Frequently asked questions

Here you find answers to the most important questions.

1. What can I find in EUR-Lex?

The database covers many types of texts produced mostly by the institutions of the European Union, but also by Member States, EFTA, etc. The content is divided into sectors: 1 – Treaties, 2 – International agreements, 3 – Legislation, 4 – Complementary legislation, 5 – Preparatory acts, 6 – Case-law, 7 – National transposition measures, 8 – References to national case-law concerning EU law, 9 – Parliamentary questions, 0 – Consolidated acts, C – Other documents published in the Official Journal C series, E – EFTA documents.

For a detailed overview go to: Types of documents in EUR-Lex.

Legislative procedures are also part of the EUR-Lex database. Follow the life cycle of a particular legislative proposal from the moment it is launched until it becomes law. You can also view the documents involved, details about the stage of the procedure, the decisions by each institution, the departments responsible, etc.

2. How often is EUR-Lex updated?

EUR-Lex is updated daily.

The electronic version of the Official Journal is uploaded in PDF, together with its signature on the day of its publication. Contents are then processed for their individual inclusion in the database which involves detailed legal and bibliographic analysis. Even though individual documents can be loaded the very same day of publication accompanied with a limited number of analytical data (title and publication reference), the complete set of analytical data is loaded within three working days. This explains why there is a short time lapse between the appearance of the Official Journal itself and the subsequent availability of the individual acts for searching.

The frequency of updates of other documents varies because they come from different sources.
3. What are the series, subseries and special editions of the Official Journal?

The **Official Journal of the European Union (OJ)** is the main source of EUR-Lex content. It appears in the official EU languages. There are 2 series:
- **L – Legislation**
- **C - Information and notices** (C stands for French 'communications').

Within these series, there are 3 subseries:
- **A** - an OJ that is an annex to another OJ
- **I** – a one-off (isolated) OJ
- **M** - a special edition in Maltese, or an edition that is part of a backlog in a given language.

**Find out more about OJ L and C series**
An OJ number comprises:
- the letter denoting the series – L or C
- followed by up to 3 digits
- in some cases, followed by the letter denoting the subseries.

See the table below.

### SERIES L

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERIES L</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>L</strong> (Legislation) (i.e. OJ L 067)</td>
<td>Contains EU legislation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subseries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subseries</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LI</strong> (Isolated) (i.e. OJ L 011I)</td>
<td>A subseries introduced to make the planning and numbering of OJ more flexible. First used on 16 January 2016 (L 011I).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LM</strong> (i.e. OJ L 118M)</td>
<td>The M subseries has so far been used only to publish the backlog of Maltese-language material as, by derogation, not all acts were published in Maltese initially, after Malta joined the EU in 2004.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SERIES C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERIES C</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> (Information and notices) (i.e. OJ C 100)</td>
<td>Other official documents from the EU institutions, bodies and agencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subseries**
### CA (Annex) (i.e. OJ C 019A)
Contains vacancy notices and calls for expressions of interest. Can be published in one, several or all official languages.

### CI (Isolated) (i.e. OJ C 015I)
A subseries introduced to make the planning and numbering of OJ more flexible. First used on 16 January 2016 (C 015I).

### Historical series
- **A** and **P** - for legislative acts published before 1967.

#### HISTORICAL SERIES A AND P

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (1952-1958) (i.e. OJ A 038)</td>
<td><strong>A</strong>' stands for French 'antérieur', i.e. <em>before</em> the European Communities were set up. It covers legislative acts dating from 1952 to April 1958.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P (1958 - 1967) (i.e. OJ P 050)</td>
<td><strong>P</strong>' stands for French 'postérieur', i.e. <em>after</em> the European Communities were set up. It covers legislative acts dating from May 1958 to 1967.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Subseries

**CE (Electronic) (i.e. OJ C 296E)**
For electronic versions only. Published between 31 August 1999 and 31 March 2014, originally at the Commission's request, for COM documents. Later, the subseries was also used by:
- the Council - to publish common positions
- the European Parliament - for various document types (minutes of plenary sittings, adopted texts, written questions).

Documents which would once have been published in this subseries are now part of the C series.

### SPECIAL EDITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| There is also a **Special edition**. This contains all the translated secondary legislation adopted before a country joins the EU, which is thus in force on the date of its accession. The process of translating and publishing acts starts before accession and is usually completed shortly after.

Special editions comprise 20 chapters following the Directory of EU legislation in force. Each contains one or
4. What is consolidation? What legal acts does it include?

Consolidation consists of the integration in a legal act of its successive amendments and corrigenda. Several legal texts initially and officially published in different issues of the *Official Journal of the European Union* are thus combined as a 'consolidated family' in one easy-to-read document in which you can find the current status of the EU law.

If any corrigendum is published after the last amending act was incorporated, we will consolidate it immediately, unless it provides only a minor change. In the last case it will be included into the next consolidation.

The Publications Office consolidates EU regulations, directives and decisions. However, we do not consolidate legal acts which will be in force for only a short time. Minor corrigenda in a few languages are included in consolidation with the next modifier.

Read more on consolidation.

5. What are COM, JOIN, SEC and SWD documents?

Documents with the identifier COM, JOIN, SWD or SEC are preparatory acts (sector 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>TYPE OF DOCUMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>EC*</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td><strong>COM</strong> : Proposals and other acts adopted in the framework of a legislative procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td><strong>COM</strong> : Other COM documents: communications, recommendations, reports, white papers, green papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC and HR*</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td><strong>JOIN</strong> : Joint proposals, communications, reports, white papers and green papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EC or EC and HR  |  SC  |  SWD: Staff and joint staff working documents (impact assessments, summaries of impact assessments, staff working papers). Staff working documents had the identifier SEC prior to 2012 (now used only for internal documents of the European Commission, which are not published on EUR-Lex). SWD documents are published in one language, apart from the summaries of impact assessments, which are published in all the official languages of the EU.

*EC: European Commission, HR: High Representative

JOIN and SWD document identifiers were introduced in January 2012 by the Secretariat General of the Commission. Preparatory acts can be found via the advanced search or by clicking on EU law and related documents in the menu and then selecting Preparatory acts. To learn more about document types and their identifiers, see Types of documents in EUR-Lex.

6. Are documents available in all the official languages of the European Union?

The linguistic coverage is greater for the four official languages of the founding Member States, that is Dutch, French, German and Italian. For the other languages you will find translations of the legislation in force at the time of the accession of the country in question and the texts adopted after this date. Some of the texts, particularly the oldest, are therefore not available in the languages that were added during the later accessions: English and Danish; Greek; Spanish and Portuguese; Finnish and Swedish; Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Slovak and Slovene; Bulgarian and Romanian and, more recently, Croatian.

7. Which EU documents can I find in Irish?
Although Irish (GA) has been an official EU language since 1 January 2007, the only legal acts currently available in Irish are:

- **key legislation** adopted jointly by the European Parliament and the Council,
- some **treaties**.

In general, there is no complete edition of an Official Journal in Irish.

**Why?**

Irish has been temporarily exempted from the institutions' language requirements (**Regulation No 1**), for practical reasons.

This exemption does not apply to the following joint Parliament/Council acts:

- **regulations** adopted since 1 January 2007
- **directives** adopted since 1 January 2017.

**Future arrangements**

The current exemption is **reviewed every 5 years**. It is now in force at least until the end of 2021.

At the same time, the exemption will be gradually reduced – see the timetable annexed to **Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2015/2264**.


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**8. CELEX number of EUR-Lex documents**

**What is a CELEX number?**

The CELEX number is a **unique identifier** for every document in EUR-Lex – regardless of language.

Learning how to read a CELEX number will help you **search faster** and **understand how documents are related**.

It has **4 parts**:
Exceptions: Some documents, such as treaty protocols or declarations have a slightly different CELEX structure. For more information, see how CELEX numbers are composed (available in English only, last updated 04/2017).

**Sector**

Documents on EUR-Lex are classified into 12 sectors.

**Sectors**

1. Treaties
2. International agreements
3. Legislation
4. Complementary legislation
5. Preparatory acts
6. Case-law
7. National transposition measures
8. References to national case-law concerning EU law
9. Parliamentary questions
0. Consolidated acts
C. Other documents published in the Official Journal C series
E. EFTA documents
Document type

Each document type has a descriptor. Descriptors can have one or two letters. 
Full list of descriptors

Some common descriptors:

**Sector 3 - Legislation**
L for Directives
R for Regulations
D for Decisions

**Sector 6 - Case-law**
CJ for Judgments by Court of Justice
CC for Opinions of the advocate-general
CO for Orders of the Court of Justice.

**Sector 5 - Preparatory documents**
PC for Legislative proposals by the Commission (COM documents), etc.
DC for other COM documents (green and white papers, communications, reports...)
SC for SWD documents (staff working documents, impact assessments...)
JC for JOIN documents (adopted jointly by the Commission and the High Representative)

Examples

**Treaties (sector 1)**
There are 3 digits after the descriptor. They indicate the number of an article of Treaty.
For example:
11957E086 is the number for Article 86 of the EEC treaty (1957).

**Consolidated versions of treaties**

These are indicated by year of consolidation, e.g.
Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union:
12016E – table of contents, consolidated version 2016
12016E/TXT – consolidated version 2016
12016E003 – Article 3, consolidated version 2016

**International agreements (sector 2)**

These are identified by publication date.
So the international agreement No. 22006A1230(03) was published in the Official Journal on 30 December 2006.
If several agreements are published on the same day, only the number in brackets changes: e.g. 22006A1230 (01)

**Case-law (sector 6)**

Number is based on the case number issued by the Court of Justice.
The year is the year in which the case entered the Court’s register.
For example:
6 2004 TJ0 201
This is the judgment in the 201st case entered in the register in 2004.
The case number is T-201/04.

**Corrigenda**

Corrigenda have the same number as the document they are amending, with R(xx) added at the end (xx being the number of the corrigendum).
For example:
32009L0164R( 01 ) is the first corrigendum to Directive 32009L0164.
A corrigendum may relate to one or more language versions – or even all of them.

**Consolidated acts (sector 0)**

Consolidated acts have the same number as the basic act – but its sector is ‘0’ instead of ‘3’.
It is followed by the date of application of the last amendment to the act (see our FAQ on consolidation). For example: 02009L0156- 20161018.
9. What is ECLI?

The **European Case Law Identifier** is a 5-part identifier for a legal document, designed to make European case law databases more usable.

**Form of the ECLI**
The identifier consists of 5 components, in the following order and each separated by a colon:

1. Abbreviation "ECLI"
2. Country code (2 characters)
3. Court code (1-7 characters)
4. Year of the decision (4 digits)
5. Unique identifying number (max. 25 characters, dots allowed)

More on the ECLI components.

**Examples (EU Court of Justice)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECLI</th>
<th>DOCUMENT IT IDENTIFIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECLI:EU:C:1998:27</td>
<td>27th decision by the Court of Justice in 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECLI:EU:F:2010:80</td>
<td>80th decision by the Civil Service Tribunal in 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECLI:EU:T:2012:426</td>
<td>426th decision by the General Court in 2012.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 5th part of the Court's ECLI is a sequential number, restarted every year and specific for each court (Court of Justice, General Court, Civil Service Tribunal). It is not the **CELEX number**.

**Background**
In 2011 the EU Council asked EU member countries to introduce the ECLI. The Commission is also setting up a common search interface for ECLI and a minimum set of metadata as part of its [e-Justice portal](#).

10. What is ELI?

The **European Legislation Identifier (ELI)**:
- provides access to EU and national law;
- enables the sharing of information about EU and national law.

ELIs are assigned to a wide range of legislation published in the Official Journal L series (regulations, directives, decisions) and to consolidated acts. They appear in document notices under the heading 'Title and Reference'. Users can search among documents that have an ELI identifier or carry out a
search by using the ELI URI. 
The simplest type of ELIs have the following structure:
http://data.europa.eu/eli/{typeOfDocument}/{yearOfAdoption}/{numberOfDocument}/oj

There are many more types, e.g. for consolidation.

**Examples**
- The ELI of [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2009/496](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2009/496) provides access to the most recent consolidated version of this act, if it exists.

For more information, see the [ELI register pages](#).

11. Can I reuse the entire contents of the EUR-Lex database? How?

Yes, you can re-use EUR-Lex data, free of charge, subject to [copyright conditions](#).

There are different ways to search for content and retrieve it.

**Webservices**

If you are a registered user, you can search EUR-Lex databases **directly** using Webservices. The search options are similar to those in 'expert search'. They supply data in XML format.

For a simpler way to stay up-to-date, use [RSS feeds – predefined or customised](#).

More on [how to use webservices](#).

**Direct access to the database**

To process data in a more sophisticated way, you can request:

1. **Notifications** via database **RSS feeds** – to notify you of every single change.

   😕 These feeds may return **very large numbers** of notifications (millions a day).

2. **Direct access** to your selection of content and metadata in the database, via the REST interface.

Are you interested in direct access? Then [contact us](#) and we can send you additional documentation.

 الكم **Note that given its complexity, you will need to involve experts.**

**Bulk download of the OJ**

Official Journals (from 2004 onward) in XML format are available for bulk download via the [EU Open Data Portal](#).
It can be downloaded by language and by year.

12. How do I enable JavaScript?

You can enable JavaScript in your browser's Settings or Options menu. For detailed instructions on how to do this, use your browser's Help function.

13. How to create stable links to documents and notices?

You can create links to EUR-Lex, as long as you respect its copyright notice. To ensure these links are stable, follow the guidelines below.

Language versions

EUR-Lex is available in 24 languages.
To link to a page in a specific language version, define this language by changing, in the link, the code after locale=.
The codes are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>bg</td>
<td>BUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>hr</td>
<td>HRV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>cs</td>
<td>CES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>da</td>
<td>DAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>nl</td>
<td>NLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>en</td>
<td>ENG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian</td>
<td>et</td>
<td>EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>FIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>fr</td>
<td>FRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>DEU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>el</td>
<td>ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>hu</td>
<td>HUN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>ga</td>
<td>GLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>ITA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Official Journals (OJs)

Direct access to the OJ (overview)
Direct access in English: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/oj/direct-access.html?locale=en

OJs by year – chronological list
Official Journals published for example in 2013:

OJs by month - chronological list

Table of contents of an OJ
Guidelines
Formatting
- year: 4 digits (yyyy)
- OJ number: 3 digits (xxx)
- OJ series with a capital letter, e.g. L or C

Examples:
1. Table of contents of OJ C 326/2015:
   EUR-Lex view (includes navigation elements):
   HTML view (without EUR-Lex navigation elements):
   XML view of the notice:
2. Table of contents of an OJ series C:
   EUR-Lex view (includes navigation elements):
   HTML view (without EUR-Lex navigation elements):
   XML view of the notice:

Documents: by OJ publication reference, by CELEX number or by other types of identifiers

Guidelines
Formatting
- year: 4 digits (yyyy)
- OJ number: 3 digits (xxx)
- OJ series with a capital letter, e.g. L or C
Link to specific tabs (wherever it exists) in the documents view
- Text: TXT
- Document information: ALL
- Procedure: HIS
- Internal procedures: PIN
- National transposition: NIM
- Summary of legislation: LSU
- Summary: SUM
Language version, see table at the start of this FAQ

Examples:
   EUR-Lex view (includes navigation elements):
   PDF view:
   HTML view (without EUR-Lex navigation elements):
   XML view of the notice of the act:
2. By CELEX number
   To find out how to construct a CELEX number, see: More about CELEX numbers.
   Note: for recently published documents, it can take up to two days before a CELEX number is available.
   EUR-Lex view (includes navigation elements):
3. Other types of identifiers

The links of some legal documents or procedures are based on identifiers that, unlike the CELEX number assigned by the Publications Office, are attributed by the originating institution. As a result, while it is always possible to build a pattern for their links, the sequence and the logic of the reference numbers cannot be predicted in advance. Indicative cases are:

- **COM documents**
  Upon their publication, the links of the preparatory acts (COM/JOIN documents) are based on the number of the act itself. In the days following their publication, a CELEX identifier is assigned but these documents will also remain accessible with the links based on the number of the act.
  Example: COM/2017/043 final:

- **Documents from the Council**
  The link is based on the number assigned by the Council and it can differ according to the type of document
  - Council documents sent for signature by the European Parliament and the Council
    Example: PE 45 2016 REV 1- 2016/0197 (OLP):
  - Council documents sent during the life cycle of the procedure: a voting result in this example
    Example: ST 15454 2016 INIT - 2016/0197 (OLP):

4. Interinstitutional procedure

The interinstitutional procedure’s links are built on the basis of the reference of the procedure (Year and number), after the language code.
Example: Procedure 2015_906:

5. Documents related to an internal procedure

Examples: Commission implementing Decision:
Commission implementing Regulation:

6. External links

To access certain documents, you can find links to other EU websites, for which EUR-Lex has no control.

7. By the ECLI identifier

The European Case Law Identifier is a 5-part identifier for case-law, designed to ease access to judicial decisions. It has been developed ‘to
facilitate the correct and unequivocal citation of judgments from European and national courts. Read more about how to construct an ECLI identifier.

**How to create an ECLI link to EUR-Lex?**
The URL syntax is similar to other links to EUR-Lex. EUR-Lex view, includes navigation elements:

**HTML view, without navigation elements:**

**XML of the notice:**

8. By the ELI identifier

The [European Legislation Identifier](http://data.europa.eu/eli) is a system to make legislation available online in a standardised format, so that it can be accessed, exchanged and reused across borders. It can be used for EU as well as for national legislation. [Read more about ELI](http://data.europa.eu/eli).

**How to create an ELI link to EUR-Lex?**
The basic URI template is the following:
http://data.europa.eu/eli/{typedoc}/{year}/{naturalnumber}/oj

**Types of documents {typedoc}:**
- Directives: dir or dir_impl or dir_del
- Regulations: reg or reg_impl or reg_del
- Decisions: typedoc either dec or dec_impl or dec_del

**Examples:**
http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2009/496 (provides access to the most recent consolidated version of this act, if it exists)

Please note that the despite the data.europa.eu domain, the returned page will be a EUR-Lex document or search result.
ELI offers many more templates, including the option to create links to lists of documents which meet selected criteria.
[Detailed information on URIs of EU legislation using ELI](http://data.europa.eu/eli).

**Language version, see table at the start of this FAQ.**

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### 14. How to use the webservice?

**Registration**

How to register for a webservice:

1. Click **Webservice registration** in the right menu.
2. Click **Register** if you don't already have an EU Login account. Once you have registered an account, click **Sign in**. Read [more on how to register on EUR-Lex](http://data.europa.eu/eli).
3. Click **Register** and fill out the registration form *(see table below)*.
4. Click **Save** to send us the form.
5. If your form checks out, we will send you an e-mail specifying your access rights.

**Information to put in the form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used data</th>
<th>Data you want to get from the webservice, for further use.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final use of data</td>
<td>What you intend to do with the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling application</td>
<td>Name of the application you intend to use to query EUR-Lex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of use</td>
<td>Day of the week when you will use the webservice. One checkboxes per day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call frequency</td>
<td>Number of calls per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Additional comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Username</td>
<td>Your user name (prefilled - in &quot;read-only&quot; mode).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>Your first name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last name</td>
<td>Your last name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number</td>
<td>Your phone number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>Your email address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Name of your organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Address of your organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcode (ZIP code)</td>
<td>Postcode (ZIP code) of your organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Country where your organisation is located</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number</td>
<td>Phone number of your organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I accept the terms of usage</td>
<td>Your acceptance of the terms of use for webservice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Using the webservice**

You can use your webservice as soon as we send you the email granting you access:

1. Click **Webservice registration** in the right menu.
2. The information you will see includes a [link](#) to the WSDL of the webservice - you will need to provide the URL of the WSDL to the application you are using to query EUR-Lex.
3. Call the webservice, using the username and password we emailed to you. You need to specify:
   - your query, written as an expert query. It can contain a SELECT clause, to choose the metadata to be displayed, and an ORDER BY clause, to define the sorting order. You can also use the webservice template.
   - the language
   - the page number
   - the number of results per page
4. The results list will contain the metadata you selected, for each document. If you did not select any metadata here, the display profile defined in your search preferences is used.

**Get the webservice template**

If you are approved to use the webservice, you can get a special XML template to use for every query you make:
1. Sign in and run a search (quick, advanced or expert).
2. Click the webservice template icon at the top of the search results.
3. A new window will open with the query written in a structured way and instructions on how to use it in your webservice call. You can copy this template and use it for all subsequent webservice calls.

**Change your webservice limits**

The maximum daily number of calls to the webservice is limited. To change these limits, go to the webservice page and click the link to change the limits. We will inform you by email about your new limits (if any).

**Unsubscribe**

To unsubscribe from webservices, go to the webservice page and click the link to unsubscribe. Give your reasons for doing so, and then click Unsubscribe. Your webservice access will be revoked and your password deactivated.

**Some technical information about webservices (in English only)**

2. Data Extraction using Web Services
3. Web Services query metadata

15. Numbering of acts
Numbering

The Publications Office provides reference numbers for acts. Each number has three parts, in this order: (domain) year/number. 

For example, Regulation (EU) 2016/1627

**Domain abbreviation in brackets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABBREVIATION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(EU)</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Euratom)</td>
<td>European Atomic Energy Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(EU, Euratom)</td>
<td>European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CFSP)</td>
<td>common foreign and security policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- year of publication, 4 digits,
- a sequential number, assigned from a single series, regardless of the domain or the type of act, comprised of as many digits as necessary.

**Until 1 January 2015**, each act had a sequential number assigned from one of many series. The order of the different parts also varied according to the type of act. The numbering system - still used to refer to these acts - has changed over time, as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regolutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952 to 31 December</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>Regulation No 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 January 1963 to</td>
<td>A reference to the relevant treaty(ies) and the year are added to the number</td>
<td>Regulation No 1009/67/EEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 December 1967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 1 January 1968</td>
<td>Position of the treaty reference changes, abbreviation appears in brackets</td>
<td>Regulation (EEC) No 1470/68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Directives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015</th>
<th>Year is followed by the sequential number and the abbreviation</th>
<th>Council Directive 2010/24/EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1 January 1992 to 31 December 2014</td>
<td>Numbers assigned by the General Secretariat of the Council following adoption</td>
<td>Directive 2010/75/EU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decisions published under OJ L, section I (Legislative acts)</th>
<th>Sequential number is followed by the year and the abbreviation</th>
<th>Decision No 477/2010/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions published under OJ L, section II (Non-Legislative acts)</td>
<td>The year is followed by the sequential number and the abbreviation</td>
<td>Council Decision 2010/294/EU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dual numbering

Some acts have two numbers:
- a number assigned by the Publications Office, e.g. (EU) 2015/299, and
- a number assigned by the author, e.g. ECB/2015/5, ATALANTA/4/2015.

For European Central Bank acts and instruments, as well as Political and Security Committee decisions, the number assigned by the author appears in brackets at the end of the title:
- Decision (EU) 2015/299 of the European Central Bank…(ECB/2015/5)
- Political and Security Committee Decision (CFSP) 2015/711…(ATALANTA/4/2015)

For some acts, the number assigned by the Publications Office does not include
For some acts, the number assigned by the Publications Office does not include a domain and appears in square brackets after the title. These include:

- **decisions** of the various **councils** and **committees** created by international agreements
- acts relating to the **European Economic Area (EEA)**
- acts relating to the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)**
- regulations of the **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**

Examples

- Decision No 1/2015 of the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors … [2015/1909]
- Decision of the EEA Joint Committee No 159/2014 … [2015/94]
- EFTA Surveillance Authority Decision No 30/15/COL … [2015/1813]
- Regulation No 78 of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (UNECE) … [2015/145]

### BEFORE 1 JANUARY 2015

Acts relating to the **European Economic Area (EEA)** or to the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** and regulations of the **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE)** only had a number assigned by the author.

### Unnumbered acts and other texts

Some acts and other texts are not numbered, such as:

- international agreements attached to a decision
- information on the date of entry into force of an international agreement (this is the only information published in the L series)
- corrigenda.

### 16. What is a procedure?

EU legislation is adopted through a range of decision-making procedures, depending on the policy area concerned and the institutions and bodies involved. There are 2 procedure types:

- **interinstitutional**
- **internal**.

You can access them using the dedicated tab procedures tabs through a document on EUR-Lex.
Interinstitutional procedure

This follows the major stages of the decision-making process (legislative and non-legislative). It sets out the work of the various institutions involved. It starts with the adoption of a Commission initiative (proposal for an act or communication) and ends when the legal act is adopted or if the proposal is withdrawn.

Between the events which launch and close the procedure (‘adoption by the Commission’ and ‘signature’ or ‘withdrawal by Commission’) there is a series of events that are identified by and vary depending on the type of procedure the act has gone through.

For the interinstitutional procedure, the Commission’s initiating document has a ‘COM’ reference (e.g. COM(2016)056). Any related working documents have the reference ‘SWD’ or ‘SEC’.

Internal procedure

This procedure follows the major stages of the internal decision-making process in an institution and sets out the work and contributions of the different sub-entities involved.

It usually begins with the drafting of an act and ends when the act is adopted or rejected.

The outcome of the internal procedure can be a document that is part of an interinstitutional procedure (e.g. a Commission proposal).

Between the beginning of the internal procedure and the adoption of the relevant act by the institution, there are a number of steps which differ depending on the institution and its rules of procedure.

Internal procedures have only been uploaded to EUR-Lex since July 2016. Initiating documents in Commission internal procedures have an ‘Ares’ reference and the final act adopted has either a ‘C’ reference (for an ‘autonomous act’) or a ‘COM’ reference (for a Commission proposal).

How can I identify a procedure?

Codes are used to identify the type of interinstitutional procedures, as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVC</td>
<td>Assent procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APP</td>
<td>Special legislative procedure (European Parliament consent required)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For example, for legislative procedures (where the European Parliament and Council are legislators), the procedure is identified by a code and an interinstitutional number, e.g. 2016/0351/COD or 2015/0309/CNS.

Any type of interinstitutional procedure is made up of a series of events. The procedure sets out the sequence of those events and the role of each institution involved in the decision-making process.

For each event, EUR-Lex shows:
- the date
- reference numbers of documents linked to the event
- the responsible departments (the directorate-general or the parliamentary committee) or individuals (commissioner, rapporteur)
- any additional information.

In most cases, EUR-Lex links to documents relating to the event (either on EUR Lex or on another public registry) and, if applicable, to the corresponding Official Journal.

You can also view all the events on a timeline located at the top of the interinstitutional procedure.

Internal procedures do not yet have a specific identifier. However, they also contain a series of events leading to the adoption of the internal final document and the role of competent bodies in the decision-making process.

How can I find a procedure?

Interinstitutional procedures
You can access interinstitutional procedures in 2 ways:
- using the advanced search form on EUR-Lex, browsing through the 'Legislative procedures' collection and searching by the procedure reference number, keywords in the title, or an event in the life cycle of the procedure.
- through a document on EUR-Lex – just click on the ‘Procedure’ tab (for example, here is the procedure tab for Directive 2013/37).

You can also follow the progress of a specific interinstitutional procedure by setting up an RSS feed – just click 'Follow this procedure'. You’ll be notified every time a new event is added to that particular procedure.

Internal procedures
You can access internal procedures through any related documents that are part of the procedure (e.g. draft and final delegated acts, draft and final implementing acts, roadmaps, impact assessments, or opinions on impact assessment). Internal procedures do not have an identifying code so you cannot search for them by number – but can still access them easily.

From the advanced search form, browse through the collection 'Preparatory acts' and enter any criteria in the sections ‘Text search’, ‘Document reference’ ('Other' button under 'Type') or ‘Author of the document’. You should find one or more documents.

In the related bibliographic page, you will find an ‘Internal Procedure’ tab where you can follow the progress of the internal decision-making process (for example, [here is the internal procedure](#) for a draft delegated directive of the Commission). Other document types are gradually being added to internal procedures.