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“E-JUSTICE: INTEROPERABILITY OF SYSTEMS”**

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**National Report of Denmark**

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## 1. Context

### 1.1. Decisions concerning the public sector in general

The Danish government has set the goal that Denmark shall be among the countries that is best at utilizing the global digital transformation to create growth and welfare.

The ambition is to utilize the potentials of digital society across state, regional, and local levels of government to organize the public sector in a more flexible and efficient way and with higher quality of service for citizens.

The government and the local and regional organizations have established a board for the digitalisation of the public sector. The board is served by both a joint public digitalisation unit (The Digital Task Force) and by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. The Digital Task Force is based in the Ministry of Finance.

The joint e-government strategy for the public sector "Towards e-government - vision and strategy for the public sector in Denmark" is available in English at:

<http://www.e.gov.dk/sitemod/design/layouts/default/index.asp?pid=1700>.

### 1.2. Decisions concerning the Courts

After the general elections in November 2001 the new parliament has made a number of decisions concerning the general economy and funding of Danish public offices – including the Courts.

The funding for the Courts has been reduced – both in 2002 and the following years. This has also made an impact on funding for IT-projects. During the fall of 2001 the Danish Courts Administration had plans to specify a major IT-project for one large new system to replace the currently running IT-systems.

In part given the fact that funding for this type of project would seem unlikely, the Danish Courts Administration has made a decision to adapt the IT-development in 2002 and the following years to a new 'model' of funding, where the IT-development has to 'fit' into the running budget of the Courts Administration.

The effect of this being that the IT-systems for the Danish Courts will be exchanged gradually over time with newer systems.

### 1.3. Organizational changes in the Courts Administration

The management of IT has changed in 2001. During the summer and fall of 2001 a new IT-management has taken office and started working.

The new management is responsible for the process of implementing the IT-strategy decision of the Board of Governors of the Danish Courts Administration from January 2001. The vision of the IT-strategy is:

*"to develop and implement IT-solutions that will assist all work processes and to offer electronic communications between the Danish Courts and the public within a 5 year time span"*

## 2. Legal information databases

The computerised legal information system run by the Danish State is called Retsinformation. The information system is published by the Ministry of Justice, Secretariat for Legal Information.

Retsinformation includes statutes, subordinate legislation, bills and motions, parliamentary proceedings and administrative decisions. However, Retsinformation does not include court decisions.

Retsinformation is available to the general public via the internet. Access to Retsinformation is free of charge.

### **3. Administrative systems**

#### **3.1. Systems for the courts**

##### **3.1.1 Case management of Criminal Cases for County Courts**

The Danish Courts Administration entered a contract with the Danish IT-company DSI Data A/S to reprogram the currently running criminal case management system to a windows-platform.

The system was delivered in January 2002 and is now being tested internally at the IT-office.

The system is expected to be implemented in the County Courts later this year. The new system does not add any major new functionality compared to the currently running system, but the main goal was to move the system away from the current platform (FOCUS).

##### **3.1.2 New system to handle Bankruptcy in County Courts**

A new system to handle some types of bankruptcy in the county courts is being tested at a number of county courts in Denmark.

Given a successful conclusion of the test the new system is expected to be implemented within the county courts later in 2002.

##### **3.1.3 Internet access from the Courts**

We plan to open Internet access from all Courts before summer 2002.

Originally the project was to conclude before the end of 2001, but the technical challenges were somewhat larger than expected.

As part of the project to open Internet access we have to open new communications lines between each court office and a central site, where the actual access to the Internet is made through a common 'gateway'.

The new communications lines is based on 'ADSL' combined in a technology known as 'MPLS-ADSL' giving a type of 'private ADSL network' for the Courts.

At the central gateway we are using a Websweeper to overlook the Internet traffic for viruses and security purposes.

After some discussion we have made a decision not to make any restrictions on the sites the staff can access on the Internet, but every employee has been informed that the access to the Internet is monitored and that some types of downloads has been banned for security or performance reasons.

##### **3.1.4 Project Email**

The Danish Courts Administration decided to start a project opening Email to the Danish Courts.

The project is planned to show practical results by the end of 2002.

After the parliament decision on the national budget a specific funding for the project has been obtained in total DKK 15 mio.

The aim of the project is to give Email to each employee as well as general email-addresses for each court site and possibly for departments within the larger courts.

During the winter we have had debates on the regulations for using Email with the courts e.g. whether to allow the use of Email for private purposes. Also the subject of how to accept Emails as part of the legal process has been discussed.

One special complication for the Danish Courts is the fact that we currently are using DSI-text for text-processing. This is supplied by a local Danish company (DSI Data A/S). The set up of PCs in the Danish Courts does not include Microsoft Word or any other program that will read a Word-document. The moment Email is opened we expect to receive an Email with an attached word-document. Thus the project also includes upgrading every PC to use Microsoft Office.

We do not expect to finalize this project until some time into 2003.

## **4. Computerized Registers**

### ***4.1. Land register***

Registration of title to land is carried out by the Danish courts and is still based on (paper)documents. The manual registers of the local courts are, however, converted into one central computerized register. As one of the tasks of land registration is to convey information on registered interests in land, the land registration system is an important legal information system.

In Denmark, disclosure of information from the land register is subject to a fiscal tax. This applies both to information obtained by the user via external terminal access to the land registration system and to printouts granted by the court.

### ***4.2. Commerce and Companies register***

The registers of the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency are computerized, and companies registered with the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency can make changes to registered information on-line.

People who have computer equipment that lives up to the requirements of the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency and have entered into a connection agreement can access the agency's computerised information system subject to the terms set out in the agreement.

People who do not have access to the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency's computerised information system can obtain a printout of the information by contacting the agency.

Disclosure of information registered with the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency involves costs. This applies to both information obtained by the user from the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency's computerised information system and printouts of information granted by the agency.

## **5. Specific Issues**

### ***5.1. Internet addresses of information about the Justice sector***

On December 17<sup>th</sup> 2001 the Danish Courts Administration launched a new Internet site for the Danish Courts:

- [www.domstol.dk](http://www.domstol.dk).  
The homepage of the Danish Courts. The site is free and in Danish. A general text explaining how the Danish Courts operate can be found in both English and French.

Each of the Danish Courts have access to add general information concerning the specific court by themselves. Also all courts are encouraged to publish daily lists of courts operations and abbreviated (and in some cases anonymous) judgements.

- [www.politi.dk](http://www.politi.dk)  
The homepage of the Danish Police. The site is free and in Danish. A general text in English can be found at the first page.
- [www.kriminalforsorgen.dk](http://www.kriminalforsorgen.dk)  
The homepage of the Danish probation services. The site is free and in Danish.
- [www.jm.dk](http://www.jm.dk)  
The homepage of the Danish Ministry of Justice. The site is free and in Danish. Large parts of the site has been translated into English.
- [www.retsinfo.dk](http://www.retsinfo.dk)  
The homepage of the official online legal information system of the Danish State. The site is free and in Danish. A general text in English can be found at the first page.

## **5.2. Interoperability**

By the end of 2001 the Danish Ministry of Justice decided on a new general IT-strategy covering both Police, Probation Services and Courts.

As part of the new IT-strategy the three services are required to locate and implement IT-solutions to enhance the interoperability between Police, Courts and Probation Services.

The plan is to acquire the service of a consultancy company to write a report before September 2002 and – based on this report – to locate which areas of interoperability are suitable to develop and implement. The IT-strategy of the Ministry of Justice has as a goal to implement at least one practical solution before the end of 2002.

Currently there is no interoperability directly between the IT-systems of the Police, The Courts and the Probation Services.

As a result of the contacts established for the before mentioned project the IT-management from the Police, the Courts Administration and the Probation Services has made plans to meet on a regular basis to exchange information.

## **6. Requests for Information**

### *6.1. Experiences using XML*

The Danish Courts Administration plans to use XML as the new standard for exchanging information both within the courts systems (e.g. from County to Higher Court) and between the Courts, Police, Lawyers and others.

The Secretariat for Legal Information plans to use XML in the production of the legal texts, the Danish Official Journals and in the legal information system 'Retsinformation'.

Information concerning the implementation of practical solutions using XML will be greatly appreciated.