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French

About the network

France

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In France, the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters is made up of judges, lawyers (*avocats*), notaries and judicial officers (*commissaires de justice*). However, the network is open to all the legal professions which have an interest in it, in particular when they participate in the implementation of EU law as regards civil and commercial matters (clerks of court (*greffiers*), chief registrars (*directeurs des services des greffes*), judges and clerks of commercial courts).

Since the network was created, the **French point of contact has always been a judge working in the Ministry of Justice's Civil Affairs Directorate (*Direction des affaires civiles et du Sceau du Ministère de la justice*)**. Specifically, this judge works in the Department for mutual assistance, private international law and EU law (*Département de l'entraide, du droit international privé et européen* – DEDIPE), which has been designated as the central authority for the application of numerous international cooperation instruments for civil and commercial matters. The point of contact can provide French practitioners and members of the network from other EU countries with practical expertise in judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters and assistance in resolving obstacles in cross-border cases.

The French network is organised at national and local level. Thus, **a 'reporting judge' is designated in each French court of appeal and in the Court of Cassation (*Cour de cassation*)**. Their role is to facilitate cooperation locally and inform the judiciary about the implementation of civil judicial cooperation tools and, in particular, about EU law. The reporting judges in the Courts of Appeal and the Court of Cassation can also inform the national point of contact about difficulties in the application of European legislation. The national point of contact passes the information on these difficulties to the network's secretariat at the European Commission.

The other professions are members and participate in the network's activities through their national representative body:

- **Judicial officers** (*commissaires de justice*, previously called *huissiers de justice*) are represented by the National Chamber of Judicial Officers (*Chambre nationale des commissaires de justice* – CNCJ).
- **Lawyers** are represented by the National Council of Bar Associations (*Conseil national des barreaux* – CNB) and by the *Délégation des barreaux de France* (DBF), the CNB's delegation in Brussels. The EJN-Civil tab on the DBF website provides full information on the involvement of the lawyers' network in France.
- **Notaries** are represented by the High Council of Notaries (*Conseil supérieur du notariat* – CSN).

French liaison judges working in EU countries are also part of the network, as are the **central authorities** designated for the application of civil and commercial cooperation agreements (for example, the Office for the recovery of maintenance of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs).

Under the CLUE project 'Connaître la législation de l'Union européenne' (Getting to know EU legislation), subsidised by the European Commission's Justice programme, numerous actions have been carried out to raise awareness of the EJN-Civil in France.

In recent years, the CLUE I project has made it possible: to enhance the visibility of the judicial cooperation and EU law tools (through the dissemination of a monthly newsletter, a video about the network, and a dedicated webpage on the Ministry's intranet); and, in addition, to promote the exchange of good practices between practitioners (through training seminars on private international family law and a practical guide for reporting judges at the Court of Appeal). The new CLUE II project, which was launched in February 2021, continues along the same lines, with additional ambitions (more seminars, more subjects, more tools for disseminating EU law) and the desire to share best practices with other national networks.

Once a year, all the members of the French network meet in Paris to review the activities of the network and to discuss developments in EU law in civil and commercial matters.

Further information about the French network can be found on the website justice.gouv.fr.

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