



European Network of Councils  
for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

Réseau européen des Conseils  
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# Time limits and timeframes used in the EU MS

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**Time limits and timeframes  
used in EU Member States**

# Introduction

*What are time limits / timeframes?*

*How are they used?*

*Who uses them?*

# Definitions

Time limits: Quantitative procedural deadlines, for certain cases or steps.

Timeframes: Measurable targets or practices to promote the timeliness of court proceedings.

*These two terms have to be distinguished from the requirement under art. 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (and ECHR art. 6) to resolve a case within "a reasonable time"*

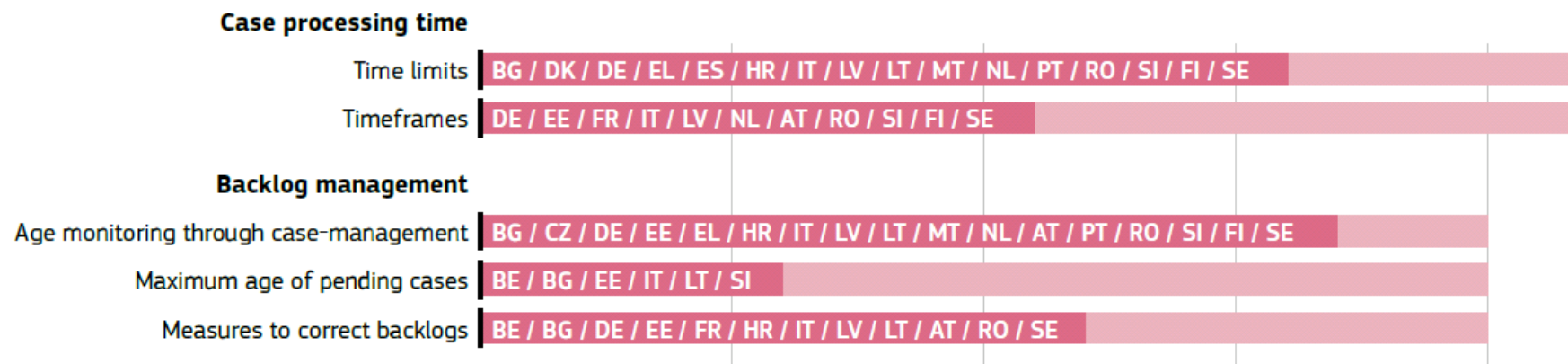
# 2016 Justice Scoreboard

**Figure 43**

**Specific standards in selected aspects related to the justice system (\*)**

Standards on specific aspects
  Standards on general area

Source: European Commission <sup>(72)</sup>



## Usage

*Standards on quality include time limits or timeframes in most MS.*

*The more common solution is to have standards for certain phases, rather than for the entire case length*

*Many use them for resource allocation as well as for efficiency needs*

## Time limits, some observations:

*It is more common to have a standard time limit for the time between the last hearing and the judgment, than between the registration and the initial hearing.*

*However, both types of time limits exist for both civil and administrative cases.*

## Timeframes, some observations:

*As regards timeframes, which often coexist with time limits, the two most common are:*

- **A specified share of cases needs to be closed within a prescribed time**
- **A court is given an expected average time to resolve cases**



# Timeframes

*There are however differences between who is in charge of setting the standards*

*Even if the most common is the Ministry of Justice, also the Council for the Judiciary or another judicial body is often involved*

# Time limits / timeframes: Coverage

*Two solutions: full country coverage or only for an individual court*

*The two options often used in combination*

# Time limits / timeframes: A tool for whom?

*In most countries the court president or the court management use the time limits / timeframes to follow the work of colleagues*

*However, in a number of countries, also the Ministries of Justice use it*