



Statistics concerning judicial activity in 2010: references for a preliminary ruling have never been dealt with so quickly

At the same time, the number of new cases brought is constantly increasing and in 2010 reached an unprecedented figure

In the entire history of the institution, there have never been so many cases brought before the three courts comprising the Court of Justice of the European Union: 1 406 cases were brought in 2010. That figure reflects the constant increase in the volume of European Union litigation. Attention should be drawn also to another strong trend in 2010: the overall reduction in the duration of proceedings.

The Court of Justice

In 2010 the Court of Justice had 631 new cases brought before it, which amounts to a very significant increase compared with 2009 (562 new cases) and constitutes the highest number of cases brought in the Court's history. The situation is identical as regards references for a preliminary ruling. In 2010 the number of references for a preliminary ruling submitted was, for the second year in succession, the highest ever reached and it exceeded the number in 2009 by 27.4% (385 cases in 2010 compared with 302 cases in 2009).

The Court completed 574 cases in 2010, a slight decrease compared with the previous year (588 cases completed in 2009).

So far as concerns the duration of proceedings, the statistics prove very positive. In the case of references for a preliminary ruling, the average duration amounted to 16.1 months. A comparative analysis covering the entire period for which the Court has reliable statistical data shows that the average time taken to deal with references for a preliminary ruling reached its shortest in 2010. The average time taken to deal with direct actions and appeals was 16.7 months and 14.3 months respectively (compared with 17.1 months and 15.4 months in 2009).

The General Court

From a statistical point of view, 2010 was marked by several trends. The first is the large increase in the number of new cases brought, rising from 568 (in 2009) to 636 (in 2010), a level never reached before. The second trend is maintenance of the number of cases completed at appreciably above 500 (527 cases completed) This was nevertheless not sufficient to contain the increase in pending cases, which numbered 1 300 as at 31 December 2010. The third trend concerns the duration of proceedings, a fundamental criterion for evaluating the General Court's work. Because of the emphasis placed on dealing with cases quickly, the duration of proceedings was reduced significantly, by an average of 2.5 months (from 27.2 months in 2009 to 24.7 months in 2010). The reduction is even more appreciable as regards cases decided by judgment in the areas that since the General Court's creation have been at the heart of its caseload – that is to say,

the areas other than appeals and intellectual property – for which a reduction of more than seven months in the duration of proceedings was recorded.

The Civil Service Tribunal

The statistics concerning the Civil Service Tribunal's judicial activity show a significant increase in 2010 in the number of cases brought (139 cases, compared with 113 in 2009).

The number of cases completed (129) is lower than the number in the previous year (155).

The number of cases pending is slightly higher than in the previous year (185 as at 31 December 2010 compared with 175 as at 31 December 2009). The average duration of proceedings also increased (18.1 months in 2010 compared with 15.1 months in 2009).

Nevertheless, these figures do not appear to reflect a structural trend.

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