

Foreword

The year 2004 will certainly be recorded in the history of the European Union as the year of its most significant enlargement. The latter did not fail to affect the organisation and functioning of the Court of Justice. The arrival of 10 new Judges at the Court of Justice and 10 new Judges at the Court of First Instance, together with the increase of approximately 50% in the institution's staff, suffices alone to illustrate the challenge which enlargement has represented for the Court of Justice too. Meticulous preparation and, in particular, the remarkable devotion to duty of its staff have, however, enabled the Court successfully to meet the challenge, limited only by the means at its disposal.

The past year has also allowed an initial assessment of the effect of the changes to the functioning of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance resulting from the Treaty of Nice. Those changes were supplemented by a series of internal measures adopted by the Court of Justice in order to improve the effectiveness of its working methods. Finally, the creation of the European Union Civil Service Tribunal also deserves a mention among the events that marked 2004.

This report contains an account of the changes for the institution in the course of this pivotal year and, as is now traditional, a record of the main judicial activity of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance, accompanied by statistics.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. Skouris', with a stylized, flowing script.

V. Skouris
President of the Court of Justice