

Exchange Programme for Judicial Authorities (2025)

BILATERAL EXCHANGES FOR JUDGES, PROSECUTORS AND/OR COURT/PROSECUTION STAFF BETWEEN COURTS/PROSECUTION OFFICES OF THE EU MEMBER STATES

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

I. Subject:

The European Judicial Training Network is launching a call for applications for the organisation of bilateral exchanges between courts/prosecution offices of the EU Member States (EU MS) in the framework of the Exchange Programme for Judicial Authorities 2025.

The main objective of the EJTN Exchange Programme is to develop mutual trust between judicial authorities and the feeling of belonging to a common European judicial area to promote the mutual recognition of judicial decisions by getting to know each other better and working together.

In an exchange between two courts/prosecution offices of two different EU MS, one court/prosecution office from an EU MS will send judges/prosecutors/court staff to the corresponding court/prosecution office of the other EU MS, who will act as the host institution.

II. Target audience:

- groups of judges, prosecutors and/or court/prosecution staff of the EU Member States
- the groups shall be composed of maximum of five (5) and minimum of three (3) participants

III. Length:

The duration of the exchange shall be five (5) working days, from Monday to Friday. (Possibility to reduce to three (3) full working days upon request)

IV. Language:

The working language shall be determined by the courts/prosecution offices involved in the exchange. Interpretation costs are not covered by EJTN.

V. Reciprocity:

A bilateral exchange does not imply automatic reciprocity. When reciprocity in bilateral exchanges is desirable, it is not compulsory.

A reciprocal bilateral exchange is considered as **two separate projects**.

This implies that **both visiting institutions must submit an application**. The applications must contain all required documents as mentioned in point VI below.

As each application is subject to pre-selection and prioritisation by the national contact point(s). Therefore, the allocation of both projects in a reciprocal exchange is not guaranteed!

VI. Requirements and application procedure:

1. Eligible countries:

Bilateral exchanges can involve courts/prosecution offices of all European Union Member States except Denmark. Please note that the Centro de Estudos Judiciarios of Portugal does not participate in bilateral exchanges. This is why no judges and/or prosecutors can apply for a bilateral exchange to and from Portugal.

2. Repetitive participation:

To encourage as many judges, prosecutors and/or court/prosecution staff as possible to participate in a bilateral exchange, the following rules apply:

1. Participation in more than one exchange in the same year is not allowed for a single participant,
2. Institutions having participated in bilateral exchanges **as visitors in the previous three years** are not eligible to apply. The secretariat will flag to the relevant national contact point any such application and/or participant in bilateral exchanges. Failing justification of the preselection by the national contact point, the EJTJ secretariat will be entitled to exclude the concerned applicants.
3. In exceptional cases, for example if there is only one institution in a country, or if an institution is especially large, another application may be considered if the delegation is composed **of new participants only**. This must be clearly communicated by the applying institution and will be verified by EJTJ.

3. Required documents for an application

a. Application form

An application form ("project proposal") must **always be submitted by the visiting** institution. In case of a planned reciprocal exchange (see above point "V. reciprocity") both institutions must submit their separate project, as well as a hosting agreement.

The application form must be duly completed, signed, stamped and dated. All documents shall be submitted in PDF-format and written in English or French as working languages of EJTJ.

It must contain:

- The cover sheet
The cover sheet includes the most important information, namely: The name of the visiting institution; The name of the hosting institution; The dates of the exchange; Reciprocity yes/no; The working language; The planned duration of the exchange
- The subject of the exchange
- General information concerning host and visiting institutions
- Motivation for the bilateral exchange

The motivation shall comprise the interest for the partner institution chosen, concrete objectives to be reached through the exchange and expected outcome of the exchange.

- The judicial area addressed by the exchange
- The content of the exchange/topics to be tackled
Applicants are requested to submit a draft agenda in the annex of their application.
- The composition of the delegation
Visiting delegations can be composed of **maximum five (5) and minimum three (3)** judges, prosecutors, and/or court/prosecution staff of the designated visiting institution. Any exchange with more or less participants will not be eligible unless an urgency or a veritable justification is provided.

If an applying court or prosecution office cannot gather at least three participants, it is possible to co-operate with other institutions of the same judicial district. E.g. if a Court of First instance is not large enough, two first instance courts of the same Court of Appeal may form a delegation together.

In this case, the application may be submitted by either institution. The higher instance (district) must explicitly be mentioned in the application and be aware and supportive of the planned exchange.

Judges, prosecutors, and/or court/prosecution staff can form a visiting delegation together. However, if more than one national institution is concerned (e.g. Court staff training institution and Judicial training institution or the institutions training judges and prosecutors in certain countries), all involved institutions must give the permission to each individual participant.

The functions of the group members must be communicated in the application. If the composition by function is not defined in the project proposal form, the application will not be considered by EJTN

- The length of the exchange
Bilateral exchange agendas must cover at least three (3) full days of judicial training and cannot be longer than five (5) days.
- The language of the exchange
The working language of the exchange can be defined by mutual agreement of the hosting and visiting delegation.
- Contact persons
The application form must indicate the contact data of a contact person at the visiting and hosting institution (name, e-mail and phone number). This must not be a generic or institutional e-mail address. A National Contact Point cannot be the contact person.

b. Annexes to the application form

- Hosting agreement:

A hosting agreement in the form of the template available online shall be included in the application submission.

The hosting agreement is an official document. It must carry the letterhead of the hosting institution, all highlighted parts must be filled with the relevant information, and it must be signed, dated and stamped.

Modified hosting agreements (where the text has been changed) will not be accepted and any application not complying will be considered inadmissible.

The responsible person signing the hosting agreement must be named under his / her signature. Detailed information on how to complete a hosting agreement is available in the video tutorial via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5Cgja46kE8>.

- Draft agenda of the exchange

All applications must be submitted together with a draft agenda for the exchange. At the stage of the application, it is not required to submit a detailed agenda but it shall outline the general topics to be discussed and the institutions to be visited / with whose representatives to be debated.

The agenda submitted for a bilateral exchange must suit the training needs indicated in the call for applications and focus on the common topics of interest defined in the project proposal form. It may approach the learning objectives in different ways and apply different didactical concepts. Its design is the prerogative of hosting and visiting institution. In any case, the agenda shall be sent to the EJTN Secretariat by the **visiting institution** as the hosting institution is not funded by EJTN and not directly in contact with the Secretariat.

Every agenda must cover full days of judicial training with at least one session in the morning and one in the afternoon to ensure preparation, discussion and reflection of a topic tackled during the training session. Social events may be organised by the hosting institution but shall **not** be part of the agenda. Free time and touristic visits and cannot be funded by EJTN. The judicial training character of each point on the agenda must be at least partially visible. Agendas covering only half training days will grant half a per diem for the concerned training day.

Generally, there are no restrictions about which other/external institutions can be part of the programme. Other than courts and prosecution offices, bilateral exchanges may — include visits of the local law enforcement bodies, customs, penitentiary facilities, universities, political bodies such as parliaments or government bodies, ministries, libraries or other judicial training institutions.

The EJTN Secretariat is well aware that every agenda is subject to availability and to change. Thus, EJTN will request an updated version of the agenda closer to the beginning of the exchange and check it for eligibility.

EJTN reserves the right to reject funding to any exchange with a non-eligible agenda.

4. Application procedure

The call for applications will be disseminated through the contacts points of the EJTN Exchange Programme in the EU MS.

Applications shall be submitted by the group leader of the delegation from the court/prosecution office willing to visit the partner court/prosecution office. Should both involved courts/prosecution offices want to visit each other in the same year (reciprocal visits), they must both submit an online application, a project proposal and a hosting agreement alike.

The applications and all accompanying documents shall be submitted on the Exchange Programme platform via the “project-based exchanges” online application form that can be found by following the

link: <https://exp-platform.ejtn.eu/>. The deadline to submit a bilateral exchange project is 15 October 2024 (18:00, Brussels time).

VII. Selection process

After the application deadline, the national training institutions will make their pre-selection of the bilateral exchange projects submitted via the online application form.

VIII. Financial conditions

Bilateral exchanges for judges, prosecutors and/or court/prosecution staff of the EU MS are governed by the Financial Conditions of the EJTN Exchange Programme. Each visiting participant will receive a per diem for his/her subsistent expenses during the stay abroad and will be reimbursed for their travel expenses in line with the Financial Conditions. The costs of the hosting courts/prosecution offices will not be covered by EJTN.

IX. Evaluation

A report/evaluation must be submitted by the concerned participants after the exchange. In order to have a complete view, the report shall contain information derived from the assessment provided by the visiting group, the hosting group and the host institution.

Further information about how to draft the report will be provided to participating delegations prior to their exchange.

X. Calendar

The exchanges will have to take place in 2025 and finish no later than 14 November 2025.