COURT OF JUSTICE
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Annual Report 2025

The Year in Review

curia.europa.eu

The Court of Justice of the European Union, upholding European Union law.

The Court of Justice of the European Union is one of seven European institutions.

It is the judicial institution of the European Union and its task is to ensure compliance with EU law by overseeing the uniform interpretation and application of the Treaties and ensuring the lawfulness of measures adopted by the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies.

The Institution helps to preserve the values of the European Union and, through its case-law, works towards the building of Europe.

The Court of Justice of the European Union comprises two courts: the Court of Justice and the General Court.

Cover photo: the *Grande salle des délibérés* of the Court of Justice.

Annual Report 2025

The Year in Review

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Every year the *Review*, the Court's annual report, looks back at the events of the past year and ahead to what the future may hold. It is also the opportunity to view our activities in the broader context of the history of our institution and of European integration.

Koen Lenaerts

President
of the Court of Justice
of the European Union

On 10 December 1952, at the inaugural session of the Court established by the Treaty of Paris, the Court's first President, Massimo Pilotti, quoted the Italian poet and politician Dante Alighieri in his address: *'ubicumque potest esse litigium, ibi debet esse judicium*' ('whenever there is a possibility of dispute there must be a judgment to settle it'). He also recalled that it fell to the Court to guarantee for all – 'States, undertakings or simply individuals' – respect for the boundaries within which the activities of the Community's bodies must be contained.

That same day, Jean Monnet greeted the new court 'not only as the Court of the European Coal and Steel Community, but also as the prospective supreme federal European Court', a symbol of 'the sovereign presence of the law within the Community'. More than 70 years later, those founding principles continue to inspire our daily activities. They shed light on the progress achieved in 2025 and the challenges that we foresee for 2026.

2025 was the first full year of implementation of the reform which came into force on 1 October 2024, providing for the partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings from the Court of Justice to the General Court in six specific areas (VAT, excise duties, the Customs Code, tariff classification, passengers' rights and the emission allowance trading system). The results achieved have proven most satisfying. The reform is based on a 'one-stop shop' mechanism, under which all requests for a preliminary ruling are submitted to the Court of Justice, which then determines, after internal consultation, if they are to be transmitted to the General Court or dealt with by the Court of Justice itself. Since the reform took effect, almost 100 requests for a preliminary ruling have been handled by the one-stop shop, and about nine of ten of them have been transmitted to the General Court, as they fell exclusively within one of the six aforementioned areas.

The composition of the European Union courts also saw a number of changes in 2025. At the Court of Justice, two new judges entered into office, one of whom came from the General Court. At the General Court, five new appointments were made, two of which were to replace Members who had become judges at the Court of Justice. Moreover, in September 2025, the governments of the Member States renewed the terms of office of 19 Judges of the General Court for the 2025-2031 period. At the same time, Mr Marc van der Woude was re-elected President of the General Court for a third term, and Mr Savvas Papasavvas was returned to the role of Vice-President.

Over the course of 2025, the Institution forged ahead with the reform of its communication policy, in particular with the launch of audiovisual debriefings presented by Members of the Court of Justice in the most significant cases: a judge who sat in the chamber which delivered the judgment presents a concise, explanatory summary of the implications of the case and how the Court of Justice resolved the legal questions raised. At the same time, progress was made on several major projects so that they could be launched simultaneously in January 2026: the redesign of the Curia website, the Institution's main portal; the development of a new search engine; and the changes made to Curia Web TV, previously an internal audiovisual platform, to transform it into a genuine tool for external communications, supplementing existing communications channels.

As for technological advances, artificial intelligence continues to play a key role in the evolution of the Institution. This year, a number of AI-based tools have been launched or tested, in particular Curia AI Brain, a platform for internal use developed by the Institution itself which is intended to provide its staff members with a series of specialist AI assistants addressing the Court's specific needs.

Lastly, 7 December 2025 marked the 25th anniversary of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. To celebrate that event and the Charter's contribution both to case-law and to the protection of human rights, the next Meeting of Judges, which will take place at the Court in March 2026, will be devoted entirely to the central position held by the Charter in the EU legal order.

Through those projects and with a focus turned resolutely towards the future, the Court has remained faithful to its mission since 1952: to secure respect for the law, the trust of citizens and the stability of the EU legal order.

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2025 at a glance

A. The year in pictures

January

Solemn undertaking by the European Commission

At formal sittings held in January, February, March and May, the President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen, and the Members of the Commission give the solemn undertaking provided for in the Treaties, as part of the appointment of the new European Commission.

February

Solemn undertaking by the European Ombudsman

Ms Teresa Anjinho, elected by the European Parliament to the office of European Ombudsman, gives the solemn undertaking before the Court.

March

Visit by the Court's departments to the ECtHR

A delegation from the Court of Justice of the European Union, consisting of the Registrar and heads of different departments of the Court, travels to Strasbourg for an official visit to the European Court of Human Rights. The delegation takes part in several round tables on common challenges and the opportunities for cooperation between the two courts.

Formal sitting to give eulogies

Formal tribute is paid to the memory of Mr Uno Lõhmus, first Estonian Judge at the Court of Justice (2004-2013), who died in August 2024, and Ms Ena Cremona, first Maltese Judge at the General Court (2004-2012), who died in May 2024.

30 years since the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden

A ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden to the European Union is held at the Court. Opened by the President of the Court, Mr Koen Lenaerts, the ceremony is punctuated by speeches made by prominent figures from those Member States, introduced by Members of the Court of Justice.

April

Final of the ‘European Law Moot Court’ competition

First organised in 1988, the 2025 edition of this university moot competition is won by the University of Fribourg (Switzerland).

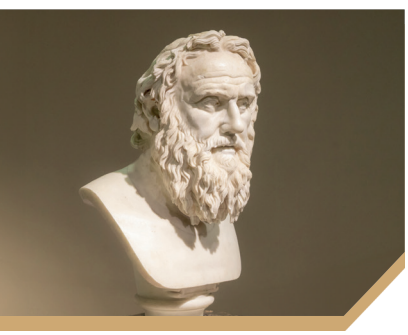
The European Parliament and the Court meet for their annual dialogue

The European Parliament and the Court meet in Luxembourg for the second edition of their annual dialogue on the functioning of the EU judicial system. This dialogue was established as part of the reform of the Statute of the Court that saw the partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings from the Court of Justice to the General Court in certain specific areas.

May

The Court celebrates Europe Day

The Court takes part in the European Village, organised to mark Europe Day by the Representation of the European Commission in Luxembourg, in cooperation with the European Parliament Liaison Office in Luxembourg. This year, the event is held in Echternach, a town in eastern Luxembourg.



Three new works of art on loan to the Court

In May, works by the Polish artist Magdalena Abakanowicz, *Figury z cyklu Mędrcy (Figures in the 'Sages' series)*, are officially presented to the Court on loan from the National Museum in Wrocław, with the support of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute.

In October, the painting *Silence* by the Slovak artist Tamara Klimová is officially presented to the Court by the Bratislava City Gallery.

The marble sculpture *The Bust of Lycurgus* is presented to the Court – also in October – by the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN). The work depicts the legendary legislator of Sparta.

Live broadcast of the delivery of a General Court judgment

A judgment of the General Court is delivered live for the first time. The move is part of the development of the Institution's resources and communication channels and reflects its intention to make European justice more accessible for EU citizens.

June

First audiovisual debriefing focussed on a judgment of the Court of Justice

The Institution launches a new communication format: a short audiovisual debriefing in which a Member of the Court presents a particular judgment. In so doing, the Court makes its key rulings more visible and accessible for the general public and the media.

Taking of the oath by new Members

At a formal sitting, Mr Marko Bošnjak takes the oath on his entry into office as Judge at the Court of Justice. Ms Danutė Jočienė and Mr Jörgen Hettne take the oath as Judges at the General Court.

July

EU Legal Summer School

As part of the promotion of Luxembourg as a workplace for the staff of the European institutions, the Court coordinates the very first EU Legal Summer School, welcoming more than 30 students and young professionals of 24 European nationalities.

September

3rd edition of the ‘EUnited in Diversity’ conference

Bulgaria’s Constitutional Court hosts the 3rd edition of the ‘EUnited in Diversity’ conference, organised in cooperation with the Court. This year, the conference that brings together the constitutional courts of the Member States considers the role of constitutional justice in the common legal order of the European Union.

Entry into office of new Members at the Court of Justice and the General Court and partial replacement of the General Court

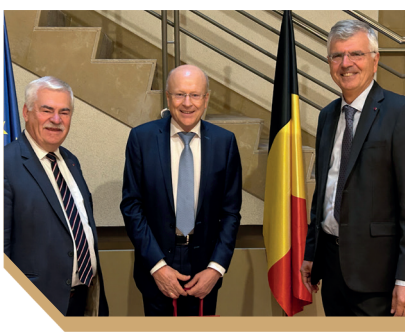
A formal sitting is held at the Court to mark the departure of certain Members and the taking of the oath by new Members. Mr Alexander Kornezov becomes a Judge at the Court of Justice. New judges take office at the General Court: Mr Francesco Bestagno, Ms Raffaella Pezzuto and Ms Tanja Pavelin.

Re-election of the President and the Vice-President of the General Court

Following the partial replacement of the Members of the General Court of the European Union, Mr Marc van der Woude is re-elected President of the General Court for the 2025-2028 period. Mr Savvas Papasavvas is also re-elected Vice-President for the same period.

Visit by the Court to Belgium's Constitutional Court

A delegation from the Court pays a visit to the Belgian Constitutional Court. Talks focus on the role of the Constitutional Court as a European court, the rights of foreign nationals, gender equality and the balance between security and privacy in a digital environment.



Visit by the Court to Italy's Constitutional Court

A delegation from the Court pays a visit to the Italian Constitutional Court. Talks focus on the role of the Constitutional Court as a European court, the rule of law, security and privacy, and asylum and migration.

October

Final of the Young European Lawyers Contest

The Court hosts the final of the Young European Lawyers Contest, organised by the Academy of European Law (ERA). Teams from across Europe apply EU law on digital rights, data protection, artificial intelligence and cross-border justice. They plead their case before a jury composed of Judges of the General Court and legal professionals.

Open Day at the Court

As every year, the Court opens its doors to the general public, enabling people to discover how the Court functions and learn about its history and its buildings. The 2025 Open Day is attended by almost 2 600 visitors, who explore its corridors, learn about its procedures and meet the people who work there, thus gaining a better understanding of the central role played by the Court in the European Union's mission.

November

Visit by the Court to Cyprus

A delegation from the Court of Justice travels to Cyprus for talks with its Supreme Constitutional Court and Supreme Court on equality, data protection and the asylum procedure. The delegation also meets with President Nikos Christodoulides, Ms Annita Demetriou, the President of the House of Representatives, Mr Marios Hartsiotis, the Minister for Justice, and Mr George Savvides, the Attorney-General.

Visit by the Court to Spain's Supreme Court

A delegation from the Court of Justice travels to the Spanish Supreme Court in Madrid, where it is welcomed by the Court's President, Ms Isabel Perelló Doménech. The visit is an opportunity for talks on EU law, the protection of fundamental rights and the challenges associated with the rule of law and judicial independence.

Visit by the European Court of Human Rights to the Court

A delegation from the European Court of Human Rights pays an official visit to the Court. The visit takes the form of a series of round tables devoted to issues of joint interest, such as the best interests of the child, freedom of expression in the digital era and access to asylum procedures.

Meeting of the Judicial Network of the European Union

The 7th annual meeting of the correspondents of the Judicial Network of the European Union is held in Lisbon, bringing together representatives of 47 member courts. It is devoted to European judicial dialogue, with a particular focus on the obligation on national courts and tribunals ruling at last instance to make a reference for a preliminary ruling.

December

Meeting of Judges

The Court plays host to around 150 judges from the Member States of the European Union. This meeting offers national judges the opportunity to discuss matters of joint interest directly with Members of the Court, thus strengthening the close cooperation between the Court and national courts and tribunals.

Disability Awareness Day

To mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Court organises two days of events to raise awareness. A whole range of activities offer staff opportunities – through art, culture and communication – to learn about the values embodied by persons with disabilities: creativity, resilience in the face of obstacles, authenticity and the ability to be a source of inspiration for everyone.

Final of the THEMIS 2025 competition

The Court hosts the Grand Final of THEMIS 2025, a competition open to future EU judges in the initial stage of their training. The competition is one of the flagship initiatives of the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN). Eight teams, from six Member States, present their work, with the team from Romania finishing in first place.

Visit by the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)

A delegation from the CBBE, representing the Bars and Law Societies of 46 countries and headed up by its President, Mr Thierry Wickers, pays an official visit to the Court. Round tables consider judicial procedures, the independence of lawyers and technological developments, including artificial intelligence and the broadcasting of hearings.

B. The year in figures

The Institution in 2025

81 judges from 27 Member States

Court of Justice

27 judges

11 Advocates General

General Court

54 judges

2 302

officials and other staff

61% women

39% men

Budget: EUR 537 million

Women hold:

54% of administration posts

50% of middle and senior management posts

The representation of women in positions of responsibility within the administration means that the Court exceeds the average for the European institutions.

e-Curia

Percentage of procedural documents lodged via e-Curia:

92% Court of Justice

97% General Court

12 903 e-Curia accounts

e-Curia is an IT application enabling the representatives of the parties in cases brought before the Court of Justice and the General Court, and national courts in the context of requests for a preliminary ruling to the Court of Justice or the General Court, to send and receive procedural documents to and from the Registries purely by electronic means.

↘ The judicial year (Court of Justice and General Court)

1 878 cases brought

2 301 cases resolved

2 489 cases pending

Average duration of proceedings: 18.2 months

The Linguistic Services

As a multilingual judicial institution, the Court must be able to deal with a case irrespective of the official language of the European Union in which it has been brought. It then ensures that its case-law is disseminated in all those languages.

24
languages of the case

552
language combinations

600 lawyer-linguists to translate written documents

1 405 000 pages to be translated

1 386 000 pages translated

511
hearings and meetings with simultaneous interpretation

69
interpreters for hearings and meetings

Multilingualism at the Court of Justice of the European Union – Ensuring equal access to justice

Watch the video

At the Court, translations are produced in accordance with mandatory language arrangements, which provide for the possibility to use any of the 24 official languages of the European Union. The documents to be translated are all highly technical legal texts. That is why the Court's language service employs only lawyer-linguists who have completed their education in law and who have a thorough knowledge of at least two official languages other than their mother tongue.

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Judicial activities

A. The Court of Justice in 2025

The Court of Justice deals mainly with requests for a preliminary ruling. When a national court is uncertain as to the interpretation or validity of an EU rule, it stays the proceedings before it and refers the matter to the Court of Justice. When the matter has been clarified by the Court of Justice's decision, the national court is then in a position to settle the dispute before it. In cases calling for a response within a very short time (for example, in relation to asylum, border control, child abduction, and so forth), an urgent preliminary ruling procedure may be used.

The Court also deals with direct actions, which seek either the annulment of an EU act ('action for annulment') or a declaration that a Member State is failing to comply with EU law ('action for failure to fulfil obligations'). If the Member State does not comply with the judgment finding that it has failed to fulfil its obligations, a second action, known as an action for 'twofold failure to fulfil obligations', may result in the Court of Justice imposing a financial penalty on it.

Furthermore, appeals may be brought against decisions handed down by the General Court. The Court of Justice may set aside such decisions of the General Court.

Lastly, requests for an Opinion may be made to the Court of Justice to determine the compatibility with the Treaties of an agreement which the European Union envisages concluding with a non-member State or an international organisation (submitted by a Member State or by a European institution).

Koen Lenaerts

President
of the Court of Justice
of the European Union

↘ Activities and developments at the Court of Justice

2025 was a milestone year in several respects.

First and foremost, it was the first full year of implementation of the final strand of the reform of the European Union's judicial architecture provided for in Regulation 2024/2019, which seeks to rebalance the workload between the two courts of the European Union with the ultimate goal of delivering high-quality judicial decisions within the best timeframes.

That final strand involved, in particular, a partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings from the Court of Justice to the General Court, which has been in effect since 1 October 2024, in six specific areas (VAT, excise duties, the Customs Code,

889
cases brought

580 preliminary ruling procedures, including **4** urgent preliminary ruling procedures

Member States from which the most requests originate

Italy	110
Poland	63
Germany	61
Austria	47
Bulgaria	42

58 direct actions, including **49** actions for failure to fulfil obligations and **1** action for 'twofold failure to fulfil obligations'

245 appeals against decisions of the General Court

1 request for an Opinion

5 applications for legal aid

A party who is unable to meet the costs of proceedings may apply for legal aid.

tariff classification, passengers' rights and the emission allowance trading system). It is based on the 'one-stop shop' mechanism, under which all requests for a preliminary ruling are submitted to the Court of Justice. Where a request for a preliminary ruling falls within one of those six areas, the President, after hearing the Vice-President and the First Advocate General or the Court of Justice, at a general meeting, decides whether that request is to be transmitted to the General Court or retained at the Court of Justice. In the course of 2025, 65 of the 74 requests for a preliminary ruling examined by the one-stop shop were transmitted to the General Court. The transmission decisions were taken in good time thanks to the continuous engagement of the chambers and services, in particular from the Registry of the Court and the Research and Documentation Directorate.

With effect from 1 September 2024, the mechanism used to determine whether appeals against judgments or orders of the General Court are allowed to proceed has been expanded to include the decisions of six new independent appeal chambers and to cover disputes concerning the performance of contracts containing an arbitration clause; this has been implemented in line with the practice developed since that mechanism was introduced. Thus, of the 36 requests examined by the Chamber determining whether appeals may proceed, two requests – one concerning a contractual dispute (order in *SC* v *Eulex Kosovo* (C-881/24 P) now falling within the jurisdiction of that chamber – were allowed to proceed because they raised issues that were significant with respect to the unity, consistency or development of EU law.

Next, turning to the composition of the Court, 2025 was marked by the arrival of the new Slovenian Judge, Mr Bošnjak, to take up the post left vacant following the death, on 20 June 2024, of our late colleague Marko Ilešič, and by the departure of the first Bulgarian judge of the Court of Justice, Mr Arabadjiev, who was replaced by Mr Kornezov, previously a Judge at the General Court.

Lastly, 2025 represents a major turning point in the Court's communication and transparency policies. Significant progress has been achieved with a view to bringing European justice even closer to citizens and to better meeting the needs of legal professionals.

In terms of communication, in addition to the launch of explanatory audiovisual debriefings – by which Members of the Court of Justice provide summaries of some of the most significant judgments given by that court – significant progress has been made with several major projects with a view to their implementation at the start of 2026: the redesign of the Curia website, the development of an extensively overhauled search engine for external users and the transformation of Curia Web TV into a version accessible to all internet users. Those changes considerably improve access to judicial information for everyone.

As regards strengthening the transparency of the procedures conducted before the Court, mention must also be made of the publication of the statements of case and written observations lodged in preliminary ruling cases, a decision made as part of the most recent reform of the judicial system, together with the adoption on 1 April 2025 of the decision on the implementing rules and procedures for the broadcasting of hearings. Such broadcasting promotes better understanding of the role of the Court and its activities and provides wider access both to the pleas, arguments and observations submitted by the parties as well as to the Opinions of the Advocates General and the judgments given by the court.

As a complement to its judicial activities, the Court has pushed ahead with its efforts in the fields of training, communication and exchanges with the courts and tribunals of the Member States. For instance, the third 'EUnited in diversity' conference was held from 3 to 5 September 2025 in Sofia (Bulgaria), bringing together the constitutional courts and the equivalent institutions with constitutional jurisdiction of the Member States of the European Union and the Court of Justice, with the goal of galvanising judicial dialogue and bolstering interactions within the common legal order formed by the European Union and the Member States' legal systems. On 1 and 2 December 2025, the Court welcomed around 150 judges from the Member States for its annual Meeting of Judges. The event, first organised in 1968, offers national judges the opportunity to familiarise themselves with how the Court functions and to discuss matters of joint interest directly with its Members within the Institution itself, thus strengthening the close cooperation which binds the Court to the national courts and tribunals. Also worth mentioning is the development of meetings and training sessions organised within the framework of the Judicial Network of the European Union (JNEU) and in cooperation with the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), covering in particular the preliminary ruling procedure. Lastly, in December 2025, the Court played host, for the first time, to the Grand Final of the THEMIS competition, organised by the EJTN. This prestigious competition offers future judges and prosecutors from the four corners of Europe a unique opportunity to hone their practical knowledge of EU law, and thus contributes to consolidating a common judicial culture within the European Union.

The statistics for the past year again reveal that a high number of cases were both brought before the Court of Justice (889) and closed by it (774); the latter figure is due in large part to the partial replacement of the Judges at the Court in 2024. Accordingly, there were 1 322 pending cases as at 31 December 2025. The average duration of proceedings, all manner of cases combined, stood at 16.7 months in 2025.

774 cases resolved

561 preliminary ruling procedures, including 3 urgent preliminary ruling procedures

51 direct actions, including 38 failures to fulfil obligations found against 20 Member States

5 judgments finding a 'twofold failure to fulfil obligations'

156 appeals against decisions of the General Court, including 24 appeals in which the decision adopted by the General Court was set aside

Average duration of proceedings:
16.7 months

Average duration of urgent preliminary ruling proceedings: 3.4 months

1 322
cases pending
as at 31 December 2025

Principal matters dealt with:

Area of freedom, security and justice	142
State aid and competition	132
Economic and monetary policy	111
Freedom of movement and of establishment – internal market	106
Consumer protection	95
Common foreign and security policy	79
Approximation of laws	76
Environment	63
Social policy	52
Transport	47

See detailed statistics for the Court of Justice.

Members of the Court of Justice

The Court of Justice is composed of 27 Judges and 11 Advocates General.

The Judges and Advocates General are appointed by common accord of the governments of the Member States after consultation with a panel responsible for providing an opinion on prospective candidates' suitability to perform the duties concerned. Judges are appointed for a term of office of six years, which is renewable.

They are chosen from among individuals whose independence is beyond doubt and who possess the qualifications required for appointment, in their respective countries, to the highest judicial offices, or who are of recognised competence.

The Judges perform their duties in a totally impartial and independent manner.

The Judges of the Court of Justice appoint, from among their number, the President and Vice-President. The Judges and Advocates General appoint the Registrar for a term of office of six years.

> The Advocates General are responsible for delivering, with complete impartiality and independence, an 'Opinion' in the cases assigned to them. This Opinion is not binding, but allows for an additional view to be provided on the subject matter of the dispute.

2025 saw the entry into office of the following persons as Judges: in June, Mr Marko Bošnjak (Slovenia), replacing Mr Marko Ilešič, and in September, Mr Alexander Kornezov (Bulgaria), replacing Mr Alexander Arabadjiev.


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K. Lenaerts
President

T. von Danwitz
Vice-President

F. Biltgen
President of the First Chamber

K. Jürimäe
President of the Second Chamber

C. Lycourgos
President of the Third Chamber

I. Jarukaitis
President of the Fourth Chamber

M. L. Arastey Sahún
President of the Fifth Chamber

M. Szpunar
First Advocate General

I. Ziemele
President of the Sixth Chamber

J. Passer
President of the Tenth Chamber

O. Spineanu-Matei
President of the Eighth Chamber

M. Condinanzi
President of the Ninth Chamber

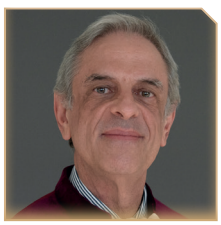
F. Schalin
President of the Seventh Chamber

J. Kokott
Advocate General

S. Rodin
Judge

M. Campos Sánchez- Bordona
Advocate General

E. Regan
Judge



N. J. Cardoso da Silva Piçarra
Judge

A. Kumin
Judge

N. Jääskinen
Judge

J. Richard de la Tour
Advocate General

A. Rantos
Advocate General

D. Gratsias
Judge

M. Gavalec
Judge

N. Emiliou
Advocate General

Z. Csehi
Judge

T. Ćapeta
Advocate General

L. Medina
Advocate General

B. Smulders
Judge

D. Spielmann
Advocate General

A. Biondi
Advocate General

S. Gervasoni
Judge

N. Fenger
Judge

R. Frendo
Judge

R. Norkus
Advocate General

M. Bošnjak
Judge

A. Kornezov
Judge

A. Calot Escobar
Registrar

Order of Precedence as from 7 October 2025

B. The General Court in 2025

Proceedings may primarily be brought before the General Court, at first instance, in direct actions brought by natural or legal persons (individuals, companies, associations, and so forth), where they are directly and individually concerned, and by Member States against acts of the institutions, bodies, offices or agencies of the European Union, and in direct actions seeking compensation for damage caused by the institutions or their staff.

The decisions of the General Court may be the subject of an appeal, limited to points of law, before the Court of Justice. In cases which have already been considered twice (by an independent board of appeal and then by the General Court), the Court of Justice will allow an appeal to proceed only if it raises an issue that is significant with respect to the unity, consistency or development of EU law.

Since 1 October 2024, the General Court has also had jurisdiction to hear and determine requests for a preliminary ruling, transferred by the Court of Justice, which fall exclusively into one or more of the following six specific areas: the common system of value added tax; excise duties; the Customs Code; the tariff classification of goods under the Combined Nomenclature; compensation and assistance of passengers in the case of denied boarding or of delay or cancellation of transport services; the system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading.

A large part of the litigation before it is economic in nature: intellectual property (EU trade marks and designs), competition, State aid, and banking and financial supervision.

The General Court also has jurisdiction to adjudicate in civil service disputes between the European Union and its staff.

Marc van der Woude

President of the General Court of the European Union

↘ Activities and developments at the General Court

For the General Court, 2025 was particularly marked by two events that occurred in September: first, a partial replacement of its Judges and, second, the end of the transitional period for dealing with requests for a preliminary ruling.

On 15 September 2025, three Members departed the General Court as part of the partial replacement, namely Judge Tomljenović and Presidents of Chambers Mastroianni and Porchia, whereas Mr Kornezov was appointed as a Judge at the Court of Justice. The General Court thanks them for their important contribution to its case-law. On that same date,

989
cases brought

820
direct actions, including:

Intellectual and industrial property	257
EU civil service	109
State aid and competition	39

21 actions brought by Member States

65 references for a preliminary ruling

52 applications for legal aid

A party who is unable to meet the costs of the proceedings may apply for legal aid.

Judges Bestagno, Pezzuto and Pavelin took the oath as new Members of the General Court. The new college thus established subsequently re-elected its President and its Vice-President for three-year terms and elected ten Presidents of Chambers.

Those events also coincided with the end of the transitional period established by the General Court following the partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings from the Court of Justice to the General Court provided for in Regulation 2024/2019 (a reform which came into effect on 1 October 2024). Internally, this saw the creation of two specialist chambers for the handling of requests for a preliminary ruling, each composed of six judges, including one Advocate General designated for those requests. Unlike direct actions, requests for a preliminary ruling are, without prejudice to a subsequent referral of a case to an alternative formation, initially assigned to a five-judge formation. To ensure optimum handling of requests for a preliminary ruling, the General Court also elected two Judges to replace those Advocates General if the latter are prevented from acting.

That reorganisation and the arrival of the new Members did, however, have a positive impact on the General Court's judicial activities as, over the course of 2025, it was able to close 1 527 cases (including 404 joined cases brought by former MEPs against the European Parliament concerning the additional pension scheme), which represents its absolute historic record. Taking into account the 989 cases brought, the number of cases pending at the end of the year was reduced to 1 167. As regards requests for a preliminary ruling more specifically, 65 were transferred to the General Court in 2025 and 16 were closed.

The average duration of proceedings stands, all matters and decisions combined, at 18.9 month. If the 404 essentially identical cases are treated as a single case, the average duration of proceedings falls to 16 months. For the handling of requests for a preliminary ruling, that duration is shorter and comes to 6.2 months.

In 2025, 34.7% of the cases closed were closed by formations sitting with five judges (including the abovementioned 404 joined cases). The most important cases (see Chapter entitled 'A look back at major judgments of the year') included two in which

the General Court sat as a Grand Chamber, composed of 15 judges, and two as an Intermediate Chamber of nine judges, which the General Court established at the time of the most recent reform in 2024. The cases in question were those of *Stevi and The New York Times* v *Commission* and *Austria* v *Commission* (Grand Chamber), as well as the joined cases of *YL* v *Council* and *YL* v *Council and EUIPO* (Intermediate Chamber).

In this first full year since the partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings on 1 October 2024, the General Court has been able to consolidate its new role and to integrate perfectly the handling of such requests into its internal operations, whilst in overall terms ruling in an exceptionally high number of cases. Thanks to the – now proven – effective and proactive handling of cases, the General Court is more ready than ever to rise to new challenges.

Savvas Papasavvas

Vice-President of
the General Court
of the European Union

↘ Major case-law developments

2025 was primarily marked by the impact of the reform introduced by Regulation 2024/2019. Adopted against the backdrop of an increase both in the number of pending preliminary ruling cases and in the average duration of their handling before the Court of Justice, that reform makes two substantial changes within the General Court, creating a new formation of that court for the hearing and determination of cases and transferring to the General Court jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings in certain matters.

The Intermediate Chamber, composed of 9 judges, thus gave its first judgment and was entrusted with a number of cases. The creation of that chamber was guided by the intention to preserve, inter alia, the consistency of the preliminary rulings given by the General Court and out of concern to ensure the proper administration of justice.

The preliminary rulings chamber of the General Court also made its first rulings. Those rulings fell within the scope of two of the six specific areas transferred to the General Court: specifically, excise duties and the common system of value added tax.

Thus, in the first preliminary ruling case on which the General Court ruled, which resulted in the judgment of 9 July 2025, *Gotek* (T-534/24), the request concerned the interpretation of Articles 7 and 8 of Council Directive 2008/118/EC and had been made in proceedings between a natural person and the Croatian Ministry of Finance concerning the recovery of the excise duty payable by that person, in the context of a fictitious supply of excise goods appearing on falsified invoices.

In connection with the common system of value added tax, the General Court, in the judgment of 26 November 2025, *Versãofast* (T-657/24), ruled on a request for a preliminary ruling concerning the interpretation of Article 135(1)(b) of Council Directive 2006/112/EC made in proceedings between Versãofast and the tax authority concerning the activities of a credit intermediary carried out by that company which that tax authority had classified as transactions in respect of the negotiation of credit that are exempt from value added tax.

The Advocates General assisting the General Court in dealing with requests for a preliminary ruling also delivered their first Opinions.

Thus, in her Opinion in *Accorinvest* (T-653/24), delivered on 29 October 2025, Advocate General Brkan examined a request for a preliminary ruling concerning the interpretation of Article 1(2) of Council Directive 2008/118/EC in which the General Court would be called upon to determine whether a tariff-based transmission contribution may be classified as an 'other indirect tax' within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Directive 2008/118 and falls within the scope of that provision.

In his Opinion in *European Air Charter* (T-656/24), delivered on 26 November 2025, Advocate General Martín y Pérez de Nanclares examined the request for a preliminary ruling made by the Düsseldorf Regional Court (Germany), which asked the General Court to clarify the concept of a '"direct" causal link' between the occurrence of extraordinary circumstances, for the purpose of Article 5(3) of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004, which affected a flight and the delay to a subsequent flight.

The transfer to the General Court of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings in certain matters is an important step for that court, whose original mission was to rule on disputes necessitating an in-depth examination of complex facts and which is now tasked with entering into dialogue with the national courts and tribunals. In the past year the General Court has proven to be up to the task as regards both the quality of the first rulings made and the average length of proceedings.

1 527
cases resolved

1 399
direct actions, including:

Intellectual and industrial property	303
State aid and competition	126
EU civil service	67

16 references for a preliminary ruling

Average duration of proceedings: 18.9 months

Proportion of decisions appealed before the Court of Justice: 26%

1 167
pending cases
(as at 31 December 2025)

Principal matters dealt with:

Intellectual and industrial property	276
EU civil service	164
Restrictive measures	125
Institutional law	88
State aid and competition	66
Environment	63
Economic and monetary policy	46
Access to documents	40
Taxation	40
Public contracts	37

The total number of cases resolved includes 404, essentially identical, joined cases concerning the supplementary pension scheme of MEPs.

See detailed statistics for the General Court.

Members of the General Court

The General Court is composed of two Judges from each Member State.

The Judges are chosen from among individuals whose independence is beyond doubt and who possess the qualifications required for appointment to the highest judicial offices. They are appointed by common accord of the governments of the Member States after consultation with a panel responsible for giving an opinion on candidates' suitability. They are appointed for a term of office of six years, which is renewable. They appoint, from among their number, the President and Vice-President for a period of three years, and appoint the Registrar for a term of office of six years.

The Judges perform their duties in a totally impartial and independent manner.

In June 2025, two new Members entered into office at the General Court: Judge Jörgen Hettne (Sweden) and Judge Danutė Jočienė (Lithuania), replacing, respectively, Mr Fredrik Schalin, appointed Judge at the Court of Justice in 2024, and Mr Rimvydas Norkus, appointed Advocate General at the Court of Justice in 2024.

The partial renewal of Judges at the General Court in September 2025 saw the entry into office of three new Members: Judge Francesco Bestagno (Italy) and Judge Raffaella Pezzuto (Italy), replacing, respectively, Mr Roberto Mastroianni and Ms Ornella Porchia, and Judge Tanja Pavelin (Croatia), as the replacement for Ms Vesna Tomljenović.

M. van der Woude
President

S. Papasavvas
Vice-President

E. Buttigieg
President of the First Chamber

N. Półtorak
President of the Second Chamber

K. Kowalik-Bańczyk
President of the Third Chamber

G. De Baere
President of the Fourth Chamber

M. Sampol Pucurull
President of the Fifth Chamber

P. Škvařilová-Pelzl
President of the Sixth Chamber

K. Kecsmár
President of the Seventh Chamber

I. Gâlea
President of the Eighth Chamber

S. Kingston
President of the Ninth Chamber

S. L. Kalėda
President of the Tenth Chamber

M. Jaeger
Judge

H. Kanninen
Judge

J. Schwarcz
Judge

M. Kancheva
Judge

L. Madise
Judge

A. Marcoulli
Judge

I. Reine
Judge

R. da Silva Passos
Judge

P. Nihoul
Judge

J. Svenningsen
Judge

U. Öberg
Judge

M. J. Costeira
Judge

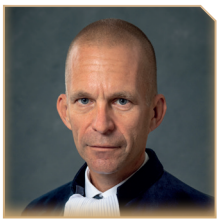
C. Mac Eochaidh
Judge

T. Pynnä
Judge

L. Truchot
Judge

J. C. Laitenberger
Judge

J. Martín y Pérez de Nanclares
Judge



G. Hesse
Judge

M. Stancu
Judge

I. Nõmm
Judge

G. Steinfatt
Judge

T. Perišin
Judge

D. Petrlík
Judge

M. Brkan
Judge

P. Zilgalvis
Judge

I. Dimitrakopoulos
Judge

D. Kukovec
Judge

T. Tóth
Judge

B. Ricziová
Judge

E. Tichy-Fisslberger
Judge

W. Valasidis
Judge

S. Verschuur
Judge

L. Spangsberg Grønfeldt
Judge

H. Cassagnabère
Judge

R. Meyer
Judge

J. Hettne
Judge

D. Jočienė
Judge

F. Bestagno
Judge

R. Pezzuto
Judge

T. Pavelin
Judge

V. Di Bucci
Registrar

Order of Precedence as from 16 September 2025

C. Case-law in 2025

Focus EU citizenship and the ‘golden passports’

Judgment in *Commission* v *Malta (Citizenship by investment)* (C-181/23)

Since 2014, Malta introduced mechanisms allowing third-country nationals to acquire Maltese nationality in exchange for financial contributions and investments. In 2020, those arrangements were replaced by a new ‘Citizenship by Naturalisation for Exceptional Services by Direct Investment’ scheme. That scheme allowed a foreign investor, together with some of his or her family members, to obtain Maltese citizenship in return for the payment of substantial sums of money to the State, the purchase or lease of property in Malta, a donation to an approved organisation and compliance with a requirement of legal residence, the duration of which could be reduced in return for an additional payment.

The European Commission considered that that scheme raised difficulties in the light of EU law, because a person’s acquisition of the nationality of a Member State automatically confers Union citizenship on that person. In the Commission’s view, the new Maltese scheme introduced in 2020 was based on an essentially transactional logic. The financial conditions were the key component of the scheme, whereas the residence requirement did not require actual, long-term presence in Malta. The possibility of reducing significantly the required period of residence in exchange for a higher payment demonstrated that the link between the applicant and the Member State was not a decisive criterion for the grant of nationality. The Commission thus took the view that that scheme ultimately amounted to a form of commercialisation of Union citizenship which was incompatible with that status.

The Commission referred the case to the Court of Justice, which recalled that Union citizenship is the fundamental status of nationals of the Member States. That status confers rights and imposes duties, and is based on a special relationship of solidarity and good faith between the State and its nationals. That relationship also forms the basis of the mutual trust between the Member States which governed the establishment of Union citizenship on the adoption of the Treaty of Maastricht, with each Member State recognising the effects of other Member States’ decisions in matters of nationality.

The Court noted that, under that scheme, the grant of Maltese nationality was primarily dependent on compliance with predetermined financial conditions and that, since it did not require that the applicant demonstrate actual residence for a particular period in Malta, the residence requirement did not entail genuine integration into Maltese society. It also observed that those findings could not be called into question by the security and background checks relied on by Malta, as such checks were essentially confined to preventing certain public interest risks.

The Court held that a naturalisation scheme based on such a transactional procedure disregards the very nature of Union citizenship. By granting a person its nationality, and therefore European citizenship, primarily in exchange for predetermined payments or investments, without requiring a genuine link of solidarity and good faith between it and the applicant for naturalisation, a Member State undermines the mutual trust upon which the Union is based.

By establishing and implementing that citizenship by investment scheme, Malta therefore failed to fulfil its obligations as a Member State and infringed the principle of sincere cooperation.

What is citizenship of the European Union?

Citizenship of the European Union is one of the key facets of the European project. Introduced by the Treaty of Maastricht and now enshrined in Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), it confers on every national of a Member State a common status, which is a supplement to national citizenship without taking its place. That status affords significant rights, such as the right to move and reside freely in the Member States, the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal and European elections in the State of residence, and the right to the diplomatic and consular protection of the other Member States in third countries.

Union citizenship has its basis in the solidarity and mutual trust between the Member States and their nationals. Its grant stems automatically from the status of national of a Member State, which is based on the existence of a special relationship of solidarity and good faith between a Member State and its nationals. It is that special relationship which justifies the grant of rights attaching to Union citizenship which are exercised throughout the European Union.

EU citizenship in the Court's case-law

Since its introduction by the Treaty of Maastricht (1993), the case-law of the Court of Justice has continually shed light on the precise scope of Union citizenship. As early as the judgment in *Martínez Sala* (C-85/96), the Court acknowledged that the status of Union citizen meant that the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of nationality could be relied on directly in certain situations. That development was confirmed in the judgment in *Grzelczyk* (C-184/99), in which the Court held that Union citizenship is intended to be the 'fundamental status' of nationals of the Member States, marking a symbolic and legal turning point in European integration.

The Court subsequently clarified the scope and the limits of that status. In the judgment in *Rottmann* (C-135/08), it held that national decisions on the loss of nationality, where they entail the loss of Union citizenship, must comply with the principle of proportionality. Shortly thereafter, in the judgment in *Ruiz Zambrano* (C-34/09), it confirmed that a minor child who is a national of a Member State, and is therefore a citizen of the Union, must be able genuinely to enjoy the substance of the rights attaching to that status. Therefore, his or her parents, who are third-country nationals, cannot be refused a residence permit. Without such a permit, that child would be forced to leave the territory of the European Union in order to accompany his or her parents and would thus be deprived of the genuine enjoyment of the substance of the rights conferred by Union citizenship.

In the same vein, in the judgment in *Stolichna obshtina, rayon 'Pancharevo'* (C-490/20), the Court held that a Member State is obliged to recognise, for the purpose of applying EU law, a parent-child relationship lawfully established in another Member State involving two persons of the same sex so as to ensure the child has genuine enjoyment of the rights attaching to Union citizenship, in particular the right of free movement. The Court thus enshrines in that judgment a concept of European citizenship which is exercised specifically through the right to enjoy a normal family life.

Finally, more recently, in the judgment in *Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet* (C-689/21), the Court confirmed that, while the Member States remain competent in matters of nationality, they must exercise that competence in a manner which does not disproportionately undermine the very substance of the rights conferred by Union citizenship, underlining once more the central and protective nature of that status in the EU legal order.

A citizen of the Union has the right to:

- move freely, live, work or study in another Member State;
- vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and European elections in his or her State of residence;
- submit a petition to the European Parliament or a citizens' initiative to the European Commission;
- make a complaint to the European Ombudsman pertaining to an act of maladministration by an EU institution;
- benefit from the consular protection of another Member State where his or her own State is not represented in a third country;
- request access to documents of the EU institutions;
- contact the EU institutions in one of the 24 official languages of his or her choice.

Focus The Minimum Wage Directive before the Court of Justice

Judgment in *Denmark* v *Parliament and Council (Adequate minimum wages)* (C-19/23)

Adopted in October 2022 by the European Parliament and the Council, Directive (EU) 2022/2041 on the minimum wage seeks to improve the living and working conditions of workers in the European Union. It establishes a common framework intended to promote the adequacy of statutory minimum wages where they exist and to strengthen the role of collective bargaining in wage-setting. Adopted on the basis of Article 153(1)(b) TFEU, which concerns working conditions, the Directive explains that it respects the competence of the Member States to set wages and the autonomy of the social partners.

Denmark, supported by Sweden, had contested the competence of the European Union to intervene in this field. Denmark considered that, despite its seemingly procedural nature, the Directive in reality entailed the direct intervention by the European Union in wage-setting. In its view, that field is expressly excluded from the competences of the European Union under Article 153(5) TFEU. Denmark also claimed that some of the obligations imposed on the Member States undermined the right of association and the Danish model of professional relations, based on broad autonomy of the social partners.

The Court recalled that the Union can act only within the limits of the competences conferred upon it by the Treaties. It explained that the exclusion relating to 'pay' seeks to prevent any direct harmonisation of the level of wages at EU level. However, that exclusion cannot be interpreted so broadly that it would deprive the social policy competences of the Union of their substance, in particular those which seek to improve working conditions.

The Court held that the Minimum Wage Directive does not introduce either a European minimum wage or a harmonised level of pay within the European Union. In essence, it simply lays down minimum procedural requirements, leaving the Member States broad discretion to determine and update their minimum wages.

As for the promotion of collective bargaining, the Court stated that the Directive does not impose any obligation as to the result to be achieved. Member States in which fewer than 80% of workers are covered by collective bargaining simply have to create a framework favourable to such bargaining and, consequently, adopt an action plan to encourage that bargaining. The obligations laid down are obligations as to means, which respect the diversity of national traditions and the autonomy of the social partners, as the Directive does not lay down, in particular, any obligation on those Member States to achieve such a level of coverage as a minimum requirement.

The Court did, however, hold that certain provisions of the Minimum Wage Directive went beyond that procedural framework. It considered that requiring Member States to take specific criteria into account in setting and updating statutory minimum wages, such as the cost of living, the general level of wages or productivity, amounted to harmonising some of the constituent parts of statutory minimum wages. It ultimately made

a similar finding regarding the provision of that directive prohibiting any decrease in the statutory minimum wage where those wages are subject to automatic indexation systems. Those provisions therefore constitute direct interference in the determination of pay. Consequently, the Court annulled the provisions of the Directive amounting to such direct interference by the European Union in the determination of pay, which therefore go beyond the competences conferred on the Union by the Treaties. It dismissed Denmark's action as to the remainder.

Thus, the Court clarified the balance between the European Union's social policy competence and the exclusion relating to pay, confirming that the European Union can provide a procedural framework and promote collective bargaining without intervening directly in wage-setting.

What does Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provide?

Article 153 TFEU lists the fields in which the European Union may support and complement the activities of the Member States in matters of social policy. It allows the Union, inter alia, to adopt directives establishing minimum requirements in fields such as working conditions, the protection of workers, equality between men and women, or the information for and consultation of workers.

That article does, however, lay down clear limits on the Union's actions. Paragraph 5 of the article expressly excludes certain matters from the scope of the Union's competence, in particular pay, the right of association, the right to strike and the right to impose lock-outs. The purpose of that exclusion is to preserve the autonomy of the Member States and of the social partners in fields regarded as essential to their social and constitutional traditions. The case-law of the Court of Justice explains that, while the Union may adopt rules having an indirect impact on wages, it cannot intervene directly in the setting of the level of wages.

Directive (EU) 2022/2041 on adequate minimum wages

The aim of Directive (EU) 2022/2041 is to improve living and working conditions in the European Union by strengthening the protection provided by adequate minimum wages. It does not lay down a European minimum wage or set a uniform level of pay. Its objective is to establish a common framework guaranteeing that minimum wages, where they exist, ensure a decent standard of living, whilst respecting national traditions and the autonomy of the social partners.

The Directive pursues those objectives primarily by means of procedural provisions. It thus requires Member States with legislation that introduces **a statutory minimum wage** to provide for **clear and transparent procedures** for setting and updating that wage.

It **also promotes collective bargaining**, which is considered a core component of ensuring adequate wages, in particular by asking those Member States in which the proportion of workers covered by collective bargaining is low to adopt measures promoting dialogue between management and workers. Accordingly, the Directive seeks to strengthen social convergence within the Union without encroaching, in that regard, on the competence of the Member States in matters of wage-setting.

The minimum wage in the Court's case-law

Even before the Directive on adequate minimum wages entered into force, the Court had already had occasion to develop a substantial body of case-law on minimum wages. The scope of national competences and of the requirements under EU law were marked out in several judgments.

Cases relating to the posting of workers played a central role. In the judgment in *Laval* (C-341/05), the Court clarified the scope of the 'minimum rates of pay' that can be imposed on foreign undertakings which post workers, drawing attention to the need for a clear legal basis and sufficient transparency for economic operators.

A second major flank of the case-law concerns the relationship between the minimum wage and legislation on public contracts. In the judgment in *Bundesdruckerei* (C-549/13), the Court thus examined the compatibility of an obligation to comply with a minimum wage set by the legislation of the host State under a public contract partly performed abroad, and insisted on observance of the requirement that such measures are proportionate having regard to the freedom to provide services. That being established, in the judgment in *RegioPost* (C-115/14), the Court accepted that contracting authorities can make the performance of a public contract subject to compliance with a minimum wage imposed by law or by a regulation, where that requirement pursues a legitimate social objective and is applied in a non-discriminatory manner.

Finally, the Court has also clarified the very concept of 'minimum rates of pay' in the context of the Posted Workers Directive, in particular in the judgment in *Sähköalojen ammattiliitto* (C-396/13), in which the elements of pay covered by that concept are set out.

All that case-law forms the bedrock upon which litigation relating to the Directive on adequate minimum wages is currently brought within the European Union. It provides a framework for the discretion exercised by the Member States, whilst ensuring that the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the FEU Treaty remain effective.

Focus Access to text messages exchanged between the President of the Commission and the CEO of Pfizer

Judgment in *Stevi and The New York Times* v *Commission* (T-36/23)

Transparency in public life is a fundamental principle of the European Union. Accordingly, all EU citizens or legal persons can access Parliament, Commission or Council documents. That access is governed by Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

That legislation forms the legal basis of the public's right of access to the documents of those EU institutions and is primarily intended to strengthen transparency, a fundamental requirement of European democracy and for the legitimacy of the Union's actions. That principle of transparency applies fully to the activities of the institutions, including where those activities take the form of modern means of communication such as text messages.

In May 2022, Ms Stevi, a journalist at *The New York Times*, asked to consult the text messages exchanged between the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the Chief Executive Officer of the pharmaceutical company Pfizer pertaining to the COVID-19 vaccine contract negotiations.

The European Commission refused that request, stating that it did not hold the messages sought. According to the Commission, the text messages exchanged were not documents retained by the institution and could not therefore be provided.

Ms Stevi brought proceedings before the General Court, which began by recalling a core principle: the purpose of the right of access to documents is to ensure the greatest transparency possible of the actions taken by the European institutions. Where an institution states that it does not hold a document, that statement is, in principle, presumed to be accurate. However, that presumption can be called into question if the applicant produces firm evidence to show that the documents existed.

The General Court found that that was the case in these proceedings. It noted that several public sources, including press articles, statements by the President of the Commission and a report by the European Court of Auditors, pointed to direct contacts, including by SMS, between the two senior figures at the time of the negotiations. Those elements were sufficient to show that the messages had existed, at least at one time.

Presented with that evidence, the Commission should have provided a clear and detailed statement explaining why the messages could not be found. According to the General Court, the Commission did not provide any such explanation. It simply stated that searches had been conducted, without specifying where, how or on which media, or stating whether the messages had been deleted, archived or transferred when the phones used were replaced.

The General Court observed that the institutions cannot deprive the right to transparency of all substance by failing to retain documents. The institutions are required to manage their documents in a meaningful and predictable way to enable the public to understand and review their actions. Exchanges connected with important decisions, such as the purchase of vaccines for the entire Union, cannot be precluded simply because they took the form of text messages.

Finding that the Commission had failed to provide adequate explanations about the fate of the messages requested, the General Court held that the refusal of access was unlawful. It therefore annulled the contested decision.

Clear procedure

Regulation (EC) No 1049/2011 establishes a clear procedure, requiring a reasoned decision from the institution and the possibility of an internal re-examination followed by judicial review. The Regulation provides citizens with a way to understand, monitor and, where appropriate, challenge the actions of the institutions.

Whilst providing for exceptions intended to protect sensitive public or private interests, the Regulation governs strictly their use by requiring that those exceptions are interpreted restrictively, that specific reasons are provided for refusals and that the possibility of granting partial access is examined systematically.

EU case-law has lent weight to that approach, stating that transparency must take precedence, in particular in legislative processes, in order to guarantee democratic accountability.

As early as the judgment in *Sweden and Turco* v *Council* (C-39/05 P), given on appeal, the Court of Justice set the foundations for that approach by requiring that requests for access to the legal advice provided to the Council be subject to concrete, individual assessment and rejecting any approach based on the automatic secrecy of legislative documents, thus enshrining the principle that transparency is the rule and secrecy the exception. That guidance was bolstered by the judgment in *De Capitani* v *Parliament* (T-540/15), in which the General Court ruled out the systematic confidentiality of trilogue documents (documents concerning the tripartite meetings and exchanges between the three institutions involved in the legislative process), clarifying that the exception relating to the protection of the decision-making process cannot be used to conceal the ordinary functioning of the Union. More recently, in the judgment in *Kaili* v *Parliament* (T-1031/23, the subject of an appeal before the Court of Justice – C-632/25 P), the General Court annulled the Parliament decision refusing to grant its former Vice-President access to certain documents. It thus confirmed the requirement that refusals of access must be subject to a robust and individual review as well as the specific scope of the right to transparency, including in sensitive institutional contexts.

Focus Information society: the Digital Services Act (DSA) and very large online platforms

The European Union plays a key role in the development of the information society to foster an environment conducive to innovation and competition while protecting the rights of consumers and providing legal certainty. Those principles are set out in the Digital Markets Act (DMA), Regulation (EU) 2022/1925, and the Digital Services Act (DSA), Regulation (EU) 2022/2065. They form a substantial legislative framework, the purpose of which is to structure the European digital space around two objectives. First, to guarantee the effective protection of the fundamental rights of users and consumers within the digital environment and, secondly, to introduce requirements of fair competition between economic operators, in particular given the growing power of certain large digital platforms. Together, these two regulations represent a decisive step in the construction of a European framework for digital regulation.

2025 saw the first judgments given by the General Court in proceedings brought against Commission decisions implementing the DSA.

The first judgments concerning the DSA

Judgment in *Zalando* v *Commission* (T-348/23)

In April 2023, the European Commission designated the online shop Zalando as a 'very large online platform' within the meaning of the Digital Services Act (DSA). More than 83 million people use its services each month, meaning that the platform significantly exceeds the threshold of 45 million laid down in the act. Zalando nevertheless challenged that designation, arguing that the Commission had made calculation errors.

The General Court **dismissed** Zalando's action. It confirmed that Zalando is indeed an online platform as it hosts third-party sellers under its 'Partner Programme', even though its direct sales activity ('Zalando Retail') does not come under that category. The Commission was entitled to find that all the users were exposed to the information provided by third-party sellers. The General Court also rejected the arguments alleging infringement of the principles of legal certainty, equal treatment and proportionality, recalling that such platforms must be subject to enhanced obligations so as to limit the risks of dangerous or illegal products being disseminated.

Judgments in *Meta Platforms Ireland* v *Commission* and *Tiktok Technology* v *Commission* (T-55/24 and T-58/24)

The General Court **annulled** the decisions by which the European Commission had set the 2023 supervisory fee payable by Facebook, Instagram and TikTok as 'very large online platforms' within the meaning of the Digital Services Act (DSA). It held that the methodology used to calculate the fee, based on the average number of monthly users, should have been adopted in a delegated act and not simply in implementing decisions because it is an essential element of the calculation. However, as there was no error affecting the obligation of those platforms to pay the fee, the General Court **temporarily maintained the effects of the annulled decisions** pending the adoption by the Commission of a compatible methodology and of new decisions. That transitional period may not, however, exceed 12 months from the date on which the judgments become final.

Judgment in *Amazon EU* v *Commission* (T-367/23)

The General Court **dismissed** Amazon's action for annulment of the European Commission decision designating the Amazon Store platform as a 'very large online platform' within the meaning of the Digital Services Act (DSA), which imposes enhanced obligations on services exceeding 45 million users in the European Union. Amazon relied on the infringement of several fundamental rights guaranteed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, including the freedom to conduct a business, the right to property, equality before the law, the freedom of expression and the right to respect for private life and confidential information. However, the General Court took the view that, while they may entail costs and affect the platform's organisation, the obligations imposed by the DSA are provided for by law, proportionate and justified by the objective of general interest of preventing the systemic risks associated with very large platforms, inter alia the dissemination of illegal content and consumer protection. It concluded that the contested measures, such as the recommender system option without profiling, the public register of advertisements or researchers' access to data, do not affect the essence of the rights relied on and come with strict guarantees as to confidentiality and security.

The Digital Services Act (DSA)

The DSA, which has been applicable since 17 February 2024, is the counterpart to the DMA on the regulation of digital content and services. Its purpose is to establish a more secure, more transparent and more predictable online environment for European users. The act revamps the rules governing the liability of intermediary service providers and imposes enhanced obligations on very large online platforms and very large search engines. Those obligations relate inter alia to the establishment of effective mechanisms for handling illegal content and the assessment and reduction of systemic risks – such as disinformation, infringements of fundamental rights or risks for the protection of minors – as well as the greater transparency of the algorithmic systems and recommender system mechanisms.

The DMA and the DSA do not therefore target exactly the same categories of actors. The DMA is focussed on those platforms which exert structural weight on the internal market and represent a vital gateway allowing the undertakings that use them to reach the end users. In turn, the DSA covers a wider field of undertakings which provide intermediate services to European users, whilst imposing particularly stringent requirements on very large platforms and search engines on account of their systemic impact on the information and economic space.

With regard to the DSA, the Commission, in an updated decision of December 2025, identifies a series of very large online platforms and very large search engines subject to the enhanced obligations laid down in the act, which include inter alia Amazon, Apple, Booking.com, Google, LinkedIn, Meta, Microsoft, Pinterest, Snap, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Wikimedia Foundation and Zalando, as well as a number of other actors operating on the European market.

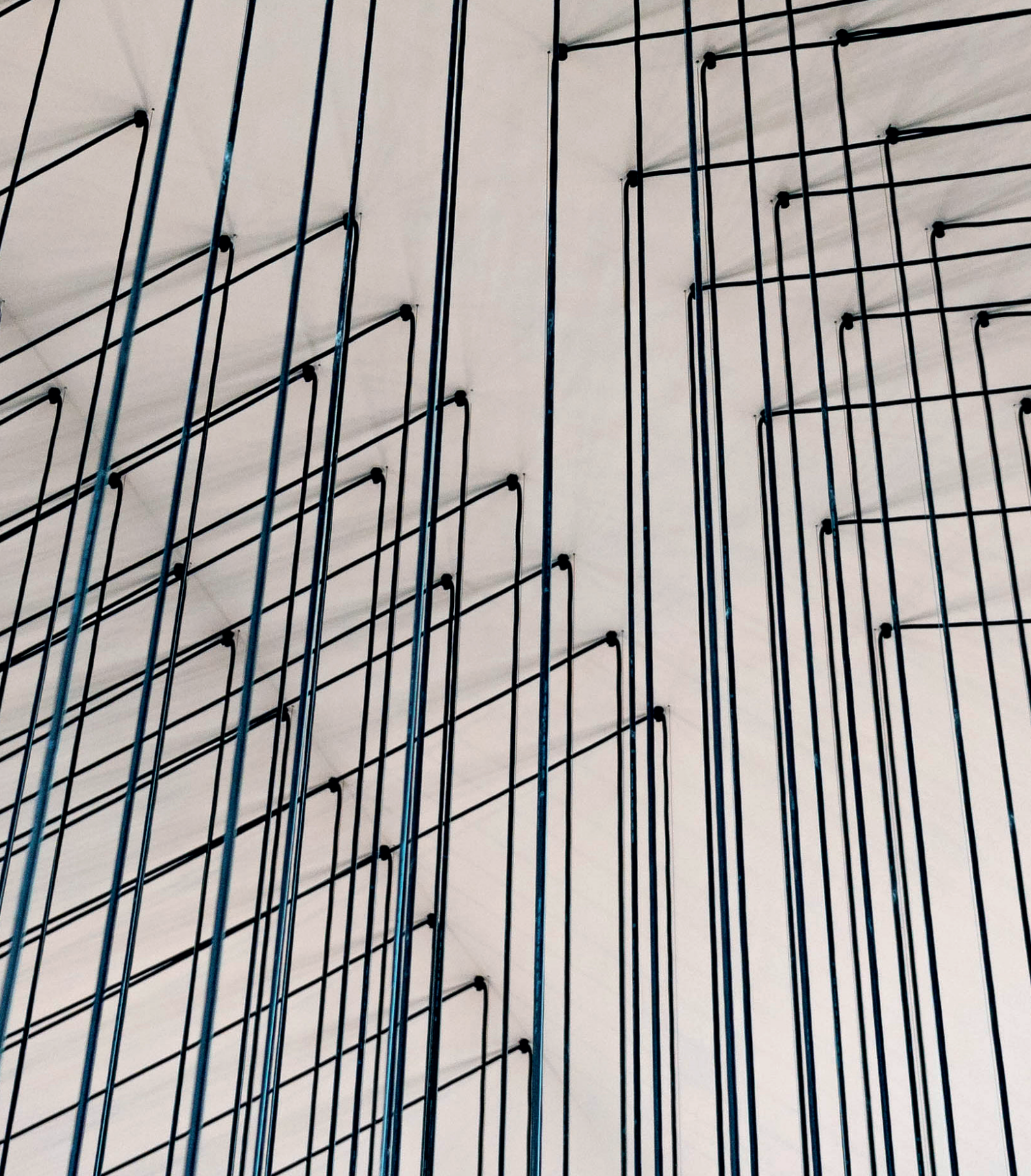
Significant penalties have already followed from the implementation of the two acts. The first fine imposed under the DSA, totalling EUR 120 million, was imposed on 5 December 2025 on the platform X because of the latter's failure to comply with several obligations laid down in that act.

Understanding the main terms in the DSA

The **Digital Services Act** is a European regulation intended to govern digital services in order to guarantee a more secure, more transparent and fairer online environment. Here are some simple explanations of its key concepts:

- **Online platform:** a digital service that allows users to publish, share or view content (social media, marketplaces, video platforms etc.);
- **Very large online platform (VLOP):** a platform with more than 45 million active users in the European Union. Given their significant impact on society, such platforms are subject to enhanced obligations;
- **Illegal content:** any content that infringes applicable EU or national law (for example, hate speech, illegal products or copyright breaches);
- **Content moderation:** a series of measures taken by platforms to detect, assess and, where appropriate, remove or restrict access to problematic content;
- **Algorithmic transparency:** obligation on certain platforms to explain, in clear language, how their content recommender systems work.

Using those concepts, the DSA seeks to provide better protection for users, to hold large platforms to account and to build trust in the European digital space.



A look back at major judgments of the year

Freedom of movement

The European Union guarantees its citizens the freedom to move and reside within the territory of the Member States. For that freedom to be effective, the States must recognise personal and family situations lawfully acquired in another Member State, which must be considered in the light of the fundamental rights protected by the European Union, in particular the right to private and family life and the principle of non-discrimination.

Two Polish citizens who were married in Germany requested that their marriage certificate be transcribed into the Polish civil register so that their marriage would be recognised in Poland. The competent authorities refused that transcription request on the ground that Polish law does not allow marriage between persons of the same sex. In answer to a question put to it in that regard by a national court, the Court of Justice found that refusing to recognise a marriage between two Union citizens, lawfully concluded in another Member State where they have exercised their freedom to move and reside, is contrary to EU law because it infringes that freedom and the right to respect for private and family life. Member States are therefore required to recognise, for the purpose of the exercise of the rights conferred by EU law, the marital status lawfully acquired in another Member State. The Court emphasised, however, that that obligation does not require marriage between persons of the same sex to be introduced under domestic law. In addition, Member States have a margin of discretion to choose the procedures for recognising such a marriage. Nevertheless, when a Member State chooses to provide for a single procedure for recognising marriages concluded in another Member State, such as the transcription of the marriage certificate in the civil register, it is required to apply that procedure in a non-discriminatory manner, both to marriages between persons of the same sex and to those between persons of different sexes.

Judgment of 25 November 2025, *Wojewoda Mazowiecki* (C-713/23)

Equal treatment and non-discrimination

The European Union has a common legal framework that seeks to ensure equal treatment and to combat discrimination. Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC form the pillars of that framework: the first prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, whilst the second concerns equality in employment and occupation. These Directives prohibit all direct or indirect discrimination, subject to certain possible justifications, and thus require Member States to guarantee effective and homogenous protection within the European Union.

↘ A station operator repeatedly asked her employer to appoint her to a position with fixed working hours. Her request was based on the need to care for her son, who has extensive and comprehensive needs arising from disability. Her employer provided her with some accommodations on a provisional basis, but refused to make those accommodations permanent. The station operator contested that refusal and the case reached the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation. That court referred questions to the Court of Justice because it had doubts as to the interpretation of EU law with regard to protection against indirect discrimination of an employee who cares for his or her minor child who has severe disabilities, while not having a disability him- or herself. The Court replied by confirming that the prohibition of indirect discrimination on grounds of disability under the Framework Directive on equal treatment in employment and occupation also extends to an employee who is subject to such discrimination because of the assistance that that person provides to his or her child who has a disability.

Judgment of 11 September 2025, *Bervidi* (C-38/24)

↘ The Danish Law on Public Housing seeks to reduce the percentage of public family housing units in 'transformation areas'. These areas are characterised, inter alia, by the fact that the proportion of 'immigrants from non-Western countries and their descendants' residing in those areas has exceeded 50% during the last five years. Under that law, some of the leases on public family housing units in two residential areas in the Municipalities of Slagelse and Copenhagen have been or were to be terminated in the near future. The Danish court hearing disputes regarding those terminations is uncertain whether the legislation at issue constitutes direct or indirect discrimination on the ground of ethnic origin. By its judgment, the Court of Justice clarified which situations may constitute direct discrimination based on ethnic origin. The Court noted that ethnic origin is based on several factors. One factor taken in isolation, such as nationality or country of birth, is insufficient to determine whether a person belongs to a particular ethnic group. For the purpose of examining whether there may be direct discrimination, it will be for the national court to ascertain whether the criterion relating to the proportion of immigrants and their descendants is truly based on the ethnic origin of the majority of the inhabitants of 'transformation areas' and whether, as a result, they suffer less favourable treatment, such as an increased risk of early termination of their leases. If the national court finds that there is possible indirect discrimination, it will have to examine whether this is nevertheless justified. It would be for that court, inter alia, to ensure, in that regard, that the law at issue pursues an objective in the public interest in a proportionate manner and respects, in particular, the fundamental right to respect for the home.

Judgment of 18 December 2025, *Slagelse Almennyttige Boligselskab, Afdeling Schackenborgvænge* (C-417/23)

Rule of law

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, like the Treaty on European Union (TEU), refers expressly to the rule of law, which is one of the values common to the Member States pursuant to Article 2 TEU. The independence and impartiality of courts are key aspects of the rule of law.

↘ In two judgments, the Polish Constitutional Court declared certain provisions of the Treaties, as interpreted by the Court of Justice, to be contrary to the national Constitution and expressly described the Court's case-law on the right to effective judicial protection as exceeding the powers conferred on it (ultra vires). Taking the view that those judgments disregard several fundamental principles of EU law, including its primacy, the European Commission brought an action against Poland for failure to fulfil obligations. The Court upheld that action and ruled that Poland had failed to fulfil its obligations because its Constitutional Court had infringed the principle of effective judicial protection and disregarded the primacy, autonomy, effectiveness and uniform application of EU law, as well as the binding effect of the Court's decisions. The Court also upheld the Commission's action in so far as it concerned serious irregularities vitiating the appointment of three judges of the Polish Constitutional Court and of its President, calling into question the status of that Constitutional Court as an independent and impartial tribunal established by law within the meaning of EU law.

Judgment of 18 December 2025, *Commission* v *Poland (Ultra vires review of the case-law of the Court – Primacy of EU law)* (C-448/23)

↘ The General Court confirmed that Poland had to pay a total of approximately EUR 320.2 million in respect of the penalty payment imposed by the Court of Justice following Poland's refusal to suspend certain 2019 legal reforms that were contrary to EU law. The Court had set a daily penalty payment of EUR 1 million with effect from November 2021, then reduced it to EUR 500 000 per day in April 2023 following the adoption of a Polish law complying in part with the Court's decision. Since Poland had failed to pay the amounts owing, the Commission had recovered the penalty payments by means of offsetting against European funds which should, in principle, have been granted to Poland. Poland thus challenged six set-off decisions covering the period from 15 July 2022 to 4 June 2023, submitting that the legislative change should have brought about a speedier reduction in the amount of the penalty payment. The General Court rejected those arguments in their entirety, finding that neither the case-law of the Polish Constitutional Court nor the Law of June 2022 had wiped out the amount of the penalty payment and recalling that the reduction ordered by the Court in April 2023 had effect only going-forward. Inasmuch as Poland had still not fully complied and the penalty payment of EUR 1 million remained applicable, the Commission was obliged to ensure its recovery in full.

Judgments of 5 February 2025, *Poland* v *Commission* (T-830/22 and T-156/23, T-1033/23)

Common foreign and security policy

An essential tool of EU common foreign and security policy (CFSP), restrictive measures or 'sanctions' are used as part of an integrated and global policy which includes, in particular, political dialogue. The European Union uses the CFSP, inter alia, to protect its values, fundamental interests and security, to prevent conflict and to strengthen international security. The purpose of sanctions is to encourage a change of policy or conduct on the part of the persons or entities concerned in order to promote the objectives of the CFSP.

↘ Further to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine in 2022, the European Union adopted a series of restrictive measures. In 2023, the Council of the European Union extended the criteria under which persons or entities may be targeted by those measures. A new criterion thus serves to freeze the funds and economic resources of entities operating in the Russian IT sector with a license issued by the Centre for Licensing, Certification and Protection of State Secrets of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) or a 'weapons and military equipment' licence administered by the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade. Positive Group PAO, a Russian company active in the cybersecurity sector, holds such a licence via its subsidiary and was included on the list of entities subject to sanctions. It sought annulment of that inclusion but the General Court dismissed its action. The General Court considered that the criterion used is clear, foreseeable as a matter of law and proportionate to the objectives pursued, which consist in exerting pressure on Moscow and restricting its capacity to engage in warfare, including in the field of information. The Council had been able to find, without committing any error, that the company could be targeted on account of its reliance on an FSB licence, even though that licence is held by its subsidiary.

Judgment of 10 September 2025, *Positive Group* v *Council* (T-573/23)

↘ The General Court of the European Union confirmed the sanctions adopted against MegaFon, one of the principal mobile telephone operators in Russia. The Council had included that company on the list of entities subject to its restrictive measures in 2023, taking the view that it provides direct support to the Russian war effort by providing services that can be used by the army, in particular in the telecommunications sector. MegaFon sought annulment of those decisions, relying on a failure to state reasons, infringement of its rights of defence and disproportionate interference with its freedom to conduct a business. The General Court rejected those arguments, finding that the Council had provided a sufficiently precise explanation of the reasons for those sanctions and had been under no obligation to hear the undertaking beforehand, in order to preserve the element of surprise needed for the sanctions to be effective. It also held that the measures remain proportionate to and necessary for the public interest objective of restricting Russian military capacity in the context of the war in Ukraine, even though those measures affect MegaFon's activities and reputation.

Judgment of 15 January 2025, *MegaFon* v *Council* (T-193/23)


CVRIA

Migration and asylum

The European Union has adopted a body of rules in order to establish an effective, humanitarian and safe European migration policy. The Common European Asylum System lays down minimum standards applicable to the treatment of all asylum seekers and to the processing of their applications throughout the European Union.

↘ A third-country national may have his or her application for international protection rejected under an accelerated border procedure when his or her country of origin is designated as 'safe' by a Member State. The Court made clear that that designation may be made by a legislative act, provided that that act can be subject to effective judicial review. The sources of information on which that designation was based must be accessible to the applicant and to the national court or tribunal. However, a Member State may not include a country in the list of safe countries of origin if that country does not offer adequate protection to its entire population.

Judgment of 1 August 2025, *Alace* and *Canpelli* (C-758/24 and C-759/24)

↘ Two asylum seekers in Ireland had been forced to live in conditions that deprived them of their dignity after the State argued that its centres had reached saturation point in order to refuse to provide them with accommodation. The Court found that that type of refusal, even in the context of a mass, unforeseeable influx of applicants for international protection, constitutes a serious infringement of EU law and may trigger the liability of the State. The Court recalled that the Member States are required, under the 'Reception Conditions' Directive, to guarantee applicants for international protection reception conditions which ensure an adequate standard of living, whether through housing, financial aid, vouchers or a combination of those forms of support, to lead a life of dignity.

Judgment of 1 August 2025, *Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Others* (C-97/24)

↘ An Iraqi national had applied for asylum in Greece alleging that there was a genuine risk to his life. His application was rejected and then his appeal against that decision was found to be 'manifestly unfounded' solely because he had failed to appear in person before the competent committee. In such a case, Greek legislation provided for an automatic presumption that the appeal has been improperly brought. The Court held that that rule infringes EU law: the requirement to appear in person in order for an appeal to be examined is disproportionate where its sole purpose is to verify the applicant's presence and not for him or her genuinely to be heard. Greece should have offered other less restrictive solutions, such as representation by a lawyer, appearance before a local authority or simply proof of the applicant's presence so as to ensure genuine access to an effective remedy.

Judgment of 3 July 2025, *Al Nasiria* (C-610/23)

Consumers

The Court of Justice: Guaranteeing the Rights of EU Consumers

Watch the video

EU consumer policy seeks to protect the health, safety and security, and economic and legal interests of consumers, wherever they live, travel to or make their purchases within the European Union.

A German company sold a saffron and melon juice-based food supplement claiming that it improved mood and reduced stress and fatigue. An association contested that advertising practice before the courts considering that it made health claims that are contrary to EU law. The Court of Justice held that, since the Commission has not completed the scientific examination of health claims relating to botanical substances and has not included them in the official lists, such claims cannot be used in advertising unless they are covered by a transitional regime, which is not the case here.

Judgment of 30 April 2025, *Novel Nutriology* (C-386/23)

A non-alcoholic beverage may not be marketed as 'non-alcoholic gin'. A German association for combating unfair competition brought proceedings against the undertaking PB Vi Goods before a German court for an order prohibiting that undertaking from selling a non-alcoholic beverage named 'Virgin Gin Alkoholfrei' (non-alcoholic Virgin Gin). The Court recalled that EU law has reserved the legal name 'gin' for a spirit drink produced by flavouring ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin with juniper berries with a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 37.5%. It found that the addition of the term 'non-alcoholic' did not alter that classification and did not provide exemption from the prohibition. The Court also found that that restriction does not undermine the freedom to conduct a business guaranteed by the Charter, since it does not prevent the product from being marketed as such, merely the use of a reserved name. That prohibition is proportionate because it is intended to protect consumers against any risk of confusion and to protect gin producers complying with EU law against unfair competition.

Judgment of 13 November 2025, *PB Vi Goods* (C-563/24)

A French consumer held a gold deposit account with Veracash and noticed that daily withdrawals had been made using a card which he claims never to have received. He notified Veracash of those transactions almost two months after the first withdrawal, but still within the 13-month statutory time limit. The Court held that the user of a card can lose his right to a refund if he fails to notify the unauthorised transaction 'without undue delay'. However, in the case of a lost, stolen or misappropriated card, the user loses that right only if he or she acted intentionally or with gross negligence, and only in respect of the transactions which he delayed in notifying.

Judgment of 1 August 2025, *Veracash* (C-665/23)

↘ Two Polish travellers booked an 'all-inclusive' stay at a five-star hotel in Albania but the day after their arrival their holiday was seriously disrupted by significant demolition works ordered by the local authorities. For several days they were awoken by the constant noise from the building sites, whilst the swimming pools, the seafront promenade and the beach access were being demolished. The catering services provided also deteriorated, with long queues, limited meals and the removal of certain services before new construction work was commenced at the end of the stay. Considering that they had suffered material and non-material damage, the holidaymakers brought proceedings before the Polish courts seeking a full refund of the price paid plus compensation. Hearing the case, the Court held that a traveller is entitled to a full refund not only where the services were not provided or were provided improperly, but also where, even though some of those services were provided, their improper performance was so serious that the package no longer served its purpose and the trip was objectively no longer of interest. It clarified that it is for the national court to make that assessment and that the Directive is intended to restore the contractual balance without allowing punitive sanctions. However, the Court did recall that the organiser cannot escape liability if the work, although ordered by a public authority, was not unforeseeable or unavoidable for it.

Judgment of 23 October 2025, *Tuleka* (C-469/24)

↘ European and US undertakings which produce or use melamine challenged before the General Court the decision of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) classifying that substance as one 'of very high concern' on account of serious risks for health and the environment. They argued that that classification was based on an incorrect scientific analysis and that they had not been sufficiently heard during the procedure. The General Court rejected their arguments and upheld the ECHA's decision. It explained that a substance can be identified as hazardous even if its properties do not have serious effects on their own but only in combination. It also held that the procedure provided for in the EU's 'REACH' Regulation (which is intended to protect human health and the environment from the risks associated with chemical substances) does not guarantee any particular right beyond the opportunity to submit comments.

Judgments of 9 July 2025, *Fritz Egger and Others v ECHA (Melamine) and LAT Nitrogen Piesteritz and Cornerstone v ECHA (Melamine)* (T-163/23, T-167/23)

Intellectual property

Intellectual Property at the General Court

Watch the video

The rules adopted by the European Union to protect intellectual property (copyright) and industrial property (trade mark law, protection of designs) improve the competitiveness of undertakings by fostering an environment conducive to creativity and innovation.

In 2019, the Italian company Nero Lifestyle filed with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) an application for registration of the word sign NERO CHAMPAGNE. The Comité interprofessionnel du vin de Champagne and the Institut national de l'origine et de la qualité objected to its registration. They submitted that the trade mark could take unfair advantage of the reputation of 'Champagne' PDO products, the protection of which offers a guarantee of quality due to their geographic provenance. The opposition was rejected in part by EUIPO and the professional bodies brought proceedings before the General Court. In its judgment, the General Court annulled EUIPO's decision and upheld the opposition. The application for registration of the trade mark NERO CHAMPAGNE was thus rejected.

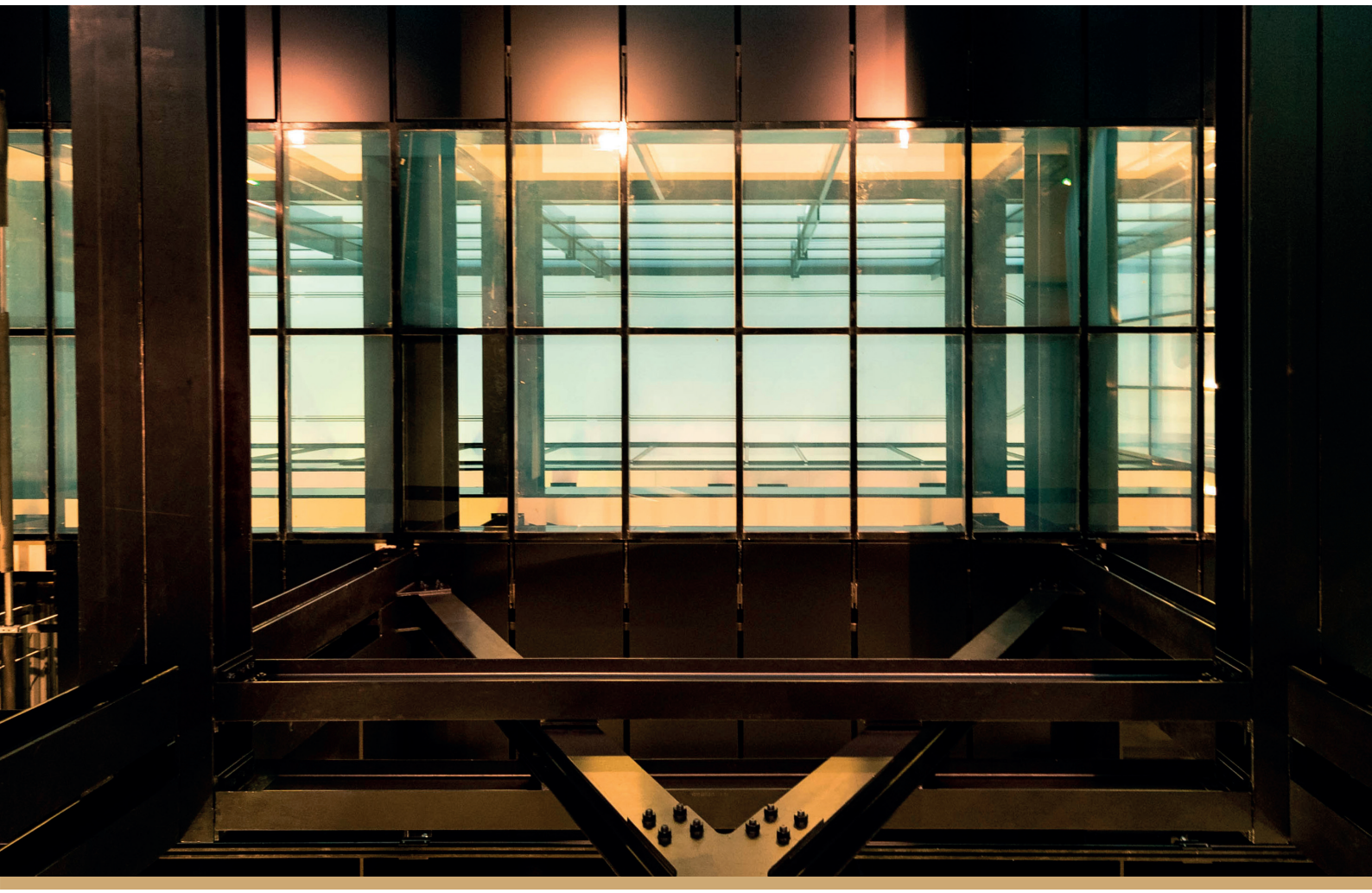
Judgment of 25 June 2025, *Comité interprofessionnel du vin de Champagne and INAO* v *EUIPO – Nero Lifestyle (NERO CHAMPAGNE)* (T-239/23)

The Rubik's Cube cannot be protected as an EU trade mark: the General Court confirmed the annulment of the trade marks registered for that famous, three-dimensional puzzle. EUIPO had considered that the shape of the cube, its grid structure and the differentiation of the faces represented technical elements that were essential to its functioning, making it impossible for them to be protected by trade mark law. Spin Master, the proprietor of the trade marks in question, submitted that certain elements, in particular the colours, were not technical. The General Court rejected those arguments, explaining that the colours are merely a secondary detail that serves to distinguish the faces, and that the essential components of the shape – the squares, the grid structure and the differentiation of the faces – fulfil a technical requirement: they enable the rotation and identification of the elements of the puzzle. Since all the cube's essential characteristics are associated with its function, they cannot be protected as a trade mark, and EUIPO's decisions were therefore confirmed.

Judgments of 9 July 2025, *Spin Master Toys UK* v *EUIPO – Verdes Innovations (Shape of a cube with faces having a grid structure)* (T-1170/23 to T-1173/23)

↘ The Court annulled the EUIPO decisions which had revoked Ferrari's rights in the word mark TESTAROSSA for cars, parts, accessories and scale models, after the Office considered that the trade mark had not been put to genuine use between 2010 and 2015. The General Court found that, even though the Testarossa model had not been produced since 1996, second-hand cars had been sold during the period in question by dealers and authorised distributors, and that that use, combined with the certification service provided by Ferrari, had constituted genuine use of the trade mark with the implicit consent of the manufacturer. It held similarly in relation to parts and accessories, the origin of which had been verified as part of the certification service. As regards scale models, it accepted that the trade mark had been used by third parties who had affixed the words 'Ferrari Official Licensed Product', which had guaranteed commercial origin of the toys and demonstrated genuine use with Ferrari's implicit consent. Thus, the General Court concluded that Ferrari had indeed continued to use the TESTAROSSA trade mark in relation to all the goods in question.

Judgments of 2 July 2025, *Ferrari* v *EUIPO – Hesse (TESTAROSSA)* (T-1103/23 and T-1104/23)



Competition

The European Union applies rules to protect free competition. Practices which have as their object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the internal market are prohibited and may be sanctioned by fines. The right of every person to seek compensation for damage caused by anticompetitive conduct strengthens the operational nature of EU competition rules and can discourage conduct that undermines free competition.

↘ Apple retains a commission from the sale price of third-party apps sold in its App Store. According to two foundations in the Netherlands, which defend the collective interests of multiple unidentified but identifiable users of Apple devices, that commission is excessive and those users suffer damage. The two foundations argue that Apple's conduct is anticompetitive and brought actions on that basis before the Netherlands courts. Apple, however, contends that the Netherlands court does not have jurisdiction because the alleged harmful event did not occur in the Netherlands and, in particular, in Amsterdam. Questions having been referred to it in that connection, the Court of Justice stated that the App Store in question is designed specially for the Netherlands market. The damage allegedly suffered when purchases are made in that virtual space can therefore occur in that territory, irrespective of the place where the users concerned were situated at the time of the purchase. The Netherlands court therefore has international and territorial jurisdiction.

Judgment of 2 December 2025, *Stichting Right to Consumer Justice and Stichting App Stores Claims* (C-34/24)

↘ In 2018, the Italian group Enel launched the JuicePass app, which enables drivers of electric cars to find and reserve charging stations. Wishing to facilitate the use of that app directly from the cars' infotainment screen, Enel asked Google to make the app compatible with Android Auto, Google's connected driving system. Google however refused to adapt its platform to ensure such interoperability, which led the Italian competition authority to impose a fine of more than EUR 100 million for abuse of a dominant position. Contesting that penalty, Google brought the matter before the Council of State (Italy), which decided to refer questions to the Court of Justice for a preliminary ruling. The Court held that the refusal by an undertaking in a dominant position to grant access to a digital platform which it has developed, by refusing to ensure that that platform is interoperable with an app developed by a third-party undertaking, can constitute an abuse of a dominant position, even though that platform is not indispensable for the commercial exploitation of the app. Such an abuse can be found to exist where the platform was developed with a view to enabling third-party undertakings to use it and where it is such as to make the app more attractive to consumers. A refusal may, however, be justified where ensuring interoperability would compromise the security or integrity of the platform, or where it would be impossible for other technical reasons to ensure such interoperability. In other cases, the dominant undertaking must develop a template that ensures such interoperability within a reasonable period and in return for, depending on the circumstances, appropriate financial consideration.

Judgment of 25 February 2025, *Alphabet and Others* (C-233/23)

↘ In 2015, the Belgian football club RFC Seraing signed contracts with the Maltese company Doyen Sports, which enabled the club to finance its players in exchange for a part of their economic rights. Finding those agreements to be contrary to its rules prohibiting third parties from holding economic rights, FIFA imposed sanctions on the club. Those sanctions were upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and subsequently by the Swiss Federal Supreme Court. RFC Seraing went on to challenge those rules before the Belgian courts. Following a reference for a preliminary ruling made to it, the Court took the view that preventing national courts or tribunals from reviewing an arbitration award made in the context of arbitration imposed by an international sports federation infringes EU law. It stated that CAS decisions must be amenable to effective judicial review. That review must allow, inter alia, the compatibility of such decisions with EU public policy to be assessed (it being recalled that the rules of EU competition law and the fundamental freedoms of the internal market inter alia form part of such policy), interim measures to be obtained and, if necessary, a reference for a preliminary ruling to be sought. A national court must therefore disapply any rule, whether a national rule or a rule of a sports association, that would hinder such review, in order to guarantee the protection of athletes and clubs where a decision undermines EU law, in particular in matters relating to competition or free movement.

Judgment of 1 August 2025, *Royal Football Club Seraing* (C-600/23)

↘ The General Court largely confirmed the decision by which the Commission had found that seven large investment banks had participated, between 2007 and 2011, in a cartel in the European Government Bonds sector, by exchanging sensitive information and sharing practices in order to gain undue advantages on the primary and secondary markets. The Commission had imposed fines totalling EUR 371 million on Nomura, UBS and UniCredit, whereas Bank of America, Natixis and NatWest had not been sanctioned because the relevant acts were time-barred or on grounds of leniency. As for Portigon, its fine had been set at zero on account of its negative net turnover. Further to actions brought by six of those banks, the General Court confirmed that one single and continuous infringement had occurred and that the institutions were liable for the conduct of their traders, whilst moderately reducing the fines imposed on Nomura (on account of a calculation error by the Commission) and UniCredit (because the reference period for its anticompetitive conduct had been overestimated). Finally, the General Court confirmed that the Commission also had a legitimate interest in finding the infringement with respect to Bank of America and Natixis, even though it did not fine them, because their identification had contributed to shedding light on the scope of the collusion.

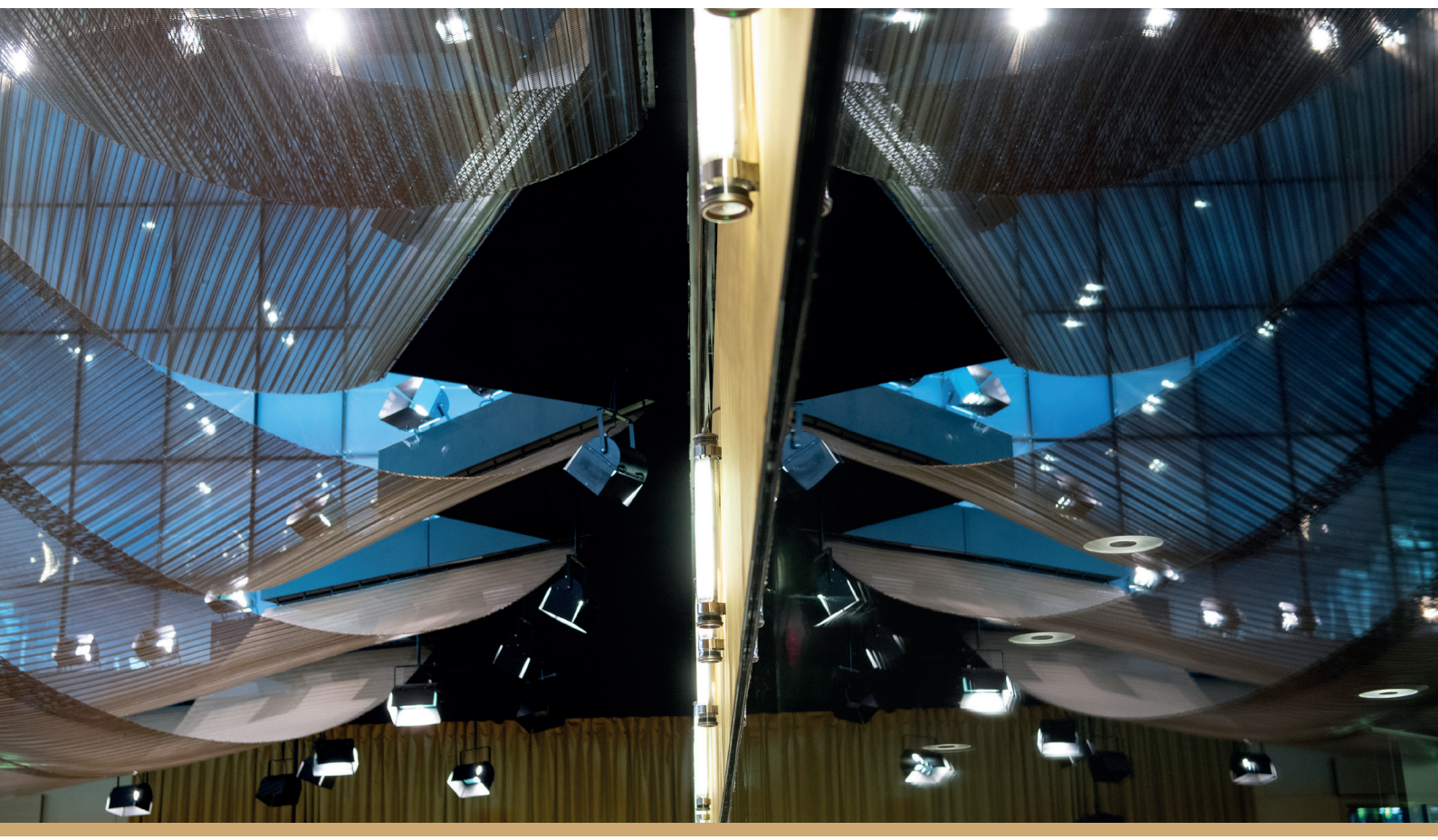
Judgments of 26 March 2025, *UBS Group and UBS* v *Commission*, *Natixis* v *Commission*, *UniCredit and UniCredit Bank* v *Commission*, *Nomura International and Nomura Holdings* v *Commission*, *Bank of America and Bank of America Corporation* v *Commission* and *Portigon* v *Commission (European Government Bonds)* (T-441/21, T-449/21, T-453/21, T-455/21, T-456/21, T-462/21)

Judicial cooperation

The area of freedom, security and justice includes measures to promote judicial cooperation between the Member States. This cooperation is based on the mutual recognition of judgments and judicial decisions and seeks to harmonise national laws in order to combat transnational crime by guaranteeing that the rights of victims, suspects and detainees are protected within the European Union.

↘ A former leader of ETA, who had already been sentenced in France to 20 years' imprisonment for terrorism-related offences, is being prosecuted in Spain for the same attack committed in 1997, which could bring her total sentence to at least 50 years without a statutory cap. Further to a reference from a Spanish court about the application of the principle *ne bis in idem*, the Court of Justice recalled that a person cannot be prosecuted twice in the European Union in relation to the same acts, even if the legal classification differs from one Member State to another. It is for the Spanish court to determine whether the acts that were the subject of proceedings in France are substantively the same as those for which the person is being prosecuted in Spain.

Judgment of 11 September 2025, *MSIG* (C-802/23)



Privacy

The European Union has set out detailed rules for the protection of personal data. In order to be lawful, the processing and storage of such data must satisfy the conditions laid down in legislation, be limited to what is strictly necessary and not disproportionately undermine the right to privacy.

↘ A woman had discovered that a false advertisement published on the Romanian website www.publi24.ro stated that she offered sexual services and contained photographs of her, used without her consent, and her telephone number. Russmedia Digital, the operator of the website, removed the advertisement within an hour, but it had already been copied to other websites. After being awarded compensation at first instance and then a finding being made for that company on appeal on the ground that it was a mere hosting service, the woman brought the case before the Cluj Court of Appeal (Romania), which put questions to the Court of Justice concerning the obligations on an online marketplace under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Court held that the operator of an online marketplace is responsible for the processing of the personal data contained in advertisements published on its platform and must, before any publication, identify advertisements that contain sensitive data, verify the identity or the explicit consent of the person concerned, and refuse to publish if such consent is not given. It also clarified that the operator had to implement technical measures to prevent sensitive advertisements from being copied unlawfully to other websites, and that it could not rely on the exemption from liability provided for in the Directive on electronic commerce to avoid the obligations imposed by the GDPR.

Judgment of 2 December 2025, *Russmedia Digital and Inform Media Press* (C-492/23)

↘ An association challenged, before the French data protection authority, the requirement that SNCF Connect customers indicate their title, 'Monsieur' or 'Madame' ('Mr' or 'Ms'), when making an online purchase, taking the view that that collection of gender identity data was unnecessary having regard to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Court of Justice recalled that only data that are strictly useful can be collected and that processing is lawful only if it is indispensable for the performance of a contract or justified by a clearly explained legitimate interest. Lastly, the Court clarified that such processing cannot be justified by a legitimate interest if that interest is not declared, if it goes beyond what is strictly necessary or if it risks undermining fundamental rights, in particular in connection with discrimination on grounds of gender. The collection of data regarding customers' titles is not objectively indispensable, in particular where its purpose is to personalise commercial communications.

Judgment of 9 January 2025, *Mousse* (C-394/23)

↘ An Austrian customer was refused a EUR 10-per-month mobile phone contract after a private company had used an entirely automated process to determine that her credit rating was insufficient. An Austrian court found that that company had not complied with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) because it had failed to explain how its decision had been taken. The Court of Justice took the view that a data subject is entitled to a clear explanation when his or her personal data are processed: that explanation must state which data were used and how they influenced the outcome, potentially by demonstrating what would have changed if certain data had been different. The undertaking cannot hide behind trade secrecy to refuse to disclose that information; if such secrecy is claimed, it is for the court or the supervisory authority to decide to what extent access can be granted.

Judgment of 27 February 2025, *Dun & Bradstreet Austria* (C-203/22)

↘ Mr Philippe Latombe, a French citizen, sought the annulment of the European Commission decision authorising the transfer of personal data between the European Union and the United States. In his view, the US system did not offer an adequate level of protection, in particular on account of the lack of independence of the 'Data Protection Review Court' (DPRC) and the mass collection of data by the US intelligence agencies. The General Court dismissed the action. It took the view that the United States have strengthened their legal framework as regards data protection since the adoption of the new executive order in 2022 and that the DPRC offers sufficient guarantees of independence. Its judges may be dismissed only for cause and the intelligence agencies may not influence their work. The General Court also found that the bulk collection of data is not contrary to EU law, as an *ex post* judicial review is guaranteed by the DPRC. Furthermore, the European Commission will continue to be required to monitor compliance with that framework on a continuous basis and may suspend the decision if the protection offered by the US system declines.

Judgment of 3 September 2025, *Latombe* v *Commission* (T-553/23)

↘ The General Court ordered the European Commission to pay EUR 400 in damages to a German citizen whose personal data had been transferred to the United States when he had registered for an event on the Conference on the Future of Europe website. By using the option 'sign in using Facebook' on EU Login, the IP address of the individual concerned had been transferred to Meta Platforms without appropriate safeguards or any decision on the adequacy of protection applicable at that time. The General Court took the view that the Commission had to be held responsible for that transfer and that it had not complied with any of the conditions laid down in EU law for transferring data to a third country. The General Court found that there had been a sufficiently serious breach of a rule of law conferring rights on individuals and non-material damage associated with the uncertainty as regards data processing, which triggers the non-contractual liability of the European Union.

Judgment of 8 January 2025, *Bindl* v *Commission* (T-354/22)

Environment

The Court of Justice and the Environment

Watch the video

The European Union is committed to preserving and improving the quality of the environment and to protecting human health. If the Court of Justice finds that a Member State has infringed EU law, that Member State must comply with the relevant judgment as soon as possible. If the Commission considers that the Member State has not complied with the judgment, it can bring a new action seeking financial penalties.

↘ Greece is found to have failed to comply with a judgment of 2014 ordering it to put an end to the use of a landfill in the Zakynthos National Maritime Park, a protected habitat of the Caretta turtle. Despite exchanges with the Commission between 2014 and 2023, the landfill was not closed or developed in accordance with the European directives on waste, and it continued to receive waste until the end of 2017. Finding that failure to fulfil obligations to be persistent, the Court imposed on Greece a periodic penalty payment of EUR 12 500 for each day of delay until the judgment has been complied with in full, plus a lump sum of EUR 5.5 million, on account of the seriousness and the duration of the infringement, its risks for health and the environment and Greece's repeated failings in waste management.

Judgment of 9 October 2025, *Commission* v *Greece (Enforcement of the judgment on the Zakynthos landfill)* (C-368/24)

↘ In Italy, the poor management of urban waste water has again seen the State brought before the Court. More than 20 years after the expiry of the deadlines laid down in the applicable European directive and almost ten years after an initial judgment given in 2014, a number of Italian agglomerations have continued to discharge waste water without appropriate collection or treatment. At the time, the Court had already found there to be failings involving 41 agglomerations. However, despite improvements, five of them, located specifically in Sicily and the Aosta Valley, had still not been brought into line, and in four of those the failings were still ongoing at the time of the hearing held in November 2024. Given that situation, the European Commission brought proceedings before the Court seeking the imposition of financial penalties. The Court found that Italy had not complied with the 2014 judgment within the time limits prescribed and held that that prolonged failure to fulfil obligations was seriously detrimental to the environment, in particular because the discharges concerned were flowing into sensitive areas. It therefore ordered Italy to pay a lump sum of EUR 10 million and a penalty payment of over EUR 13 million for every six months of delay until full compliance had been achieved, taking into account the seriousness of the infringement, its exceptionally long duration and the capacity of the Member State to pay.

Judgment of 27 March 2025, *Commission* v *Italy (Urban waste-water treatment)* (C-515/23)

↘ In Slovenia, the management of a landfill in the municipality of Teharje (the 'Bukovžlak landfill') led to fresh proceedings before the Court. For a number of years, excavated earth had been deposited at that site without the national authorities having ascertained whether other waste was present or taken the necessary measures to remove the waste not covered by the authorisation, thus creating an illegal landfill. By a judgment of 2015, the Court had found that that situation constituted an infringement of the EU law on waste management. The measures necessary to rehabilitate the site were not, however, implemented within the period prescribed. In the face of such persistent inaction, the European Commission brought further proceedings before the Court seeking the imposition of a financial penalty. The Court held that Slovenia had failed to comply with the 2015 judgment despite the time available to it, and found that the delays could not be justified, inter alia, by the COVID-19 pandemic. It stated that that prolonged failure to fulfil obligations entailed serious risks for the environment and human health for over nine years. It therefore ordered Slovenia to pay a lump sum of EUR 1.2 million, taking into account the seriousness and the duration of the infringement and the capacity of the Member State to pay.

Judgment of 8 May 2025, *Commission* v *Slovenia (Bukovžlak landfill)* (C-318/23)

↘ Austria brought an action for annulment of a 2022 delegated regulation by which the European Commission included, subject to strict conditions, certain activities in the nuclear energy and fossil gas sectors in the taxonomy of sustainable investment. The General Court dismissed that action and confirmed that the Commission had not exceeded the powers which the EU legislature had conferred on it. It found that nuclear energy generation has near to zero greenhouse gas emissions and that renewable energies alone cannot yet cover the total electricity demand in a reliable manner. The General Court also took the view that the Commission took sufficient account of the risks associated with nuclear energy, without needing to require a level of protection going beyond existing rules. As for fossil gas, its inclusion was held to be consistent with EU law because it is based on a gradual approach of emissions reduction while allowing for security of energy supply.

Judgment of 10 September 2025, *Austria* v *Commission* (T-625/22)

↘ Spain and several associations of Galician and Asturian fishers challenged a European Commission regulation designating deep-sea fishing areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known to occur or are likely to occur, in which fishing with bottom gears is prohibited. The General Court dismissed their actions and confirmed that that designation is founded on reliable scientific criteria based on the proven or probable presence of protected species and on the characteristics of the ecosystems. The Commission was not obliged to assess the impact of each type of gear or the economic consequences of those measures. The General Court also took the view that the methodology used, based on the advice of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, does not exceed the Commission's discretion. Lastly, it rejected the arguments alleging a supposed infringement of the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy or of the principle of proportionality, stating that the prohibition does not apply to all fishing with bottom gears and that it has not been shown that certain passive gears have no adverse impacts on fragile ecosystems.

Judgments of 11 June 2025, *Spain* v *Commission* and *Madre Querida and Others* v *Commission* (T-681/22, T-781/22)

Information society

The Court of Justice in the Digital World

Watch the video

The European Union plays a key role in the development of the information society, so as to foster an environment conducive to innovation and competition whilst protecting the rights of consumers and providing legal certainty. It guarantees that digital markets are fair and open, and it removes the barriers to cross-border online services within the internal market so that they can move freely.

In April 2023, the European Commission designated the online shop Zalando as a 'very large online platform' within the meaning of the Digital Services Act (DSA), because more than 83 million people use its services each month, significantly more than the threshold of 45 million laid down in the Act. Zalando challenged that designation, but the General Court dismissed its action. The General Court confirmed that Zalando is indeed an online platform because it hosts third-party sellers under its 'Partner Programme', even though its own direct sales activity ('Zalando Retail') does not come under that category. The Commission was entitled to find that all the users were exposed to the information provided by third-party sellers. The General Court also rejected the arguments alleging infringement of the principles of legal certainty, equal treatment and proportionality, recalling that such platforms must be subject to enhanced obligations in order to limit the risks of dangerous or unlawful products being disseminated.

Judgment of 3 September 2025, *Zalando* v *Commission* (T-348/23)

The General Court annulled the decisions by which the European Commission had set the 2023 supervisory fee payable by Facebook, Instagram and TikTok as 'very large online platforms' within the meaning of the Digital Services Act (DSA). It held that the methodology used to calculate the fee, based on the average number of monthly users, should have been adopted in a delegated act and not simply in implementing decisions because it is an essential element of the calculation. However, as there was no error affecting the obligation of those platforms to pay the fee, the General Court temporarily maintained the effects of the annulled decisions pending the adoption by the Commission of a compatible methodology and of new decisions. That transitional period may not, however, exceed 12 months from the date on which the judgments become final.

Judgments of 10 September 2025, *Meta Platforms Ireland* v *Commission* and *Tiktok Technology* v *Commission* (T-55/24, T-58/24)

↘ The General Court dismissed Amazon's action for annulment of the European Commission decision designating the Amazon Store platform as a 'very large online platform' within the meaning of the Digital Services Act (DSA), which imposes enhanced obligations on services exceeding 45 million users in the European Union. Amazon relied on the infringement of several fundamental rights guaranteed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, including the freedom to conduct a business, the right to property, equality before the law, the freedom of expression and the right to respect for private life and confidential information. However, the General Court took the view that, while they may entail costs and affect the platform's organisation, the obligations imposed by the DSA are provided for by law, proportionate and justified by the objective of general interest of preventing the systemic risks associated with very large platforms, inter alia the dissemination of illegal content and consumer protection. It concluded that the contested measures, such as the recommender system option without profiling, the public register of advertisements or researchers' access to data, do not affect the essence of the rights relied on and come with strict guarantees as to confidentiality and security.

Judgment of 19 November 2025, *Amazon EU* v *Commission* (T-367/23)

Access to documents

Transparency in public life is a fundamental principle of the European Union. Accordingly, all EU citizens or legal persons may, in principle, access the documents of the institutions.

↘ A journalist at *The New York Times* asked the European Commission for access to the messages exchanged by President Ursula von der Leyen and the CEO of Pfizer, believing that those messages had been used in the negotiations on the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines. The Commission rejected the request, stating that it did not hold those messages. However, the General Court found that the explanations provided were vague and changing, and that the Commission had not clearly stated where and how it had searched for those documents, nor whether the messages had been deleted or lost. In addition, the journalist had provided credible evidence showing that such exchanges had very likely taken place. The General Court found that an EU institution cannot simply state that it does not possess documents without providing solid evidence, especially in the case of public decisions of such importance. It therefore annulled the Commission decision refusing access to the documents.

Judgment of 14 May 2025, *Stevi and The New York Times* v *Commission* (T-36/23)

The Research and Documentation Directorate offers legal professionals, as part of its Collection of Summaries, a 'Yearly Selection of Major Judgments' and a 'Monthly Case-law Digest' of the Court of Justice and the General Court.

3

An administration at the service of justice

A. Introduction by the Registrar

Alfredo Calot Escobar

Registrar of the Court of Justice

2025 was a major milestone in the Institution's development – it was an ambitious year focussed on strengthening the foundations upon which the Court is based whilst preparing it for changes going forward.

In an age of emerging technologies and of the partial restructuring of the labour market, and against the background of the high expectations weighing upon the European Union, it is important to remember the values underlying the functioning of the Court – quality and speed of justice, proximity to citizens, linguistic and cultural diversity and the optimum management of the resources entrusted to it. It is with the very aim of ensuring that those values are protected that the Court has undertaken a number of strategic projects with a view to addressing the expected changes.

On the judicial front, 2025 marked the first full year since the **partial transfer of references for a preliminary ruling from the Court of Justice to the General Court** took effect. The in-depth preparations made by all the Institution's departments ensured a fluid and orderly implementation of the reform, demonstrating the departments' versatility and their capacity to support the two courts in the face of their new challenges. The findings of the first review of the reform's implementation are very positive, with all the objectives having been achieved: the transfer is contributing to improved case handling and to full advantage being taken of the reform to the structure of the Court of Justice of the European Union, for the benefit of all citizens. At the same time, the new rules on the publication of the observations submitted in preliminary ruling procedures have been successfully put into effect and provide a better understanding of the preliminary ruling mechanism and the legal questions submitted for debate.

Bringing the Court closer to citizens was also one of the year's priorities. The Institution's communication and IT departments, acting in close partnership, worked intensively to redesign the Court's website, integrating a completely revamped search engine and consolidating the arrangements for the online broadcasting of hearings. At the same time, the diversity of the communication channels was boosted, in particular with the

launch of Curia Web TV, a new modern and educational platform which uses eye-catching audiovisual content to improve viewers' understanding of the Court's judicial activities. In other words, the Institution has not only developed a more user-friendly and appealing website: following efforts made to step up its social media presence, it has succeeded in modernising its external communication policy targeting the general public and younger generations.

'Appeal' was also the guiding concept of the Court's **human resources policy**, which saw the Institution implement many initiatives to improve its ability to attract candidates from all Member States and with all skillsets. The Institution has thus committed to developing more appealing, more inclusive and clearer paths to recruitment, with the goal of expanding the pool of candidates interested in working at the Court. Improvements to the internship arrangements have been a particular focus, to ensure that the process of taking on interns guarantees equal access to all young graduates who want to learn more about the Institution. Work has also been undertaken in other fields to expand awareness-raising campaigns in Member States whose nationals are less well represented within the Institution, with the permanent aim of increasing the cultural and linguistic diversity of its staff. Lastly, several initiatives have allowed the Court to broaden its accessibility and inclusion policy so as to offer people with a disability the opportunity to take up permanent posts at the Institution and to contribute to it becoming more ambitious in that field with each passing day.

Staying true to its spirit of innovation, the Court has taken significant steps in the technological sphere. It has pushed ahead with the integration and development of **tools based on artificial intelligence** and, at the same time, undertaken extensive work to develop an ethical framework fully tailored to the requirements of the Court's judicial role. From the drafting of a Code of Ethics for the Integration of Artificial Intelligence to the development of specific guidelines governing the use of the AI tools within the Institution, the Court has sought to facilitate the use of those tools offering ever-increasing potential. Such tools do, however, require a sound understanding of their limits, the risks associated with them and the need to ensure constant human supervision. The Court has thus continued to forge ahead with both determination and caution, in particular by expanding the training programmes offered to staff to assist them with the use of this new technology.

Strong values, clear ambitions and a renewed and constant commitment to ensuring the quality of European justice: that is how I would sum up a proud 2025 for the Institution's departments.

B. Key events of the year

↘ 2025: a pivotal year for judicial reform of the European Union

2025 marked the first full year of implementation of the partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings from the Court of Justice to the General Court and represents the completion of a long-standing process. The foundations for this reform had in fact been laid as early as the Treaty of Nice (2001), before being reasserted as part of the reform of the judicial architecture in 2015.

Its goal was to improve the efficiency of the EU judicial system by striking a better balance between the workload of the Court of Justice and that of the General Court. It was made possible by the doubling of the number of Judges of the General Court, which was completed in 2022, giving the General Court the capacities necessary to handle more cases.

Its implementation necessitated significant amendments to the Statute and to the Rules of Procedure. The amendments to the Statute, proposed by the Court of Justice, were adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. The amendments to the Rules of Procedure following the revision of the Statute to ensure its implementation were, in turn, approved by the Council.

The final stage of that reform was completed on 1 October 2024, with the entry into application of the new rules implementing the partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings to the General Court and modernising the procedures before the two courts. After a full year of application, the first review of the reform shows that the Court of Justice and the General Court have fully integrated these new working arrangements, to the satisfaction of all involved in the preliminary ruling procedure.

What is a reference for a preliminary ruling?

EU law forms part of the national law of every Member State of the European Union. This means that EU law can be relied on before national courts and tribunals, which apply EU law directly.

Where doubt exists about how EU law should be interpreted in a case, the national courts may, and in certain cases must, refer questions to the Court of Justice, and in certain specific areas to the General Court. The national courts can thus obtain clarifications about the meaning of a provision of EU law, or even about its validity. This then allows them to apply EU law correctly and consistently.

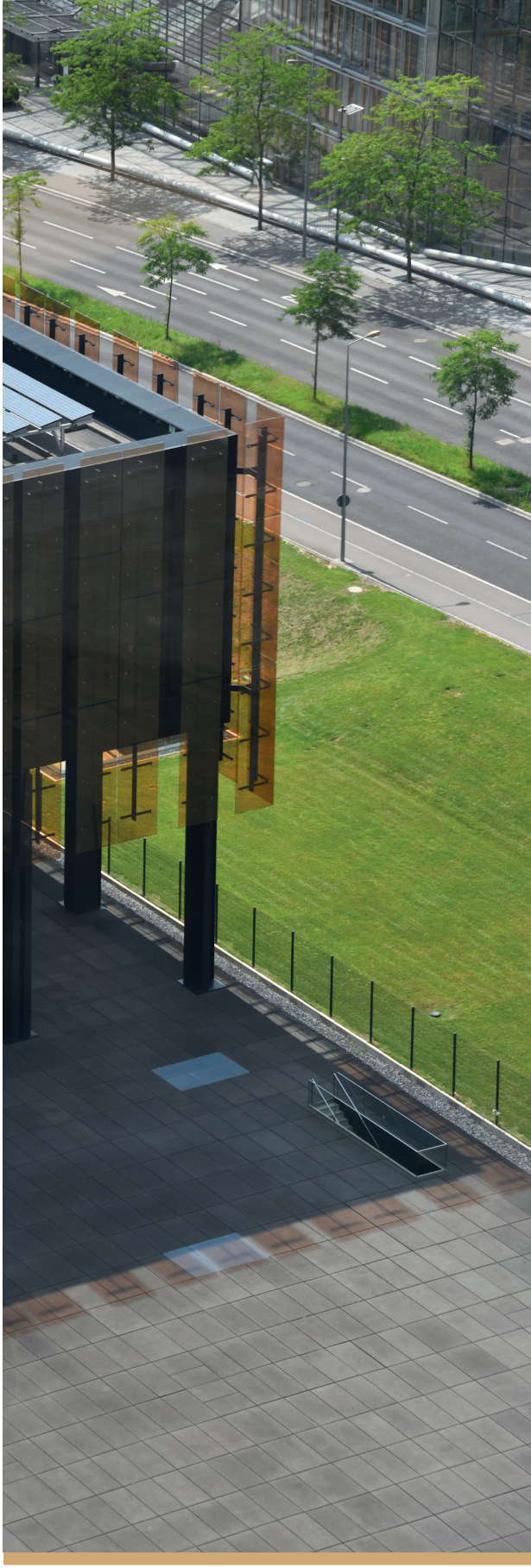
Jurisdiction of the General Court in preliminary rulings

The General Court now has jurisdiction to examine requests for a preliminary ruling concerning specific, clearly demarcated areas, which are sufficiently separable from other areas and which have generated a substantial body of case-law of the Court of Justice. This reform thus allows the workload of the Court of Justice to be eased in practical terms, by transferring to the General Court questions referred for a preliminary ruling that fall within several specific areas, namely (i) the common system of VAT, (ii) excise duties, (iii) the Customs Code, (iv) the tariff classification of goods, (v) compensation and assistance of passengers in the event of denied boarding, delay or cancellation, and (vi) the system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading.

The one-stop shop: an effective process

The reform has not changed the procedure for submitting requests for a preliminary ruling: all requests continue to be lodged before the Court of Justice. However, a 'one-stop shop' mechanism identifies those requests that come under the jurisdiction of the General Court. The decision to keep a case before the Court of Justice or to transfer it falls either to the President of the Court, after hearing the Vice President and the First Advocate General, or to the Court of Justice at its general meeting.

At the General Court, two specialist chambers, sitting, in principle, in a five-judge formation, now have jurisdiction to hear and determine such cases. Furthermore, certain Judges of the General Court are also designated to perform the duties of Advocate General at the General Court to ensure that there is a procedure equivalent to that before the Court of Justice.



Actions and reviews

In preliminary rulings, given the nature of the procedure, there cannot be an appeal before the Court of Justice against decisions given by the General Court. There is, however, a review mechanism: within one month, the First Advocate General of the Court of Justice may propose that the Court of Justice review a decision of the General Court where there is a serious risk of the unity or consistency of EU law being affected.

One-year review

Since the reform came into effect, the new one-stop shop has already dealt with around 100 preliminary ruling cases. Approximately 85% of them were transmitted to the General Court because they fell exclusively within the six areas in which that court has specific jurisdiction under the relevant rules.

Preliminary ruling cases brought before the General Court – Subject matter of the proceedings

	2024	2025
Common system of VAT	8	24
Excise duties	6	7
Customs Code	1	8
Tariff classification of goods	1	7
Compensation and assistance of passengers (denial of boarding, delay or cancellation)	3	18
System for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading	-	1
Total	**19**	**65**

In 2025 the General Court dealt with the first cases transferred under the new arrangements. Sixteen cases were thus closed without it having been necessary to hold a hearing or request an Opinion. The majority – 11 cases – were closed by order. Five cases were disposed of by a judgment. The time taken to deal with cases proved particularly short: 10.9 months on average for the cases settled by a judgment, from the one-stop shop to the final ruling (6.2 months on average if the cases settled by judgment or order are included).

The arrangements are therefore operating effectively and the initial results show that the reform is meeting its objectives: to speed up case handling and share the workload between the Courts of the European Union for the benefit of citizens and undertakings.

Would you like to learn more?

To give legal professionals and, in particular, national courts a better understanding of how the one-stop shop operates and the criteria for the division of competences, the Institution has published **a document** on the implementation of the new rules on the partial transfer of jurisdiction to give preliminary rulings to the General Court. Available on the Court's website, the document lists the requests lodged in the first year following the entry into force of the rules and indicates, for each request, whether it was transmitted to the General Court or kept before the Court of Justice, stating the relevant reasons.

https://curia.europa.eu/site/article50breport

The division of competences between the Court of Justice and the General Court

Watch the video

Making European justice more transparent

2025 represents a major turning point in the Court's communication policy. Driven by technological developments and by the intention to make European justice more accessible for and closer to citizens, the Institution has expanded a number of initiatives intended to modernise its information channels and to promote a better understanding of its role and activities by the public.

New social media presence to bring the Court closer to citizens

Today, social media are part of citizens' daily life and represent a key source of information for many of them, in particular the younger generations. To meet that need and, in so doing, to ensure that reliable and accurate information is shared about its activities in the most accessible way for citizens, the Court has diversified its social media presence, opening accounts in 2025 on four new platforms: Bluesky, Threads, WhatsApp and Instagram.

Thanks to these channels, which supplement the information provided by the Court on LinkedIn, X, YouTube and Mastodon, the Court is able to reach new audiences and to communicate with them – in a manner tailored to their needs and accessible directly by them – about its activities and the importance of its role in the protection of citizens' rights and the preservation of a Europe founded on democratic values.

In this way, the public can easily access clear information about the Court's latest judicial activity at any time and from anywhere. From early 2026, this will be supplemented by innovative and expanded video content, with the launch of the new audiovisual platform Curia Web TV.

Attend Court hearings from anywhere in Europe

The hearings before the Court of Justice and the General Court, which are held in Luxembourg and represent a key moment in proceedings, are public and open to all citizens. With the aim of ensuring the transparency and accessibility of justice for 450 million European citizens, for whom the decisions of the Courts of the European Union are of direct concern, the Court has established a system that allows everyone to attend hearings remotely, without having to travel to Luxembourg.

Back in April 2022, the Institution decided, on a trial basis, to make available on its website a service providing delayed access to broadcasts of hearings before the Grand Chamber of the Court of Justice and the full Court, as well as live broadcasts of the delivery of judgments and reading of Opinions. The success of that trial stage led to the inclusion of a special provision in the Rules of Procedure of the Court of Justice to make those arrangements permanent, as well as to open up the possibility of broadcasting certain hearings of chambers of five judges where justified by the case at hand. In addition, so that the context of the case and the exchanges between the parties and the judges at the hearing can be best understood, each broadcast of a hearing is preceded by a short video in which a press officer explains the case. That explanation is also broadcast on the Court's website and social media.

As for the General Court, the broadcasting of hearings, the delivery of judgments and the reading of Opinions was also incorporated into its Rules of Procedure. As the implementing rules and procedures for such broadcasting had to be decided by the General Court, in February 2025 the General Court adopted a decision on the broadcasting of the delivery of judgments and the reading of Opinions. In accordance with that decision, the first broadcast took place in May, with the live delivery of a judgment of the Grand Chamber. A further two broadcasts followed in September.

This expansion of the Institution's audiovisual communications not only allows the Court to make full use of the technological potential that saw an upsurge at the time of the 2020 health crisis, but above all means that anyone who takes an interest in the Court's judicial activities, whether current or future legal professionals (national judges, lawyers, agents for the governments of the Member States and EU institutions, professors, students), journalists or, more generally, any citizen curious to learn more about the Institution's role, can attend hearings on equal terms with those persons physically present in the courtrooms, wherever they may be, without having to travel to Luxembourg.

More transparent judicial debate

In the same spirit of openness, in 2025 the Court continued to implement the decision adopted in 2024 to publish online, once a case has been closed, the written observations lodged in preliminary ruling cases by the various stakeholders in the preliminary ruling procedure (parties before the national court, institutions, Member States, and so forth), unless those stakeholders raise an objection. To make it easier to consult the observations, they can be accessed using the Court's search engine on its website, which allows any interested party to find out the positions adopted during the debate before the Court of Justice or the General Court prior to delivery of the preliminary ruling.

Modernising communications products to target the general public

In line with that objective of making case-law more accessible for non-specialists, the Court has continued with the modernisation of one of its flagship products: its press releases. They were re-designed in late 2023 so as to offer shorter summaries with a more narrative structure which are better suited to the expectations of the media and of the general public. That reform was launched in 2025 with the publication of clearer, more concise and more appealing press releases, written in more accessible language. The majority of them are accompanied by an "abstract", a summary intended to facilitate its re-use by the media.

At the same time, the Court launched a new communication tool: short explanatory videos in the form of debriefings presented by judges who sat in the case are now broadcast after the delivery of the most important judgments. This innovative format means that decisions attracting significant media interest can be explained in a few minutes, once again in clear and accessible language. The very first short video debriefing, broadcast in June, concerned the Italian case of *Kinsa* (C-460/23): the explanation was given in the language of the case (Italian) by the President of the Court, Mr Koen Lenaerts. Available with subtitles in the 24 official languages of the European Union, the video went online immediately after the delivery of the judgment on the Curia website and was published simultaneously on social media. It proved to be very successful, attracting almost 20 000 views on LinkedIn. In 2025, 11 explanatory videos of this kind concerning judgments of the Grand Chamber of the Court of Justice were published on the Court's website and on social media.

Through these initiatives, in 2025 the Court has pushed ahead with its commitments to make European justice more transparent and easier to understand and to bring it closer to citizens by tailoring its communication formats to the public's new expectations.

↘ Cooperation with European courts and tribunals

EU law applies in all Member States, thus forming a shared body of law founded on the community of values upon which the European Union is based. With a view to strengthening that legal community and ensuring a uniform interpretation of EU law, and in addition to the proceedings before its two courts, the Court of Justice of the European Union has long been committed to open and constant dialogue with the judges of the Member States – not only judges of the constitutional and supreme courts of the Member States or courts of first instance and appeal, but also representatives of judicial networks and international courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights, with which it discusses best practices to enhance the quality of justice. That dialogue, which takes the form of conferences and meetings held both at the Court and in the Member States, was particularly rich in 2025.

'EUnited in Diversity' in Sofia

First organised in 2021 in Riga (Latvia) and expanded when held for the second time in 2023 in The Hague (Netherlands), the third edition of the 'EUnited in Diversity' conference took place in September 2025, with the support of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court in Sofia. These biennial conferences bring together representatives of the Court of Justice and the national constitutional courts with the goal not only of strengthening dialogue between those courts, but also of promoting interaction between the common legal order of the European Union and the national legal systems of the Member States.

Having adopted as its theme 'The role of constitutional justice in the common legal order of the European Union', the 2025 conference explored the concept of 'constitutional justice' within the European Union, with the participation of the constitutional courts (or courts exercising constitutional jurisdiction) of 21 Member States. The programme consisted of four panels focussing on the division of competences between the European Union and the Member States under the principle of delegation, the protection of the European Union's identity in times of crisis, the relationship between national constitutional law and EU law in the Member States, and the interpretation and application of EU law in order to ensure the coherence and consistency of the common legal order.

The conference was also the opportunity for a meeting between the senior administrative officials of the participating institutions, the goals of which were to facilitate the exchange of best practices and to discuss matters of mutual interest. The main topic of the roundtable meeting, at which the Court was represented by its Director-General for Information, was thus 'the impact of digital technologies on the work of the courts'.

Meeting of Judges at the Court

In early December 2025, the traditional Meeting of Judges held at the Court of Justice was attended by 148 judges from courts of appeal and courts of first instance of all the Member States. The topics discussed at the various working sessions included recent developments in the preliminary ruling procedure, recent case-law on asylum and immigration, the new jurisdiction of the General Court to give preliminary rulings, and recent case-law on the European Arrest Warrant and judicial cooperation in civil matters.

This meeting, which was first organised by the Court in 1968, brings the Members of the Court of Justice and of the General Court into direct contact with judges of the Member States. It allows informal connections to be made, encourages the uniform application of EU law by national courts (ordinary courts applying EU law), offers a forum for discussion on matters of joint concern, and promotes knowledge sharing and the mutual understanding of the different legal systems, as well as cooperation between courts.

Meeting of the Judicial Network of the European Union in Lisbon

The seventh annual meeting of the correspondents of the Judicial Network of the European Union (JNEU) was held in November in Lisbon (Portugal). Set up at the initiative of the Court in 2017, at a Meeting of Judges to mark the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, the JNEU's goal is to enhance judicial cooperation in Europe to deliver high-quality justice. With 78 constitutional and supreme courts of the Member States and supreme courts of four non-Member States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, the United Kingdom and Ukraine) as its members, the JNEU is a permanent forum for debate between its members. It establishes a system of informal cooperation and dialogue between Europe's highest courts and thus supplements the mechanism for formal cooperation, which takes the form of the preliminary ruling procedure.

Since the meetings of the JNEU are now organised by the national courts with the support of the Court, the 2025 meeting was coordinated by the Portuguese Constitutional Court, Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court. It was attended by 60 correspondents, from 20 Member States, one non-Member State, and four other European networks. The speeches made and the discussions held between the participants concerned the future of cooperation within the network and the scope of the obligation to make a reference for a preliminary ruling borne by national courts and tribunals ruling at last instance.

Meetings with the European Court of Human Rights

The European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union are two of the key figures in the protection of fundamental rights in Europe. The two courts operate within two separate organisations (the Council of Europe and the European Union, respectively) but work side by side in pursuit of the same objectives, on the basis of shared values: human dignity, freedom, democracy, the protection of human rights, respect for the rule of law, the protection of minorities, tolerance, non-discrimination, solidarity and maintaining an area of peace and justice in Europe. They therefore ensure that they maintain a close relationship based

on regular meetings, with a view to sharing developments in their respective case-law and discussing both matters of mutual interest and the common challenges facing them. The members of the two courts therefore meet every year, either in Luxembourg or Strasbourg, to foster that complementary relationship and their mutual cooperation with the aim of protecting fundamental rights in Europe.

This year, the meeting was held in November at the Court in Luxembourg. The members of the two judicial institutions took part in several roundtables covering freedom of expression in the digital era, the best interests of the child in cross-border child abduction cases, and the legal and physical obstacles to accessing asylum procedures. The official meeting also provided an opportunity for the Presidents of the two courts to discuss the challenges facing the justice system, which was recorded in a video interview.

Among other issues, the Presidents stressed the importance, in the current geopolitical and societal context, of citizens recognising what has formed the basis of the progress made over the past 75 years: the aspiration to guarantee people the best possible life, by restoring peace, re-establishing justice and ensuring the democratic functioning of society.

https://curia.europa.eu/site/ECHRvisit2025

'Every time there is a specific attack on judicial independence, every time the freedom of expression is turned against the values which it is meant to promote – pluralism, tolerance – with the rise of hate speech or violence, we must remember what is essential, we must remember what, at its core, we need to protect.'

Mr Mattias Guyomar,
President of the ECtHR

'The rule of law protects citizens but it also protects the democratic system, a system which must be able to evolve from election to election and between elections, which must involve civil society, which must involve politically engaged citizens and groups of citizens. All of that is expressed in a wide range of judgments of our Court, which are often linked to the fundamental freedoms.'

Mr Koen Lenaerts,
President of the CJEU

C. Public relations

Visiting the Court

The Court works to bring the Institution closer to citizens by organising visits and seminars which contribute to improving understanding of EU law, using tailored programmes. Visits help to improve people's understanding of the role of the EU courts and the concrete impact of their case-law on the daily life of citizens, whereas the seminars – which are primarily intended for national judges – foster dialogue between national and European courts. The Court welcomes people from all walks of life into its buildings but also offers virtual visits, in particular an online educational programme that allows secondary school students to learn about justice in the European Union from their classroom. In 2025, 412 such students took part in this programme.

15 987 visitors, including

4 647 legal professionals

Virtual visitors: **4,2%**

2 557 visitors on the Open Day

2 080 press releases

593 newsletters

469 'info-rapid' bulletins

12 181 responses to requests for information from citizens (telephone calls and emails)

Understanding justice within the European Union

The Communication Directorate's press officers, who are lawyers by training, have the task of making judgments, orders and legal Opinions, as well as ongoing cases, easier to understand for journalists and other interested parties. They draft press releases in real time to inform journalists and legal practitioners about the decisions of the Court of Justice and the General Court. They send out regular newsletters covering important events in the judicial calendar (hearings and the delivery of judgments and the reading of Opinions) and institutional matters to those who have requested them from the Court's Press service, as well as 'info-rapid' bulletins on cases for which there are no press releases. They also deal with emails and calls from citizens to the Court on various aspects of its activities (procedural information, explanation of a judgment, role of the Court, help with the website, and so forth).

Stay informed via the Court's social media

So that information can be published live and relayed instantly, the Court maintains an active presence on social media via its LinkedIn and Mastodon, its two X accounts (one in French and the other in English), and its Bluesky and Threads accounts. It also has WhatsApp channel and a YouTube channel, which provides access in the 24 official languages to a variety of audiovisual content, including videos aimed at the general public to explain how the case-law of the Court affects the daily lives of citizens, and programmes of Curia Web TV. The Court published two new videos on YouTube in 2025:

Judicial transparency

Watch the video

What happens when a country doesn't respect EU law?

Watch the video

Opened in 2025, the Court's Instagram account targets a wider and younger audience, promoting its activities using engaging visual content.

The number of subscribers to all the Court's platforms continues to grow, demonstrating the public's interest in its activities.

384 185 LinkedIn followers
+29% by comparison with 2024

5 271 Mastodon followers

3 465 Bluesky followers

2 606 Instagram followers

145 Threads followers

164 725 X followers

120 000 followers on YouTube
+33% by comparison with 2024

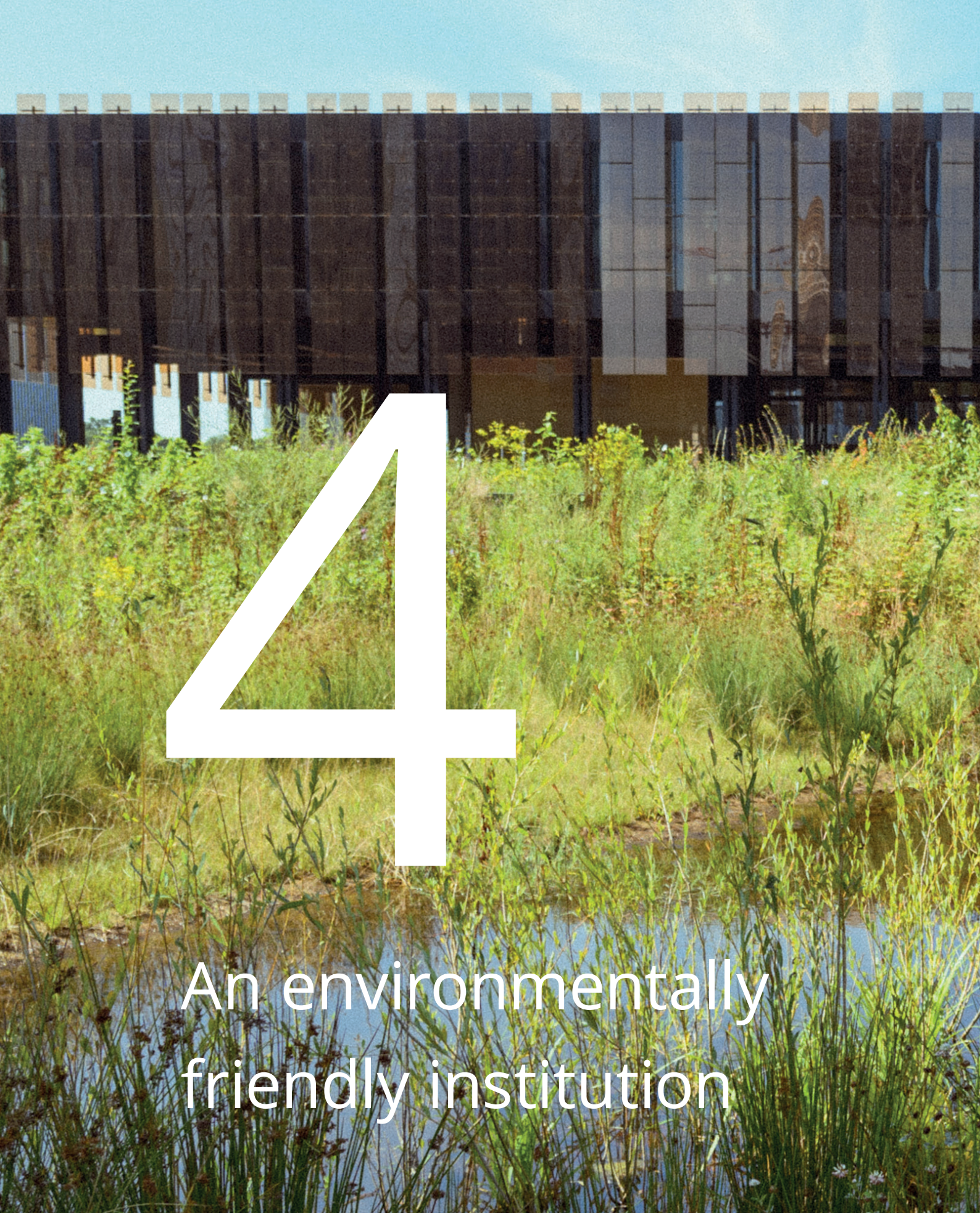
Follow hearings and decisions in real time

In order to facilitate access to its judicial activity, the Court offers a system for broadcasting hearings.

The delivery of judgments of the Court of Justice and the reading of Opinions of the Advocates General are broadcast live, as are certain judgments and Opinions of the General Court. As for hearings of the Court of Justice, in accordance with the requirements of the Rules of Procedure, they are broadcast with a delay. The hearings in question as those of the full Court, the Grand Chamber or, exceptionally, of a five-judge Chamber. The video recording of a hearing remains available on the Curia website for one month.

For the major judgments, a judge who sat in the case presents the decision of the Court of Justice in a short explanatory video lasting a few minutes and using clear and accessible language (for more, see Chapter entitled 'Making European justice more transparent').

Before hearings are broadcast, an explanatory briefing on the case is published on the Court's website in the languages of the hearing and relayed on social media.



4

An environmentally friendly institution

For many years, the Court has been committed to an ambitious environmental policy targeting the highest standards of sustainable development and respect for natural resources. That commitment has been recognised, since 2016, by its EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) registration. That certification, which is regulated by the European Union, is granted to organisations whose environmental policies and sustainable working methods satisfy strict conditions.

In 2024 (the last year for which environmental performance was audited and validated by an approved external assessor, in October 2025), the Court once again made progress in the field of environmental protection.

With regard to energy, the Court achieved a further significant reduction in its energy consumption related to heating and electricity. That performance is particularly remarkable since an entire fleet of charging points for electric and hybrid vehicles was brought into service in 2024.

Efforts to reduce paper consumption are also proving effective. In particular, the use of office paper continues its net decline as a result of changes in working habits and the continued digitisation of procedures and documents.

CO_2 emissions, which have fallen significantly since 2015, now appear to have stabilised. This positive development is testimony to the concrete impact of the projects implemented in recent years but also to the day-to-day involvement of staff in the planned actions under the EMAS policy.

Thanks to the level of environmental performance achieved in 2024 and to strict compliance with the requirements of the EMAS scheme, the Court's EMAS certification was renewed for the third time in 2025. It is therefore approaching 2026 – which will mark the 10th anniversary of its EMAS registration – with the same determination and the same ambition to limit its environmental footprint.

The **environmental indicators** for water, waste, paper, heating and electricity are the same as those for 2024. Changes are quantified by reference to 2015, the reference year for the EMAS scheme.

Environmental action

- Improvement in waste sorting and reduction of single-use plastics
- Participation in the Vel'OH! self-service bicycle scheme and support for travel by bicycle and train for cross-border workers
- Installation of charging points for electric vehicles
- Improvement of the heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and lighting systems
- Operation of 3 466 m^2 of solar panels, producing 350 204 kWh:
  (equivalent to the annual electricity needs of 92 households in Luxembourg)

Results in figures

- 40.1%
in 'Offices and Catering' waste (kg/FTE)

- 25.6%
in water consumption (m^3/FTE)

- 64.2%
in paper consumption (kg/FTE)

- 29.3%
in electricity consumption (kWh/FTE)

- 37.5%
in energy consumption for heating (kWh/FTE)

- 27.0%
in CO_2 emissions (kg CO_2/FTE)

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) is the unit of measurement of occupational activity, independent of the disparities in the weekly working hours of staff members resulting from their different working arrangements.

5

Looking ahead

↘ 2026: a year focussed on innovation and dialogue with citizens

2026 promises to be an important year for the Court, a year shaped by the implementation of projects with clear objectives: to bring European justice closer to the public, to increase the transparency of the Court's activities and to improve access to its case-law, for both citizens and legal professionals.

That dynamic is reflected above all in the launch of the Court's **new website**, which is intended to modernise and facilitate access to information about the Court by different sections of the interested public. Marking the completion of a total overhaul focused on the user experience, since January 2026 the Curia website has offered clearer, more intuitive navigation. The redesign is based on a complete restructuring of the information architecture, changes to content, now drafted in clear and easily understandable language, and a simpler, stripped-back graphic design.

The new site is equipped with a **modernised search engine** which allows all the Court's information and resources to be consulted with greater speed and precision, both for the general public and for legal professionals. An initial version already offers full-text and document metadata search options, supplemented by new functionalities. An advanced interface, intended for legal professionals, will be launched soon and allow more targeted multi-criteria searches.

As usage patterns are evolving, in particular given the increasing significance of audiovisual media, the new website also provides access to an innovative service that was launched when the site was redesigned: the **Curia Web TV platform**. Supplementing the written information provided by press releases, Curia Web TV broadcasts – on the internet and on social media – a series of multilingual programmes aimed at improving the general public's knowledge of the Institution and increasing the transparency of how it functions.

Programming is structured around the judicial calendar: explanatory briefings for hearings, broadcasting of hearings, live broadcasting of the reading of Opinions and delivery of judgments, short videos presented by Members of the two courts explaining the decisions handed down.

In addition to covering the latest judicial news, Curia Web TV also offers programmes in the form of interviews and presentations as well as coverage of the main events taking place at the Institution, offering a vivid, educational and tangible insight into the Court's daily work.

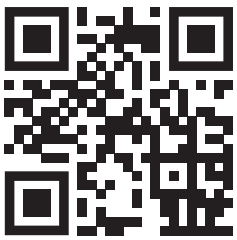
Designed with the aim of reaching different audiences, three original programmes are regularly broadcast on the platform. First, 'Cour des citoyens' (Citizens' Court), an educational programme for the general public which explains the composition, jurisdiction and mission of the Court and gives specific examples of how its rulings impact citizens' daily lives. Next, designed to target younger generations, 'Bright' is a short-format, fun and jargon-free programme incorporating graphics, animations and questions put by young visitors. Its aim is to get viewers interested in the European project and to decipher the Court's rulings by referring to day-to-day issues. Lastly, 'Open Court', a programme for a more informed audience, leaves the talking to the Members

of the Institution and, in subject-specific programmes, sheds light on the Court's mission, how it functions, the foundations of EU law, the role of citizens, their relationships with the institutions, the professions of Judge and Advocate General, the pathways to the Court and fundamental legal issues.

Although the Court is looking to the future and embracing new technologies, this does not mean it will forget the key milestones which marked the evolution of EU law, one of the most significant of which is the Charter of Fundamental Rights. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union – proclaimed in Nice on 7 December 2000 – the Court will be organising, in early 2026, a **special Meeting of Judges** devoted to the big questions which shaped the origins of the Charter, its development, its future prospects, its entrenchment in the fundamental values of the European Union and its role within the national legal systems. These discussions with judges from all the Member States will contribute to an in-depth consideration of the current role of the Charter and the emerging challenges to effective judicial protection and respect for private life in Europe.

Through those initiatives, the approach taken by the Court will be one of renewal and openness. The launch of the new website, the upgrade of its search engine and the broadcasting of Curia Web TV online reflect the intention to make the Court more accessible and easier to understand, whilst the celebration to mark the 25th anniversary of the Charter is a reminder that the Charter gives concrete expression to the rights guaranteed for citizens by the EU legal order. One goal is clear from all those actions: to bring the Court closer to citizens, consolidating a direct and trust-based relationship with citizens founded on the effective protection of their rights.

Keep up with the latest case-law and institutional news via:
curia.europa.eu



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