

## Foreword

2002 was brought to a close by the events held to celebrate the Court's 50th anniversary which was referred to by my predecessor in the foreword to the Annual Report for 2002. 2004 will be marked by the arrival of Judges and other colleagues from the 10 new Member States.

However, the past year has not been a year of transition. During 2003 the Court took the steps necessary to implement the changes in its operation provided for by the Treaty of Nice which entered into force on 1 February 2003. These changes include the creation of the Grand Chamber, the election of the Presidents of the chambers of five Judges for a period of three years (previously the period was limited to one year) and the possibility of determining cases without an Opinion from the Advocate General where the Court considers that the case raises no new point of law.

The Court has also striven to prepare for enlargement and have offices available for the new judges and other colleagues from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. The Court has likewise begun to consider how to adapt its working methods to take account of the increase in the number of Judges from 15 to 25 in May 2004. None of this has prevented the Court from paying close attention to the work carried out by the Convention on the future of Europe.

The main judicial activity of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance is summarised, accompanied by statistics, in the pages which follow.



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President of the Court of Justice