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### In the context of its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Court bestows new names on some of its buildings

*The buildings concerned will now be named Comenius, Montesquieu, Rocca and Themis, in homage to the values protected by the Court of Justice and the General Court*



*Towers A, B, C of the Court are now named Comenius, Montesquieu and Rocca.*

In the context of its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Court of Justice of the European Union has decided officially to attribute new names to the newest parts of its building complex, which, until today, have been designated by letters. Towers A, B, C and Annex C are now named Comenius, Montesquieu, Rocca and Themis.

Since its installation on the plateau of Kirchberg (Luxembourg) at the beginning of the 1970s, the Court has been extended several times. Those enlargements have their origins in the successive accessions to the European Union of new Member States and the creation, in 1989, of a second court, the General Court, which now comprises two judges for each Member State.

The first inauguration of a building devoted to the Court was that of the Palais in 1973. Since then, the buildings have been extended on several occasions with the addition of three initial extensions in the 1980s and 1990s, followed by the Anneau, the Galerie and Towers A and B in 2008. A fifth extension, Tower C, completed the architectural ensemble in 2019, thus enabling the whole of the institution's personnel to work within a single site. In 1990, Annex A of the Palais was named **Erasmus**, presented as the first European, contributing to bringing cultures together around humanist ideals. In 1992, Annex B took the name of **Thomas More**, with a view to honouring the memory of that great European humanist, as well as his integrity and the force of his convictions against any threat to liberty.

Today the Court continues its approach of naming its buildings with reference to the values that it defends, both in its jurisprudence and, more broadly, as an institution of the European Union. For the President of the Court of Justice of the European Union, M. Koen Lenaerts, “the names chosen seek to honour the history of Europe or justice. We also wished to select personalities who were amongst the first defenders of values that the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice and the General Court protects, such as democracy, the rule of law, respect for diversity, including multilingualism, equal access to knowledge and, more broadly, equal opportunities and social justice”.

**Tower A** takes the name of **Comenius**. Philosopher and pedagogue, Jan Amos Komenský, known as ‘Comenius’ (1592-1670), was the first defender of universal education. Convinced that social advancement should be the fruit of education rather than birth, he fought for equal opportunities and education for all, without reference to wealth, religion or sex. Referred to as the father of modern education, Comenius revolutionised the methods of teaching languages and, in particular, Latin, the language of knowledge, in order to promote its learning by the greatest possible number. Translated into some fifteen languages, his textbooks became, for more than a century, the most used scholarly texts in Europe, which contributed to the influence of multilingualism as a key to knowledge.

By honouring the name of Comenius, who travelled across Europe promoting a more open and egalitarian teaching of languages, the Court of Justice of the European Union highlights the value of multilingualism and pays homage to those who contribute every day to defending Europe’s linguistic richness.

The name of **Montesquieu** is given to **Tower B**. Charles-Louis de Secondat de la Brède, baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755), was a lawyer, judge and writer. His reputation is associated with his work *The spirit of law*, published in 1748 after several years travelling in Europe, during which he studied the political systems, economy, climate, history and customs of the countries in which he stayed. Regarded as one of the first comparators of laws, but also as a pioneer of modern sociology, Montesquieu favoured a new distribution of State power, founded on both their separation and their interdependence, with the aim of ensuring their equilibrium. In that way he set out the bases of the principle of the separation of powers which is today still regarded as the foundation of any democracy.

In choosing Montesquieu, whose thinking contributed to forging the principle of judicial independence, the Court of Justice of the European Union recalls the values, common to all the Member States, which define the very identity of the European Union as an autonomous legal order.

**Tower C** is now named **Rocca**. Giustina Rocca is regarded as the first female lawyer in history. Her name entered the history books owing to an arbitral award handed down on 8 April 1500, in the context of a dispute which she had been entrusted to resolve. In the Court of the Venetian Governor of Trani, Giustina Rocca delivered her ruling in the vernacular — rather than in Latin, as was the custom at the time — so as to render it intelligible to the public who had come to be present at its delivery. She then summoned the losing party to pay her the customary legal fees, thus signalling, at a time when women did not have access either to legal education or practice, her wish to be treated on an equal footing with men invested with those prerogatives.

By attributing the name of Rocca to the highest of its towers, the Court of Justice of the European Union emphasises its commitment to the accessibility of law and justice to all and reiterates, echoing its own case-law, its commitment to equal opportunities.

Finally, **Annexe C** takes the name of **Themis**. Daughter of Ouranos and Gaïa, who represent the sky and the earth respectively, Themis is regarded in Greek mythology as the goddess of justice. Wife and adviser to Zeus, she sat at his right side and contributed to the maintenance of the established order. Allegory of inherent justice, Themis is generally depicted with its symbols of the scales and sword of justice and sometimes also with a blindfold over her eyes to represent impartiality. The scales, which symbolise social order, balance and harmony, are a counterpoint to the sword which represents the judicial decision and authority and confer, thanks to the double-edged blade capable of sanctioning each party, the enforceability of its decisions. Themis has accordingly become the universal image of justice. The choice of the name of Themis echoes the decision of the first members of the Court who, on the basis of their common cultural traditions, chose, in 1952, to depict the scales and sword of Themis in the logo of

the Court of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).



*Annex C, constructed in 1992, houses the General Court and is now called Themis.*

Plaques have been installed in the various parts of the building complex so as to share with the public the considerations that led to these names being chosen. They have been unveiled, in the presence of the institution's personnel, in a ceremony which opened with a speech by the President of the Court, Mr Koen Lenaerts.

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