

Press and Information Division

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**2002 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE AND COURT OF
FIRST INSTANCE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES**

The Court of Justice of the European Communities publishes its annual report

The Court of Justice once again presents, at the beginning of spring, its report on the activities of the preceding year.

As the President, Mr Gil Carlos Rodríguez Iglesias, points out in the foreword, 2002 was a year marked by the Court of Justice's reflections on its past and its future.

Whilst, in its daily work, continuing to perform its task of ensuring that the law is observed in the application and interpretation of the Community Treaties, the Court of Justice also celebrated its 50th anniversary.

That event provided the opportunity to take stock of half a century of judicial activity, and to recognise how, by its judgments over the years, the Community judicature has brought to light the fundamental principles which were implicit in the wording and the structure of the founding treaties and has defined, by giving judicial expression to those principles, the characteristic features of the Community legal order. The celebrations also provided the ideal opportunity to pay tribute to all those who, since 1952, have assisted in the performance of those tasks.

The events to mark its 50th anniversary did not prevent the Court of Justice from paying close attention to the work carried out throughout the year by those involved in the Convention on the Future of Europe and, while taking care to exercise the reserve appropriate to its role in the Community, from responding positively to requests for its assistance from the various Convention working groups concerning, in particular, the principle of subsidiarity, fundamental rights, and the question of the legal personality of the Union.

As regards the main judicial function of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance, the level of activity remained high and substantially comparable to that of the previous year. The number of cases brought to a close was 513 (434 in 2001) at the Court of Justice and 331 (340 in 2001) at the Court of First Instance, while new cases brought numbered 477 (504 in 2001) and 411 (345 in 2001) respectively. The average duration of proceedings has remained broadly constant over the two years.

As the President points out at the end of the foreword to the 2002 Annual Report, those figures illustrate the high level of Community judicial activity on the eve of two very important changes: the entry into force of the Treaty of Nice with its consequences for the Community judicial system, and enlargement, for which the Court is industriously preparing, as it must given the importance of that development for the future of Europe and the European Union.

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Available in all official Community languages.

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