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**Law Library  
Guide to  
Information Sources  
on the  
European Union  
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# Guide to Information Sources on the European Union

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# 1 The European Union

The European Union (EU) was set up and developed in the post-war period (since 1945). Its main purposes are:

- fostering democracy and political union in place of war,
- economic union and the removal of trade barriers
- inter-governmental co-operation in foreign and security policy
- co-operation in justice and home affairs

## 1.1 History of the EU

Following the Schumann declaration (1950) the EEC or Common Market of six nations was established by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Since this time, the number of member countries has grown to twenty-seven, and successive treaties have gradually strengthened the degree of co-operation between the member states. The European Union in its current form was established by the 1993 Maastricht Treaty.

### Main Events in the Formation of the EU

<b>Treaty of Rome</b>	1957	6 Nations: France; West Germany; Italy; Belgium; Netherlands; Luxembourg. Created Common Market/EEC
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Enlargement</b>	1973	UK, Eire, Denmark joined
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Enlargement</b>	1981	Greece joined
<b>Single European Act</b>	1986	Speeded up legislative decisions by allowing decision by weighted majority; prevented vetos protecting national interests. Increased powers of European Parliament. Launched single market programme; prepared ground for EMU
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Enlargement</b>	1986	Spain and Portugal joined
<b>Treaty on European Union – Single Market</b>	1992	Internal market set up Borders dismantled
<b>Treaty of Maastricht</b>	1993	EMU – European Monetary Union EPU – European Political Union
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Enlargement</b>	1995	Austria, Finland and Sweden joined
<b>Treaty of Amsterdam</b>	1997	Making EU more relevant Prepare for enlargement to the East (Maastricht 2)
<b>Treaty of Nice</b>	2001	Amends the Treaty on European Union
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Enlargement</b>	2004	Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia,

		Slovakia joined
<b>Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe</b>	2004	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Enlargement</b>	2007	Bulgaria and Rumania joined

## 1.2 EC Institutions

### Main Institutions of the EU

- Council of the EU (Council of Ministers)
- The European Commission
- The European Parliament

### Council of the EU (Council of Ministers)

This is the supreme decision making body of Europe. Member states are usually represented by foreign ministers or ministers who are responsible for the subject under discussion. Foreign ministers take turns to be president for 6-month terms; meetings are held in the country of the current president. It is assisted by a committee of permanent representatives and a general secretariat.

The Council of the EU adopts the main decisions on EU policies on the basis of proposals from the Commission. It is responsible for intergovernmental co-operation in foreign and security policy.

### The European Commission

The administrative and executive arm of the EC, responsible for proposing legislation, which it takes to the Council of the EU. It implements their decisions. The commission comprises (since 2005) of one commissioner from each member state, and 36 operational divisions. It ensures treaties are not violated by member states, and that legislation is implemented by them. Its sanction is the **European Court of Justice**. The **Court of First Instance** was set up in 1987 in order to relieve the workload of the Court of Justice. It has limited jurisdiction and its judgments can be taken on appeal to the Court of Justice.

### European Parliament

Until the signing of the Maastricht Treaty the European Parliament's powers were limited to debating proposed legislation, the budget and issues of immediate concern to the communities. After Maastricht it received authority to propose legislation itself. It may also dismiss the Commission and veto applications for entry.

### Court of Auditors

Monitors all EU financial activities. Audits the accounts of the EC and produces an annual report. Fifteen members appointed by the Council after European Parliament consultation.

### Committee of the Regions

Created in 1994 to act as a consultative body to give a local and regional view point to European legislation and policy. Two hundred and twenty-two members from elected local and regional councils. Influences the distribution of funds. The main documents produced are “opinions” which are issued as COR documents.

### The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is the oldest of the European Institutions, founded in 1949 to protect human rights and strengthen democracy throughout Europe. It also seeks to promote European cultural identity and is a key link between Eastern and Western Europe.

### Other Institutions:

Economic and Social Committee

European Coal & Steel Community

Euratom

European Investment Bank / European Central Bank

## **1.4 Sources of interest**

Please remember if accessing any for the links below that different versions (original and consolidated) of the full text are available.

### Treaties and Declarations

- The Shuman declaration of 9 May 1950, the full text of which is available at: [http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl_en.htm)
- Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/index.htm#founding>
- Treaties of Rome (1957).  
(Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community).  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/index.htm#founding>
- Treaty on European Union (Maastricht treaty) (1992) is available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/index.htm#founding>

## 2 EU Documentation

There are many sources of information within the EU, each with its own labelling and numbering systems. The following covers some of the main documentation categories.

### 2.1 Working papers (COM documents)

These are the working papers of the **European Commission** and appear in 3 forms

1. Pre-legislative proposals
2. Broad policy documents (may have “green paper” or “white paper” in the title.)
3. Implementation of policy reports

Only final versions are made public. They are identified by a number and the year of publication. Until 1998, the year was written in 2 digit form; after 1998 the year is given in full.

*Examples:*

*COM (97) 35 final*  
*COM (1999) 25 final.*

The Frenchay Library holds COM DOCs from 1991 to 2002 on microfiche (on Level 3). A list of the library holdings can be found on the catalogue by searching using “community documents” in the journals field. COM documents are also available from:

- EUR-Lex website (1999 - ) (Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/> )
- Official Journal C Series

### 2.2 Other document series

#### EP documents

These are the documents of the **European Parliament**. Each document is identified by a session number followed by a running number.

#### SEC documents

Internal documents of the **Secretary-General of the Commission** These documents are not generally publicly available but are sometimes referred to in other documents. Some are available from European Documentation Centres (EDC).

### CES documents

These documents contain the opinions of **The Economic and Social Committee** on Commission Proposals for legislation plus other matters considered by the Committee to warrant special attention. The numbering system includes the year in brackets as well as a running number.

#### *Example:*

*CES (91) 1115: Opinion on consumer protection and completion of the consumer market.*

### COR documents

Reports and opinions of the Committee of the Regions. With these, the running number comes first and the year second.

#### *Example:*

*COR239/96 Opinion on the CAP and eastward enlargement.*

### 3 EU Legislation

The EU follows the continental model of publishing all legislation in an official gazette, the **Official Journal of the European Communities L** series. European legislation is divided into primary and secondary legislation. Legislative documents are available from a number of sources:

- Official Journal L Series
- EUR-Lex database
- Westlaw database

#### 3.1 Primary legislation

Primary legislation consists of Treaty provisions that establish the legal framework of the Union and also set out the basic policies and operational procedures.

#### 3.2 Secondary Legislation

There are five main types of secondary legislation:

##### Regulations

Immediately legally binding on member states

##### Directives

Legally binding on member states by a certain date. Usually known by the subject matter, the name of the proposing commissioner or the number.

##### *Examples:*

*second banking directive*

*Vredeing directive on worker participation*

*98/207*

Implementation of directives in the UK is usually by Statutory Instrument although important directives may be enabled by statute, eg. Consumer Protection Act 1987, which followed the Product Liability Directive 85/374

UK implementation:

- N-Lex (Trial version since 2006): <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/n-lex/>
- Halsbury's Statutory Instruments (Law Search area, Level 5 348.025 HAL)
- Statutory Instruments in full text on Westlaw, and Lexis databases
- Government web site for SIs from 1987-

- Current Law Monthly Digest

Implementation by other member states:

- European Current Law Monthly Digest

#### Decisions

Legally binding on member states by a certain date, have specific not general application.

#### Recommendations and Opinions

These are non-binding views on policy which have been expressed by the Council or Commission on which no decision has yet been made. Found in the Official Journal L Series

### **3.3 The Legislative Procedure**

#### Proposed Legislation

Pre-legislative consultation documents take the form of COM DOCs (see above).

#### Consultation phase documentation

This phase allows the various interested bodies to study the final formal proposal and to respond. Consultation documents may be accessible via the relevant institutions web sites or Official Journal C series.

#### Adopted Legislation

This is the final phase of the process when the legislation is passed and becomes part of European law.

### **3.4 The Judicial Process**

European Court Reports (ECR) contain the official reports of the **European Court of Justice** since 1954 and the **Court of First Instance** since 1990.

Each case is given a running number within the year in which it is brought and this reference is used in any citation.

Example: *Case - 479/93 Francovich v Italian Republic [1995] ECR 1 -3843*

Court of First Instance cases have a similar numbering system but use the pre-fix T.

Common Market Law Reports and All England Law Reports also contain full reports of ECJ hearings. Summaries of recent cases appear in the Times and the Financial Times.

## 4 Information Sources

The easiest way to search for EU information is often to search by sector e.g. **Environment**, or **Economic and Social Affairs** as there are separate Commission directorates for each area, and the EU itself organises its information in this way.

The Internet has made EU research easier. There is much clearer access to EU official bodies, it is easier to find out where to look, and easier to access specific documents.

### 4.1 The Library Catalogue

Materials published before 1992 are catalogued under *European Community*.

Subject	Classmark
History, structure and development of the EC and EU	337.142
Legal aspects of the EU	341.242
Monetary union	332.45094

### 4.2 Printed Sources

#### 4.2.1 Official Journal of the European Communities (OJ)

The Official Journal is divided into 2 series. The **L series** covers legislation, while the **C series** covers information, notices and preparatory EU legislation. Both are available in the Law Search area on paper and on Level 3 on microfiche. Also available on the EUR-Lex web site and on Westlaw.

#### 4.2.2 Current Awareness publications

- **Bulletin of the European Union.** Contains the latest decisions by the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance. Also a subject search section and a section on documentation. Up to 2002 filed in the journals collection, Level 3. More recent editions available on the Europa web site.
- **The Publications Office Newsletter:** contains information on the most recent EU publications and other products with a concise overview of their policy context.  
Web version at: [http://publications.europa.eu/newsletter/index\\_en.htm](http://publications.europa.eu/newsletter/index_en.htm))
- **Butterworths EC Brief.** Filed in the Law collection, Level 5
- **The Week in Europe.** – now available electronically at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/press/the\\_week\\_in\\_europe/latest\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/press/the_week_in_europe/latest_en.htm))

### 4.2.3 Statistics on the EU

Statistics held in the Library can be found by searching the Library Catalogue using *statistics* and *European Union* as key words. Many are to be found in the Eurostat series in the Statistics Collection on Level 3.

The Europa web site statistics page is located at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

It has 200 links to main statistical and international organisations.

## 4.3 Electronic sources

### 4.3.1 Europa Web site

Main database of the EU available at: <http://europa.eu/>

Includes information on EU organisations and programmes, the Bulletin of the European Union, press releases etc. Useful sections include:

#### 4.3.1.1 EUR-Lex database

Covers:

- **Treaties:** All treaties, resolutions, declarations and other instruments
- **Official Journal:** C and L series for 20 days after publication
- **Legislation:** includes **Directory of Community Legislation in Force**
- **Case Law:** judgments from the European Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance since June 1954.

Free access via the **Europa** web site at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>

#### 4.3.1.2 Rapid

Daily view of EU activities as presented by the Institutions' press releases.

Free access via the Europa web site at: <http://europa.eu/rapid/>

### 4.3.2 Legal Databases

The following legal databases are useful sources of information about EU legislation. They can be accessed via UWE eLibrary at:

<http://elibrary.uwe.ac.uk/>

See individual database helpsheets for details on how to access and use these databases.

#### 4.3.2.1 Lawtel UK

Articles Index provides an index of articles from legal journals, including articles on aspects of EU legislation.

#### 4.3.2.2 Westlaw UK

Provides full text information on EU law as follows:

- **Official Journal L and C** series
- **European Case Law:** in full text, includes Common Market Law Reports, European Human Rights Reports, European Patent Office Reports, European Commercial Cases, European Trade Mark Reports
- **EU Parliamentary Questions**
- **EU primary and secondary legislation** back to 1952 EU Preparatory Acts
- **Journals** on EU law in full text such as European Law Review

Also contains Legal Journals Index, which provides an index of articles from legal journals, including articles on aspects of EU legislation.

### 4.4 Organisations providing information on the EU

#### 4.4.1 European Documentation Centres

The EDC network has been established to make as widely accessible as possible comprehensive, well-managed collections of official publications of the European Communities. EDCs receive publications catalogued or published by the Office of Official Publications (EUR-OP), but not necessarily documents published in collaboration with agencies or commercial publishers. The network is intended to serve the reference needs of researchers, students, and citizens. There are 44 European Documentation Centres throughout the UK based on university campuses. The nearest centres to UWE are at the Universities of Bath, Bristol and Cardiff. A list of UK centres can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/relays/edc\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/relays/edc_en.htm)

#### 4.4.2 European Information Centres

Profitmaking organisations providing information, often for business. Best known is the **European Information Association**, web address <http://www.eia.org.uk>

#### 4.4.3 Trade Associations

Often provide useful information on their web sites, in more simplified language.

## 5 European Union Web Sites

### 5.1 EU Institutional web sites

#### **Council of the European Union**

<http://ue.eu.int>

#### **European Commission**

<http://ec.europa.eu/>

#### **Europarl**

European Parliament

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/>

#### **Committee of the Regions**

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/>

#### **Court of Justice and Court of First Instance**

<http://curia.europa.eu/en/index.htm>

#### **Cordis**

Research programmes with the EU

<http://cordis.europa.eu/>

#### **Economic and Social Committee**

<http://eesc.europa.eu/>

#### **European Central Bank (ECB)**

<http://www.ecb.int/>

#### **European Court of Auditors**

<http://eca.europa.eu/>

#### **European Environment Agency**

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/>

#### **European Investment Bank**

<http://www.eib.org>

#### **Europe's Information Society**

Market developments

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/index_en.htm)

#### **Rapid**

EU press releases

<http://europa.eu/rapid/>

### 5.2 Gateways

#### **EUROLEX**

Mailing list forum for the exchange of European Legal Information.

<http://www.eurolex.com/>

#### **Eurotext**

Resource bank of learning materials on Europe aimed at and freely available for academic institutions

<http://eurotext.ulster.ac.uk/>

#### **Intute**

<http://www.intute.ac.uk/>

### 5.3 Current issues in the EU

#### **Commissions work programme for 2008**

[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm)

#### **EU Press Room**

[http://europa.eu/press\\_room/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/press_room/index_en.htm)

#### **Europa's Easy Reading Corner**

<http://ec.europa.eu/publications/>

## 5.4 Other useful sites

### Business

One Stop Internet Shop for Business  
<http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/nav/en/business/index.html>

### Duke University's List of European Union Websites

<http://docs.lib.duke.edu/igo/guides/euindex.old>

### EIA

European Information Association  
<http://www.eia.org.uk>

### EUR-Lex

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>

### Euro Information

The official Treasury euro resource  
<http://www.euro.gov.uk/home.asp>

### European Commission in the UK

<http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/>

### European Union's Publications Office

[http://publications.europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://publications.europa.eu/index_en.htm)

### European Voice

<http://www.european-voice.com/>

### EU Statistics

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=1090,30070682,1090\\_33076576&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

### IDEA

#### Who's Who in the EU

<http://europa.eu/whoiswho/index.htm>

### N-LEX

Trial service set up in 2006 to track national implementation of EU directives by member states.  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/n-lex/>

### Official Journal of the European Communities

<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en>

### Office of Public Sector Information

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>

### TED (tenders database)

[http://ted.europa.eu/info\\_newurl.html](http://ted.europa.eu/info_newurl.html)

### Your Europe

On-line EU and national public services  
<http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/>

Law Librarians

[Library.law@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Library.law@uwe.ac.uk)

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