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Anonymised references for preliminary rulings lodged from 1 January 2023 to be allocated a fictional name

This measure seeks to facilitate the designation and identification of cases that have been anonymised for reasons relating to the protection of personal data

From 1 January 2023, all new anonymised cases involving proceedings between natural persons (whose names have, since 1 July 2018, been replaced with initials for reasons relating to the protection of personal data) or proceedings between natural persons and legal persons that do not have a distinctive name, are to be allocated a fictional name suggested by a computerised automatic name generator. This initiative has been introduced in order to make it easier to identify anonymised cases. The measure **will make it easier to recall the names of those cases and cite them both in case-law and elsewhere.**

The allocation of fictional names does not affect:

- References for preliminary rulings in which the name of the legal person is sufficiently distinctive (the name of that legal person will be used as the name of the case);
- Direct actions (the Court of Justice will continue to allocate a conventional name to those cases, which will appear in brackets after the usual name of the case);
- Requests for opinions;
- Appeals;
- Cases before the General Court.

Fictional names will not correspond to the real name of any party to the proceedings and will not, in principle, be an existing name. They will appear in the header of the judgment and on the first page after the case number.

The fictional name generator works by dividing words into syllables, which are then randomly combined to produce fictional names. There is a generator for each official language of the European Union and additional generators will be developed, where necessary, for languages of third countries.

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