

The Revised European Small Claims Procedure Has Entered into Force

The revised European Small Claims Procedure entered into force on July 14 (see Regulation (EU) 2015/2421 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2015 amending Regulation (EC) No 861/2007 establishing a European Small Claims Procedure and Regulation (EC) No 1896/2006 creating a European order for payment procedure). According to the Commission's Fact Sheet, *Small Claims Procedure becomes even simpler, faster and more user friendly*. Which means:

1. The European Small Claims Procedure is more widely available. The threshold rises to €5 000 from €2 000.

2. Citizens can use online procedures to avoid unnecessary travelling to courts. The new rules enhance the use of technology and will limit unnecessary travelling. In practice this means:

- kicking-off the procedure online;
- using video-conferencing for communication;
- limiting physical presence only to the cases when the court cannot make a decision based on written documents;
- accepting documents sent by email by the court.

3. Cutting court fees: Fees can be very high in small claims cases and sometimes higher than the value of the claim. With the new rules, the court fees have to be proportionate to the value of the claim.