

EU break up

Divorce rules could be in for a huge shake up if legislation is streamlined across the EU. Politicians have been calling for a harmonisation of divorce rules and closer co-operation between the EU's differing legal systems. UK Constitutional Affairs Minister, Harriet Harman, has been one of those backing the plan.

EU Commission figures show there are around 875,000 divorces in the EU each year. Of these, 19%, or 170,000, have an international element – typically partners of different nationalities. This can involve rules and legislation from different countries and lawyers for the parties may well speak different languages, making reaching a resolution especially difficult.

In some EU cases more than one country may be able to deal with resolving any disputes which may arise. If this is the case choosing where and when to start Court proceedings can substantially change the outcome. Early advice is thus particularly vital in any case with an international element.

At least things here aren't usually as bad as they are in America. In one recent case from the USA, a judge ordered a bickering New York couple to have a dividing wall built inside their home to keep them apart. Neither Chana nor Simon Taub, both 57, had been prepared to give up their Brooklyn home during a two-year divorce battle.

Such measures should be avoidable in this country – and here solicitors try to keep divorce proceedings away from the courts wherever possible, seeking more reasonable paths to resolution such as mediation. Securing the right country's Court to deal with your case is the exception. Whatever your circumstances, we will be able to guide and help.



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