European Commission

REGISTER OF COMMISSION DOCUMENTS

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Under Article 15 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, citizens and residents of EU countries have a right of access to the documents of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 on public access to documents from these 3 institutions sets out the general principles governing this right of access and the limits to it.

To help citizens exercise this right, the Regulation stipulates that all 3 institutions must make a register of documents available online.

This is why the Commission decided to set up a register that would initially contain a number of document types, with a focus on legislative documents: documents with references including COM, C et SEC and other types, including agendas and minutes of Commission meetings.

The register includes only the references of documents produced since 1 January 2001. Coverage will gradually be extended to other document types.

The register complements EurLex, the database of interinstitutional procedures, which enables users to carry out searches for documents produced by the institutions while drawing up EU laws.

The purpose of the tool is to inform citizens of the existence of the main documents produced by the Commission. However, the right of access is clearly not restricted to the documents in this register alone. Moreover, the fact that users have access to this list of documents does not mean that a request for one of them will necessarily be granted. It is possible to refuse access to documents which, if disclosed, could harm public or private interests protected under the list of exceptions set out in Article 4 of the Regulation.

For each document, the register contains:

- the code or reference number
- the document title in the languages in which it is available
- the date of the document
- the languages in which it is available.
- the department responsible for drafting the document.

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