

“CRYSTAL SCALES of JUSTICE” PRIZE JUNIOR EDITION

**European Award for Innovative Practices
contributing to the efficiency and quality of justice**

4th Edition 2026

Rules of the Competition and Application form

For more information:

- www.coe.int/CEPEJ
(European Commission for the Efficiency of justice/CEPEJ – Council of Europe)

Rules of the Competition –4th Edition 2026

Preamble

In 2005, as part of the European Day of Civil Justice, the European Commission and the Council of Europe created the "Crystal Scales of Justice" Prize to reward innovative practices in the organisation of courts and judicial procedures.

In 2013, the Council of Europe initiated a new edition of the "Crystal Scales of Justice" Prize pertaining to justice in general, now organised every two years (odd years).

Within the framework of a Partnership signed in 2018 between the Faculty of Law, Political Science and Management of Strasbourg (hereinafter referred to as the "Faculty") and the Secretariat of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), it was decided to organise a Junior Crystal Scales of Justice Prize, open to students from a Faculty of Law of a Council of Europe member State or an observer country to the CEPEJ¹. This Prize intends to encourage students to reflect on promising methods aimed at establishing quality justice and at improving the functioning of judicial systems. It also complements the existing Crystal Scales of Justice Prize, which is open to legal professionals concerning initiatives already implemented and having produced results.

It offers students the opportunity to participate in Council of Europe activities, while at the same time providing the Council of Europe with the ideas, projects and dynamism of the future generation of lawyers called upon to carry out their duties throughout Europe.

The organisers undertake to ensure publicity of this competition among their networks: Member States, entities and observers for the CEPEJ, and the scientific community for the Faculty.

Organisers

THE CEPEJ

By creating the CEPEJ at the end of 2002, at the initiative of the European Ministers of Justice meeting in London (2000), the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe wanted to set up an innovative body to improve the quality and efficiency of European judicial systems and strengthen the confidence of individuals in these systems. It is composed of representatives of the 46 member States of the Council of Europe and many observers.

The CEPEJ develops concrete measures and tools for public decision-makers and legal practitioners, to analyse the functioning of judicial systems and guide public policies in the field of justice, to identify procedural deadlines and optimise time management in the courts, to promote the quality of the public service of justice, to facilitate the implementation of European standards in the field of justice, and to support member States in their reforms of the judicial organisation.

The CEPEJ also puts its specific expertise at the service of the debate on the functioning of justice to offer a space for reflection and proposals and to bring users closer to their justice system.

¹ Holy See, Canada, Mexico, United States, Japan, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, Kazakhstan, Guatemala.

THE STRASBOURG LAW FACULTY

Founded in the 17th century, the Faculty of Law, Political Science and Management of the University of Strasbourg aims to promote openness to ideas and to world among the approximately 5800 students it welcomes each year. In this way, it wishes to transmit knowledge and know-how that will make them recognized professionals.

Attentive to the realities of the times, the proposed training offer aims to provide a general mastery of the fundamental principles to bachelor graduates of law and to guarantee to master graduates a thorough specialization, in relation to their projects. As a result, the faculty forges many links with the institutional, associative and socio-economic worlds. For example, in September 2018, a Master in cyberjustice was opened in order to meet the imperative needs of the digital transformation of law and justice.

The international and European vocation of the Faculty is also fully assumed. Indeed, the faculty has a Master in international law, which differs from another dedicated to European law. In addition, since September 2018 a Bachelor in European Rights has been created. Finally, the Faculty prides itself on the vitality of the Erasmus program and the attractiveness of its international dual diplomas, both at the bachelor and master levels.

Article 1: Conditions of participation

The competition is open to students enrolled, for the current year, in Master (or equivalent diploma) from a Faculty of Law of a Council of Europe member State or an observer country to the CEPEJ. Each Faculty of Law can only present one team. No registration fee is required.

Each team is composed of a maximum of five students and a teacher/researcher/PHD candidate in charge of the team. Candidates must submit an application file indicating the composition of the team, the status of the responsible of the team and the degree(s) to which the students are enrolled.

The candidate teams allowed to participate will be assigned, by drawing lots, one of the awarded projects of the Crystal Scales organised the year before this junior edition Crystal Scales competition.

Each team will defend, through a written document and an oral presentation, in French or English, the project they have been assigned by analysing the reasons why this project has been awarded during the Crystal Scales competition. The teams will have to carry out legal analysis and also research, in particular on the possible implementation of the project in other contexts or countries.

Applications and complete file must be completed in English or French.

Article 2: Organisation of the competition

The competition is jointly organised by the CEPEJ of the Council of Europe and the Faculty of Law, Political Science and Management of Strasbourg (hereinafter "the organisers").

The organisers shall set up a Bureau to meet as soon as necessary to organise the competition.

Article 3: Composition of the jury

The jury is composed of 6 members (3 appointed by the CEPEJ, 3 by the Faculty) and a President, appointed alternately by the CEPEJ and by the Faculty. For the fourth edition, the President will be appointed by CEPEJ.

The travel and subsistence expenses of the members of the jury are covered by the organisers, each of them taking care of the members they have appointed.

Article 4: Applications and allocation of projects

Applications must be submitted electronically to the following address no later than 9 January 2026 (included) : cepej@coe.int

Applications must include the duly completed application form, in accordance with the model attached in Appendix I.

The teams whose applications meet the above mentioned requirements will be allocated one of the Crystal Scales projects (edition of the year preceding this competition). This allocation will be ensured by the CEPEJ.

Article 5: Drafting of the file

Once one of the projects has been assigned to the teams, they will have to prepare a complete file, in English or French, which must include:

- 1) a legal analysis of the awarded project (10 pages maximum);
- 2) research work, in particular on the possible implementation of this project in other contexts or countries (10 pages maximum);
- 3) a summary of the file submitted (maximum 2 pages) in accordance with the model in Annex II.

In their file, the teams will also have to explain the method and the different steps that will have been followed by the team, for the "analysis" part and the "research" part.

This file should be sent to the CEPEJ Secretariat at the above-mentioned address before 2 April 2026. The CEPEJ will then be responsible for the transmission of the files to the jury.

Article 6: Procedure for the selection of files

Each member of the jury must send to the organisers, by electronic means and before the jury meeting, a list containing the 5 initiatives they have pre-selected. The organisers will draw up a final list of the 5 initiatives pre-selected on the basis of the list received by each member of the jury.

This list will be sent to the members of the jury and the teams thus pre-selected will be notified and invited to defend their case orally in front of the jury of the Crystal Scales of Justice Prize Junior Edition.

The jury will then meet to determine the winner of the competition, whose file has received the highest number of points. For this purpose, each jury member will award 4 points to the initiative they have selected as the winner, 3 points to the initiative that will be in second place, 2 points to the initiative that will be in 3rd place and 1 point to the initiative that will be in 4th place. After the points have been counted, a simple

majority vote could be held to decide between the two initiatives to which the same number of points were awarded.

The Crystal Scales Prize Junior Edition will be awarded to the team with the highest number of points. If necessary, the jury may also grant a "special mention" to certain teams. The jury's decision cannot be challenged

Article 7: Criteria to award the prize

When considering the applications, the jury must ensure that they comply with the following criteria:

- they constitute legal analyses in connection with the awarded projects of the Crystal Scales of Justice, aimed at improving the efficiency and quality of the functioning of justice, judicial procedures or the organisation of courts;
- they also analyse how and under what conditions these innovative practices can be concretely and in a near future implemented in other countries or contexts;
- they are explained in detail, considering the realities of the judicial framework concerned;
- they have been the subject of an exchange of views with a legal professional or practitioner, one of which at least is related to the awarded Crystal Scales' project.

During the entire process (consideration of the applications and audition of the selected candidates), the jury must also ensure:

- their conformity with the objectives of the Prize;
- their quality;
- conformity with the main values defended by the Council of Europe, and in particular with the European Convention on Human Rights and those guiding the action of the Faculty of Strasbourg.

Article 8: Award Ceremony and visibility of the Awarded initiatives

The Crystal Scales of Justice Junior Edition Prize is awarded to the winner by the Council of Europe and the Strasbourg Faculty of Law, if possible on the occasion of the CEPEJ plenary meeting in June of the year of the competition or possibly on the occasion of a specific event organised by the Council of Europe and/or the Strasbourg Faculty of Law.

Two representatives of the winning team are invited to the award ceremony, at the expense of the Council of Europe. The CEPEJ will also organise, whenever possible, a meeting between the winning team and the persons responsible for the awarded project of the Crystal Scales of Justice that had been awarded to them and on which they had to work.

The organisers undertake to organise appropriate communication to ensure the visibility of the winning initiative and of the special mentions.

Article 9: Cancellation of the competition

The organisers reserve the right to cancel the competition at any time. If necessary, participants will be informed individually as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 1



APPLICATION FORM CRYSTAL SCALE OF JUSTICE PRIZE – JUNIOR EDITION 2026 EDITION

To be sent to the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), by electronic means no later than 9 January 2026 (included), to the following address: cepej@coe.int

1. Information about the candidate team (maximum five students)

- Faculty of affiliation:
- Diploma of affiliation:
- For each student:

Name:

Address:

Country:

Year of study at the Faculty:

Tel:

E-mail:

2. Teacher/researcher/PHD candidate in charge of the team

Last name:

Position:

Tel:

E-mail:

I _____, the undersigned, representing the above-mentioned candidate team, declare that I have read and comply with the Prize regulations.

Done at _____ The _____

Signature _____

APPENDIX II



SUMMARY

CANDIDATE TEAM / TEAM REPRESENTATIVE	
NAME	
ADDRESS	
PHONE NUMBER	
E-MAIL	
REPRESENTING THE FACULTY OF	
NAME	
FUNCTION	
PHONE NUMBER	
E-MAIL	
ASSIGNED AWARDED PROJECT OF THE CRYSTAL SCALE	
TITLE	

(Please note that this summary should not exceed 2 pages)

PROJECT ANALYSIS:

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES:

METHODOLOGY USED:

APPENDIXES: