) 1 additional CP from a MS if there is a handover to be made,
- f) Representatives from the EJM website contractor.

Depending on the topics of the meeting and upon request of the Presidency, could be invited:

- g) The CP from the European Commission,
- h) The GSC,
- i) Eurojust,
- j) Delegates or representatives from third countries or other partners involved in the e-tools of the EJM website.

## **2. ORGANISATION AND FINANCING OF THE EJM MEETINGS IN THE HAGUE**

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### **2.1. INVITATIONS**

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The EJM Secretariat prepares the invitation, the registration form and a document with practical information on the meeting location. The agenda is prepared in close cooperation between the Presidency and the EJM Secretariat.

The EJM Secretariat will send the invitation documents to the participants on behalf of the Presidency and publish the documents on the EJM website.

### **2.2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

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The EJM Secretariat, in cooperation with the Eurojust Conference and Events Management Sector and other relevant units and sectors, is responsible for the organisation of the EJM meetings in The Hague.

If the meeting is held at the Council, it will be co-organised by the EJM Secretariat, the Presidency and GSC together with the Eurojust Conference and Events Management Sector.

The meeting working languages of the Regular meeting (1.1) are English and French. The meeting documents will be in English and interpretation will be provided.

The working language of the NCM (1.2) and TCM (1.3.) will be English. The meeting documents will be in English.

### **2.3. REGISTRATIONS**

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Participants must send to the EJM Secretariat the registration forms filled in no later than 3 weeks before the meeting, unless specified otherwise in the invitation to the meeting.

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## 2.4. FINANCIAL MATTERS

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When the meeting is held in The Hague (Eurojust premises), the EJM Secretariat will cover the costs as follows:

- a) Travel Costs: reimbursement will be provided in accordance with the Eurojust budget ceilings or in accordance with ceilings provided by the EJM Secretariat for the particular meeting at the time of the invitation. The reimbursement will not exceed the applicable ceilings to each MS of the CP;
- b) Depending on the duration of the meeting, 1 or 2 nights of accommodation.
- c) An additional night may be covered if the participant is involved in additional EJM meetings organised in the margins of the meeting, due to flight unavailability and/or if lower travel costs justify a longer stay in The Hague;
- d) Collations depending on budget availability;
- e) *Ad-hoc* participants may be reimbursed for travel costs and accommodation following the conditions above and provided there is budget availability.

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## 3. AD HOC MEETINGS IN THE HAGUE OR IN THE MEMBER STATES

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### 3.1. EJM PRESIDENCY BOARD MEETINGS

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The function and the working methodology of the EJM Presidency Board are described in the **Guidelines on the Structure and Functioning of the European Judicial Network**.<sup>13</sup>

The meetings will take place in The Hague or in the Member State of the Presidency. The meetings will be organised by the EJM Secretariat or co-organised with the Member State of the Presidency.

The EJM Presidency Board will also meet on an *ad hoc* basis whenever deemed necessary by the Presidency.

Additionally, bolstering the strength of the privileged relationship between the EJM and Eurojust, the EJM Presidency Board and the EJM Secretariat will meet with the Eurojust Presidency team and the Administrative Director of Eurojust in order to discuss common interests or matters related to both structures. Both the EJM Presidency Board and the Secretariat may participate in Eurojust's internal meetings at the invitation of Eurojust's College or Administration. This option is intended to enhance relations and the coordination between both structures. These particular meetings should be co-organised with Eurojust.

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### 3.2. AD-HOC WORKING GROUPS' MEETINGS

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As per the Guidelines on the Structure and Functioning of the European Judicial Network and in accordance with the best practice within the EJM, the possibility of establishing sub-groups are set out for a specific purpose and for a specific time.

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<sup>13</sup> EJM/2016/3.

Meetings of such sub-groups should be organised in accordance with the EJM Work Programme as well as the EJM priorities and EJM Presidency Board scoreboard. These *ad-hoc* working groups meet:

- a) In line with its statement of work (e.g. scoreboard/ roadmap, EJM Work Programme, action plan) agreed between the EJM Presidency Board, the EJM Secretariat and the working group.
- b) On an *ad hoc* basis when there is a particular need;
- c) Upon request by the EJM Presidency Board.

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### 3.3. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

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The EJM Secretariat may organise these meetings in The Hague at Eurojust's premises, or in the Member States on the occasion of other meetings taking place in the Member States, in particular the EJM Plenary meetings as referred to in Chapter 4 of these Guidelines.

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### 3.4. FINANCIAL MATTERS

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The EJM Secretariat may cover the following costs:

- a) Travel Costs: reimbursement will be provided in accordance with the Eurojust budget ceilings unless the EJM Secretariat provides for different ceilings at the time of the invitation. The reimbursement will exceed the applicable ceilings to each MS of the CP;
- b) 1 night of accommodation. An additional night may be covered if the participant is involved in additional EJM meetings organised in the margins of the meeting, due to flight unavailability and/or if lower travel costs justify a longer stay in The Hague;
- c) Collations depending on budget availability.

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## 4. PLENARY MEETINGS IN THE MEMBER STATES

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### 4.1. OVERVIEW OF THE PLENARY MEETINGS

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Plenary meetings of the EJM within the meaning of Article 5(1) of the EJM Decision are, in principle, to be held in the Member State of the Presidency during the last phase of the Presidency. The EJM Presidency mirrors the Council Presidencies and rotates every 6 months. Therefore, the Presidency alternate from January to June and from July to December.

The Presidency has a duty to have the Plenary meeting organised under its mandate, in order to fulfil conditions provided for in Article 5(3) of the EJM Decision.

Among other main objectives of this type of meeting, the meeting should enable the CPs of all the MSs to meet authorities of the Presidency other than its own CPs and to visit specific bodies in that MS with responsibilities in the context of international judicial cooperation or of combating certain forms of serious crime.

The meeting programme should be operational and contain workshops dedicated to discuss practical issues of judicial cooperation in criminal matters; and a section should be dedicated to discuss the EJM business in accordance with Article 5(1)(a) and 5(1)(b).

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## 4.2. TIME OF THE MEETING

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The dates for the Plenary meeting should be decided by the incoming Presidency preferable 12 months in advance.<sup>14</sup> The Member State concerned will suggest to the EJM Secretariat at least two alternative dates for the meeting.

The Plenary meetings, including the travelling time for the participants, should in principle not take place on weekends and national holidays.

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## 4.3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ORGANISATION OF THE PLENARY MEETINGS

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The EJM Secretariat, with the support of the Eurojust Conference and Events Management Sector and other relevant units and sectors, is responsible for the organisation of the Plenary meeting.

The Presidency, who is the host MS of the Plenary meeting, is responsible for providing resources, services and support in order to contribute to the fulfilment of the Plenary meeting as per Article 25a(1)(b) of the “Eurojust Decision”.

Resources provided by the Presidency should be agreed upon in advance with the EJM Secretariat.

The Presidency must inform the EJM Secretariat during the preparation period and prior to its takeover of its mandate, the entity that will be involved in the organisation of the Plenary meeting and provide contact details of the organisational team from the Presidency, no later than 8 months before the time of the meeting

The meeting programme should be prepared in close cooperation between the Presidency and the EJM Secretariat.

The Presidency is encouraged to provide as much support as possible for the fulfilment of the meeting, mainly through services that may be already used by the Presidency of the EU.

An example to be used unless agreed otherwise between the EJM Secretariat and the Presidency, would be as set out below:

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<sup>14</sup> As the organisation of the Plenary Meetings is launched before the Presidency has taken over from the current MS holding the Presidency, the “Presidency” referred to in point 4 of these Guidelines, concerns the incoming Presidency.

<b>EJN Plenary meetings</b>	
<b>COST/ SERVICE<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>PROVIDER</b>
Travel expenses	MS
Venue	Presidency
Accreditation for the venue	Presidency
Equipment for interpretation, sound system etc.	Presidency
Interpretation	Presidency
Staff/ Hostesses	Presidency
Catering at the meeting venue	Presidency
Catering during preparatory meetings (if applicable)	Presidency
Conference packages	Presidency/ EJN
Airport transfer and local transport	EJN
Accommodation for participants	EJN
Rooms for preparatory meetings	EJN
Registration of the participants	EJN
Dinners	EJN
Photograph services	EJN

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#### 4.4. ADVANCE INSPECTION VISIT

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No later than 8 months before the Plenary meeting, the delegation from the EJN Secretariat, Eurojust Conference and Events Management Sector and Eurojust Security will attend the advance inspection visit to the MS that will be holding the meeting. The Presidency should enable the delegation to visit the meeting venue, when possible, and to hold meetings between the authorities in that MS responsible for the organisation of the Plenary meeting.

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#### 4.5. INVITATIONS AND VENUE ACCREDITATION

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The EJN Secretariat in close cooperation with the Presidency will prepare<sup>16</sup>:

- a) the invitation letter,
- b) the registration form,
- c) information sheet for the accreditation of the meeting venue facilities for security requirements provided for by the Presidency and
- d) a document with practical information on the meeting's location,

unless agreed otherwise in advance with the EJN Secretariat. The Presidency will ensure the signing of the invitation letter.

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<sup>15</sup> The Presidency may provide for additional services incl. any services that are not set out in the Guidelines on the European Judicial Network Meetings.

<sup>16</sup> Models of these documents can be provided by the EJN Secretariat upon request.



These documents should be ready to be disseminated to the CP's by the EJM Secretariat no later than 2 months prior to the meeting.

The venue accreditation process should be finalised no later than 2 months prior to the meeting.

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#### 4.6. REGISTRATION

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Participants must send the registration forms filled in by the deadline provided by the Secretariat. Immediately after the deadline for registration, the unused country quotas will be redistributed, in close cooperation with the Presidency, to ensure a wider participation of the EJM CPs.

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#### 4.7. PARTICIPANTS

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To this meeting are regularly invited:

- a) EJM CPs,
- b) Delegates from EU candidate or accessing countries
- c) Delegates from EU associated countries
- d) The CP from the European Commission,
- e) A delegate from the GSC,
- f) A delegate from the European Parliament,
- g) Participants from Eurojust,
- h) Practitioners from the MS of the Presidency and
- i) Members from other judicial networks,
- j) Delegates from other EJM partners.

Ad hoc participants:

- k) The Presidency and the EJM Secretariat may agree on the participation of delegates or representatives of third countries and/or national or international institutions and bodies sharing similar objectives in the field of international judicial co-operation in criminal matters and EJM partners.

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#### 4.8. LINGUISTIC REGIME

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The official language of the MS currently holding the Presidency, English and French should be the working languages of the Plenary meeting.

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#### 4.9. MEETING DOCUMENTS

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Documents for the Plenary meetings are prepared by the Presidency in close cooperation with the EJM Secretariat, unless agreed otherwise with the EJM Secretariat.

Meeting documents, which are prepared by the Presidency, must be sent to the EJM Secretariat by the Presidency in English well before the date of the meeting, taking into account any deadline for the distribution of them in advance to the participants. When appropriate, the EJM Secretariat will add them to the EJM Registry.

Meeting documents, which are prepared by the EJM Secretariat, are sent to the Presidency for approval in due time.

The EJM Secretariat will follow the *paperless meeting* policy for the EJM meetings. The Presidency may decide to distribute copies of the meeting documents to all participants at the meeting venue, unless agreed on differently in advance with the EJM Secretariat.

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#### 4.10. FINANCIAL MATTERS AND APPLICABLE FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES

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The EJM Secretariat, as the primary organiser, covers the general organisation of the Plenary meeting. In order to comply with the principle of co-financing<sup>17</sup>, the Presidency will have to ensure budget for those tasks that the Presidency is responsible for, as defined in these Guidelines.

Depending on the Presidency's specificities and budget constrictions, the EJM Secretariat may have to reduce the services and/or re-arrange the Programme.

No later than 8 months before of the planned dates of the Plenary meeting, the EJM Secretariat and Presidency, will agree on the organisation and cost estimate, as well as distribute the responsibilities of the following activities in line with point 4.3.:

- a) meeting venue,
- b) accommodation for 2 nights for the participants,
- c) catering (lunch, collation and dinner),
- d) equipment (sound system, computers, copier, etc),
- e) interpretation,
- f) written translation of the documents,
- g) airport transfer and local transportation (e.g. from hotel to the meeting venue and back),
- h) conference packages including stationary and folders for the participants,
- i) arrangements for the speakers,
- j) photograph services including group photo,
- k) any other related organisational issues and/or services.

The EJM Secretariat and the Presidency are responsible for the contracts financed for the above mentioned services.

In undertaking its duties, the EJM Secretariat will respect the principles of transparency, proportionality, equal-treatment and non-discrimination. In executing the budget for the EJM Plenary meetings, the EJM Secretariat will strictly follow the principle of sound financial management.

In line with the principle of transparency, the EJM Secretariat communicates the budget availability and any changes to it to the Presidency in due time and without delay. In line with the principle of proportionality the EJM Secretariat ensures the right balance between responsibilities set out by these Guidelines and means which are being used to achieve those.

Principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination means all Member States holding the Presidency will be treated equally, respecting the same eligible costs and the maximum ceiling to the organisation of the meeting.

The principle of sound financial management requires that the uses of resources are economic, efficient and effective. The EJM Secretariat is responsible that using the resources for its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity, quality and at the best price; that the

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<sup>17</sup> Article 25a(1)(b) of the Eurojust Decision, Article 183 of Rules of Application of the EU Financial Regulation.

best relationship between resources employed and results achieved is provided, and that the attainment of the specific objectives set and the achievement of the intended results is guaranteed.

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#### 4.11. CEILINGS AND ELIGIBLE COSTS FOR ALL EXPENSES FROM THE EJN BUDGET

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##### CEILING OF THE OVERALL COST OF THE MEETING:

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The EJN budget will cover up to a maximum of EUR 50,000 of the eligible costs of the organisation of the Plenary meeting through its budget lines within Eurojust budget.

Ceilings for activities and services are based on Eurojust ceilings and Eurojust documents relevant for the organisation of the meetings<sup>18</sup>. The EJN Secretariat will compile the relevant ceilings in the beginning of each calendar year in a table format. The table for the ceilings is available upon request at any time.

A 5% margin should be allocated in the budget planned for the Plenary meeting for contingences in accordance with the eligible costs and must be approved in advance.

The budget abovementioned is to be strictly kept – no extra unforeseen requests can be accommodated.

##### ELIGIBLE COSTS:

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#### 1. Accommodation:

Maximum of two nights of accommodation per person should be covered.

#### 2. Meals:

Lunch, including drinks, waiters, linen, flowers, etc. Up to two lunches will be covered.

Dinner, including drinks, waiters, linen, flowers, etc. Up to two dinners will be covered.

No liquor-based drinks are eligible for reimbursement; only wine, beer; soft drinks and water are covered.

The costs for accommodation and meals are eligible for the following number of participants:

- a) 3 CPs per MS<sup>19</sup>,
- b) Up to 20 participants from the host MS, including the 3 CPs mentioned above,
- c) The representatives of the EJN Secretariat,
- d) 2 representatives of the GSC,
- e) 2 delegates per EU candidate/accessing countries,
- f) 3 representatives from Eurojust,
- g) 1 delegate each from EU associated countries,
- h) 1 delegate/representative from each of the third countries and/or international or national institutions invited on an *ad hoc* basis, up to a maximum of 5 participants in

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<sup>18</sup> E.g. College Decision 2011-55 on amending existing policies on coordination meetings and Conference and Events Management Sector Newsletter No 2 winter 2012.

<sup>19</sup> The participation of more than three CP for a MS, other than the host MS, may be permitted upon request to the organiser of the meeting provided there is budget availability. However, in principle, cost reimbursements will not be available for additional CPs.

total,

- i) 1 observer from each of the international judicial networks invited to the meeting,
- j) Up to 5 observers from other EJM partners.

In principle, each MS or other invited participants receive a non-transferable 'quota' for participants. However, the EJM Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Presidency, may transfer the quotas that are not filled by the participants, within the deadline for registration, to other participants with greater participation to maximise de resources available to the meeting. Additional hotel nights must be agreed upon before the hotel rooms are booked.

Due to contractual arrangements and to any organisational purposes, in principle, the accommodation costs are eligible only for participants whose registrations have been received by the deadline (provided for in 4.6).

In addition, the cost of the lunches and/ or dinners for participants invited by the Presidency will be covered.

### **3. Interpretation:**

Interpretation services into English and French (the working languages of the presidency meetings), plus the language of the Presidency, should be covered.

### **4. Meeting rooms:**

Costs associated to the renting of the meeting venue should be covered. Hosts are only covered for expenses related to meeting and conference setup.

### **5. Equipment:**

Costs associated to sound system setup, computers, copiers, etc. should be covered.

### **6. Transport:**

Costs associated to transfers provided in the meeting programme, agenda or practical information, including airport transfer.

### **7. Speakers:**

Travel costs and accommodation may be covered for speakers who are not listed as any otherwise eligible participant in these Guidelines.

### **8. Family photo:**

Costs associated to photo coverage of the event and family photo should be covered.

For the maximum eligible cost of the services as well as for any organisational activity not specified in these Guidelines, Eurojust ceilings and Eurojust documents relevant for the organisation of the meetings are applied<sup>20</sup>. Expenses that exceed the ceilings require prior authorisation from the authorising officer of Eurojust and are allowed only provided that the maximum ceiling of the meeting (50 000 EUR) is not exceeded.

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## **4.12. DEADLINES**

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<sup>20</sup> E.g. College Decision 2011-55 on amending existing policies on coordination meetings and Conference and Events Management Sector Newsletter No 2 winter 2012.

Presidency must respect the deadlines below unless agreed otherwise with the EJM Secretariat, for organisational purposes. If the MS holding Presidency does not respect the deadlines or does not follow instructions agreed upon, the EJM Secretariat reserves the right to postpone the Plenary meeting.

<b>Deadlines</b>			
<b>TIMEFRAME<sup>21</sup></b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ENTITY RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>RELEVANT POINT</b>
<b>12 months before</b>	The dates for the Plenary meeting should be decided	The Presidency	4.2
<b>8 months before</b>	Advance inspection visit to the host MS	The EJM Secretariat/ the Presidency	4.4
<b>8 months before</b>	EJM Secretariat will be informed who is the entity that will be involved in the organisation of Plenary meeting and provide contact details of the organisation team from the Presidency.	The Presidency	4.3
<b>8 months before</b>	It is agreed on the organisation and cost estimate, as well as distribute the responsibilities of the activities listed above. There must be a clear division of the responsibilities including party responsible for covering the cost of a particular responsibility (4.9).	The EJM Secretariat/ The Presidency	4.10- 4.11
<b>2 months before</b>	The invitation letter, the registration form and a document with practical information on the meeting's location must be finalised.	The Presidency in close cooperation with the EJM Secretariat	4.5
<b>2 months before</b>	The venue accreditation process should be finalised no later than 2 months prior to the meeting.	The Presidency	4.5
<b>4 months before</b>	A document that requires contribution from CPs from other MSs for the discussions (e.g. a questionnaire) must be finalised in order to allow sufficient time for the CPs to answer and for summarising the replies.	The Presidency	4.9

<sup>21</sup> From here on: before the time when the meeting takes place as agreed on in line with point 4.2. The activities specified here should be completed no later than the indicated timeframe, unless agreed otherwise between the EJM Secretariat and the Presidency.

<b>4 weeks before</b>	Meeting documents that do not require contribution from CPs must be finalised.	The Presidency	4.9
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## SECTION II: MEETINGS CREATED BY THE EJN TO ENHANCE ITS OPERATION

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### 1. OVERVIEW OF THE MEETINGS

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These meetings have been considered necessary for the performance of the EJN’s mission and tasks such as the promotion of the EJN and the improvement of its functioning and the strengthening of its support to the Presidency of the Council. These meetings are co-organised by the EJN Secretariat in line with the procedure set out in this section.

#### 1.1. REGIONAL MEETINGS

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The EJN’s efficiency and cooperation amongst EJN CPs in different MSs may be improved by organising Regional meetings of the EJN CPs in various MSs. This possibility is envisioned in the EJN Vision Paper adopted during the 25<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting in Rovaniemi on 1 December 2006<sup>22</sup>. The Vision Paper states that Regional meetings should also be promoted to help focus on problems which have a particular regional character.

The first organisation guidelines for these meetings were adopted at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Plenary of the EJN, 25-26 June 2009. After their implementation, some points were adjusted.

This section is intended to provide guidelines on how to organise the EJN Regional meetings with the support from the EJN budget.

The term “regional,” as used in these guidelines, should not be construed in a narrow geographical sense. The EJN Regional meetings may be organised by the MSs, regardless of their geographic proximity or distance. Therefore the countries involved in the meetings do not necessarily have to be neighbouring states and also third countries may be invited to take part in them. MSs interested in applying for funding should consult with the countries that they intend to invite to the meeting, prior to submitting the application.

For this meeting, the MS organising a Regional meeting should invite:

- a) CPs and judicial authorities – central, regional and/or local - from the MS organising.
- b) Ad-hoc Participants – when possible the participation of a representative of the Member State holding the Presidency of the Council, the EJN Secretariat or a third country should be also considered.

The CPs taking part in these meetings are encouraged to inform the EJN Secretariat, so that this information can be included in the Report on the Operation and Management of the EJN to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on its activities and management.

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<sup>22</sup> See doc. 16444/06 EJN 28.

The Regional meetings may also be organised without the involvement of the EJM Secretariat and financial support from the EJM budget. In this case, the criteria described below will not apply.

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## 1.2. NATIONAL MEETINGS

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The National meetings of the EJM CPs are included in the Conclusions of the 35<sup>th</sup> Plenary of the EJM on 28-30 November 2010.

The Member States are encouraged to provide support to their EJM CPs to organise regularly, at least once per year, working meetings between themselves and between them and national judicial networks in criminal matters or other representatives of the judiciary, where applicable.

The CPs taking part in these meetings are encouraged to provide information to the EJM Secretariat, so that this information can be included in the Report on the Operation and Management of the EJM to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on its activities and management.

In accordance with the EJM Work Programme, the EJM Secretariat can provide support to these meetings via their participation in and presentation of the EJM matters, e.g., the website and current issues.

National meetings organised with financial support of the EJM budget:

The National meetings of the EJM CPs may be organised preferably in the Member states for strengthening of links between the CPs and raising awareness of the EJM and its operational tools among members of the judiciary.

The National meetings can also be organised in The Hague envisaging the synergy between EJM and Eurojust towards a more effective judicial cooperation in the EU.

The National meetings being held in The Hague will be organised by the MS with the support of the EJM Secretariat. The organisation and financing of the meetings provided by these Guidelines will be equal to National meetings organised in the MS.

The National meetings may also be organised without the involvement of the EJM Secretariat and without financial support from the EJM budget. In this case, the criteria described below will not apply.

## 2. ORGANISATION AND FINANCING

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### 2.1. FINANCING

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The EJM budget will provide partial financing to the MS organising the meeting in a form of grant agreement, unless other form of financing is provided for. The grant award procedure will be carried out in accordance with Eurojust financial rules referred to in the introduction of these Guidelines. After performance of the tasks related to the organisation of the national meeting and provision of the required supporting documents, a grant will be paid in accordance with the grant agreement and within the limits mentioned below (e.g. grant ceiling and eligible costs).

The maximum amount of the grant will be established in the Call for Applications for Financial Assistance for the organisation of EJM Regional and National meetings (hereinafter referred to as “*Call for Proposals*”), published by the EJM Secretariat.

### 2.2. GRANT AWARD PROCEDURE

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The budget available for the organisation of National and Regional meetings will be included in the EJM Work Programme each year. The final maximum grant in each calendar year may be approved by the EJM in the Plenary meeting at the end of the year. At this meeting the EJM can also decide that, due to budget limitations, financing regional meetings may have priority. The EJM Secretariat will prepare a Call for Proposals, send it to all EJM CP(s) and publish it in the EJM website under “Funding for EJM meetings”. EJM CP who wishes to organise a national or a regional meeting should send its application by the deadline established in the call for Proposals. The meetings should be planned from mid-May to mid-November of the corresponding year unless a different time-frame is provided in the Call for Proposals. The EJM Secretariat reserves the right to alter the dates of the meetings in agreement with the organiser.

The application must contain:

- a) The purpose of the meeting and a draft agenda;
- b) A complete budget estimate (form enclosed in the call for grants);
- c) Information about the estimated number of participants, and the date and venue of the meeting; and
- d) The signature of at least one EJM CP of a MS organising the meeting.

Applications that do not fulfil the conditions set out in 2.2. a)-d) are not considered eligible for the grant.

### 2.3. SELECTION CRITERIA

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The selection criteria should enable to assess the applicant’s ability to complete the proposed action or EJM work programme.

The application for financial assistance must be submitted by an EJM CP<sup>23</sup> in his/her professional

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<sup>23</sup> the National Correspondent concerned should be informed about the application



capacity in order to demonstrate the professional competencies required to organise a EJM Regional and National Meeting.

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## 2.4. AWARD CRITERIA

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The award criteria should enable to assess the quality of the proposals submitted in the light of priorities and principles set. The award criteria will be published in the Call for Proposals.

The award criteria should take into account whether the MS of the applicant has already received funds from the EU budget to organise a Regional and/or a National meeting in previous years.

In addition, the award criteria will be set in line with the following priorities and principles:

**a) National meetings are organised for the EJM CPs<sup>24</sup> of one MSs and it must pursue at least one of the following goals:**

- 1) Exchanging best practices between CPs in practical cases of judicial cooperation;
- 2) Promoting the work of the EJM in the MS;
- 3) Promoting the EJM website in the MS;
- 4) Increasing networking among the judiciary in the MS, and between the EJM CPs;
- 5) Mutual information exchange about current legal issues and regulations in the MS, in particular in the field of criminal law and judicial co-operation in criminal matters.

**b) Regional meetings are organised for the EJM CPs of at least three MSs or two MSs and a third country must pursue at least one of the following goals:**

- 1) Exchanging best practices in the participating States;
- 2) Promoting the work of the EJM in participating States.
- 3) Increasing networking among the EJM CPs of the participating States, and between the EJM CPs and the internal structures of the EJM in the participating states, where applicable;
- 4) Mutual information exchange about current legal issues and regulations in the participating states, in particular in the field of criminal law and judicial co-operation in criminal matters;
- 5) Discussion of solutions to practical problems in co-operation with the participating States.

If two or more eligible applications receive the same amount of points in the evaluation of the award criteria, but due to the limited funds available they all cannot be granted financial assistance will be awarded to the application from the Member State, which has not previously received financial assistance from the EU budget to organise EJM Regional and/or National meetings. In case that all Member States received such financial assistance, the application from Member State which has received such financial assistance the least number of times will be preferred.

If none of the applications from those eligible received previously any financial assistance or if applications from two or more Member States received previously financial assistance for the same number of times, financial assistance will be granted to the application with highest number of points achieved in an award winning criterion. If the applications score the same number of points for all criteria, the Evaluation Committee shall decide, based on an overall assessment of the

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<sup>24</sup> Also representatives from national judicial networks in criminal matters and other representatives of the judiciary may participate, as well as EJM Contact Points from other Member States

respective applications.

This also applies if at least three participating Member States in two or more applications are the same and if both or all applications would be successful based on the points achieved in line with award criteria.

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## 2.5. EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND AWARD DECISION

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The applications will be evaluated and awarded points in accordance with the award criteria. An appointed Evaluation Committee will recommend the Authorising Officer on the award decision. The Authorising Officer will draw up the list of beneficiaries and the amounts approved (the award decision), which will be adopted shortly after the evaluation and the successful MSs (beneficiary MS) will be notified by the EJM Secretariat. The CPs will be informed about the results if possible during the Regular meeting taking place in February/March<sup>25</sup>.

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## 2.6. GRANT AGREEMENT

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The grant agreement<sup>26</sup> should be signed at least 4 weeks before the meeting. To this end, the following information must be provided:

- a) A completed and signed budget estimate
- b) The name and function of the person who will sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, or any other competent authority of the MS organising the meeting.
- c) Bank account details, together with the completed forms annexed to the grant agreement.

A budget estimate provided by the EJM Secretariat must be filled in and sent by email to the EJM Secretariat at least 4 months before the meeting. If approved, this budget estimate will be annexed to the grant agreement to be signed. Please note that the signature of the grant agreement is conditional upon approval of the budget estimate and the grant agreement must be signed no later than 4 weeks before the meeting. If the grant agreement is not signed at least 4 weeks before the national meeting, the EJM Secretariat reserves the right to postpone or cancel the meeting.

Within 10 Eurojust working days after receipt of the budget estimate, the Budget and Finance Unit of Eurojust may request additional information/clarifications via the EJM Secretariat. Upon a request for additional information/clarifications, the beneficiary MS must provide the information and clarifications within 10 Eurojust working days. Please note that the budget estimate allows for a 5% margin for unforeseen costs within the limits of the grant ceiling and provided that the 5% margin for unforeseen costs qualify as eligible costs within the meaning of the grant agreement.

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## 2.7. GRANT CEILING

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<sup>25</sup> The evaluation of the proposals and the award will proceed as described in EU Financial Regulation and its Rules of Application: Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 [O J L 298, 26.10.2012]. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union [O J L 362, 31.12.2012].

<sup>26</sup> The model grant agreement will be found on the EJM website. The grant agreement will be signed between Eurojust and the competent authority of the Member State that holds the Presidency.

The EJM budget will cover up to a maximum of 95% of the organisational costs (the maximum amount for funding per meeting to be indicated in the Call for Proposals).

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## 2.8. ELIGIBLE COSTS

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### 1. Accommodation:

Maximum of two nights of accommodation per person should be covered.

### 2. Meals:

Lunch, including drinks, waiters, linen, flowers, etc. Up to two lunches will be covered.

Dinner, including drinks, waiters, linen, flowers, etc. Up to two dinners will be covered.

No liquor-based drinks are eligible for reimbursement; only wine, beer; soft drinks and water are covered.

The costs for accommodation and meals are eligible for the following number of participants:

- a) All CPs of the MS organising the meeting;
- b) Up to 30 participants from the organising MS;
- c) 1 representative the Presidency;
- d) The representatives of the EJM Secretariat;
- e) 1 representative of the Council Secretariat;
- f) The CP from the European Commission
- g) 1 delegate from the European Parliament
- h) 1 delegate/representative from international institutions invited on an *ad hoc* basis, up to a maximum of 5;

### 3. Interpretation services:

Should be covered where necessary.

### 4. Meeting rooms:

Hosts are only reimbursed for expenses related to meeting and conference setup.

### 5. Equipment:

Costs associated with sound system setup, computers, copiers, etc. should be covered.

### 6. Local transport:

The EJM will also reimburse bus transport for participants during the meeting days, including airport transfer.

### 7. Travel costs for eligible participants

### 8. Speakers:

Travel costs and accommodation may be reimbursed up to a maximum of three speakers will be allowed per host country.

Costs not eligible for reimbursement: Costs for a cultural programme, decorations, music (entertainment) and gifts.

A 5% margin should be allocated in the budget for contingences in accordance with the eligible costs and must be approved in advance.

The beneficiary should forward original or certified copies of invoices specifying the costs, keeping these requirements in mind. For example, a hotel invoice must state which persons are entitled to reimbursement according to the above rules.

Where the MS organising the regional or national meeting needs to launch a public procurement procedure, then it will award the contract to the bid offering the best value for money. Where possible, it should attach 3 quotes as supporting document to the budget estimate.

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## 2.9. SUBMISSION OF A REQUEST FOR PAYMENT

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After the meeting ends, the beneficiary must send a signed request for payment and a completed table outlining all costs incurred for the meeting, sorted by category. This should be sent to the EJM Secretariat, along with the complete list of participants and forward copies of invoices specifying the costs and a signed statement of the proof of payment of the costs incurred.

These should be sent no later than 45 days after the meeting. The submitted costs will be evaluated on their eligibility within 30 days after receipt. The beneficiary may be required to clarify issues concerning the costs incurred before the costs are accepted and the payment made.

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## 2.10. MEETING SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS

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Summaries, conclusions and/or recommendations of the meetings should be compiled at the end of the meeting and distributed to the EJM Secretariat. The EJM CPs should be notified of the results of the meetings by the EJM Secretariat by any appropriate means; where possible, conclusions should also be uploaded to the EJM website.

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## 2.11. REPORT OF THE EJM SECRETARIAT

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The EJM Secretariat should include, in the Report on Activities and Management of the EJM, the regional and national meetings organised by the CPs, based on the documents referred to in 2.10.