



European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

Réseau européen des Conseils de la Justice (RECJ)

The General Assembly of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (the “ENCJ”)

The Hague
3-5 June 2015

THE HAGUE DECLARATION On promoting effective justice systems

Considering that

the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (the ENCJ)

(i) has conducted a unique survey of the views of judges across Europe on their own independence with nearly 6,000 judges in 20 countries indicating a high level of confidence in their own independence;

(ii) has established indicators to measure the independence and accountability of the judiciaries in Europe, which indicators have been applied to most of the ENCJ’s member Councils for the Judiciary and observers;

(iii) has established a range of standards, guidelines and statements of best practice in relation to the creation and improvement of effective justice systems in Europe most recently on disciplinary proceedings in relation to judges;

(iv) in accordance with its four year plan is now focusing on encouraging its member Councils for the Judiciary and its observers to adhere more closely to these standards, guidelines and statements of best practice in order to make their justice systems even more effective;

and

(v) will now establish a series of dialogue groups, each comprising a number of members and observers, aimed at promoting open and candid debate about the challenges facing individual Councils for the Judiciary and similar institutions and their justice systems, with the objective of identifying practicable and achievable solutions

The members and observers of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary gathered in **THE HAGUE** between 3rd and 5th June 2015 **HEREBY DECLARE** that:

1. Independent and accountable judiciaries are an essential component of high quality, effective and efficient justice systems, and a prerequisite for a well-functioning EU area of justice;
2. The ENCJ will facilitate the use of dialogue groups and other means to enable its members and observers to enhance the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of justice in their countries for the benefit of all persons;
3. The ENCJ will continue to develop and improve its standards, guidelines and statements of best practice and find ways to ensure that its members and observers more closely comply with them in order to improve their justice systems; and
4. The ENCJ will endeavour to identify elements that constitute a quality justice system and subsequently develop indicators that will assist in the evaluation of the measurement of the quality of justice with a view to its enhancement across the EU and in candidate member states.