# Public Access to Documents (Rule 122(7)) – Annual report for the years 2016-2018

2019/2198(INI) - 10/02/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 676 votes to 14, with 1 abstention, a resolution on public access to documents (Rule 122(7) of the Rules of Procedure) - Annual Reports 2016 to 2018.

***Broader transparency***

Firmly resolved to continue its efforts to bring the EU closer to its citizens and its decision-making process, Parliament stressed that transparency and accountability are of crucial importance to maintain citizens' trust in the EU's political, legislative and administrative processes. It reiterated the importance of transparency of the legislative process for citizens, as it is an important way of actively involving citizens in the legislative process.

Members regretted that the Commission and the Council insist on in camera meetings without proper justification. They also deplored the Commission's recurrent practice of providing Parliament with only a very limited amount of information on the implementation of EU legislation. The institutions were invited to respect the principle of sincere cooperation and to proactively publish this information.

The resolution also called for:

- documents sent by the Commission to Member States in the framework of infringement procedures to be accessible to the public, as with the replies to them;

- the institutions continue their discussions on the establishment of a common database and user-friendly access to the state of play of legislative files;

- the transparency of comitology procedures and the accessibility of the comitology register to be enhanced;

- the current method for finding information about the voting patterns of Members of the European Parliament to be improved.

Parliament welcomed the successful conclusion of negotiations on the Commission's proposal for an inter-institutional agreement on a mandatory transparency register and urged the three institutions to swiftly implement it.

***Access to documents***

Recalling that the right of public access to the institutions' documents is a fundamental right enshrined in the Charter and the Treaties, Parliament stressed that a fair balance had to be struck between the need for transparency, the need to protect personal data and the need to allow decisions to be taken with a degree of confidentiality where necessary.

Any exceptions to public access to EU documents or information should be analysed on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration that access to such documents is the rule, while exceptions from the rule are matters of strict interpretation.

Members called on all institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to develop a common approach to access to documentation, including the procedure for trialogue materials, and to explore and develop further measures to achieve maximum transparency on an ongoing basis.

Parliament called on all parties concerned to continue work on the revision of Regulation (EC) No 1049 /2001 (blocked since 2012) to adapt the provisions of the regulation to the Lisbon Treaty and to ensure that the scope extends to all EU institutions, bodies and agencies.