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### **Access to documents: Parliament calls for immediate action to break the deadlock**

**A revision of the 2001 regulation on access to documents should be a priority for all the EU institutions, stresses Parliament in a resolution adopted on Wednesday. A failure to agree on a new version of the regulation would undermine the legitimacy of EU decision-making, especially in the light of the fast-approaching key European elections, it adds. MEPs regret the deadlock that has been created and ask all the EU institutions to work together to find a way out as soon as possible.**

Parliament strongly reaffirms the importance of the fundamental right of access to information and documents, of transparency and openness of institutions and of their decision-making processes, "which are pillars of democracy and can bring citizens closer to the EU".

A failure to agree on a new version of the regulation on access to documents "would send the wrong signal about the nature of the EU to its citizens", MEPs say. This failure would undermine the legitimacy of EU decision-making, especially in the light of the fast-approaching key European elections, they add.

### **A standstill which has lasted more than a year**

Parliament adopted its first-reading position on 15 December 2011, and dialogues were started with the Danish Presidency in the first half of 2012. The Commission did not agree with the proposed possible compromises, "which is the main reason for a standstill which has lasted more than a year", says the text.

The Commission should engage fully in the amending and 'Lisbonising' of the 2001 regulation on access to documents, or take "any appropriate measures to break the deadlock", and Council should immediately restart debates to adopt its first-reading position and to continue negotiations, ask MEPs.

### **Parliament's red lines**

Parliament reaffirms its first-reading position as the starting position for negotiations and insists that an amended text, "as an absolute minimum", should:

- ε explicitly extend the scope to all EU institutions, offices and agencies;
- ε enhance legislative transparency, including access to legislative legal opinions, whereby any use of exceptions in the legislative procedure should constitute an exemption from the general rule of legislative transparency;
- ε clarify the relationship between transparency and data protection;
- ε include the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information;
- ε consider the current broad definition of a document as a minimum basis for further development;
- ε ensure appropriate access to documents and transparency in relation to international negotiations and agreements;
- ε provide for financial transparency of EU funds;
- ε not introduce any block exemptions.

The resolution was adopted by 333 votes in favour, 128 against and 50 abstentions.

### **Links**

[European Parliament resolution on the deadlock on the revision of Regulation \(EC\) No 1049/2001](#)

[European Parliament legislative resolution of 15 December 2011 on the proposal for a regulation regarding public access to documents](#)

[Press release \(15.12.2011\)](#)

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