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From: General Secretariat of the Council
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Subject: Future of the European Judicial Network (EJN)
- Conclusions from the 66th Plenary meeting of the EJN (Limassol, Cyprus,
27 to 29 May 2026)

Delegations will find below conclusions from the 66th Plenary meeting of the EJN Contact Points on the topic “Future of the European Judicial Network”.

**66th EJM Plenary meeting under the
Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the EU**

FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN JUDICIAL NETWORK

Conclusions from the Panel discussions and Workshop 1

I. Introduction

Ever since its establishment, with **Joint Action 98/428 JHA of 29 June 1998**, the **European Judicial Network** ("EJN") in criminal matters has functioned as an essential instrument for facilitating international judicial cooperation in criminal matters, resulting today in about 10,000 cases handled per annum. In December 2008, the current legal basis entered into force, **Council Decision 2008/976/JHA of 16 December 2008** on the EJN ("**the EJN Decision**"), which consolidated the 10 years of existence of the EJN and reinforced the legal status of the EJN.

The EU is currently reflecting on the future of criminal justice cooperation in the context of increasingly complex cross-border crime, digitalisation, geopolitical developments and evolving operational needs of practitioners. This reflection is taking place in several parallel processes, including the [High-Level Forum on the Future of EU Criminal Justice](#) last year, the evaluation and ongoing [revision of both the Eurojust Regulation](#), and the [Europol Regulation](#) as well as evaluation of the [EPPO regulation](#), the implementation of [the e-Evidence package](#) and broader discussions on [digital justice](#) infrastructure in the EU.

Given the pace of change, the very numerous legislative developments and increase in threats and challenges in the field of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, it is essential that the EJN itself is in a position to contribute to the debate and steer the discourse where it is best placed to determine what developments are required to ensure its continued relevance and success, for practitioners and for the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.¹ Over the years, the network has grown and as of 2026, there is almost 450 EJN Contact Points nominated in Europe. The changing nature of international crime requires the development of better coordination and tools for cooperation beyond the EU, acting with our international partners.

¹ In 2024, the EJN established the EJN Working Group on the Future of the EJN. Further, the discussions launched at the **46th Regular meeting of the EJN in February 2025** and in the **17th National Correspondents meeting in October 2025**, aimed at identifying the key challenges with regard to the functioning of the EJN. Finally, the discussions during the **64th Plenary Meeting of the EJN in Warsaw under the Polish Presidency in May 2025** highlighted that the EJN continues to be recognised by practitioners and EU stakeholders as an informal, flexible, decentralised and cost-effective instrument for judicial cooperation.

During the **66th Plenary meeting of the EJN held in Limassol, Cyprus on 27-29 May 2026 under the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU**, the Future of the EJN topic was discussed extensively – in the panel discussions and in a dedicated workshop.

I. Panel discussions: Future of the EJN

Overview

The panel discussion brought together representatives from the European Commission and the EJN Contact Points. The key aspects discussed were related to the future role of the EJN within the evolving EU criminal justice landscape, digitalisation of justice and the relationship between the EJN and Eurojust.

Speakers highlighted that the EJN remains **an essential component of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice** and continues to play a **unique role in facilitating day-to-day judicial cooperation between practitioners**. The EJN was described as a **practitioner-driven and decentralised network built on direct contacts, mutual trust and practical expertise**. Particular emphasis was given on the **“human factor”** of the Network – Contact Points providing immediate assistance, sharing experience and facilitating communication between competent authorities across borders.

The discussion recalled the significant **contribution of the EJN to the development of mutual trust and the practical implementation of mutual recognition instruments** over the past decades. Speakers noted that the Network had played an important role in supporting practitioners during the introduction and implementation of instruments since the adoption of the European Arrest Warrant and it continues to assist authorities in applying all mutual recognition instruments in practice.

Digitalisation

The future impact of judicial cooperation was brought up throughout the discussions. Reference was made to the implementation of the [e-Evidence package](#), JUDEX and other initiatives in relation to the [digital justice](#) strategy within the EU. While digitalisation was widely welcomed as necessary to keep pace with increasingly sophisticated forms of criminality, **speakers stressed that digital tools should complement rather than replace direct practitioner-to-practitioner cooperation**.

What was further underlined was the importance of:

- secure communication channels,
- interoperability between systems and
- adequate training for practitioners.

Relationship between the EJM and Eurojust

With regard to the relationship between the EJM and Eurojust, speakers generally emphasised the **complementary nature of both structures**. The [Commission evaluation of the Eurojust Regulation](#) had identified a lack of clarity regarding the allocation of cases between Eurojust and the EJM. It was noted by the panellists that the EJM and Eurojust fulfil different but mutually reinforcing functions within the EU judicial cooperation framework, with the EJM facilitating cooperation between practitioners and Eurojust providing operational coordination in more complex cases.

Above all, **the importance of maintaining effective communication and cooperation between the two structures was highlighted, while nevertheless preserving the specific role and identity of the EJM**.

EJM's role and autonomy

Several speakers also stressed the importance of preserving the EJM's autonomy, decentralised character and broad composition, which includes judges, prosecutors, representatives of central authorities and other State criminal justice actors. The EJM is expressly **referred to in the Lisbon Treaty**.

The Network's **cost-effectiveness, flexibility and ability to respond quickly to practitioners' needs were identified as key strengths** that should be preserved in future developments.

The **need for adequate resources, continued support for Contact Points and Tool Correspondents, and sustainable human and financial resources for the EJM and the EJM Secretariat** was also highlighted.

Judicial training & expertise for the EU legislative initiatives

The panel further noted the **growing role of the EJM in judicial training**, and in this context, increased cooperation with training providers. This was discussed in the wider context of [the EU digital justice and judicial training](#).

Speakers observed that the EJM has increasingly contributed to training activities, provided expertise and support to mutual evaluation rounds and contributed to the practical implementation of EU legislative instruments by expertise.

At the same time, concerns were expressed regarding the increased number of specialised networks and the potential risk of fragmentation, with several participants underlining the value of the **EJM as a generalist network competent across all areas of criminality**.

Overall, the panel concluded that the **EJM remains a highly relevant and effective instrument for judicial cooperation**.

While adaptation to digitalisation, and changing operational requirements will be necessary in the context of the evolving forms of crime, participants broadly agreed that the Network's future development should build on its core strengths as a decentralised, practitioner-driven and trust-based mechanism for facilitating international judicial cooperation.

While there was no consensus on the need for a new legislative instrument, there was broad agreement that if such an instrument were to be created it should be by way of a Directive, allowing the Member States to retain flexibility in its implementation to ensure that it respected national procedures and systems with appropriate discretion on how the EJM would function.

II. Workshop discussions

The workshop focused primarily on the internal functioning of the EJM, continued on the discussions concerning EJM's relationship with Eurojust and touched upon possible safeguards necessary to preserve the Network's autonomy, visibility and operational identity in the future.

Overall, the participants concluded the following:

Internal functioning of the EJM

Regarding the internal functioning of the EJM, participants noted that Member States have adopted different approaches to organising their national EJM structures.

While some rely primarily on informal arrangements and established practice, others have introduced more detailed national rules or legislation. Participants generally considered that a harmonised EU approach would not be appropriate, given the diversity of national legal systems and organisational structures. The discussion **highlighted the importance of maintaining sufficient flexibility for Member States to organise the functioning of their national EJM structures according to their specific needs and legal traditions.**

At the same time, **participants identified several areas where improvements could further strengthen the Network:**

- Particular emphasis was placed on **the role of National Correspondents** in supporting the functioning of the Network, including situations where requests addressed to Contact Points remain unanswered.
- The importance of **regular communication and meetings between Contact Points at national level** was also highlighted, both to ensure the dissemination of information and to strengthen cooperation within national EJM structures.
- Participants further stressed the continuing need to improve **the visibility of the EJM** among judges, prosecutors and other practitioners, noting that awareness of the Network remains uneven in some Member States.

It was agreed that the EJM Secretariat draft will draft an action plan to address internal functioning matters, including any underperformance – built on the discussions throughout 2025 and 2026 (as well as on the Peer Evaluation).²

Relationship between the EJM and Eurojust

A significant part of the discussion focused on the relationship between the EJM and Eurojust, in particular the complementarity between the two structures and the allocation of cases.

Participants broadly agreed that both the EJM and Eurojust remain necessary and fulfil distinct but complementary functions within the EU judicial cooperation framework. The discussion confirmed that the EJM is particularly well suited to facilitating direct practitioner-to-practitioner cooperation, providing practical information and addressing bilateral cooperation issues, while Eurojust plays a central role in supporting more complex operational coordination. Participants therefore considered that **the objective should not be to choose between the two structures, but rather to strengthen cooperation and improve existing referral mechanisms in both directions.**

Several practical solutions were discussed to improve cooperation and case allocation between the EJM and Eurojust. These included:

- closer cooperation between National Desks and EJM Contact Points,
- regular exchanges at national level,
- wider use of Eurojust National Coordination System (ENCS) structures,
- internal arrangements and rules whereby practitioners can assess, at national level, which structure is best placed to assist in a particular case and, where appropriate, facilitate referrals between the EJM and Eurojust.

Legal framework for the EJM

The workshop also examined whether certain aspects of the EJM's functioning should be reflected more explicitly in its legal framework.

While many participants **expressed caution regarding a possible revision of the legal basis, noting the benefits of the current flexibility, a number of areas were identified that could merit further consideration should legislative changes be envisaged in the future.** These included:

² In 2024, the EJM established the EJM Working Group on the Future of the EJM. The discussions launched at the **46th Regular meeting of the EJM in February 2025** and in the **17th National Correspondents meeting in October 2025**, aimed at identifying the key challenges with regard to the functioning of the EJM. The discussions during the **64th Plenary Meeting of the EJM in Warsaw under the Polish Presidency in May 2025** highlighted that the EJM continues to be recognised by practitioners and EU stakeholders as an informal, flexible, decentralised and cost-effective instrument for judicial cooperation.

- governance of the EJN,
- the role of the EJN Presidency Board,
- decision-making responsibilities within the Network (National Correspondents/ EJN Presidency Board/ EJN Secretariat)
- national and regional meetings,
- visibility and awareness related matters,
- budgetary independence.

In terms of the latter, particular attention was given to the issue of **budgetary autonomy and the resources available** to the EJN. Several participants stressed that the Network's ability to carry out its tasks effectively depends on **adequate and predictable resources**, including for the **maintenance and further development of EJN tools and the website**. The discussion highlighted that, if the EJN is to maintain its operational identity and autonomy, **appropriate mechanisms should exist to ensure that decisions affecting the Network's activities and priorities can be taken in a transparent and sustainable manner**.³

Support on the national level

Finally, participants underlined that preserving the credibility and effectiveness of the EJN requires not only an appropriate organisational framework but also **active support from Member States**.

Contact Points should be provided with **sufficient time, resources and institutional backing** to carry out their EJN responsibilities effectively and to participate in Network activities.

³ The **national correspondent (NC)** is responsible, in his or her Member State, for issues related to the internal functioning of the Network, including the coordination of requests for information and replies issued by the competent national authorities. The NC is also the main person responsible for contacts with the EJN Secretariat, including the participation in the meetings of the NCs and, where requested, gives an opinion concerning the appointment of new Contact Points (Art 4.4. of the "EJN Decision").

The **tool correspondent (TC)**, who may also be a Contact Point, ensures that the information related to his Member State on the EJN website is provided and updated (Art 4.5. of the "EJN Decision").