

A COUNCIL OF EUROPE TREATY ON TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No.25), also known as the Tromsø Convention, is the *only legally binding international treaty* which guarantees a general *right* to access on request State-held information.

MAIN PRINCIPLES



Disclosure of information is the **rule**, confidentiality is the **exception**



Legal **certainty** and **fairness** in processing access requests



Independent, **rapid**, **affordable** review of access denials



Proactive publication of information by public authorities

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The Convention's standards enable:

- ☑ Citizens to seek information on how decisions affecting them are made, journalists to investigate matters of public interest, civil societies and NGOs to hold governments accountable and businesses to seek transparency on procurement decision-making; and
- ☑ Public authorities themselves to earn people's trust and strengthen their legitimacy.

The Convention helps governments implement balanced solutions. It allows for keeping certain information confidential, but it requires that the interest in confidentiality be weighed against the public interest in disclosure.



The Convention is increasingly being seen as **the transparency benchmark** across numerous Council of Europe member States.

WHY RATIFY THE CONVENTION ?

- To show a meaningful and tangible commitment to **good governance** and the **fight against corruption**.
- To counter risks of national political changes eroding **democratic standards** on transparency established in national legislation.
- To uphold the Convention's standards at the **international level** by showing wide acceptance of the Convention by the Council of Europe member States.
- To learn from exchanging **experience and practice** amongst State Parties and to contribute to each other's progression.
- To **further develop** the Convention's standards and its interpretation by sharing insights into national legal traditions and practice.
- To strengthen the domestic courts and oversight bodies' practice by providing them with an additional layer of **international guidance**.
- To support multilateral **international co-operation**.

MONITORING

The Convention has two monitoring bodies. These work together to ensure that the Convention is implemented effectively across all Parties.

The Access Info Group (AIG)

A panel of independent experts that evaluates how Parties implement the Convention.

The Consultation of the Parties

Composed of representatives of the Parties which addresses recommendations to the Parties based on the AIG's evaluation.



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