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The Supreme Court represents Estonia in several European and international organisations that deal with the administration of justice and the training of judges. The external communication of the Supreme Court is aimed at exchanging of knowledge and experiences, enhancing cooperation with the other supreme courts and presenting the legal and judicial system of Estonia. The Supreme Court is most engaged in the activities of the Network of the Presidents of European Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union, the Association of Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the European Union, the Conference of European Constitutional Courts, the Venice Commission and the European Judicial Training Network. Yearly meetings of the Supreme Courts of the Baltic States have also become a tradition.

In October 2016, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Priit Pikamäe was elected as President of the Network of the Presidents of European Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union. His term of office runs until the end of 2018. In this context, both the meeting of the Board of the Network and the Annual Conference of the Presidents of the Supreme Courts of the Member States of the EU will take place in Estonia in 2017.

Questions and proposals concerning external communication are expected to the following mailbox: Karin Leichter-Tammisto, Legal Adviser to the Chief Justice, [karin \[dot\] leichter@riigikohus \[dot\] ee](mailto:karin.leichter@riigikohus.ee)

A brief overview of the organisations which the Supreme Court is a member of:

World Conference on Constitutional Justice (WCCJ) [1]

In January 2012, the Supreme Court joined the World Conference on Constitutional Justice that was founded with the support of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. The Conference brings together the world's constitutional courts or institutions of equal competence. It links the states from all over the world and aims at enhancing dialogue between the constitutional courts and promoting constitutional review procedure as a guarantee of democracy and the protection of human rights. The contact person of the Supreme Court is **Karin Leichter-Tammisto**, Legal Adviser to the Chief Justice.

Conference of European Constitutional Courts [2]

The Supreme Court is a full member of the Conference of European Constitutional Courts since October 17, 2003. The Conference was founded in 1972 by the constitutional courts of Germany, Austria and Italy. Today, it brings together 41 European constitutional courts or equal institutions. The contact person of the Supreme Court is **Karin Leichter-Tammisto**, Legal Adviser to the Chief Justice.

Consultative Council of European Judges [3]

Consultative Council of European Judges is an independent advisory body comprised of the judges of the Member States of the Council of Europe. It was founded in the year 2000. The uniqueness of CCJE lies in the fact that it is the first union attached to an international organisation all members of which are judges who act on behalf of themselves and not the respective Member States. CCJE plays an important role in

forming the positions of the Council of Europe on issues concerning the independence and impartiality of the judiciary and the work of the courts. Estonian judicial system is represented in the Council as of its first meeting on November 8, 2000.

The main outcome of the work of the Consultative Council of European Judges comes in the form of opinions which although not being legally binding, still play an important role in shaping the administration of courts of the Member States of the Council of Europe.

In the years 2008–2010, the President of the Consultative Council of European Judges was Julia Laffranque, the Justice of the Administrative Chamber of the Supreme Court. Since autumn 2011, the representative of Estonia in the Council is **Meelis Eerik**, the Chief Justice of Harju County Court.

European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) [4]The Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law i.e. the Venice Commission was founded in 1990. The Venice Commission advises the Council of Europe on matters of constitutional law. The Commission is comprised of independent constitutional law experts who prepare studies and give opinions/guidelines on enhancing the rule of law and democracy not only in the Member States of the Council but also outside Europe. In addition to legal experts from Europe, representatives from the USA, Peru, Chile and Mexico also belong to the Venice Commission. The Commission is assisted by a network of the representatives of the constitutional courts. The contact person of the Supreme Court is **Karin Leichter-Tammisto**, Legal Adviser to the Chief Justice.

European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) [5]

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice was founded on 18 September 2002 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe by its resolution No RES(2002)12. CEPEJ's main goal is to enhance the quality of the judicial systems of the Member States of the Council of Europe. The most important and substantial activity of CEPEJ is collecting statistics on the judicial systems and court proceedings of the Member States and carrying out comparative analyses. Estonian representative in the Commission is the Ministry of Justice.

Network of the Presidents of European Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union [6]

The Supreme Court is a member of the Network since its foundation, as of 10 March 2004. Its membership comprises of the EU Member States' Presidents of the Supreme Courts hearing civil and criminal law cases. The Network of the Presidents of higher courts of general competence offers a forum for tightening cooperation and exchanging of ideas between the courts. With the support of the EU, the Network provides the judges inter alia with a possibility of internships in the other EU Member States' higher courts. The contact person of the Supreme Court is **Karin Leichter-Tammisto**, Legal Adviser to the Chief Justice.

Association of Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the European Union [7]

The Supreme Court of Estonia is a full member of ACA-Europe as of Estonia's accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004. The origins of this organisation date back to the European Economic Union six Member States' Council of State and Supreme Administrative Court leaders' idea of organising regular colloquia on topics concerning administrative courts. The first colloquium was held in 1968. Upon enlargement of the European Communities, the Supreme Administrative Courts of the new Member States have also been invited to participate in the colloquia. In 1998, a decision was taken to give the organisation a permanent form. Today, the organisation brings together all the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Courts of the Member States of the EU. The contact person of the Supreme Court is **Maarja Oras**, Adviser to the Administrative Law Chamber.

European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment[8]

The European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment was founded in Paris on 28 February 2004. In the same year, the first gathering of the European judges interested in the environmental law took place in the Court of Justice of the European Communities in Luxembourg. The forum aims at providing assistance in the implementation of national, European and international environmental law. This is pursued through sharing information concerning the environmental law and through thematic discussions. Each year, a conference is organised to tackle topical issues of the environmental law. The representative of Estonia at the

forum is the Supreme Court Justice **Heiki Loot**.

European Judicial Training Network [9]

European Judicial Training Network is a collaborative network of bodies that train the judges and prosecutors of the EU Member States. EJTN was founded on 13 October 2000 and the Supreme Court belongs to that organisation since June 3, 2009. EJTN aims at promoting the cooperation of organisations involved in the training of judges of the European states and organising joint trainings. In addition, EJTN annually conducts a programme of exchange for judges so that for a few weeks they are given an opportunity to gain knowledge of the judicial system of another Member State. The contact person of the Supreme Court in the network is **Kerdi Raud**, Head of the Legal Information and Judicial Training Department.

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Links

- [1] http://www.venice.coe.int/WCCJ/WCCJ_E.asp
- [2] <http://www.confeuconstco.org/home.html>
- [3] http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/cooperation/ccje/default_en.asp
- [4] <http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/events/>
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- [6] <http://www.network-presidents.eu/>
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