



Press Release

The law for couples in the 27 EU countries:

www.coupleseurope.eu

Brussels, 9 November 2012

European Union citizens can now access information on the law regulating matrimonial property regimes and the property consequences of registered partnerships in all of the EU countries, in the language of their choice. The www.coupleseurope.eu website is now online, thanks to the work of the Notaries of Europe and the support of the European Commission. It provides EU citizens with information on the law in force in the 27 Member States and answers legal questions that any couple in Europe might have, all in 21 languages.

The technical infrastructure is very simple to use, allowing citizens to find the information they are looking for quickly and easily:

- What are the consequences of divorce or separation in terms of a couple's matrimonial property regime?
- Which law is applicable to a couple's property?
- What does the law provide for the property of registered and non-registered partners?
- What are the consequences of death in terms of a couple's matrimonial property regime?

These are some of the questions that EU citizens will find the answer to on the www.coupleseurope.eu website. The content of the site will be updated regularly to reflect legislative developments at EU and national level.

Tilman Götte, President of the Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNUE), said: "*This project demonstrates the will of the Notaries of Europe to provide the best solution to the need for legal certainty experienced by couples in Europe, the forms of which are developing rapidly.*" Indeed, according to statistics from the European Commission, there are now around 16 million international couples in the EU. Of the 2.4 marriages that took place in 2007, 13% (310 000) had an international element. Similarly, 41 000 of the 211 000 partnerships registered in the EU in 2007 had an international aspect.

Many of these international couples have assets – such as real estate or bank accounts – in several countries. They face legal uncertainty and extra costs if they have to divide their assets in the case of divorce, separation or death. It is currently extremely difficult for them to be sure of which court has jurisdiction and what law is applicable to their situation and their property. Rules vary widely between countries, and may conflict with each other. It is estimated that parallel legal proceedings in different countries, the complexity of matters and the resulting legal fees cost EUR 1.1 billion per year.

The Couples in Europe project follows the model of the www.successions-europe.eu website, which was launched by the CNUE with support from the Commission in May 2010. This site is another source of multilingual information, providing visitors with information on succession law in the Member States. So far it has had nearly 700 000 unique visitors.

We hope you enjoy browsing www.coupleseurope.eu, the site for all couples in Europe

For more information:

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The CNUE in brief:

The CNUE is the official body representing the notarial profession in dealings with the European institutions. Speaking for the profession, it expresses the joint decisions of its members to the institutions of the European Union.

The Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNUE) comprises 21 notarial organisations in the European Union and Croatia. The European notariats are represented in the CNUE by the presidents of the national notariats. The CNUE operates under the authority of a President, the CNUE's spokesperson, who has tenure for one year.