

# “Towards a European e-Justice strategy” - a Communication from the Commission

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# The Communication

- **The European Commission's Communication "Towards a European e-Justice Strategy" was published on 30 May 2008**

# Commission's Press Release

- **Jacques Barrot, Vice-president of the European Commission and Commissioner responsible for Justice Freedom and Security**
  - *"European citizens and businesses advocate better justice systems across Europe, which are capable of delivering better results in a more efficient way. The Commission believes that e-Justice can provide effective tools to make justice easier to access, speedier and less costly*
  - *"Judges, prosecutors and legal practitioners are also more and more vocal in demanding more effective judicial co-operation within the EU. This is also essential in order to provide adequate responses to cross-border crime. e-Justice can contribute to this aim too".*

# The role of the Justice Forum

- **Justice Forum “An e-Justice sub-group will be created within the Forum to serve as a catalyst for the exchange of best practices among national judicial systems and among legal professionals”**

# First steps

- **draw up an inventory of the existing national and cross border e-Justice projects**
- **propose coordinated action at an EU level in the future**
- **avoid the risk of diverging technical solutions**
- **identify best practice**

# Main Objectives

1. The creation of a European portal designed to facilitate access to justice by citizens and businesses across Europe.
2. The reinforcement of judicial co-operation, on the basis of existing legal instruments.

# European Portal

- **European and national information on victims' rights in criminal cases and their rights to compensation;**
- **The fundamental rights enjoyed by citizens in each Member State (rights of persons charged under criminal proceedings);**
- **Fundamental principles relating to a citizens' ability to initiate proceedings before a court in another Member State, or to their defence when summoned to appear before such a court.**

# European Portal - practical information in criminal defence

- **competent authorities**
- **how to contact them**
- **the use (obligatory or optional) of lawyers**
- **procedures for obtaining legal aid**



# The reinforcement of judicial co-operation, on the basis of existing legal instruments.

- Continuing the interconnection of criminal records
- Creating a network of secure exchanges for information among judicial authorities
- Facilitating use of video conferencing
- Aids for translation

# Criminal Record Database

- A priority for the Commission is the “interconnection” of Criminal Record Databases
- However:
  - accuracy
  - access
  - use
  - understanding of the information stored
  - Data protection

# Secure exchanges of information among judicial authorities

- **How secure?**
- **Definition of judicial authorities**
- **Access**
- **Use and understanding of information**
- **Data protection**

# Video Conferencing – defendant and court or lawyer

- Use
- Option - will it be the choice of the defendant?
- Security of privileged communications
- Client/lawyer relations
- UK pilot

# Aids for translation

- **Development of automated translation tools**
- **Creating a database of legal translators and interpreters**
- **Online forms for automated translation**

# Conclusion

- **Practitioners need to engage in the debate now**
- **The ECBA will take your views forward to the Justice Forum**