

Letter from the French Minister of Justice

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In view of the upcoming election, Jean-Jacques Urvoas, the French Minister of Justice released an “open letter” (57 pages) to his successor published by Dalloz. It details what has been done and what should be done in the field of justice in France over the next years.

The letter covers topics such as access to justice, technology in the judiciary and focuses on criminal justice and independence of the judiciary. Conditions of detention and prison policy are the most discussed issues in the current French political campaign in the field of justice.

The readers of this blog will be mostly interested in Chapter IX of the letter which deals with Justice in Europe. In this part, the Minister pleads in favour of enhanced cooperation notably regarding the future European Public Prosecutor’s office. He also advocates for the creation of international chambers within French courts and proposes to establish a European Centre for Judicial Translation (“centre européen de traduction judiciaire”) designed to alleviate the burden of translation (and its cost) on national courts.

We also wanted to underline the following quote which summarises the Minister’s views on judicial cooperation and mutual trust:

“Dans les faits, cette coopération s’est édiflée depuis vingt ans sur le principe de la reconnaissance mutuelle des décisions de justice, qui lui-même suppose la confiance réciproque entre les autorités des États membres. Or cette confiance ne se décrète pas, elle se construit. Et c’est objectivement devenu une gageure à 27 ou à 28. Il faut donc trouver le bon équilibre, ne pas céder à l’illusion de l’harmonisation des procédures judiciaires ou à une uniformisation, séduisante sur le papier, mais irréalisable en pratique. Il s’agit du penchant naturel de la Commission européenne, même si elle déploie de puis quelques années des efforts louables pour moins et mieux légiférer.”

You can find the full text (in French) here:
http://www-nog.dalloz-actualite.fr/sites/dalloz-actualite.fr/files/resources/2017/04/gds_ambition_justice-global000.pdf