



The General Court prepares for the arrival of new Members

The new structure, consisting of nine Chambers of five Judges, will be introduced in September

The legislation on the three-stage reform of the judicial architecture of the Court of Justice of the European Union¹ provides initially for 12 new Judges to be appointed to the General Court, and subsequently for seven further Judges to join the General Court as a result of the merging of posts at the present Civil Service Tribunal, bringing the number of Members of the General Court to 47 on 1 September 2016. The third stage will entail the appointment of nine additional Judges in 2019.

In order to prepare for the arrival of 19 new Judges, the General Court has adopted a series of measures to ensure that litigants are afforded a judicial review at first instance that is swift, thorough and consistent. In terms of the structure, the chosen model will be that of a court composed of nine Chambers of five Judges, each Chamber being able to sit in two formations of three Judges presided over by the President of the Chamber of five Judges.

The new structure will take effect in September. In the meantime, the 12 new Judges will be integrated into the current structure as a transitional measure.

The new structure of the General Court:

- being sufficiently streamlined, will preserve the coherence of the system through the retention of the three-Judge formation as the ordinary formation of the Court;
- will facilitate the referral of cases to five-Judge formations;
- will facilitate the replacement from within the same Chamber of any Judge who is prevented from acting;
- will give the Presidents of Chambers an enhanced role in respect of the coordination and consistency of the case-law.

Finally, according to the proposed regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transfer to the General Court of jurisdiction at first instance in disputes between the EU and its civil servants as from 1 September 2016 (currently being examined by the legislature), the General Court will deal with all civil service cases transferred from the Civil Service Tribunal to the General Court as it finds them at that date, and they will be subject to a right of appeal to the Court of Justice. Proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure of the General Court in order to provide it with an appropriate procedural framework for dealing at first instance with disputes between the European Union and its officials and staff will shortly be submitted to the Council of the European Union for approval.

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¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2015/2422 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2015 amending Protocol No 3 on the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union (OJ 2015 L 341, p. 14).