<u>**Newsletter – Results of the DEUCE Project**</u>

Dear members of our network,
Since April 2024, our organization has been collaborating in the DEUCE Project (Digitalising European Uncontested Claims Enforcement JUST-2023-JCOO), an EU funded Project aimed at improving the enforcement of consumer rights across borders.

By participating in surveys and testing activities, you contribute directly to this project. We would like to thank you for your involvement and share with you the objectives that have been achieved:

1. What is the DEUCE Project?

The DEUCE Project focuses on the better enforcement of judicial decisions - namely judgments, authentic instruments, and court settlements - issued in the context of cross-border pecuniary claims within the European Union. It relies on the successful results obtained within the previous three projects managed by the Consortium: SCAN (2018-2020, JUST-JCOO-AG-2017), EFFORTS (2020-2022, JUST-JCOO-AG-2019) and SCAN II (2018-2021, JUST-JCOO-AG-2017).

The project focuses on:

- the creation of a Roadmap of enforcement rules related to the European Payment Order (EOP) and the European Enforcement Order (EEO) in 26 EU Member States;
- the simplification and digitalisation of enforcement procedures related to the European Payment Order (EOP) and the European Enforcement Order (EEO).

At present, the lack of harmonisation of national enforcement rules represents a significant weakness in the cross-border enforcement of EOP and EEO judgments. This situation makes it difficult for creditors (as end users), as well as for lawyers and bailiffs (as operators), to identify and understand the applicable enforcement rules in different Member States.

To address this issue, the DEUCE Project combines theoretical and practical approaches. Our consortium of experts in international civil procedural law, private law, and information technology worked jointly to:

a) analyse and clarify existing national enforcement rules through a structured roadmap;
b) establish an IT platform providing practical guidance on EOP and EEO enforcement;
c) develop a blockchain-based system aimed at supporting enforcement procedures.

The project outcomes include analytical comparative study identifying best practices in the enforcement of EOP and EEO judgments, which have been integrated in a comprehensive Roadmap covering 26 EU Member States, and simplified versions of the EOP and EEO forms.

2. Results Achieved within the Project

2.1 Roadmap for EU Enforcement Rules on EOP and EEO Judgments

One of the main achievements of the DEUCE Project is the development of a user-friendly Roadmap presenting national enforcement rules for EOP and EEO judgments in 26 EU Member States.
The roadmap takes the form of a web-based application simulating a geographical map of the European Union. Users can interact with the map by selecting a Member State of interest in order to obtain relevant information on enforcement procedures.

When the cursor is placed over a Member State, the country is highlighted and a pop-up window provides a brief overview of:

- applicable law,
- competent authority or court,
- legal fees.

By clicking on a specific country, users can access a detailed national file describing the full enforcement procedure in that Member State.

The Roadmap allows users to compare national enforcement systems based on the following criteria:

1. authority responsible for enforcement;
2. methods for submitting enforcement documents;
3. required languages, including translation obligations and allocation of translation costs;
4. enforcement fees and allocation of costs;
5. availability of legal aid;
6. identified possibilities to improve enforcement of EOP and EEO procedures.

These elements guide individuals step by step through the enforcement process, from the submission of enforceable documents to cost considerations and access to legal aid. The Roadmap enables users to assess whether enforcement can be pursued independently, whether legal assistance is required in a given Member State, and what the overall costs may be. Improving transparency in this area represents an important step toward making EOP and EEO procedures more accessible and effective.

2.2 Simplification of EOP and EEO forms through the use of ML/DL Procedures

A second key objective of the project concerned the simplification of EOP and EEO forms, with the aim of making them more understandable and accessible for end users.

The simplification strategy involved:

- analysis of existing textual materials from the EU e-Justice Portal;
- a mixed methodology combining large language models (LLMs) and expert legal review;
- two complementary levels of simplification: lexical and discourse-level.

Lexical simplification focused on identifying complex legal terminology using quantitative difficulty indices and providing aligned definitions and synonyms in English, Italian, and German. Discourse-level simplification involved readability analysis across languages and the generation of simplified text versions using GPT-based models.

Feedback was collected from expert and non-expert users, including participants from Project Partners Adiconsum, ZEV, and EUBF, through a targeted survey. This feedback was incorporated into the final interface design.

The resulting interface includes:

- highlighted technical terms with definitions or synonyms displayed when hovering the cursor;
- a button allowing users to switch between the original and simplified versions of the text;
- contextual synonym panels (e.g. alternative terms for "claimant" such as "applicant" or "plaintiff");
- integrated PDF documents providing relevant information without redirecting users to external websites.
-

These features aim to improve comprehension of legal procedures while maintaining legal accuracy.

All project results have been integrated into an IT platform, which is currently under active development and is available in a beta version for testing.

Users are invited to test the platform and provide feedback. Any feedback received will be forwarded to the project coordinators in order to support further improvements and ensure the effective functioning of the final platform. You can access the beta version here: https://ideal.unina.it/deuce.

In addition to individual testing, an online Roundtable workshop will be organised in March to further assess the usefulness of the IT platform and to discuss possible improvements. The workshop will bring together project partners and selected users in order to collect structured feedback on the platform's functionality, usability, and practical relevance for end users. The outcomes of the Roundtable will contribute to the refinement and finalisation of the IT platform.

3. Final Conference of the DEUCE Project

Consumers and stakeholders interested in these topics are invited to participate in the Final Conference of the DEUCE Project, where the project results will be presented in greater detail.

The conference will also address broader themes, including:
- digital and algorithmic enforcement of consumer rights;
- access to justice in the digital age;
- EU cross-border enforcement instruments;
- national and comparative perspectives on digital justice.

Dates and Times
- 19 February: 14:00–17:30
- 20 February: 09:00–12:30

Format
- In person: Hoek 38, Rue de Louvain 38, 1000, Brussels
- Online: Microsoft Teams, via this link:
  https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/33188595345856?p=XbdbkNRSfoB8fZSvrw

Participation is free of charge. Registration is required and can be completed via the following link: https://lnkd.in/eVN9v8hM