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Estonia has one of the most effective justice systems in the European Union, according to a number of indicators, as was revealed by the new Justice Scoreboard of European Justice Systems. The country is in first place in terms of digital communication; and is in second place in relation to the speed of our court proceedings.

The European Commission compared the efficiency, quality and independence of the systems for the administration of justice in the Member States. The 2017 Scoreboard also contains data on the citizens' access to justice and to channels for communication with the courts. It was revealed that in Estonia, the most important indicator of efficiency – the length of court proceedings – is very good. Also, our courts of the first instance solve cases considerably faster than the European average, and Estonia is in second place after Denmark when it comes to solving civil and administrative matters.

In its comparison of the quality of the justice administration systems in the Member States, the Commission drew attention to the problems with using digital signatures, as digital signing has not been adequately deployed in over half of the Member States. "However, Estonia is at the forefront of using digital signatures, and the communication between our lawyers and courts is almost 100% digital. In this regard, Estonia is the leader in Europe," said Urmas Reinsalu, the Minister of Justice.

"Having our courts singled out is especially remarkable because the budget of the Estonian courts (per resident) is one of the smallest in the EU Member States: in 2015, Estonia spent 30 euros per person on court activities," said Mr Reinsalu.

The objective of the European Commission's Scoreboard is to give reliable information about the most important aspects of the administration of justice in the Member States, and thus to help improve the justice systems. The Scoreboard does not evaluate the functioning of the justice administration systems in the Member States, but instead aims to steer the countries towards ways of improving their administration of justice. The data originates from the Council of Europe's Commission for the Evaluation of the Efficiency of Justice (CEPE), contact persons within the courts, the World Bank, the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ) and other organisations.

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