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Historical commitment towards gender balance with the European court reform

The European Parliament approved the long-awaited European Union general court reform today in the plenary. Amending the statute of the court, the court's operating conditions were enforced by increasing the number of judges by 28 to a total of 56. We also witnessed a historical step towards gender balance.

For the very first time, the EU co-legislators, the Parliament and the Council, included a clause on the gender parity into a regulation that is governing an EU institution. This legal innovation supported by the EPP, S&D and the Greens, pushed the gender parity provision in the regulation as far as the treaties enable. The court and the member states are committing themselves to nominating an equal amount of women and men amongst the new judges. We, the MEPs will hold them accountable.

The increase in the number of judges raised a lot of criticism. It was important, however, to ensure that the court has the necessary resources to deal with a significantly increased case load. It has to be able to operate more efficiently, provide quicker judgements and ensure high quality of justice. For this, the current resources were not sufficient.

The Parliament did not give a carte blanche, but wants to follow up the impact of the reform. It has demanded an external review to be made once the organisational changes are finalised. Based on the review, the Parliament has also reserved the possibility to propose further development measures.

The EU general court is the court that constantly fosters the rule of law, transparency and fundamental rights. Judicial system's quality and efficiency should be our highest priority in this reform.

Heidi Hautala, MEP, Greens' shadow rapporteur for the court reform

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Heidi Hautala

EP Vice-President, Member

Contact person



Heidi Hautala

EP Vice-President, Member

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