



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 18 October 2013**

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**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Working Party on Information  
Subject: Improving access to information

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1. In the context of the ongoing review of Regulation 1049/2001, the Danish Presidency started discussions within the Working Party on Information on possible technical measures which could be taken to further improve the user-friendliness of how the (European) Council provides to the public in practice access their documents and information about the legislative processes. However, so far, these measures have not been clearly defined.
2. At a recent meeting of the Working Party, this issue was raised again. The General Secretariat, therefore, brings to the attention of delegations the following list of measures which were taken or are in the process of being developed to improve the user-friendliness of the tools which it makes available to the public to access information about the (European) Council.

3. Measures taken or under development:

**Promote a user-friendly Interface for the (European) Council's public register of documents**

Since 2011, the GSC has taken a series of initiatives to make the Council's Public Register more user-friendly and easily searchable. For instance, the entry page was simplified, texts were shortened and simplified and fields were added or removed in the search forms. In the context of the redesign of the Council's website, the interface may be further improved.

**Develop tools enabling the user to follow the decision-making process relating to legislative procedures and providing for the references of the documents concerned**

Under the aegis of the Publications Office, the three institutions, together with all the parties involved, are collaborating in providing easy and user-friendly access via new EUR-LEX to information related to the EU legislative decision making process.

The following link reflects the current situation:

<http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/legislative-procedures.html>

**Develop search facilities by subject, meeting and other relevant criteria in the (European) Council's public register of documents**

In 2010, the GSC launched an initiative to improve the way information relevant for European Council and Council decision-making is handled and made accessible. This initiative is known as CODE-MAP (Council Decision making process). Although the initiative was set up to better serve delegations and the GSC itself, the development of its different components may ultimately also be of benefit to the public register.

For instance, the development of a Council document repository (CARS) and Extranet-L, two segments within CODE-MAP, will provide optimised search facilities (per meeting, per working party, per legislative file, etc.), not only for delegations and the GSC itself, but logically subsequently also for the users of the public register.

The Council document repository is already in use, and full deployment and activation of Extranet-L are planned for Q4/2014. Discussions on extending the Public register search functions in line with these developments are ongoing.

### **Promote better drafting**

- On a regular basis, the SGC organises a series of trainings with the aim to improve the quality of drafting of its officials:
  - Clear Drafting (Good practices for clear drafting)
  - Seminar on quality of legislation (aimed at helping to change the legislative culture)
  - Better drafting, better regulation (How to amend a Legal Act)
  - Better drafting, better regulation (How to revise a Legal Act)
  
- In this respect, the following texts exist and are available to GSC staff:
  - Interinstitutional agreement of 22 December 1998 on common guidelines for the quality of drafting of Community Legislation
  - Joint practical Guide of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission for persons involved in the drafting of legislation within the Community institutions <sup>1</sup>
  - "Clear drafting in a multilingual context" ("Be simple", "Say what you mean", "Beware of ambiguity", etc.)

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<sup>1</sup> Recently revised by a joint group, consisting of lawyer linguists and legal advisers and signed in July by the Directors-General of the three institutions.

- "Guide for the drafting of documents" (General rules for drafting documents)
- "Interinstitutional Style Guide 2011" (Reference tool for written works for all European Union institutions, bodies and organisations).

4. As regards other possible measures, delegations will receive the full update on the GSC online redesign in the December meeting of the Working Party, by the Chair.

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