



Ombudsman launches public consultation on Council transparency

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The European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, has as part of an ongoing inquiry invited feedback from the public, civil society, national parliaments, and others on how the Council of the EU can make its law-making work more transparent.

This [consultation \[Link\]](#) asks nine questions including what measures the Council could take to make legislative documents easier to find; what difficulties are faced in trying to obtain documents linked to Council preparatory bodies; and how important is it to know the individual positions of Member States.

The Ombudsman has also [written \[Link\]](#) to the Council asking to inspect all documents relating to three sample legislative acts from 2016 in order to see the internal process for recording, categorising and disclosing documents as draft EU laws proceed through the Council. The files will be selected by the Council and should be representative of its document handling and transparency practices.

“ The Council, as co-legislator with the Parliament, makes laws that affect the lives of over 500 million citizens. Citizens have a right to participate in the democratic life of the EU, and for that, they must be adequately informed about the legislative process within the Council .



"There have been some transparency improvements in the Council's legislative process since the opening of my inquiry. My next step is to find out how documents related to three recent sample EU laws were recorded and published in order precisely to map the Council's document handling and transparency system.

"At the same time, I want to hear about the practical experiences of those looking for more information about ongoing discussions on draft EU laws and any suggestions for improvement," said Ms O'Reilly.

Background

The Ombudsman [opened \[Link\]](#) her inquiry in March 2017 with 14 questions to the Council on how legislative documents arising from meetings of Member State Ambassadors and deputy Ambassadors, plus the over 150 committees and working parties of national civil servants are handled in accordance with EU transparency standards.

The Ombudsman's inquiry covers four areas: the accessibility of documents in the Council's document register; the completeness of this register; the consistency of drafting and publishing practices between preparatory bodies and transparency on Member States' positions.

The Council's [response \[Link\]](#) listed some improvements including a new system to record Council documents; a project to develop a common drafting platform with the European Parliament and the Commission; and various initiatives to facilitate the public's access to documents.

The planned inspection of three legislative files closed in 2016 as well as the public consultation contributions will feed into the Ombudsman's final analysis of this issue.

The deadline for submitting responses to the [consultation \[Link\]](#) - available in the 24 official EU languages - is 31 December 2017.