Enforcement of Foreign Judgments

Contributing editor
Patrick Doris

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Enforcement of Foreign Judgments 2018

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France

Anke Sprengel
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1 Treaties

Is your country party to any bilateral or multilateral treaties for the reciprocal recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments? What is the country’s approach to entering into these treaties and what, if any, amendments or reservations has your country made to such treaties?

In this regard, as well as others, the enforcement of foreign non-EU judgments must be distinguished from the enforcement of judgments between EU members as outlined in this chapter.

Enforcement of judgments between EU members

EU regulations and treaties

The issues of enforcement of judgments between EU members were, in particular, governed by Council Regulation (EC) No. 44/2001 of 22 December 2000 on jurisdiction and the Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (the old Brussels I Regulation) for relations between Denmark and other EU member states, the Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Denmark on Jurisdiction and the Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters of 21 March 2013 applies (which includes the new Brussels I Regulation)). A reformed regulation of Brussels I (Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012) was adopted by the Council on 6 December 2012 and published in the Official Journal on 20 December 2012. This recast regulation has applied since 10 January 2015 and replaced Council Regulation (EC) No. 44/2001 (the new Brussels I Regulation). Important modifications have been adopted, the most important of which is that exequatur proceedings have been abolished. However, the old Brussels I Regulation continues to apply to the recognition and enforcement of all judgments given in proceedings initiated before 10 January 2015. An EU regulation is binding and directly applicable in all member states. As a member of the European Union, France is required to observe and apply the respective EU regulations regarding the recognition and enforcement of judgments between EU members. Besides the Brussels I Regulation, the following EU regulations contain rules on the recognition and enforcement of judgments between EU members.


- Regulation (EC) No. 1896/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 creating a European Order for payment procedure (the European Payment Order Regulation), which came into force on 31 December 2006; and


For relations between EU member states and Norway, Iceland and Switzerland, the Convention on Jurisdiction and the Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters of the European Community with Iceland, Norway and Switzerland of 30 October 2007 (the new Lugano Convention) applies.

Enforcement of foreign non-EU judgments

Furthermore, France is bound by multiple international treaties dealing with the reciprocal recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments. All the relevant treaties are listed on www.legifrance.gouv.fr; however, the most important treaties are listed below.

International treaties – multilateral treaties

Multilateral treaties containing rules on the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments cover a plurality of special cases (excluding family law):

- navigation on the Rhine (revised Mannheim Convention of 17 October 1868) or the canalisation of the Moselle (Convention of 27 October 1956);

- the exequatur of costs or expenses (the Hague Conventions of 1 March 1954 on Civil Procedure and of 25 October 1980 on International Access to Justice);

- contracts for international carriage of goods by road (CMR Convention of 19 May 1956) or international carriage by rail (COTIF of 9 May 1980);

- liability in the field of nuclear energy (Brussels Convention of 31 January 1963, supplementary to the Paris Convention of 29 July 1960, as amended by the Additional Protocol of 28 January 1964, the Additional Protocol of 16 November 1982 and the Additional Protocol of 12 February 2004); and


International treaties – bilateral treaties

An extensive network of bilateral treaties of legal cooperation or legal assistance exists with the following states, usually containing a chapter on the recognition and enforcement of reciprocal judgments: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada (Quebec), Central African Republic, Chad, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Hungary, Italy, Laos, Macedonia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Hong Kong, United States, Uruguay, Vietnam and Yugoslavia.

It should be noted that many of these treaties, such as the treaty with the United States, refer only to family law.

Treaties with members of the European Union apply only to questions that are not subject to the European regulations (see above).
Intra-state variations

Is there uniformity in the law on the enforcement of foreign judgments among different jurisdictions within the country?

France is a highly centralised state. Therefore, there is uniformity in the law on the enforcement of foreign judgments among different jurisdictions within the country.

Sources of law

What are the sources of law regarding the enforcement of foreign judgments?

In principle, the national and supranational legislation mentioned above is the only source of law for the enforcement of foreign judgments. However, the legal practice for civil and commercial matters is constantly being defined and refined by the French Supreme Court.

Hague Convention requirements

To the extent the enforcing country is a signatory of the Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters, will the court require strict compliance with its provisions before recognising a foreign judgment?

France has not signed the Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters.

Limitation periods

What is the limitation period for enforcement of a foreign judgment? When does it commence to run? In what circumstances would the enforcing court consider the statute of limitations of the foreign jurisdiction?

As far as enforcement of a foreign decision is concerned, articles L111-3 and L111-4 of the French Code of Civil Enforcement Procedures (previous articles 3-1 and 3 of Law No. 91-650 of 9 July 1991 concerning the reform of civil procedures on enforcement, modified by Law No. 2008-561 of 17 June 2008 concerning the statute of limitations in civil law and then abrogated on 1 June 2012 by Order No. 2011-1938) stipulate a limitation period of 10 years starting with the declaration of enforceability of the foreign decision (the term ‘enforcement’ is employed here only with regard to enforcement in a technical sense; this does not comprise the recognition and declaration of enforceability (see below)). However, no possibility of a remedy suspending the execution of the declaration of enforceability should still exist.

A declaration of enforceability depends on the applicable rules, namely, the above-named European regulations and conventions, international agreements and bilateral conventions, or French rules on private international law.

However, article 3-1 also provides that the period of 10 years does not apply if the actions for debt recovery that are taken into account in the decision have set a longer time limit. In this case, the French court enforcing the decision would have to take the longer prescriptions of the foreign jurisdiction into account.

It should be noted that, contrary to enforcement, there are no rules as to the prescription of the recognition of a foreign judgment. Therefore, the recognition of foreign decisions can take place at any time and the above-mentioned limitation period of 10 years will only start to run at such time.

Types of enforceable order

Which remedies ordered by a foreign court are enforceable in your jurisdiction?

All remedies ordered by a foreign court are enforceable (except for interim injunctions), according to both French private international law and European conventions, and international agreements or conventions. However, French courts do not recognise decisions on punitive damages that are disproportionate to the harm sustained and the contractual breach (see Court of Cassation, First Civil Chamber, 1 December 2010, appeal No. 09-13-1053; more recently, see Court of Cassation, Criminal Chamber, 15 October 2014, appeal No. 13-83.884). Therefore, in the case of French courts finding that the punitive damages awarded are disproportionate, they will refuse to order the enforcement of such a decision.

Competent courts

Must cases seeking enforcement of foreign judgments be brought in a particular court?

Enforcement of foreign non-EU judgments

For the enforcement of foreign judgments according to French private international law, the presiding judge of the district court has subject-matter jurisdiction (article R212-8, Code of Judicial Organisation). The local jurisdiction will be determined by the domicile of the defendant (article 42, Code of Civil Procedure) or the registered office of the legal person (article 43, Code of Civil Procedure).

Enforcement of judgments between EU members

The old Brussels I Regulation

For decisions that are subject to the old Brussels I Regulation (Regulation (EC) No. 44/2001), the presiding judge of the district court also has subject-matter jurisdiction according to article 39(1) in conjunction with Annex II of the old Brussels I Regulation (however, the recognition will take place ipso jure). The local jurisdiction will be determined by the domicile of the defendant or the place of enforcement (article 39(3) of the old Brussels I Regulation).

The new Brussels I Regulation

The new Brussels I Regulation (Regulation (EU) No. 1223/2012) only applies to judgments given in proceedings commenced on or after 10 January 2015 (see article 66 of the new Brussels I Regulation). Under the new Brussels I Regulation, a judgment given in a member state that is enforceable in that member state shall be enforceable in the other member states without any declaration of enforceability being required (article 39 of the new Brussels I Regulation).

European Payment Order Regulation (No. 1896/2006)

According to article 18(1) of the European Payment Order Regulation, the declaration of enforceability will be rendered by the court that issued the order. According to article 6(1) of this Regulation, the rules of Brussels I apply to this question of international competence unless the defendant is a consumer. In this case, only the jurisdictions in the member state where the consumer is domiciled will be competent.

The competent enforcement administration is determined by French law (article 21 of the European Payment Order Regulation). More specifically, enforcement procedures shall be governed by the law of the member state of enforcement.

European Enforcement Order Regulation (EEO) (No. 805/2004)

A foreign judgment certified as an EEO according to the European Enforcement Order Regulation shall be enforced in France under the same conditions as a judgment rendered in France.

European Small Claims Procedure Regulation (No. 861/2007)

For the European Small Claims Procedure (see article 1382 et seq of the Code of Civil Procedure), the district court and the commercial court have subject-matter jurisdiction. The local competence is defined according to the Brussels I Regulation. A judgment delivered under this procedure is recognised and enforceable in other member states (except Denmark) without any need for a declaration of enforceability.

Separation of recognition and enforcement

To what extent is the process for obtaining judicial recognition of a foreign judgment separate from the process for enforcement?

According to French private international law, foreign judgments are recognised and enforced by way of an exequatur procedure. Therefore, the judgment must first be recognised (ie, it needs to obtain full legal effect not only in the issuing state, but also in France). After receiving enforceable status through the declaration of enforceability, enforcement proceedings can start.

According to the European idea of creating a common area of freedom, security and justice, the treaties of recognition are based on the principle of mutual confidence in jurisdiction and decisions. Because
of this principle, a foreign judgment in civil and commercial matters is in general recognised ipso jure in other member states without any special procedure being required (article 33(1), old Brussels I Regulation, and article 36, new Brussels I Regulation) (for the possibilities available to challenge the recognition of a foreign judgment under Brussels I, see question 9).

As a result of the recognition by law, the beneficiary can directly apply to the chief clerk of the district court for the declaration of enforceability (article 38, old Brussels I Regulation and article 509-21(1), Code of Civil Procedure). This formality remains a requirement for the enforcement of a foreign judgment (this is also the case under the old Brussels I Regulation). However, this requirement has been abolished by Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012. Under the new Brussels I Regulation, a judgment given in one member state is enforceable in all other member states. There is no longer any need to apply for a declaration of enforceability.

Due to the European Enforcement Order Regulation establishing an EEO for uncontested claims in all member states (except Denmark), the process of declaration of enforceability is no longer required (article 3 of the European Enforcement Order Regulation).

The member state in which the judgment has been rendered will issue an EEO certificate provided that the procedural requirements of certification of articles 6(1) and 12(1) of the European Enforcement Order Regulation are complied with (eg, the regular service of the documents ensuring compliance with the rights of defence or the compatibility of the judgment with the rules of jurisdiction or court proceedings established by the Brussels I Regulation).

The enforcement of an EEO in France will be governed by French law.

In the same way, the European Payment Order Regulation simplifies cross-border litigation in European Union countries (except Denmark) by abandoning the process of recognition and the requirement of declaration of enforceability (article 19 of the European Payment Order Regulation).

Finally, the European Small Claims Procedure Regulation simplifies small claims litigation in civil and commercial matters not exceeding the sum of €2,000. A judgment delivered under this procedure is recognised and enforceable in other member states (except Denmark) without any need of declaration of enforceability (ie, article 20(1) of the European Small Claims Procedure Regulation). The party seeking enforcement only has to produce an original copy of the judgment and of the certificate of the judgment, and if necessary a duly certified translation into the language of the member state of enforcement.

9 Defences

Can a defendant raise merits-based defences to liability or to the scope of the award entered in the foreign jurisdiction, or is the defendant limited to more narrow grounds for challenging a foreign judgment?

Enforcement of foreign non-EU judgments

According to French private international law, the defendant cannot obtain a review of the case. French legal practice only permits a defence of non-compliance with procedural regularities according to French international public policy, the lack of competence of the foreign court or the existence of fraud against law in the prior action.

Enforcement of judgments between EU members

The debtor’s possibilities to attack a foreign judgment under the Brussels I Regulation are also limited: under no circumstances may a foreign judgment be reviewed as to its substance (see article 36 of new Brussels I and article 45(2) of old Brussels I).

The only possible means of defence are defined in articles 34 and 35 of the Regulation. According to article 34, recognition of a foreign judgment will be refused in cases of a manifest conflict with French public policy, provided that the defendant had no possibility of defence in the prior action, and in cases of incompatibility with an earlier judgment involving the same cause of action and the same parties in the member state of recognition, another member state or a third state.

Although article 35(3) states the principle that the competence of the jurisdiction in the country of origin must not be reviewed, it allows exceptions to this principle with regard to decisions in matters relating to insurance or to consumer contracts, or decisions by the exclusive jurisdictions according to article 22 of Brussels I. In these cases, a lack of competence will constitute a reason for the refusal of recognition.

The reasons for a refusal provided for by articles 34 and 35 can be taken into consideration during different stages of the process of recognition and enforcement if there is a legal action either to solely obtain the recognition or to raise an incidental question of recognition (article 36 of the Regulation), and within the appeal procedure lodged by the defendant after the decision on the application for a declaration of enforceability (article 49, Brussels I).

The burden of proof concerning the reasons provided for by articles 34 and 35 of Brussels I falls on the defendant.

Defences that the debtor could already have raised within the prior action are also excluded. They can only be raised as part of an appeal against the foreign judgment in the member state where the decision was rendered.

Under the new Brussels I Regulation, the judgment debtor can prevent a judgment from being enforced for the same reasons according to article 46. The reasons for a refusal of recognition and enforcement provided for in articles 34 and 35 of the old Brussels I Regulation have been incorporated in article 45 of the new Brussels I Regulation. They remain unchanged.

10 Injunctive relief

May a party obtain injunctive relief to prevent foreign judgment enforcement proceedings in your jurisdiction?

Under French law, the judgment debtor cannot obtain injunctive relief to prevent foreign judgment enforcement proceedings in France. The judgment creditor can only be prevented from enforcing a foreign judgment in the case of bankruptcy proceedings having been initiated against the judgment debtor or in the case of immunity from execution having been granted to the judgment debtor (eg, a public legal entity or a state).

Otherwise, a foreign judgment can be enforced in France by way of an exequatur procedure before the relevant district court. In the event that the conditions of the exequatur are fulfilled, the court will grant exequatur. A foreign judgment in civil and commercial matters falling within the scope of the old Brussels I Regulation is, in general, recognised ipso jure in other member states without any special procedure being required. The judgment creditor must only apply for a declaration of enforceability (see article 38(1) of the old Brussels I Regulation).

A judgment given in one member state which falls into the scope of Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012 is immediately enforceable in another EU member state, without any need for a declaration of enforceability (see article 39 of the new Brussels I Regulation).

11 Basic requirements for recognition

What are the basic mandatory requirements for recognition of a foreign judgment?

According to current French legal practice with regard to foreign non-EU judgments, a foreign judgment will be recognised if it complies with international regularity.

International regularity comprises three conditions: the competence of the foreign jurisdiction, the absence of fraud against law and compliance with international public policy.

It should be noted that, independently of the effects rendered by recognition and enforcement, there are also other effects to a foreign judgment according to French legal practice; a foreign judgment will therefore be considered as a fact (the existence of the judgment will generate consequences that will equally generate consequences in France, for example, the order in a foreign country may constitute a case of force majeure for the French debtor), as a proof (the establishment of facts in the foreign judgment can serve as a proof within another case) and as a title (eg, allowing a request for a protective measure).

Under the scope of Brussels I, the recognition of a foreign judgment is made as a right in other member states (article 33(1), old Brussels I and article 36(1), new Brussels I). Nevertheless, the Regulation determines the basic requirements for recognition (in articles 35 and 36 of old Brussels I and article 45 of new Brussels I) (see above).
12 Other factors
May other non-mandatory factors for recognition of a foreign judgment be considered and if so what factors?

There are no other non-mandatory factors to be considered. All factors for recognition of a foreign non-EU judgment are defined by French private international law (see question 11).
Brussels I also does not contain non-mandatory factors.

13 Procedural equivalence
Is there a requirement that the judicial proceedings where the judgment was entered correspond to due process in your jurisdiction, and if so, how is that requirement evaluated?

Enforcement of foreign non-EU judgments
According to French private international law, the following rules on procedural requirements exist.

As explained above, the foreign judgment must be internationally regular. The judge in charge of recognition and enforcement will, therefore, verify that the foreign judgment complies with international public policy and that the parties did not commit any fraud against the law. He or she will also verify the competence of the foreign judge. The foreign judgment also has to be enforceable in its original country.

The criterion of compliance with international public policy especially allows for an examination of procedural equivalence, but only as far as the principles of fair process are concerned.

Enforcement of judgments between EU members
For a European civil procedure according to the Brussels I Regulation, no requirement of procedural equivalence exists. By applying Brussels I, member states already ensure a homogeneous legal landscape throughout the EU.

In any case, the rights of defence have a particular importance under Brussels I. Article 45 of new Brussels I (article 34 of old Brussels I) is mainly applicable to judgments in contumacy and guarantees the right to a fair trial that constitute an infringement of article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, procedural errors do not, in general, prevent the recognition of a foreign judgment. Recognition is only refused in cases of a manifest violation of the principle of a contradictory process in cases of an incorrect or late notice of the action. Therefore, following an objection raised by the judgment debtor, the French court will examine whether the judgment debtor had sufficient opportunities to defend himself or herself in the prior action. The criterion of adequate notice cannot be generally defined; it is determined by the court according to the circumstances of each case.

Additionally, French legal practice, as confirmed by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU, Case C-7/98, Krombach, 28 March 2000), generally penalises procedural errors violating the right to a fair trial that constitute an infringement of article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, procedural errors do not, in general, prevent the recognition of a foreign judgment. Recognition is only refused in cases of a manifest violation of the principles of procedural justice on which the French legal system is based.
As a result, it is not the procedural equivalence that is decisive, but rather the respect of due process of law fixed in article 45(1 b) of Brussels I.

14 Personal jurisdiction
Will the enforcing court examine whether the court where the judgment was entered had personal jurisdiction over the defendant, and if so, how is that requirement met?

The French legal system only distinguishes between subject-matter and local jurisdiction. The concept of personal jurisdiction does not exist under French law. Therefore, the enforcing court will not examine whether the court that rendered the judgment had personal jurisdiction over the defendant.

15 Subject-matter jurisdiction
Will the enforcing court examine whether the court where the judgment was entered had subject-matter jurisdiction over the controversy, and if so, how is that requirement met?

Enforcement of foreign non-EU judgments
Since the Cornelissen case (Court of Cassation, First Civil Chamber, 20 February 2007, Appeal No. 05-14082), the enforcing court is only obliged to verify the indirect competence of the foreign court, which means that there must be a connection between the subject matter of the dispute and the foreign court to which the dispute has been referred. Furthermore, French courts must not have had exclusive subject-matter jurisdiction.

The Court of Cassation continues to apply the principles developed in the Cornelissen case (see a case recently decided by the Court of Cassation, First Civil Chamber, 4 May 2017, Appeal No. 16-13.643).

The enforcement of judgments between EU members
According to the Brussels I Regulation, the subject-matter jurisdiction of the court rendering the judgment will not be examined by the French court (article 45(3) of new Brussels I and article 35(3) of old Brussels I).

The international jurisdiction of the foreign court will be examined only in exceptional cases provided for in article 45 of new Brussels I Regulation (article 35 of old Brussels I Regulation). This is especially the case in consumer law or insurance law disputes, or in the case of French courts having exclusive jurisdiction according to article 24 of Brussels I. For example, in proceedings that have as their object rights in rem immovable property or tenancies of immovable property, the courts of the member state in which the property is situated have exclusive jurisdiction (article 24 of new Brussels I Regulation and article 22 of old Brussels I Regulation).

16 Service
Must the defendant have been technically or formally served with notice of the original action in the foreign jurisdiction, or is actual notice sufficient? How much notice is usually considered sufficient?

Enforcement of a foreign non-EU judgment
According to French private international law, the foreign judgment must be enforceable and have been served in the foreign country.

In order to obtain recognition and enforcement in France, the claimant must prove the service of the judgment. However, according to legal practice, it does not constitute an infringement of procedural public policy if the service does not mention the means of redress authorised in the foreign country. The claimant must also prove that notice of action has been served on the defendant. The enforcing court must ensure that the defendant had knowledge of the proceedings or, failing this, that the requirements of the provisions of article 15 of the Hague Convention of 15 November 1965 on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters have been met by the foreign court.

The enforcement of judgments between EU members
The old Brussels I Regulation
According to article 26, the foreign court is obliged to verify whether the defendant has been able to receive the document instituting the proceedings, or an equivalent document, in sufficient time to enable him or her to arrange for his or her defence, or that all necessary steps have been taken to this end in order to ensure compliance with the fundamental principle of a fair trial, including that no party to the legal proceedings may be judged without having had the opportunity to state his or her case. The requirements of sufficient notice are not fixed in Brussels I but will be established according to the specific circumstances of the individual case. However, Council Regulation (EC) No. 1348/2000 of 29 May 2000 on the Service in the Member States of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters applies instead of the provisions of the Brussels I Regulation if the document instituting the proceedings or an equivalent document has to be transmitted from one member state to another pursuant to this Regulation. Requirements of sufficient notice are fixed in article 19 of this Regulation.

The new Brussels I Regulation
According to article 45, recognition shall be refused where the judgment was given in default of appearance, if the defendant was not served with the document that instituted the proceedings or with an equivalent document in sufficient time and in such a way as to enable him or her to arrange for his or her defence, unless the defendant failed to commence proceedings to challenge the judgment when it was possible for him or her to do so.
17 Fairness of foreign jurisdiction

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enforce a foreign judgment?

Other factors than those presented in this chapter will not be taken into

consideration by a French court.

18 Vitiation by fraud

Will the court examine the foreign judgment for allegations of

fraud upon the defendant or the court?

According to French private international law, the recognising and

enforcing court in France will not examine the foreign judgment as to

its substance. However, the court can refuse recognition or enforce-

ment of the judgment if it was rendered on a fraudulent basis.

French legal practice distinguishes between:

• fraud against the law (eg, fraudulent manipulation of the rules on

  recognition and enforcement of foreign decisions);

• fraud against the court (eg, if the claimant had fraudulently deter-

  mined his or her residence in a foreign country in order to base the
  jurisdiction in this foreign country);

• fraud with regard to the judgment (eg, in the case of a claimant

  pleading before a foreign jurisdiction with the intent to come back
to France in order to enforce the decision, knowing that under these
conditions the judge of recognition and enforcement will apply
only an attenuated public policy and not the full public pol-
icy); and

• fraud with regard to the rights of defence (eg, a claimant’s manipu-

  lations in order to deprive the defendant of the possibility to cor-
rectly defend his or her rights). Judgments falling within the scope
of the Brussels I Regulation obtained by fraud violate the prin-
ciple of public policy and therefore will not be recognised in France
according to article 45 of the new Brussels I Regulation (article 34
of the old Brussels I Regulation).

The defence of fraud must be raised by the damaged party, except in
cases of fraud affecting French state interests, such as in antitrust law
or law of foreign exchange matters, which are automatically examined
by the enforcing court.

19 Public policy

Will the court examine the foreign judgment for consistency
with the enforcing jurisdiction’s public policy and substantive
laws?

Enforcement of a foreign non-EU judgment

According to French private international law, foreign judgments
sought to be enforced in France have to comply with the condition of
international procedural regularity (the aspect of public policy that is
relevant here). International procedural regularity principally concerns
the rights of the defence.

If the foreign judgment is in contradiction with international pro-
cedural regularity, the court will refuse to enforce it (eg, if a foreign
jurisdiction applies a nationalisation law that does not provide any
compensation to dispossessed persons, the court will not enforce the
judgment by virtue of its violation of the principle of public policy).

The enforcement of judgments between EU members

According to article 45 of new Brussels I (article 34 of old Brussels I),
the French court will examine the foreign judgment for its compli-
ance with public policy. The term ‘public policy’ as used in article 45
has to be interpreted as international public policy that is based on
a more limited understanding of the term compared to the notion
of general French public policy. In its judgments in Hoffmann/Krieg
(Case C-145/86, 4 February 1988) and Krombach (cited above), the
CJEU affirmed that the notion of public policy in Brussels I has to be
interpreted autonomously (ie, not according to French private interna-
tional law).

Nevertheless, international public policy, as well as French pri-
ivate international law, also includes a procedural notion; there-
fore the French court examines the regularity of the prior procedure
(independence and impartiality of the court, right to be heard, right of
23 **Favourably treated jurisdictions**

Are judgments from some foreign jurisdictions given greater
decree than judgments from others? If so, why?

As demonstrated, European regulations facilitate the recognition and
enforcement of judgments within the European Union. However, no
preference can be given to judgments from certain jurisdictions based
on such legal grounds.

24 **Alteration of awards**

Will a court ever recognise only part of a judgment, or alter or
limit the damage award?

According to French private international law, the court can recog-
nise only part of a judgment unless the judgment is indivisible (ie,
in cases where, if one of the measures is recognised, all of them must
be recognised).

French judges have no competence to reduce or increase a dam-
ages award.

In addition to this, French decisions cannot allow any punitive
damages because this kind of compensation does not exist in the
French system.

According to actual legal practice, a foreign decision that includes
punitive damages is not against public policy, but if the amount of puni-
tive damages appears to be disproportionate with regard to the dam-
age, the court will not recognise the foreign decision.

According to article 48 of old Brussels I, the enforcement of only
parts of a judgment is possible. A partial recognition of a judgment is
not mentioned; however, a partial recognition is admissible. This
would be the case if the foreign judgment concerns several matters. As
a result, Brussels I can be applied only in parts or the reasons for objec-
tions of articles 34 and 35 can be applicable to only some of the actions.
A partial recognition or a partial enforcement is not mentioned in the
new Brussels I Regulation, but should be possible under the same con-
ditions as described above.

A reduction or increase of the amount due is not admissible under
Brussels I.

25 **Currency, interest, costs**

In recognising a foreign judgment, does the court convert
the damage award to local currency and take into account such
factors as interest and court costs and exchange controls?

If interest claims are allowed, which law governs the rate of
interest?

For foreign judgments that are recognised and enforced according to
French private international law, and where the judgment is executed in
France, the court will convert the award into euros.

The judge rendering the declaration of enforceability cannot allow
interest if the foreign judge did not do so. However, the judge in charge
of recognition and enforcement can allow interest in arrears, which
begin to run from the day of the declaration of enforceability and must
be paid according to French law.

Concerning the enforcement of judgments under the Brussels I
Regulation, the French court does not convert the currency during the
process of recognition and declaration of enforceability. It is only at the
moment of the effective payment to the bailiff that the conversion is
effected (this issue is increasingly irrelevant, as most member states
have adopted the euro).

Concerning legal interests according to the foreign decision, the
claimant has to seize the enforcing court in order for the due sum to
be fixed.

26 **Security**

Is there a right to appeal from a judgment recognising or
enforcing a foreign judgment? If so, what procedures, if any,
are available to ensure the judgment will be enforceable
against the defendant if and when it is affirmed?

According to French private international law, the means of redress
against a declaration of enforceability are an appeal and third-party
proceedings.
27 Enforcement process

Once a foreign judgment is recognised, what is the process for enforcing it in your jurisdiction?

According to French private international law, the claimant must ask for the exequatur of the judgment in order to enforce the judgment. If the exequatur is allowed, the judgment is enforceable and the claimant can use coercion to obtain his or her obligation or award. The applicable rules are laid down in articles 11-37 of Decree No. 92-755 of 31 July 1992 (recently modified by Decree No. 2012-783 of 30 May 2012).

After the judgment has been declared enforceable and a request for enforcement (according to article 39(1) and Annex II of old Brussels I) has been sent to the presiding judge of the competent district court, the judge will make a decision about the enforcement proceedings (article 38(1), old Brussels I).

The claimant must be notified of the decision authorising enforcement proceedings and such notification must be served (together with the judgment if this has not already been served) on the party against whom enforcement is sought, even though a contradictory proceeding is not intended (ie, article 42, Brussels I now abolished by Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012).

The enforcement proceedings of all European decisions under the regulations mentioned above are governed by French law. In France, bailiffs are responsible for enforcing judgments.

Under Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012, a party that wishes to invoke in a member state a judgment given in another member state shall produce a copy of the judgment that satisfies the conditions necessary to establish its authenticity and the certificate issued pursuant to article 53, certifying that the judgment is enforceable and containing an extract of the judgment as well as, where appropriate, relevant information on the recoverable costs of the proceedings and the calculation of interest (articles 37 and 42 of new Brussels I).

An enforceable judgment shall carry with it by operation of law the power to proceed to any protective measures that exist under the law of the member state addressed (article 40, Brussels I).

Where enforcement is sought of a judgment given in another member state, the certificate issued pursuant to article 53 shall be served on the person against whom the enforcement is sought prior to the first enforcement measure. The certificate shall be accompanied by the judgment, if not already served on that person (article 43(1), Brussels I).

Where the person against whom the enforcement is sought is domiciled in a member state other than the member state of origin, he may request a translation of the judgment in order to contest the enforcement if the judgment is not written in or accompanied by a translation into either a language which he understands or the official language of the member state in which he is domiciled or, where there are several official languages in that member state, the official language or one of the official languages of the place where he is domiciled (article 43(2), Brussels I).

28 Pitfalls

What are the most common pitfalls in seeking recognition or enforcement of a foreign judgment in your jurisdiction?

Due to the large number of different rules applying to the recognition or enforcement of foreign judgments (ie, French private international law, European regulations and international bilateral or multilateral treaties (see question 1)), it is a challenge to identify, within a reasonable amount of time, the rules that are applicable in any respective case.
Acquisition Finance  
Advertising & Marketing  
Agribusiness  
Air Transport  
Anti-Corruption Regulation  
Anti-Money Laundering  
Arbitration  
Asset Recovery  
Automotive  
Aviation Finance & Leasing  
Banking Regulation  
Cartel Regulation  
Class Actions  
Commercial Contracts  
Construction  
Copyright  
Corporate Governance  
Corporate Immigration  
Cybersecurity  
Data Protection & Privacy  
Debt Capital Markets  
Dispute Resolution  
Distribution & Agency  
Domains & Domain Names  
Dominance  
e-Commerce  
Electricity Regulation  
Energy Disputes  
Enforcement of Foreign Judgments  
Environment & Climate Regulation  
Equity Derivatives  
Executive Compensation & Employee Benefits  
Financial Services Litigation  
Fintech  
Foreign Investment Review  
Franchise  
Fund Management  
Gas Regulation  
Government Investigations  
Healthcare Enforcement & Litigation  
High-Yield Debt  
Initial Public Offerings  
Insurance & Reinsurance  
Insurance Litigation  
Intellectual Property & Antitrust  
Investment Treaty Arbitration  
Islamic Finance & Markets  
Labour & Employment  
Legal Privilege & Professional Secrecy  
Licensing  
Life Sciences  
Loans & Secured Financing  
Mediation  
Merger Control  
Mergers & Acquisitions  
Mining  
Oil Regulation  
Outsourcing  
Patents  
Pensions & Retirement Plans  
Pharmaceutical Antitrust  
Ports & Terminals  
Private Antitrust Litigation  
Private Banking & Wealth Management  
Private Client  
Private Equity  
Product Liability  
Product Recall  
Project Finance  
Public-Private Partnerships  
Public Procurement  
Real Estate  
Renewable Energy  
Restructuring & Insolvency  
Right of Publicity  
Securities Finance  
Securities Litigation  
Shareholder Activism & Engagement  
Ship Finance  
Shipbuilding  
Shipping  
State Aid  
Structured Finance & Securitisation  
Tax Controversy  
Tax on Inbound Investment  
Telecoms & Media  
Trade & Customs  
Trademarks  
Transfer Pricing  
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