

Foreword

In the year which has just drawn to a close, discussion began with a view to the adoption, in the not too distant future, of a new type of procedure. The procedure is intended to deal expeditiously with references for a preliminary ruling on provisions adopted relating to the area of freedom, security and justice, and might be called 'the emergency preliminary ruling procedure'. Certain references for a preliminary ruling in this rapidly developing field will need to be handled with particular expedition, whether because of their sensitive nature or because of very strict time limits laid down by the Community legislation. Since the current procedural framework is not suited to meeting such needs, only a new type of procedure is capable of providing the necessary guarantees of efficiency.

Also, 2006 was marked by the partial renewal of the membership of the Court, entailing the departure of six of its members. When the new appointments were made, the Governments of the Member States were concerned to safeguard the stability of the institution, thereby enabling it to continue smoothly in the performance of its task. The Court cannot but welcome this.

This Report contains a full record of changes affecting the institution and of its work in 2006. As usual, a substantial part of the Report is devoted to succinct but exhaustive accounts of the main judicial activity of the Court of Justice, the Court of First Instance and the Civil Service Tribunal, accompanied by statistics.



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