



## **Policies and practices to give effect to the right of public access to documents**

### **- A short guide for the EU administration -**

This short guide sets out the policies and practices EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies should have in place so that they can fully implement their obligations to give effect to the fundamental right of public access to documents.

Each EU institution, body, office and agency should:

1. Have a policy on document registration and retention. Staff should receive appropriate information and training on how to give effect to this policy.
2. Have a policy on the publication of documents, setting out clear criteria regarding which categories of documents should be published proactively.
3. Publish these policies on its website in an easily accessible format.
4. Have a 'public register' of documents and adopt criteria on which categories of documents should be listed therein.
5. Ensure the documents listed in the public register contain, as a minimum: a reference number; the subject matter and/or a short description of the content of the document; and the date on which the document was received or drawn up and recorded in the register.
6. Publish a report or include a dedicated section in its annual report on public access to documents requests, including statistics on the number of requests and whether access was (partially) granted.
7. Have a dedicated section on its website on public access to documents and how the institution deals with access requests.
8. Include in that section information on the fundamental right of public access to documents, its legal basis and the internal rules the institution has in place for giving effect to this and dealing with requests for public access to documents.
9. Provide information in plain and accessible language about how to submit a request for public access to documents, and the procedure the institution follows in dealing with requests. This should include information about the means of redress: an introduction to the two-stage procedure (initial request and confirmatory application), and the subsequent possibilities of a legal challenge to the Court of Justice of the EU or submitting a complaint to the European Ombudsman.
10. Consider putting in place a submission form for requesting access to documents, containing guidance on the information that needs to be included when submitting a request. The form should be optional, user-friendly and require only data that is strictly relevant for processing the request. The institution should also publish the e-mail address of the functional mailbox of the operating section or team dealing with such requests.