

Rome I Reg. Adopted (and Other Results of the JHA Council Session of 5-6 June 2008)

Following our post on the agenda of the JHA session held in Luxembourg on 5-6 June 2008, a factsheet has been released by the Slovenian Presidency with the main results of the Council in the field of judicial cooperation in civil matters.

The first and most important achievement is the **adoption of the Rome I Regulation on the law applicable to contractual obligations** (text of the regulation and declarations), that will be soon published in the OJ. The application in time of the act is set out in its Articles 28 and 29 (18 months after its adoption, to contracts concluded after the same date).

As regards the other items discussed in the Council, here's an excerpt of the factsheet (emphasis added):

Maintenance obligations

The Council agreed on a set of political guidelines for further work on a proposal for a Regulation on maintenance obligations and in particular on the principal goal of the Regulation: the complete abolition of exequatur on the basis of harmonised applicable law rules. [...] The guidelines agreed contain compromise solutions on six key elements of the proposal: its scope, jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforceability, enforcement and a review clause.

Rome III - Applicable law in matrimonial matters

A large majority of Member States supported the objectives of this proposal for a Council Regulation. Therefore and due to the fact that the unanimity required to adopt the Regulation could not be obtained, the Council established that the objectives of Rome III cannot be attained within a reasonable period by applying the relevant provisions of the Treaties. Work should continue with a view to examining the conditions and implications of possibly establishing enhanced cooperation between Member States. [...]

The Hague Convention - Protection of children

*The Council adopted a **Decision** authorising certain EU member states to ratify, or accede to, the 1996 Hague Convention, and to make a declaration on the application of the relevant internal rules of EU law. This very important Convention concerns jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, enforcement and cooperation in respect of parental responsibility and measures for the protection of children. It constitutes a crucial instrument to protect the interest of a children at worldwide level. [see also this **press release** by the Commission and a **preparatory document** to the attention of COREPER]*

Recognition and enforcement of judgments on civil and commercial matters (Lugano)

Pending the assent of the European Parliament the Council approved the conclusion of the Convention on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters, which will replace the Lugano Convention of 16 September 1988 (see Council doc. n. 9196/08 of 27 May 2008). [...]

External dimension

The Council agreed on an update of the external relations strategy in the field of judicial cooperation in civil matters. The document is not a legal framework but rather an evolving process of defining and achieving policy objectives in full conformity with the provisions of the EC Treaty.

In The Hague Programme the European Council called for the development of a strategy reflecting the Union's special relations with third countries, groups of countries and regions and focusing on the specific needs for JHA cooperation with them.

In April 2006 the Council approved a strategy document outlining aspects of judicial cooperation in civil matters (doc. n. 8140/06). As indicated in this document, the development of an area of freedom, security and justice can only be successful if it is underpinned by a partnership with third countries on these issues which includes strengthening the rule of law and promoting respect for human rights and international obligations.

The external dimension of judicial cooperation in civil matters has growing significance. On the one hand, international agreements with third countries are indispensable for providing legal certainty and foreseeability for European citizens on a global scale. On the other hand, it is also important to safeguard the uniform application of Community law in international negotiations.