



European  
Commission



# EU Civil Law

From Vienna to Sopot: In a series of speeches, Vice-President Viviane Reding set out an ambitious agenda for creating a reliable legal environment for businesses and citizens in the field of civil law. **Words** have since been translated into **action**.

## 1. Building bridges between legal systems

*"As the European Commission's first dedicated Justice Commissioner, I have understood my mission to be that of a builder of bridges between Europe's different legal families."*

Vienna, 17 November 2011 ([SPEECH/11/764](#))

*"It was high time the EU acted because there are more and more couples living in a Member State of which they do not have nationality, or they acquire property in another Member State than the one they live in."*

Luxembourg, 21 May 2011 ([SPEECH/11/371](#))



- ✓ Reform of the Brussels I Regulation to abolish the "exequatur" procedure  
*proposed 2010, adopted 2012*
- ✓ Two Regulations on Matrimonial Property Regimes and property consequences of registered partnership  
*proposed 2011*
- ✓ Regulation to ease cross-border successions  
*adopted 2012*
- ✓ Enhanced Cooperation on rules helping international couples with cross-border divorces  
*proposed 2010, adopted 2011*
- ✓ Modernised Regulation on insolvency rules  
*proposed 2012*

## 2. Boosting cross border trade

*"An optional and voluntary European contract law system, which could be freely chosen by traders, would in my view be a very good way [...] to provide a useful and necessary boost to the internal market."*

Sopot, 19 July 2011 ([SPEECH/11/539](#))



- ✓ Regulation on a Common European Sales Law  
*proposed 2011*
- ✓ Consumer Rights Directive  
*adopted 2011*

## 3. Effective enforcement

*"It is time therefore to reflect if and how the European Small Claims Procedure can be improved in light of practical experience and developments in the judicial and economic spheres."*

*"I believe that the Commission has to take a more prominent role in monitoring and coordinating coherent enforcement of EU consumer rules by the Member States."*

Brussels, 19 March 2013 ([SPEECH/13/237](#))

*"I will present in July a legislative proposal to facilitate cross-border debt recovery through better enforcement."*

Luxembourg, 21 May 2011 ([SPEECH/11/371](#))



- ✓ A modernised Small Claims Procedure  
*proposed 2013*
- ✓ Communication and report on the application of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive 2013
- ✓ Regulation on cross-debt recovery (European Account Preservation Order)  
*proposed 2011*

## Next steps:

- Examine codification of adopted laws in the civil and commercial law area, notably in the area of conflict of laws
- Examine codification of all existing consumer rights laws to simplify the legislative framework. Work on raising awareness of these rights. There are no rights if citizens are not aware of these