



ECLI-BG Project: Implementation of ECLI Identifier in Bulgaria and Interconnection with the e-Justice Portal

The project "Implementation of ECLI identifier in Bulgaria and interconnection to the e-Justice portal" (ECLI-BG) is co-funded by the European Commission under the European Union's Justice Program. It is implemented by the largest legal information provider in Bulgaria – Apis Europe JSC in partnership with the most authoritative non-governmental organisation of Bulgarian legal practitioners – The Union of Bulgarian Jurists.

The project is supported by the Supreme Judicial Council as ECLI coordinator for Bulgaria.

The main objective of the ECLI-BG project is to implement the European Case Law Identifier (ECLI) within the Centralised Web Interface for Publication of Judicial Acts (<https://legalacts.justice.bg/>) created and maintained by the Supreme Judicial Council and to establish interconnection with the [ECLI search engine](#) of the European [e-Justice portal](#).

The project has a duration of 18 months and will end on 31.12.2018.

Project Objectives

- To implement ECLI within the Bulgarian national case law repository developed by the Supreme Judicial Council: the Centralised Web Based Interface for Publication of Judicial Acts
- To establish interconnection with the ECLI search engine on the European e-Justice Portal
- To promote user functionalities and benefits and to raise the awareness about ECLI, the ECLI search engine and other cross-border legal information services maintained or supported by EU institutions

Benefits of Introducing ECLI in Bulgaria

The main problem that ECLI was designed to solve is the lack of uniform identifiers for judgments. Although there are a number of databases which provide access to case law from various Member States, they either invent their own identification system or re-use one or more national numbering systems. This makes search and citation of case law in cross-border context extremely difficult.

Unlike many other EU Member States, Bulgaria does not have own identification system for case law. Judicial decisions can be identified and cited unequivocally by courts and legal practitioners only by using a very complex and descriptive textual reference. This practice not only makes it impossible to identify judicial decisions by computers, but often also by humans.

The lack of a national identification system for case law makes the implementation of ECLI even more imperative. ECLI comes timely to meet the critical need of introducing a national standard for unequivocal identification and correct reference of the judgments of Bulgarian courts. As assumed in Par. 13 of the Council conclusions, "the European standard can serve as the sole national standard for those countries that so wish". In Bulgaria, ECLI will definitely play this dual role as both a European and national standard. All Bulgarian legal practitioners will benefit from its introduction – judges, court staff, prosecutors, lawyers, incl. in-house lawyers, and others, who will be able to gain knowledge how to use ECLI in legal citations and find judgments of Member States' courts on the e-Justice Portal.

