



Ombudsman welcomes steps to make EU law making more accessible to the public

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European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly welcomes the new transparency steps taken by the Council of the EU to enable the public better to exercise its democratic right to have its say in EU law making through following the legislative process.

The [measures \[Link\]](#) include proactively publishing progress reports on negotiations on draft laws as well as the Council mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament. This is in line with proposals made by the Ombudsman in her inquiries into [legislative transparency in the Council \[Link\]](#) and the [transparency of trilogues \[Link\]](#).

The changes mark progress in one of the Ombudsman's key objectives - ensuring that citizens know what decisions governments are taking on their behalf in Brussels.

"These new measures are a further step towards legislative transparency in Brussels and allowing citizens to become active participants in European democracy. Recognising that EU decision making is a shared responsibility between Member States and "Brussels" will help to change the damaging 'blame Brussels' culture ," said Ms O'Reilly.

"As Ombudsman my task was to put this issue on the table and ask for change. The Council's paper is the result of the support of all those who believe that legislative transparency will



strengthen and further legitimise the EU.”

“ Special thanks should go to the German EU presidency for bringing about the agreement but also to those Member States who were early supporters of legislative transparency, European and national parliaments, and civil society. It takes patience and persistence to achieve systemic change,” said the Ombudsman.

In 2019, the European Parliament overwhelmingly supported the Ombudsman’s proposals on legislative transparency while a group of ten Member States (Belgium - Denmark - Estonia – Finland - Ireland – Latvia – Luxembourg - The Netherlands - Slovenia - Sweden) backed proposals for improving transparency in the Council. In 2017, the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) suggested four ways to improve accountability in EU decision making.

The Ombudsman encourages the Council to continue its efforts to improve legislative transparency, particularly by recording Member State positions on draft laws

Background

The Ombudsman opened an investigation into the transparency of the Council’s legislative work in 2017. Following an analysis of the practices of the Council through an inspection of internal Council documents, and taking into account the results of a public consultation, the Ombudsman in 2018 made three Recommendations and six proposals for improving democratic oversight of the process.

The Ombudsman in 2015 carried out an inquiry into the transparency of trilogues, the informal negotiations between the Commission, Parliament and Council on draft laws. Her proposals to improve transparency included the setting up of a common legislative database.