



50 years of direct effect of EU law benefitting citizens and companies

Since the judgment in Van Gend en Loos in 1963, individuals can rely on EU law directly before national authorities and courts

On 5 February 1963, the Court of Justice delivered the judgment in *Van Gend en Loos*¹, in response to a request for a preliminary ruling made by a court in the Netherlands, the Tarefcommissie. That court was to decide on a dispute between the Netherlands transport undertaking Van Gend en Loos and the Netherlands tax authority concerning customs duties which that undertaking had to pay to import goods from Germany to the Netherlands. The transport undertaking submitted that the rate applied was contrary to the rule in the EEC Treaty prohibiting Member States from increasing customs duties in their mutual commercial relations. The tax authority, however, took the view that the undertaking could not rely on that rule since the obligation it created was towards the other Member States only.

By its judgment, the Court established one of the fundamental principles of EU law: direct effect. In accordance with that principle, EU law does not create reciprocal obligations only between the Member States, but benefits citizens and undertakings by producing immediate effects in that it confers individual rights upon them which the national authorities and courts must safeguard.

To commemorate the delivery of this judgment, a conference will be held on 13 May 2013 at the Court. At this conference, which was open to representatives of all the legal professions and the academic world by means of an on-line registration system, the participants will discuss the content of the judgment, its impact and the perspectives of that case-law². In the same spirit of openness towards the legal world which was illustrated by the book published by the Court on the occasion of its 60th anniversary in December 2012, the conference sessions will be introduced with contributions from people from outside the Court.

For the first time in the history of the Court such an event will be broadcast live on the Court's internet site (www.curia.europa.eu) to allow the general public to follow the conference sessions, reflecting the unique nature of the event and the importance of the principle of direct effect for each EU citizen and company.

The programme of the conference may be consulted by clicking on the following icon:



¹ Case [C-26/62](#) *Van Gend en Loos v Administration fiscale néerlandaise*.

² For the announcement of that conference and more details please see Press Release No [10/13](#).

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