

Studies on the Digitalisation of Justice

Thomas Wahl

News

On 14 September 2020, the Commission published two [studies on the digitalisation of justice](#). The studies support the Commission in identifying areas where there is a need for coordinated action at the EU level.

The [study on “cross-border digital criminal justice”](#) identified the needs and challenges to communicate and exchange case-related data in a digital and secure way when agencies cooperate in cross-border criminal cases. After having found out the major deficiencies, the study suggests seven solutions to address the business needs:

- Secure communication channel;
- Communication tool;
- Redesigned Eurojust case management system;
- The joint investigation team collaboration platform;
- Exchange of data between the JHA agencies and EU bodies;
- Judicial cases cross-check;
- Large files solution.

The [study on the “use of innovative technologies in the justice field”](#) explored existing policies, strategies and legislation at the national and European levels, and took stock of the current use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and blockchain/Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) tools in the justice field. It also suggests several horizontal actions as a way forward. Following consultations with public administration representatives and with stakeholders, the study team identified 130 projects that use AI and blockchain technologies: 93 projects by Member State authorities and the judiciary, 8 projects by professional legal organisations and 29 projects (products and/or services) by private companies. These projects can be categorized in solving the following business problems:

- Processing high volume of data;
- Processing high volume of video, audio and images;
- Linking information across different sources;
- Access to justice/public services;
- Data protection compliance;
- Preparing high volume of data;
- Administrative/facilities management;
- Lack of authenticity/traceability.

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Together with suggestions on the exchange of good practices regarding the projects identified, the study makes recommendations for cross-cutting, horizontal actions:

- Need for coordination and improved communication on project activities at the EU level, given that a number of projects with similar objectives, business problems and technologies used to solve them exist;
- Establishment of a mechanism that facilitates collaboration and experience sharing on a regular basis;
- Strengthening existing partnerships and networks;
- Establishment of a supporting mechanism for legal professional organisations that facilitates the preparation and implementation of “proof of concepts”.

Background: The findings of the two studies will feed into the Commission’s work on a communication on digitalisation of justice that is to be presented in 2020. The communication will respond to discussions on the concept of digital criminal justice at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in December 2018. The way forward as regards innovative technologies is embedded in the wider context of the [Commission’s coordinated plan](#) to step up action at several levels in order to support the development and uptake of AI throughout the EU economy and public administration (see also the Commission’s White Paper on AI ([eucrim 1/2020](#), 8-9)).

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