

# European Commission Launches Public Consultation on Modernising Cross-border Judicial Cooperation



On 16 February 2021, the European Commission (the **Commission**) launched a public consultation to gather the views of stakeholders on its initiative to propose a new legislation to digitalise all data exchanges and communications taking place in the context of judicial cooperation between EU Member States. The Commission's proposal for a new legislation is expected to be published by the end of 2021.

According to the Commission, the Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the need for digitalisation in the judicial systems. The use of paper files and the requirements to be physically present in judicial proceedings hamper effective access to justice within the European Union, the Commission said. The Commission added that improving digitalisation in civil, commercial and criminal matters will contribute to making justice more accessible and efficient for EU citizens.

This public consultation is part of a broader policy objective of the Commission to modernize EU judicial systems through the

adoption of a digital judicial cooperation package. As part of its initiative, the Commission intends to implement several measures such as (i) making the digital channel mandatory for all the communications and data exchanges between national authorities, (ii) providing individuals, companies and lawyers with the possibility to choose between the use of electronic or paper communication in cross-border procedures, (iii) ensuring the use of electronic signatures and seals in judicial proceedings and (iv) ensuring interoperability between the different Member States' IT systems.

The public consultation consists of different questions and is available to a wide range of groups and individuals who could be affected by the future initiative. The public consultation will remain available until 11 May 2021.

The Commission's press release can be consulted [here](#).

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