RESOLUTION (EU) 2023/1828 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

of 10 May 2023

with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021, Section IV – Court of Justice of the European Union

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

— having regard to its decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021, Section IV – Court of Justice of the European Union,

— having regard to Rule 100 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0073/2023),

A. whereas the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) is the judicial institution of the European Union, having the task to ensure compliance with Union law by overseeing the uniform interpretation and application of the Treaties and ensuring the lawfulness of measures adopted by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies;

B. whereas the CJEU helps preserving the values of the Union and, through its case-law, works towards the building of Europe;

C. whereas the CJEU comprises two courts: the Court of Justice and the General Court;

D. whereas in the context of the discharge procedure, the discharge authority wishes to stress the particular importance of further strengthening the democratic legitimacy of Union institutions by improving transparency and accountability, and implementing the concept of performance-based budgeting and good governance of human resources;

1. Notes that the budget of the CJEU falls under Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) heading 7, 'European public administration', which amounted to a total of EUR 10,7 billion in 2021 (representing 5,9 % of Union spending); notes that budget of the CJEU represents around 4,1 % of the total Union spending on administration;

2. Notes that the Court of Auditors, in its Annual Report for the financial year 2021, increased its sample of transactions under 'Administration' from 48 in 2020 to 60 in 2021;

3. Notes that the Court of Auditors mentions that the work carried out over many years indicates that MFF heading 7 concerns an overall low-risk spending; notes, however, that the annual report on the implementation of the budget for the 2021 financial year does not provide any relevant information on the CJEU and invites the Court of Auditors to include in the next annual reports comprehensive data regarding the completion of all requirements necessary for a consistent discharge procedure;

4. Notes with satisfaction that in the Annual Report for the financial year 2021, the Court of Auditors did not identify any specific issues concerning the CJEU;

Budgetary and financial management

5. Notes that the overall budget allocated for the CJEU for 2021 was approximately EUR 444 million, an increase from EUR 436 million in 2020 and EUR 429 million in 2019;

6. Observes the high budget implementation in 2021 of 98,69 %, which is in line with the previous year's budget implementation of 98,19 %; notes that in the course of the 2021, the CJEU made 10 budget transfers pursuant to Article 29 of the Financial Regulation, representing a total of EUR 17,9 million or 4 % of the appropriations for that financial year;

7. Praises the CJEU for continuing the downward trend in the average payment time which was 24,63 days in 2021, amounting to a reduction of approximately one day in comparison with 2020; appreciates that the average time for payment of invoices relating to external translation, representing 75 % of the total number of invoices paid and for which the contractual time limit is 60 days, was 27,48 days, while the average period for payment of other invoices, for which the contractual time limit for payment is 30 days, was 18,92 days;

8. Remarks that, in 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant influence on all of the activities of the CJEU, both jurisdictional and administrative, and that budget consumption in several of the CJEU's budget lines was impacted by that crisis; observes that, for certain budget lines, the net impact was a reduction in the use of appropriations, while for others that crisis required additional expenditure; notes with satisfaction that, in order to take advantage of the experience gained from the COVID-19 pandemic, the CJEU reviewed its emergency and business continuity plan in 2021;

9. Observes that, in terms of figures, the additional expenditure that was required as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic can be estimated at EUR 1,7 million (additional costs included the purchase of IT equipment and services due to the generalised use of teleworking for staff amounted to EUR 0,9 million, the purchase of disinfectants and personal protective equipment for the members and staff of the CJEU that were required to work in the buildings of the CJEU amounted to EUR 0,1 million, and increased heating costs due to the decision to have more frequent air renewal in the buildings of the CJEU amounted to EUR 0,3 million); notes that the savings are estimated at EUR 6 million (on budget lines relating to freelance interpretation savings are estimated at EUR 1,1 million, professional training and missions savings are estimated at EUR 1,1 million, cleaning and caretaking of the buildings savings are estimated at EUR 0,5 million, furniture, office consumables and protocol-related activities savings are estimated at EUR 0,5 million, and savings related to the reduction of the salary adjustment to 1,9 % are estimated at EUR 1,2 million);

10. Points out that the net amount of savings can be estimated at EUR 4,3 million, which made it possible to finance, as part of the end-of-year mopping-up transfer, an advance payment relating to buildings with the aim of reducing the future financial burden on the CJEU;

Internal management, performance and internal control

11. Understands that, in 2021, the measures designed to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic allowed the CJEU to maintain a high performance level by drawing on the lessons learned through use of remote working, communication techniques and a system of videoconferencing allowing for remote hearings before both courts; appreciates that the CJEU was awarded with the European Ombudsman's Award for Good Administration in the category Excellence in Innovation/Transformation;

12. Remarks that, in 2021, there was an increase in the overall number of cases brought before the two courts (1 720 in 2021 compared to 1 584 in 2020) as well as in the number of cases closed (1 723 in 2021 compared to 1 540 in 2020); understands that the increase concerns primarily the Court of Justice and is due essentially to the significant increase in the number of appeals against the decisions of the General Court, linked to the increase of the General Court's activities, the cause of which being the reform of the General Court that was completed in September 2021; notes that 29 % of the General Court's decisions are subject to an appeal to the Court of Justice;

13. Observes an increase in the average duration of proceedings in 2021 (17,2 months compared to 15,4 months in 2020); notes that at the Court of Justice the average duration of proceedings increased to 16,6 months in 2021 compared to 15,4 months in 2020, while at the General Court the increase was to 17,3 months compared to 15,4 months in 2020; agrees that the increase in the overall average duration could be, at least in part, linked to the pandemic-related measures that were adopted to facilitate the parties' ability to exercise their rights by granting an additional month to present their written submission and to the parties' inability to travel to the seat of the CJEU in Luxembourg, thus leading to a longer oral phase of the proceedings;

14. Notes that the number of cases pending before the two courts remained stable in 2021 (2 541 cases, 1 428 in front of the General Court and 1 113 in front of the Court of Justice, compared to a total of 2 542 cases in 2020);

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

15. Notes that, in 2021, a significant partial renewal of the CJEU occurred with the arrival of nine new judges at the Court of Justice and five new judges at the General Court;

16. Observes that since July 2022 the General Court has two judges per Member State, while the Court of justice is still composed of one judge per Member State; encourages the CJEU to continue its analysis on how to rebalance the workload between the two courts;

17. Maintains that the lack of gender balance within the college of judges needs to be addressed; is aware of the fact that the members of the Court of Justice and of the General Court are appointed by common accord of the governments of the Member States and that the CJEU has no say over the selection of judges or advocate generals, just as neither the Council nor Parliament have any role in this respect; appreciates that, following a call from Parliament, on 26 March 2021 the President of the General Court sent a letter to the President of the Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States concerning the expiry of the terms of office of 26 judges of the General Court to underline the importance of ensuring gender balance within the General Court and inviting the governments of the Member States to take that objective into account when nominating candidates for the partial replacement of judges, consistently with recital 11 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2015/2422 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([1]); urges the governments of the Member States to take into account the need for gender balance when nominating new judges;

18. Notes that, at the end of 2021, there were 2 247 officials and other members of staff at the CJEU, compared to 2 239 at the end of 2020, and observes that its distribution across the administrative categories in 2021 is consistent with the distribution in previous years (in 2021, the staff was made up of 59 % officials, 33 % temporary agents and 8 % contract agents, compared to 60 % officials, 32 % temporary agents and 8 % contract agents in 2020); notes the high occupation rate of 97 % in 2021; notes that the distribution of posts by sector of activity remains similar to that of previous years, with almost 86 % of posts dedicated to jurisdictional and linguistic activities;

19. Observes that the gender distribution across staff and management positions in 2021 was in line with the previous year; notes that, at the end of 2021, 60 % of staff were women (1 355 members of staff) and underlines that the CJEU has exceeded the average for Union institutions as regards the representation of women in positions of responsibility within the administration (women hold 54 % of administrator posts and 40 % of middle and senior management posts);

20. Notes with appreciation the efforts by the CJEU to achieve a geographical balance, by encouraging applications from underrepresented Member States, by publishing its vacancy notices within the interinstitutional portal and by working closely with the staff selection and recruitment service of the Commission (EPSO) to explore ways to improve the recruitment of personnel; remarks that the imbalance is still significant and encourages the CJEU to pursue a more even representation of the Member States among its staff, in particular those of the Member States that joined the Union after 2004;

21. Is aware of the peculiarities of the labour market in Luxembourg and welcomes the holistic approach undertaken in the design of a new people-management strategy which encompasses all the stages of the working life-cycle: recruitment, skills development, initial and continuous training, job shadowing and mentoring, career guidance service which was launched in 2021, and mobility opportunities until preparation for retirement; believes that recruitment of committed and talented members of staff requires a stimulating and dynamic working environment and appreciates that issues associated with diversity and inclusion are mainstreamed across the strategies applied in the administration of the CJEU;

([1]) Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2015/2422 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2015 amending Protocol No 3 on the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union (OJ L 341, 24.12.2015, p. 14).

22. Notes with satisfaction that, in 2021, the activities of the CJEU's training and development unit, which runs the equal opportunities and diversity cell, included specific initiatives related to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion, such as the participation of equal opportunities and diversity representatives in the various interinstitutional working groups in this area and, specifically, in the EPSO working group on diversity in recruitment procedures, awareness raising activities for staff and managers, and the redesign of the induction programme for newcomers to integrate aspects of the diversity and inclusion policy;

23. Points out the high expectations for the outcome of the High Level Interinstitutional Group (HLIG), set up in 2020 to examine solutions likely to enhance the attractiveness of Luxembourg for staff and to find ways to boost its attractiveness in comparison with other cities hosting the headquarters of other Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies; is aware that, in June 2021, a report was adopted by the HLIG identifying actions that could be taken in the relevant areas; observes that, amongst those actions, the provision of temporary accommodation was considered; asks the CJEU to report to the discharge authority about the actions launched to implement that proposal;

24. Is concerned by the increase in the number of cases of burnout in 2021 (estimated 34 cases) in comparison to 2020 (estimated 27 cases); welcomes that the CJEU has deployed more resources to prevent and to follow up cases of burnout by increasing the number of hours of its consulting psychologist, by recruiting an additional fourth nurse and an assistant with specific responsibility for developing and coordinating actions to enhance staff well-being, and by organising numerous trainings for managers in order to enhance their management skills and to help them distribute the workload fairly and avoid discrimination; reiterates its call on the CJEU to continue monitoring the impact of the ever-increasing workload on staff well-being and encourages the use of staff satisfaction surveys to get a better understanding of the origin of the problem and of the impact of the adopted measures;

25. Commends the CJEU for taking specific measures in order to ensure the physical and mental well-being of staff, given the specific remote working conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021; observes that the flexible working arrangements available at the CJEU include part-time work, parental leave, family leave, flexitime and telework, that such options are accessible to all categories of staff in accordance with the provisions of the Staff Regulations, the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants and the applicable internal decisions, and that relevant updates are duly communicated to staff via the intranet and an internal newsletter; highlights, however, the imbalance that still exists across the users of such working arrangements in favour of female members of staff: out of 205 persons applying for parental leave, 163 were women and only 42 were men, and out of 98 persons applying for part-time work, 87 were women and only 11 were men; reiterates its request for the CJEU to engage in an effective internal communication oriented at better clarifying the options offered to all members of staff;

26. Notes that the working conditions at the CJEU, in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic, were in general perceived positively by staff, and that the CJEU carried out three staff and manager surveys in 2020 and 2021, taking on board the interest expressed for a permanent optional working from home regime upon the resumption of normal working patterns; welcomes the initiatives adopted to improve conditions for members of staff working remotely, such as the home office package (lap top, screen, docking station, mouse and keyboard, headset and ergonomic chair) and technical support and assistance that includes videoconferencing, training offers on remote working modalities and strategies, dissemination of good practices and the setting up of a telephone service via the CJEU's secure network that has prevented additional telecommunication costs for staff;

27. Appreciates the attention given to the mental health of staff during the 2021 lock-down period, the numerous communications sent on a regular basis to staff, including advice on how to cope with isolation, contacts and information on how to seek help and support, practical information on medical consultations, best practices to follow when teleworking, informative videos by the counselling psychologist on how to pursue work/life balance during the lockdown and the possibility of having counselling sessions with the counselling psychologist;

28. Observes that, in 2021, the CJEU recruited 255 trainees out of which 173 received a monthly income; deplores that, in 2021, the percentage of paid trainees (68 %) decreased in comparison to the previous year (72 % in 2020); welcomes nevertheless the recent adoption, on 29 November 2021, of an amending decision on traineeships according to which all trainees have to be remunerated by the CJEU, except those paid from other sources, and are also entitled to receive, besides the flat-rate travel allowance, a monthly grant similar to those granted by other Union institutions; acknowledges the progress made by CJEU in reducing the percentage of unpaid traineeships and calls on the CJEU to make sure that all the trainees receive a decent remuneration on the level of the remuneration paid by other Union institutions, except for trainees paid from other sources;

29. Encourages the CJEU to continue its policy that aims to guide and involve managers in safeguarding the well-being of staff as well as to continue to assess the impact of the ever-increasing workload on staff well-being in order to better understand the origin of the difficulties and to explore possible solutions; welcomes the social dialogue between the administration and the staff representatives and the launch of surveys that aim to collect staff members' views on many relevant topics, such as the teleworking regime and autonomy at work;

Ethical framework and transparency

30. Welcomes the adoption of the new code of conduct for members of the Court of Justice and the General Court that entered into force on 7 October 2021; notes with satisfaction that it brings specific focus on members' declarations of interest, which regretfully continue to be self-declarations, on their periodic update at every change of situation and at least every three years, and on their publication on the Curia website, starting from end of 2021; stresses that the new provisions are specifically targeted at the prevention of conflicts of interest and agrees with the CJEU that the strict approach is designed to strengthen public confidence in the independence of the Union's judiciary;

31. Appreciates the consolidation into a single decision, adopted in March 2021, of the CJEU's internal rules governing members' travel, missions, cars and use of drivers, which were previously set out in various complementary decisions; believes that that will make it possible to simplify the implementation of the rules and will provide for a more transparent framework; welcomes the publication, at the end of 2021, of the Curricula of Members, including additional elements such as honorary positions or titles awarded as well as memberships in foundations;

32. Notes the adequate level of transparency achieved by the annual publication on the Curia website, since 2018, of the lists of external activities carried out by the members of both the Court of Justice and the General Court; stresses that the members are expected to devote themselves fully to the performance of their duties at the CJEU and that they can only carry out external activities that are related to the performance of their duties and subject to prior authorisation being granted only in the event that such activities are compatible with the requirements of the code of conduct and, in particular, with the obligation to be available for judicial activities;

33. Regrets that the new code of conduct for members of staff**,** that was expected to be completed by the end of 2021**,** is still in the adoption process, and thus calls on the CJEU to complete that process as soon as possible; underlines the importance of providing staff with an updated and comprehensive term of reference on many sensitive topics such as revolving doors, outside activities and occupational activities after leaving the service, and reiterates its request to keep the discharge authority duly informed about the final contents and adoption of the new code of conduct for staff;

34. Remarks that staff compliance with ethical matters is currently pursued by the CJEU mainly by a mandatory training package for newcomers, which is also accessible to long-serving colleagues, and by the internal control and finance training (in 2021 a total of 14 sessions were organised); notes again the limited number of staff participating in those sessions (99 members of staff out of a total of more than 2 000 members of staff); call on the CJEU to further encourage the staff participation in training courses on ethical matters, to conduct staff surveys to verify the perception of the current ethical framework, and to enhance staff involvement; welcomes the issuance of ad hoc guidelines on the use of electronic communications which includes considerations relating to the right to disconnect and to the protection of personal data, and lays down rules for use, retention and archiving;

35. Notes that 96 requests were submitted by staff for an authorisation to engage in professional activity after leaving the CJEU, all of which were approved, that no breach of the cooling-off period was detected, that the specific rules of the code of conduct for legal secretaries on confidentiality and conflict of interests apply to former members of staff leaving such positions, and that two declarations of outside activity during leave for personal reasons were examined and approved;

36. Notes that the CJEU has updated its anti-fraud strategy as an integral part of its risk management policy and that the risk register is established accordingly and includes risks that are related to the sensitive nature of the CJEU's activity, such as the improper disclosure of information;

37. Calls for an end to the use of external companies that, according to Yale University's ranking ([2]), continue to operate in Russia;

Digitalisation, cybersecurity and data protection

38. Welcomes the CJEU's effort to accelerate and broaden the digitalisation of its activities and procedures, both in judicial and administrative areas; understands that the aim is to strengthen the provision of direct support to judicial activities and thereby tackle the unprecedented level of workload reached, in particular at the Court of Justice;

39. Welcomes the progress made, in 2021, in developing the integrated case management system (SIGA) and the possibilities that offers for greater optimisation and automation of the various stages in the processing of cases;

40. Remarks the high-level of cyberattacks suffered in 2021 compared to previous years and appreciates the fact that all were handled without meaningful impact; praises the CJEU's active role in supporting initiatives to strengthen cybersecurity across Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies as part of the steering board of CERT-EU and as member of the Interinstitutional Committee for digital transformation (ICDT); is aware that the CJEU has renewed its cybersecurity awareness programme, that it has developed a mandatory cybersecurity eLearning training course for its staff, and that it has performed a study on 'zero-trust' as part of the multi-annual digital transformation programme while starting work, in 2021, on the detailed design of the new network incorporating a 'zero-trust architecture'; also encourages the CJEU to carry out regular risk assessments on their IT infrastructure and to ensure regular audits and tests of its cyber defences;

41. Notes with satisfaction that the CJEU uses internally hosted systems, based on open source technology, as a first choice in handling and processing its sensitive judicial contents and that, where cloud solutions are deployed, the CJEU designs special technical measures and negotiates contracts with strong data protection and security requirements, with the authorisation, where necessary, of the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS); understands that such approach allows the CJEU to retain control of its technical systems, to protect ownership of data storage and data flows, and to avoid a critical dependency on any external systems, including the ones of other institutions; remarks that ownership is strengthened by the policy in place regarding access rights, by the appointment of officials as service managers in charge of the CJEU's infrastructure, by ensuring constant monitoring of the operations and by segregation of duties of the development teams and external consultants and contractors;

42. Welcomes that consideration is being given to the use of more neutral document and data exchange formats to foster 'non-proprietary' office tools and enhance transparency; notes that, since January 2021, the central record of processing activities has been online and is directly accessible to the public;

43. Recalls that the CJEU, as part of its participation in all sub-groups of the ICDT, has, in 2021, taken over the chairmanship of the Emerging Technologies Group; understands that the main objective of this group, created in October 2020, is to keep abreast of technological developments and to promote a common approach to them within the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies in the areas of artificial intelligence, blockchain, robotic process automation and quantum computing; is aware that a common interinstitutional programme with an overview of

([2]) https://som.yale.edu/story/2022/over-1000-companies-have-curtailed-operations-russia-some-remain

investments, available competences, products already developed and possibilities for reuse, and future areas of cooperation is being prepared and that it is expected to include training in new skills, a common architecture to support future collaborations and the establishment of an interinstitutional innovation centre;

44. Follows up on previous resolutions on the use of artificial intelligence in judiciary systems and calls on the CJEU to ensure the highest respect for human rights; understands that the main purpose of using artificial intelligence tools is to analyse texts in order to extract information automatically and to speed up the processing of certain tasks; notes the CJEU's commitment to take into consideration the principles of respect for fundamental rights, non-discrimination, security, transparency, neutrality and intellectual integrity, as well as user control, in compliance with the European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems and their environment; recalls that, in any case, the tasks carried out with the help of artificial intelligence should always be monitored and resolved by a human operator and be 'ethical-by-design' and 'human-rights-by-design'; reiterates its request to be informed about the modality of the possible use of artificial intelligence in the carrying out of the CJEU's activities;

45. Observes that the investigation opened by the EDPS in 2020 on the use of third-party web services by the CJEU (such as YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Play and Apple) and the obligation to make available the essence of a joint controller agreement is still pending; further observes that the EDPS also opened an investigation into the CJEU's use of cloud services provided by Amazon Web Services and Microsoft under Cloud II procurement contracts and that a decision is still pending; welcomes the follow up actions undertaken by the CJEU to align with the recommendations of the EDPS;

Buildings and security

46. Welcomes the detailed report to the budgetary authority on the CJEU's building investment plans drafted in compliance with Article 266 of the Financial Regulation; observes that, since June 2021, the CJEU has had a contract for the establishment of an inventory of its architectural assets and their systematic inspection, for which EUR 140 000 was allocated in 2021 and EUR 230 000 has been allocated in 2022;

47. Notes that, in 2021, the CJEU continued to chair the Interinstitutional Security Group set up in 2014 on the initiative of the CJEU in order to harmonise approaches, exchange best practices, cooperate in the event of a specific threat and to coordinate the establishment of procedures for access control to buildings;

48. Is aware that, since October 2019, the CJEU has been hosting the EPSO Luxembourg office in its building complex and providing it with the meeting rooms needed to organise assessment centres for candidates for posts in Luxembourg, particularly in the field of translation;

49. Observes that the interinstitutional working group on buildings coordination in Luxembourg (GICIL) has continued its work on a more sporadic basis to foster the harmonisation of the practices of the Union institutions established in Luxembourg; notes that GICIL promotes the exchange of good practice in the area of building management and facilitates interinstitutional cooperation in the area of gas and electricity supply as well as technical assistance services in the building sector that generate economies of scale; remarks that, on 11 June 2021, a workshop on new concepts for workplace design following the pandemic was held under its patronage;

Environment and sustainability

50. Welcomes the adoption by the CJEU of an environmental policy, publicly available on its website, and supports the CJEU registration in the EMAS system (since 2016) and its participation in the several interinstitutional environmental committees where environmental good practices are exchanged and contributions provided to elaborate common environmental strategies to reduce CO_2 emissions and to achieve financial synergies, namely GIME (Groupe Interinstitutionnel de Management Environmental, gathering EMAS coordinators from several European institutions whose seats are not solely in Luxembourg), ECOnet (Inter-institutional Environmental Network made up of EMAS coordinators from various Union institutions in Luxembourg which liaises with the College of Secretaries General and Heads of Administration in Luxembourg – CALux) and the interinstitutional working group 'Green Public Procurement' operating in the green purchasing sector;

51. Notes with satisfaction that, in 2021, the CJEU achieved a significant reduction of electricity, water and paper consumption, of canteen and office waste and of greenhouse gas emissions; notes that the installation of a total area of 3 447 m^2 photovoltaic panels produced 381 586 kWh and thus contributed to ensuring a sustainable energy supply; notes as well the installation, during the course of 2021, of 32 water fountains put into service in 2022 in compliance with the health recommendations of the medical officers, reducing the consumption of single-use plastic bottles;

52. Is aware that the very sharp reduction in CO_2 emissions (a decrease from 32 747 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent in 2010 to 11 181 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent in 2020) is also explained by the low occupancy rate of the buildings and the reduction in travel linked to the COVID-19 pandemic; encourages the CJEU to further limit its paper consumption and to pursue the goal of becoming a paperless institution;

53. Understands that, in line with EMAS programme for 2022, the CJEU will include renewed environmental objectives to further reduce its environmental footprint; welcomes the many initiatives adopted by the CJEU to support the sustainable mobility of its staff and to raise awareness on the matter, including the promotion of hybrid and electric cars for its members, a subsidy for annual cross-border public transport and a free subscription to the self-service bicycle service set up by the City of Luxembourg;

Interinstitutional cooperation

54. Welcome the CJEU's commitment to finding coordinated approaches to deal with the multiple challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic; notes that exchanges concerning the crisis management strategy took place, under the chairmanship of the Registrar of the Court of Justice, at the meetings of the College of Heads of Administration of the institutions and bodies of the European Union, and at the meetings of CALux with the participation of the representatives of the Luxembourg national authorities;

55. Notes the CJEU's many service level agreements with the Commission (the Office for the Management and Payment of Individual Entitlements and the Publications Office), with CERT-EU (in the domain of cybersecurity) and with Parliament and the Council (to share the financial burden related to the remote testing tool service in the framework of the interinstitutional accreditation of freelance interpreters) as well as the annual financing agreement with the translation services of the other Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to finance several IT tools; is aware that, in the field of translation and interpretation, cooperation continued within the framework of the Interinstitutional Committee for Translation and Interpretation and within its Executive Committee for Interpretation and Executive Committee for Translation;

56. Notes with appreciation that the CJEU also cooperates with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the EDPS and the European Ombudsman, and that active exchanges are carried out with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) for knowledge-sharing purposes, including a training offer for the European Delegated Prosecutors to familiarise them with the activities of the CJEU, in line with the memorandum of understanding, which is currently being negotiated and that aims to build stronger cooperation between the CJEU and the EPPO;

57. Welcomes the pursuit of the activities carried out by the Judicial Network of the European Union, which contributed to foster and facilitate the cooperation between the CJEU and the national courts, particularly in the fields of legal research, multilingual terminology and technological innovation;

Communication

58. Reiterates its call to the CJEU to increase its communication efforts to strengthen the link with citizens by endorsing greater transparency in its operations, by intensifying the use of digital technologies and by pursuing a communication strategy that allows the correct perception and understanding of the CJEU's role and of the way it fits in the Union's vision;

59. Notes that, in 2021, the budget for public communication and promotional activities was EUR 510 500, covering the production of internal and external publications (e.g. annual reports), video materials, promotion materials for visitors, media monitoring and specific materials for law professionals or press and media;

60. Observes that, in 2021, videoconferencing was used for 131 hearings before the General Court and the Court of Justice, and that 231 press releases were published in a total of 3 206 different language versions on the Curia website, 601 weekly or fortnightly newsletters were addressed to media and to legal professionals to provide first-hand information, raise awareness on important cases and explain the decisions undertaken, and 630 info-rapid bulletins were circulated on cases not covered by press-releases;

61. Remarks that the Curia website had 6,1 million visitors and 25,3 million page views in 2021; highlights the increasing role of e-Curia as a gateway for communications between the Court of Justice and the General Court, on the one hand, and the parties and their representatives, on the other; encourages further development of e-Curia functionalities;

62. Points out that almost 90 % of all procedural documents lodged before the Court of Justice and the General Court in 2021 were submitted using e-Curia; highlights that the rate of use of e-Curia was 85 % before the Court of Justice and 93 % before the General Court (compared to respectively 79 % and 95 % in 2020); underlines that the number of accounts opened before the two courts has further grown from 7 378 at the end of 2020 to 8 212 accounts a year later; observes that the number of accounts opened by national courts was only 45 at the end of 2019, reached 121 at the end of 2020 and further increased to 223 by 31 December 2021, indicating the widespread trust of users in the usefulness and reliability of e-Curia; welcomes the fact that the introduction of e-Curia in 2011 has had a considerable impact on postal costs, which have fallen by approximately 85 % over the period 2011–2021;

63. Remarks the increasing presence of the CJEU and of the number of followers on the major platforms and on social networks (Twitter and LinkedIn but also on the Mastodon platform) and the preparation of tailored communications to legal professionals via Fact Sheets and the Monthly Case-law Digest;

64. Welcomes that the CJEU actively participates in the EU Voice project launched by the EDPS to interact with the public, and which intends to promote the use of decentralised, free and open source social networks as an alternative to propriety ones;

65. Reiterates its call on the CJEU to enhance transparency by adopting innovative solutions in communicating with the public; welcomes the progress made in the streaming of judgement delivery and hearings, which, based on the technical work carried out in 2021, entered a pilot phase at the beginning of 2022 with the first hearings of the Grand Chamber of the Court of Justice streamed since April 2022;

66. Praises the CJEU's commitment to multilingualism and agrees that addressing each litigant and each citizen in his or her own language is both a matter of safeguarding the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Union and a matter of effectiveness, accessibility and legitimacy of the Union's justice system;

67. Emphasises the importance of the work of the CJEU in addressing matters that question the essential idea of the European project and its underlying values and principles; underlines the importance of the decisions of the CJEU, in particular referring to compliance with the rule of law; is aware of the far-reaching consequences of its decisions;

68. Welcomes the initiative of the CJEU to offer a virtual visitor programme for European citizens; notes that currently the pilot project has been extended to all high school students in the Union and in the future aims to diversify by developing programmes intended for other types of audience; welcomes the fact that the CJEU's data protection officer was involved from the start of the pilot phase.

69. Supports the civil society's ([3]) call to have the hearings of the CJEU live streamed on its website, as it is already the practice of several national and international courts, like the European Court of Human Rights.

([3]) https://www.thegoodlobby.eu/campaigns/a-letter-to-the-president-of-the-court-of-justice-of-the-european-union-to-live-stream-hearings/