



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Address by the the President of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council, Prof Dr Lovro Šturm at the International Conference of e-Justice and e-Law 2008 in Portorož

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Distinguished Guests, Ms Diana Wallis, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mr Rein Lang, Minister of Justice of Estonia, Ms Nekibe Kelmendi, Minister of Justice of Kosovo, Mr Arsim Bajrami, Minister of Public Administration of Kosovo, Mr Franc Testen, President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia, Ms Barbara Brezigar, Attorney General of the Republic of Slovenia, Deputy Ministers, Constitutional Court Judges, dear participants,

Welcome to the International Conference of e-Justice and e-Law 2008 in Portorož in Slovenia.

We are witnesses to extremely rapid developments in information technology which permeates all areas of our lives, both professional and personal. The efficient use of modern information technology also impacts on the law, the judicial systems and justice as a whole.

The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Slovenia set work in the field of e-justice as one of the Slovenian EU Presidency priorities for the Justice and Home Affairs Council. The task is both an exceptional challenge and opportunity for our country as well as for all the EU Member States.

Looking out at the sea here, you will certainly notice - if you have not done so already - many yachts gliding nimbly on the waves. The activities needed to implement the tasks which the trio Presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia set itself in the field of e-justice are comparable to the tasks that would need to be carried out on an e-justice yacht. Germany prepared the vessel, raised the sails, weighed anchor and safely left the bay and it was Portugal that felt the first sea winds fill the sails. We are confident that Slovenia will steer the e-justice craft successfully, using new and favourable sea winds to fill her sails and to carry her forward, in the right direction. We are on the right course.

We have travelled many successful miles thus far and we have set the conditions in place for a safe onward voyage. Among our first achievements, let me mention the informal meeting at Brdo with our esteemed colleagues, the Ministers of Justice, the European Commissioner and other representatives of the European Union judicial system, at which we agreed to open the EU e-justice portal to the public within 24 months. I consider this to be perfectly feasible considering the accelerated pace of the work being carried out by the special team.

We agreed that our work should advance step by step and we have been encouraging working through pilot projects. In this work, we have to comply with the most stringent security



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standards, since the areas of personal data protection and fundamental rights and freedoms are involved.

In the context of e-justice, successful and concerted work is being carried out in the following fields:

- supplementing the EU e-justice portal with associated insolvency records,
- linking up criminal, insolvency, land and business registers,
- studying all the existing projects in the field of EU e-justice that can be included in the judicial system and the EU e-justice portal,
- devoting attention to the financing of cross-sectoral projects to which ongoing funding needs to be granted,
- successfully participating in encouraging the use of videoconferencing in cross-border judicial cases.

On the latter point, I wish in particular to acknowledge the cooperative and successful work of the informal group for videoconferences within the EU Council's e-justice working group, which, together with the Presidency, has prepared a colourful and useful brochure on videoconferencing aimed at informing legal experts and other interested members of the public, encouraging them to make more widespread use of videoconferences in judicial proceedings.

We sincerely thank the EU Parliament for the alert monitoring of the e-justice field and the proactive take-up of the subject within its working groups. Sincere thanks are also due the Commission, which has been participating actively in e-justice activities and which is preparing a document specifically devoted to the development of e-justice in the European Union context.

Distinguished Participants,

In the remaining days of the conference, more than twenty lectures will be delivered by numerous experts from both the legal profession and the field of information technology and informatics. I would like to thank you all for your contributions to the exchanges of opinions, experiences, new ideas and knowledge in the field of e-justice. Such exchanges are essential for effective action within a community such as the European Union.

I hope you have a pleasant time at the conference in the Slovenian town of Portorož. I sincerely hope that you will enjoy and partake of everything that our beautiful homeland and our hospitality have to offer. I also hope you will enjoy plenty of professional challenges, plenty of success in your work and plenty of excellent ideas for the future.

May the sails of your success be filled with the inspiration of new knowledge and new ideas!