**A memo for a project proposal for action grants to promote judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters call (JUST-2025-JCOO)**

Call: JUST-2025-JCOO

Deadline: **23 April. 2025** - 17:00 (CET/CEST, Brussels time)

Project: **SCALE** – **S**implifying **C**ross-border **A**ccess to **L**egal **E**nforcement

Partners:

1. **Vrije Universiteit Brussel – VUB [BE] Coordinator**
2. **Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II – Cerict [IT]**
3. **Radboud University [NL]**
4. **Ljubljana University [SI]**
5. **Tallinn University of Technology – TalTech [EE]**
6. **Università Suor Orsola Benincasa [IT]**
7. **University of Nicosia [CY]**
8. **Associazione Italiana Difesa Consumatori Ed Ambiente [IT]**
9. **Zentrums für Europäischen Verbraucherschutz e. V. [DE]**
10. **European Bailiffs’ Foundation [BE]**
11. **Federation Barreaux d’Europe [FR]**
12. **AB corp [BE]**

Total budget: ca. 700.000 Euro

**Keywords:** ESCP; EOP; National Enforcement Rules, Simplification, Digitalization,

**Summary of the proposal**

Building on the successes of the SCAN, SCAN II, and DEUCE projects, the **SCALE** (**S**implifying **C**ross-border **A**ccess to **L**egal **E**nforcement) initiative aims to simplify cross-border small claims and debt recovery procedures by developing an advanced information tool that integrates the online forms for the European Small Claims Procedure (ESCP) and the European Order for Payment (EOP) available through the European e-Justice Portal. A persistent challenge lies in the fragmented enforcement regulations across EU Member States, which complicates cross-border enforcement under the ESCP and EOP schemes. By unifying and expanding the blockchain-based system developed during SCAN II and DEUCE, **SCALE** will offer citizens, lawyers, consumer protection bodies, and other stakeholders a comprehensive platform for navigating various national enforcement rules, while simultaneously exploring viable judicial and extrajudicial settlement options.

The **SCALE** consortium comprises a multidisciplinary team of international civil procedural law experts and information technology specialists. Their approach combines theoretical analysis, grounded in extensive data from previous EU-funded projects and networks such as the ECC-Net, with practice-oriented methodologies, involving mediators, lawyers, bailiffs, policymakers, and consumer associations. The project will inform the design and launch of a new information tool that streamlines how users compile the relevant online forms for ESCP and EOP, clarifies passenger rights enforcement procedures, and provides guidance on recently introduced EU legislation governing digital services. By engaging a wide range of participants—including over 200 lawyers, 200 bailiffs, 26 consumer associations, and 5 policymakers – **SCALE** will foster robust cooperation and knowledge exchange throughout its implementation.

**1. Auto-Compiling Functionality for Filling Online Forms (ESCP and EOP)**
The proposed information tool will integrate an automated system to assist end users in completing the ESCP and EOP forms, drawing on prior experiences gathered in SCAN II and DEUCE projects. This auto-compiling feature will reduce errors and ambiguities while offering clear step-by-step assistance for citizens unfamiliar with the intricacies of cross-border litigation.

**2. Implementation and Enforcement of Passenger Rights**
Beyond small claims in the traditional civil context, **SCALE** recognises that passenger rights enforcement remains uneven throughout the EU. National enforcement bodies differ in their interpretation and resources, resulting in inconsistent protection for passengers of all modes of transport. The project will collect data from passenger complaint-handling processes across Member States, mapping existing gaps and best practices. By consolidating this information into the tool, **SCALE** will provide up-to-date, easily navigable guidance on filing and following through with claims relating to air, rail, bus, and maritime travel. This knowledge-sharing mechanism is designed to promote a uniform application of EU passenger rights and close existing loopholes that often prevent travellers from fully exercising their rights.

**3. Digital Service Act: Guidance on Out-of-Court Dispute Settlement**
The emergence of the Digital Service Act (DSA), with its emphasis on responsible online platforms, has created new opportunities for alternative and online dispute resolution. In particular, Article 21 of the DSA enables users to challenge the platforms’ decisions in front of out-of-court dispute settlement bodies. To date, however, it is difficult for the users to find information and guidance on this dispute settlement mechanism, and many interested parties are not even aware of this possibility at all. To fill this gap, **we will** clarify how consumers, intermediaries, and relevant authorities can effectively engage in this form of dispute settlement, in cross-border contexts. The project will help stakeholders identify and utilise appropriate out-of-court dispute settlement bodies through practical demonstrations within the integrated information tools, thereby promoting faster, more accessible resolution of digital conflicts. Furthermore, **SCALE** will help stakeholders contextualize the out-of-court dispute settlement mechanism of Article 21 DSA within the broader context of EU civil justice and judicial cooperation.

By merging technological innovation with rigorous legal analysis, **SCALE** will deliver a robust and user-friendly solution that caters to the evolving needs of the EU’s cross-border justice framework. The consortium’s prior achievements serve as a foundation for scaling up and refining the processes of small claims, debt recovery, and consumer protection. Ultimately, the project will not only simplify procedures for claimants but also foster a more coherent and just single market by making legal avenues and enforcement mechanisms more transparent, accessible, and adaptable across Member States.Bottom of Form

**Work Packages:**

WP 1. Project Management and Coordination - VUB

WP 2. Information tool – Unina

WP 3. Testing information tool – Taltech

WP 4. Info on passenger disputes – Suor Orsola

WP 5. Info on DSA - Radboud

WP 6. Dissemination – AB Corp