



Cases brought before the Court of Justice: new practice directions to parties

The Court of Justice has recently adopted a new version of its Practice Directions to parties concerning cases brought before the Court.

Following the recent amendments made to the Rules of Procedure of the Court, this new version seeks in particular to bring to the attention of agents and lawyers some recent developments connected with, inter alia, the protection of personal data or the handling of appeals.

The written stage of the procedure

Provided a measure rendering data anonymous already taken is not deprived of its effectiveness, parties' representatives are therefore requested to give full effect in their pleadings or written observations to an order, made by the referring court or by the Court of Justice, that data be anonymous in preliminary ruling proceedings or, in the case of appeals, such an order made by the General Court.

As regards in particular appeals brought against decisions of the General Court, the new Practice Directions to the parties recall, on the one hand, the specific nature of appeals – which are limited to questions of law and should not, in principle, reveal secret or confidential information – and, on the other, the need to lodge with the appeal a request that the appeal be allowed to proceed where the appeal falls within the scope of Article 58a of the Protocol on the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Finally, the text underlines the importance of compliance with the formal requirements relating to procedural acts, in particular those concerning the length of written pleadings or observations, and the advantage in systematically sending those acts via the e-Curia application, which offers the best guarantees in terms of speed and security of the information passed in that manner.

With a view to facilitating the handling of pleadings or observations lodged and, in particular, their translation by the Court, the parties are none the less requested, in addition to the transmission via e-Curia, to send an editable version of the pleadings or observations by e-mail to the following address: editable-versions@curia.europa.eu.

The oral stage of the procedure

As regards the oral stage of the procedure, the Court specifies the criteria which govern the organisation of an oral hearing and the purpose of that hearing.

Specific guidance is also given to agents and lawyers regarding the arrangements to be made, before the hearing, in order to ensure that the hearing proceeds as smoothly as possible, in particular where a party or one of the representatives of a party has a disability or reduced mobility. Furthermore, additional stipulations are made concerning the language of the oral argument.

Finally, the Court makes reference to the multilingual environment in which it operates and all the practical measures which agents and lawyers can take to facilitate the smooth conduct of the oral

hearing and to ensure, in particular, that their submissions will be understood by all participants in that hearing.

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