# European judicial area in civil matters: implementation, general framework for activities

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PURPOSE: Report on the implementation of the Framework Programme for Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters (2002-2006).

CONTENT: Article 15(1) of Regulation 743/2002/EC establishing a general Community framework for activities to facilitate judicial cooperation in civil matters requires the Commission to submit an interim report on the implementation of the programme to the European Parliament and to the Council.

This report describes progress on the programme since its adoption in April 2002 until 30 June 2004. The first activities financed by the programme, whether Commission initiatives, specific co-financed projects or NGO schemes, began at the end of 2002, and only a few are already completed. Consequently, the report essentially focuses on the programme's structure and management.

The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

The framework programme came into being little more than two years ago and few of the initiatives that have benefited from financing are completed. It is still too early to make an in-depth analysis of the programme's impact and results. This will be the objective of an assessment to be made in 2006 with a view to renewal of the programme; the results will be communicated to Parliament and the Council.

The principal Commission actions already underway seek to inform legal practitioners and the general public about recent developments in European law on civil matters - which is in the throes of major change - using a range of different but complementary methods. Particular emphasis is put on practical and relevant information that can be accessed using modern communication technologies.

The project selection for 2002, 2003 and 2004 shows that there is keen interest in projects meeting current priorities in the area of civil law. Although the first three calls for proposals received only a limited number of applications (106 proposals, of which 51 were accepted), it was still possible to choose interesting projects designed to familiarise legal practitioners with new Community instruments and allow them to meet and exchange views. The virtual absence of projects providing for the exchange of judges or for information initiatives is unfortunate.

With its more limited share of the budget, the co-financing of NGOs attracted very few applications for the first two years.

The programme has had an auspicious start; it already plays a crucial role in the Commission's civil justice policy and contributes significantly to the practical administration of Community instruments.