Public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents

2000/0032(COD) - 04/03/2004 - Implementing legislative act

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Decision of the European Central Bank ECB/2004/3 on public access to European Central Bank documents. CONTENT : This Decision defines the conditions and limits according to which the ECB shall give public access to ECB documents and to promote good administrative practice on public access to such documents. The decision affirms the right of access for EU citizens to ECB documents subject to the conditions and limits defined in this Decision. The Decision safeguards the confidentiality of certain matters specific to the performance of the ECB's tasks. In order to ensure the effectiveness of its decision-making process, including its internal consultations and preparations, the proceedings of the meetings of the ECB's decision-making bodies are confidential, unless the relevant body decides to make the outcome of its deliberations public. Certain public and private interests are also protected by way of exceptions. Furthermore, the ECB will protect the integrity of euro banknotes as a means of payment including the security features against counterfeiting, the technical production specifications, the physical security of stocks and the transportation of euro banknotes. The exceptions will only apply for the period during which protection is justified on the basis of the content of the document. The exceptions may apply for a maximum period of 30 years unless specifically provided otherwise by the ECB's Governing Council. In the case of documents covered by the exceptions relating to privacy or commercial interests, the exceptions may continue to apply after this period. With regard to the National Central Banks, when NCBs handle requests for ECB documents that are in their possession, they will consult the ECB in order to ensure the full application of this Decision unless it is clear whether or not the document may be disclosed. In order to bring about greater openness, the ECB will grant access not only to documents drawn up by it, but also to documents received by it while at the same time preserving the right for the third parties concerned to express their positions with regard to access to documents originating from those parties. The ECB will apply a two-stage procedure, involving the Processing of initial applications and the processing of confirmatory applications This Decision repeals Decision ECB/1998/12. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 19/03/04.