Resolution on the implemention of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001: public access to documents of the Parliament, the Council and the Commission

2002/2522(RSP) - 14/03/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the implementation of Regulation 1049/2001/EC, and welcomed the establishment of the interinstitutional committee. It expected it to start work on defining the agenda and the guidelines for future cooperation between the institutions on access to documents. Whilst the Commission's move to grant direct access to the public in codecision comitology procedures is welcomed, Parliament notes that the internal rules of the Commission are not consistent with the rights of citizens to direct access pursuant to Regulation 1049/2001. It regrets that the Commission continues to withhold the entire infringement procedure from public scrutiny. Data protection rules are primarily concerned with the protection of private and family life, and not for restricting the information available to citizens about public activities. Concern was expressed at the Council decision to declare the agendas of meetings of the "Senior Level Group" and the "EU-US Task force" confidential in response to opposition by the US authorities on the grounds that the documents are "government-to-government" documents. The Council has failed to comply with Article 4(4) and 4(6) of the Regulation. The Commission is requested to ensure compatibility of public archives with the Regulation, as well as the compatibility of existing rules on access to documents. With regard to measures to inform citizens, Parliament wanted Europe Direct to be converted into an interinstitutional "help-desk" service providing for assistance to citizens seeking information on the EU. On the registers which are to be operational by 03/06/02, these must be established on the basis of common standards designed to provide user-friendly access for citizens, particularly in relation to legislative activities. On Council meetings, there is a duty to record all documents that have been examined as part of the legislative process, including the positions taken by the representatives of national delegations acting in their capacity as members of the Council, and to give direct access to such documents.