



> The Council of Europe highlights the strong points of the French judicial system

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) has set up an evaluation process of the judicial system of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. **The CEPEJ is publishing its report on October 25th.** The 2010 report is based on 2008 data from its member states. **France is one of the very few countries that has been open by answering most of the questionnaires from the CEPEJ.**

What is the objective of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice?

- The CEPEJ reminds that: **"Comparing is not ranking."** The report aims to **"give an overview of the situation of the European judicial systems, not to rank the best judicial systems in Europe, which would be scientifically inaccurate and would not be a useful tool for the public policies of justice."**
- The CEPEJ warns against **"hasty analyses and meaningless conclusions"**, in particular when comparing **"quantitative figures from different states or entities, with different geographical, economic, and judicial situations."**
- The CEPEJ makes clear, citing France, that **"The data of the wealthiest states or entities must here be related to the level of prosperity of the state; otherwise it might be wrongly interpreted that they allocate a small amount of budget to their judicial system, because of their high GDP. This fact must be taken into account if relevant comparisons, which can only be done between comparable states, are to be drawn."**

As far as the annual budget is concerned - as calculated according to the GDP per capita - the evaluation method that has been used has led the CEPEJ to place Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina at the top and Norway and Denmark at the bottom.

Source: 2010 report of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)

The CEPEJ highlights the assets of the French judicial system and the importance of the reforms that have been launched in the past years.

■ Free access to justice

France is one of very few countries where the right to initiate a proceeding before a court is free.
Example: in Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, people have to pay court fees that can go up to thousands of Euros in order to initiate a proceeding.

■ Budget : a "noteworthy" evolution

As far as the annual budget allocated to all courts, prosecution and legal aid as part of the GDP per capita is concerned, France ranks 18th.
■ Budget allocated to courts : +48% since 2002.
■ The first 3 countries are Monaco, Switzerland and Luxemburg.

■ One of the most efficient systems of legal aid in Europe

In France, as opposed to most European countries, legal aid can be granted to both the victim and defendant in civil, criminal and administrative cases but also in non-litigious cases like mediation (criminal, family...).

France is ranked 6th among Western European countries for the number of cases for which legal aid is granted.

■ Ability of the French judicial system to deliver justice

The CEPEJ highlights the ability of the French judicial system to resolve as many cases as the number of incoming cases.

■ IT equipment in courts: "high level"

The CEPEJ highlights France's **"high results."** France is one of the top countries in Europe for the IT equipment of its courts.
Since 2008, Cassiopée (French courts' new computer system) has been installed in 95% of the courthouses.

■ Training of the judiciaries : France in the lead

The CEPEJ notices that France has the biggest budget as far as the training of its judiciaries is concerned (52 million Euros), way ahead of the Netherlands (20 million Euros) and Italy (0.9 million Euros).
Budget: +25% between 2006 and 2008.

■ Salaries of the French judiciaries

(net monthly average - source: Ministry of Justice)

- Beginning of career: 2,633 Euros.
- After 15 years: 5,132 Euros.
- End of career: between 6,200 and 8,700 Euros.

Spend more money or spend it efficiently? In France, we spend more efficiently

A judicial system is not more efficient because it is more expensive. Nobody can assess the efficiency of a judicial system according to its spendings.

- DNA testing: 17 Euros per test in 2009 (300 Euros in 2005).
- Phone-tapping: 33 million Euros in 2009 (70 million Euros in 2005).
- Reform of the judicial map: 867 courts (1,193 before the reform).
- Postal expenses: 1.6 million Euros saved in 2011 (projection).

Key figures

Budget allocated to justice in France

+58% between 2002 and 2011

(from 4.5 billion Euros to 7.1 billions)