

'The role of the President of the Court of Justice' by Gil Carlos Rodríguez Iglesias

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The Judges elect the President from among their number for a period of three years. He may be re-elected. If there are several candidates, the President is chosen by ballot.

The President’s role is quite varied; in my opinion, it has three dimensions: a jurisdictional role, which is the most important dimension and the only one about which I shall speak briefly; an administrative role, since the administration of the Court is a matter for the Registrar under the authority of the President; and, in the same way as all other Presidents, I should say, a role in external relations.

I should emphasise that the most important of those dimensions is the jurisdictional role, and in that regard there is the strictly presidential role, so to speak: that is, to preside over hearings and deliberations and, beyond the duties of chairman, to organise those hearings and deliberations, a task which involves special responsibilities.

More generally, the President is responsible for organising and planning the jurisdictional work of the Court, or, at least, for initiating that process, since the panel of Judges must decide on certain organisational measures. Finally, the President is also responsible for allocating the various cases to the Judges in their capacity as Judge-Rapporteurs.

There are also certain jurisdictional tasks carried out by the President on an individual basis. I consider that the most important of those is to rule by injunction. Furthermore, there are various other administrative decisions which fall within the President’s remit; I am thinking particularly of decisions on interventions and on confidentiality, although there are many others.