To: ELI Taskforce, through John Dann, Chairman of the Taskforce and ELI representative Member of the LegalCiteM Committee

From: LegalCiteM Committee, Co-chairs Fabio Vitali and Melanie Knapp

Date: [insert date]

Re: Response to Note from the European Legislation Identifier Taskforce to the LegalCiteM Technical Committee

**Background**

1. The Technical Committee received the ELI Note on July 7, 2015, from Catherine Tabone. The Note was shared with all Committee members and discussed among the members at a regular meeting on July 15, 2015. The full Committee approved of this response by email vote closing on [insert date].
2. The LegalCiteM Committee very much values the contributions of its ELI representative members and hopes to continue to have these contributions. Moreover, the Committee values the work of the ELI Taskforce and admires the success of the ELI framework up to now.
3. The Committee is grateful that the ELI Taskforce carefully articulated and shared its concerns with us.
4. Furthermore, recognizing the importance of the EU publications office and member state publications offices in the world of legal information, the Committee fully hopes to develop a technical proposal that is useful to the ELI Taskforce, and thus the EU and its member states.

**Mission of LegalCiteM**

1. The stated mission of the Committee is to develop “an open standard for machine-readable tagging of legal citations based upon a formalized conceptual model, vocabulary, metadata definitions, and prescribed syntax”[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Response to the ELI Taskforce’s view of the LegalCiteM proposals**

1. The body of citations that the Committee intends to address is enormous, encompassing court, executive, legislative, and secondary materials over a wide span of jurisdictions, legal systems, and time and including print, electronic, and unpublished resources from official and unofficial publishers. Very few of these resources were originally published online and carefully identified using any scheme, including ELI.
2. At the moment, neither the LegalCiteM TC nor the LegalCiteM Technical Subcommittee has developed any proposal for the management of legal references, and any technical option is still on the table.
3. **The LegalCiteM Technical Subcommittee formally distinguishes between an identifier and a reference**. At the moment, LegalCiteM is not intending to propose a syntax of identifiers of legal documents, parsable or otherwise. Rather, it is interested in bridging the gap between textual citations and machine-readable references to legal documents. The difference is subtle but very important. To that end it considers the identifier (e.g., the URI) as the output of the specific action called *resolution of a reference*, and the references as the machine-readable representation of a textual citation, i.e., the main focus of activities within the TC. We welcome your input to discuss whether identifiers should be part of the inputs, and what other actions are appropriate with them, e.g. dereferencing (i.e. the action of returning a representation of a document given its URI-based identifier). In fact, the only reason for exclusion of URIs from the inputs has been fear we would not be able to convince document owners to adopt our standard.
4. The LegalCiteM Technical Subcommittee reserves the freedom to recreate, step-by-step if necessary, the narrative necessary to come to a technical solution that is satisfying for all participating parties. As such, it is extremely important that ELI continues to take part in the activities of LegalCiteM, even if this means witnessing the group naively go down roads that ELI has already explored and abandoned in order to allow and help the group discover (or rediscover, as the case might be) its own justification for abandoning them as well.
5. If the Committee decides to extend the scope to include identifiers (e.g., URIs), we will definitely aim to support the adoption of all basic criteria of ELI, such as the use of URL templates.
6. Finally, we are far from yet proposing a standard. There is still time for all members, especially those on the Technical Subcommittee, to influence the direction of the Committee’s final proposed standard.

Thank you.

1. <https://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=legalcitem> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)