



Access to EU documents: urgent update of rules needed

The rules on public access to EU documents should be updated in the light of the Lisbon Treaty, say MEPs, who on Thursday criticised the European Commission for not modifying its latest draft legislation on the matter, following a request made by Parliament in March. MEPs had held back from taking their final vote on the legislation, pending the Commission's response.

Parliament is concerned that "in spite of the clear requests" it made on 11 March, the Commission has not put forward a modified version of its draft law. At that time MEPs chose to adopt amendments contained in a report by Michael Cashman (S&D, UK) while postponing their final vote (on the legislative resolution) in order to leave the door open for a first-reading agreement.

MEPs want the regulation to be updated on the basis of case-law by the EU Court of Justice. Among these cases, a landmark ruling on 1 July 2008 (the "Turco" case) called on the Council to give access to documents (such as its Legal Service's Opinions) which were until now excluded on the grounds of the need to "protect" the institution's decision-making process.

Parliament's position is set out in a resolution tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, ECR and GUE/NGL groups and adopted today by 341 votes to 206, with 20 abstentions.

Rules should also apply to EU agencies and bodies

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, MEPs call for the scope of the regulation to be widened to cover all EU bodies, offices and agencies, including the European Central Bank, the European Court of Justice, Europol and Eurojust.

Wider access should be allowed, they believe, to documents such as legal service opinions, Council documents, including positions and votes cast, and documents relating to international agreements, protection of personal data and the content of institutions' registers.

More user-friendly access

MEPs say that granting access to information "will enable an objective evaluation of the implementation of EU rules, acts, measures and programmes in the Member States". They call for easier access to EU documents through the creation of more user-friendly systems. They also support the idea, raised on Tuesday by the EU's Interinstitutional Committee on Public Access to Documents, of a common webpage bringing together links to sites that promote public access.

Contact :

Baptiste CHATAIN

LIBE

BXL: (+32) 2 28 40992

STR: (+33) 3 881 74005

PORT: (+32) 498 98 35 90

EMAIL: libe-press@europarl.europa.eu

Press release

Simon DUFFIN

London

STR: (+33) 3 881 74256

PORT: (+44) 7 786 060 531

EMAIL: Press-en@europarl.europa.eu

EMAIL: simon.duffin@europarl.europa.eu

ADDINFO: (+44) 207 227 43 35

Eimear NÍ BHROIN

Dublin

STR: (+33) 3 881 64122

PORT: (+353) 868 559 423

EMAIL: Press-en@europarl.europa.eu

EMAIL: eimear.nibhroin@europarl.europa.eu

ADDINFO: (+353) 1 605 79 32