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The most recent Justice Scoreboard 2018 of European justice systems confirms that the Estonian justice system continues to be among the most efficient in Europe. In terms of the speed of adjudicating court cases, we ranked second among 28 states and placed first in terms of communication through digital and social media.

Every year, the European Commission compares the efficiency, quality and independence of the administration of justice in the Member States. In recent years, the most important indicator of efficiency – the length of court proceedings – has remained at a good, stable position in Estonia. This means that our courts of the first instance solve cases considerably faster than the European average, and as a result Estonia sits in second place after Denmark in the speed of solving civil and administrative matters. For instance, it takes an administrative court an average of 108 days to adjudicate on an administrative matter.

Estonia also achieved the best possible result in the area of digital communication; specifically, with respect to accepting complaints, monitoring the procedural processes and forwarding court judgments. In addition, the Estonian courts ranked highest in terms of using the opportunities offered by social media.

More than 90% of information is now communicated between court officials and lawyers using information technology tools, while 95% of documents are signed digitally. This result also puts Estonia in first place on the scoreboard.

“The scoreboard indicators confirm that our justice system is both cost-efficient and modern. But although our digital capabilities currently put us at the top, we should not rest on our laurels and should instead strive to develop our digital possibilities even further,” said Urmas Reinsalu, the Minister of Justice.

The number of court cases has increased significantly when compared to previous years (Estonia now ranks fifth in terms of the number of cases) – whereas 5.7 complaints per 100 Estonians were submitted to the county courts in 2010, that number increased to 24.7 in 2016. At the same time, the number of pending court cases has not increased, and this remains below the European average.

The reliability and independence of the Estonian justice system were also evaluated as higher than average. However, the financing of the justice system, as well as the numbers of judges and lawyers per capita, ranked lower than the European median (21st, 17th and 24th place, respectively).

The results of the study are available on the website [1] of the European Commission.

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/effective-justice/eu-justice-scoreboard_en