European Documentation Centre

1. Introduction
The Library was designated as a European Documentation Centre (EDC) in 1968. As a comprehensive EDC, it receives all of the main publications of the European Union, although in recent years the distribution of these documents by Brussels has become increasingly selective.

2. Access
Members of the University and the local community have access to the material in the EDC, although members of the public should contact the EDC librarian before visiting the Library to ensure that the material they require is available. The Library opening times are detailed on the Library website at:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/services/openinghours.   However, normal term-time opening hours are:

Monday-Thursday: 24 hours

Friday: 24 hours-Midnight

Saturday: 9 am-Midnight

Sunday: 9 am-24 hours

Location:
The EDC is situated on the Second Floor of the Library in the *Official Publications* Section. It is arranged in subject groupings at the shelf mark **EC/**. Details of most individual items in the EDC are included in the Library Catalogue, which is available at: https://library.le.ac.uk/

3. Brief history of the European Union
It is helpful to have a basic understanding of the history of the European Union when undertaking research into the EU.

1951 *European Coal & Steel Community* formed
(Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Luxembourg. *Treaty of Paris)*

1957 *European Economic Community* and *European Atomic Energy Community* formed (same countries as above, *Treaties of Rome*).

1973 UK, Denmark and Ireland join *EEC*

1981 Greece joins.

1986 Portugal and Spain join.
Single European Act signed. *European Community* to abolish its internal borders.

1992 *Treaty on European Union* signed at Maastricht.
Move towards economic and monetary union, with intergovernmental co-operation in areas such as foreign and security policy. *European Community* becomes *European Union.*

1995 Austria, Finland and Sweden join *EU*.

1997 Treaty of Amsterdam

2001 Treaty of Nice published

2004 Draft Constitution of the European Union published. Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia join EU.

2005 France and Netherlands reject the Draft Constitution after holding referenda.

2007 Bulgaria and Romania join EU. The 27 countries sign the European Treaty in Lisbon, amending the previous treaties.

2008 A referendum is held in Ireland, in which the electorate vote against the Treaty of Lisbon.

2009 A second referendum is held in Ireland. This time the electorate vote in favour of the Treaty of Lisbon. Herman Van Rompuy is appointed first permanent President of the EU Council and Catherine Ashton is appointed High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The Lisbon Treaty enters into force.

4. Institutions of the European Union
4.1 European Commission
The main functions of the Commission are to initiate proposals for legislation; to act as a guardian of the treaties; and to be the manager and executor of EU policies and international trade relationships. There are 20 Commissioners, each responsible for a particular Directorate-General and policy area. The Commission is also responsible for the 'European civil service' which employs over 1500 staff. The majority of the material in the EDC is produced by the Commission.

Main publications:

COM docs (the working documents of the EU, often proposals for legislation) 1974-2003. **EC/1** [During 2003-COM docs became available only in electronic form].

Bulletin of the European Union 1968-2009 **EC**

General report of the activities of the European Union 1968- **EC**

Official Journal (L and C series). Contains material from all EU Institutions 1958-. Published on the Europa website from 1998-. **EC** .

4.2 Court of Justice
The Court of Justice, based in Luxembourg, has one judge per EU country and 8 advocates-general. The role of the Court is to ensure that the law is observed in the interpretation and application of the Treaties. Judgments of the Court of Justice are superior to those of national courts.

In 1989 the Court of First Instance was established to rule on cases involving individual interests so that the Court of Justice could concentrate on ensuring uniform interpretation of Community Law.

Main publications:
Reports of cases before the Court; (often referred to simply as the European Court Reports) 1954- **LR/5A**
Translated transcripts of *Opinions and judgments of the European Court;* **EC/4**

Judgments of the Court are published in the *Official Journal C series*.

N.B. The Court of Justice should not be confused with the European Court of Human Rights based in Strasbourg (Council of Europe) or the International Court of Justice at The Hague (United Nations)

4.3 Council of the European Union/Council of Ministers

The Council is the principal decision making body of the EU. It consists of appropriate ministers from each of the member states depending on the subject to be discussed. The senior council is the Council of Foreign Ministers, also known as the General Affairs Council. The <u>Presidency</u> of the Council rotates amongst the Member States every 6 months.

The Council co-ordinates the activities of the EU and is responsible for intergovernmental cooperation in common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and in justice and home affairs (JHA). It should not be confused with the Council of Europe based in Strasbourg.

Details of the activities of the Council can be found in the *Review of the Council's work* **(EC/2)** and in the <u>*General report of the activities of the European Union*</u> **(EC)**.

4.4. European Parliament

The European Parliament consists of MEPs who are directly elected by the citizens of the EU member countries every 5 years. It has supervisory, budgetary and some legislative powers which were increased by the Single European Act, Treaty on European Union and the Treaty of Amsterdam. The Parliament has standing committees covering all areas of policy and these meet to discuss new Council and Commission proposals which they then report on to the main body.

Main publications:
European Parliament reports/Working documents of the European Parliament 1967/68- 1998 **EC/3;** 1998- in the <u>European Parliament</u> database
Debates of the European Parliament. 1973-2000 were published in the Official Journal**.** Recent years on the in <u>Plenary Sessions</u>
European Parliament decisions and resolutions are included in the *Official Journal C series*.

4.5. Economic and Social Committee

The Economic and Social Committee is an advisory body consisting of members appointed by member governments. It includes employers, trade unions and people representing consumer or special interests.
The opinions and reports of the Economic and Social Committee are included in the *Official Journal C series*. Its activities are reported in a monthly *Bulletin* **(EC/5)**.

4.6. Committee of the Regions

Created in 1991 as a consultative body for policy areas likely to have repercussions at a local or regional level, e.g. economic and social cohesion. It consists of representatives from local and regional authorities throughout Europe. Publications include opinions (**EC/7**) and these are also available on the Committee of the Regions' website.

4.7 Agencies and other offices

There is a growing list of EU agencies, such as the European Environment Agency and European Agency for Health and Safety at Work. The EDC receives some of their publications, which are shelved in the relevant subject area. They also each have their own website. There is a list of these <u>websites</u> on Europa.

The EDC also receives publications from <u>Eurostat</u> (the Statistical Office of the European Union), the <u>European Investment Bank</u> and <u>European Central Bank.</u> However, not all publications are received and it is wise to check the Library Catalogue to see what is available.

5. Main sections of the EDC

5.1 Primary legislation (treaties)

Treaties establishing the European Communities, treaties amending these treaties, and documents concerning the Accession, 1973, 1978, 1987. **EC**

Single European Act, 1987. **EC**

Treaty on European Union, 1992. **EC**

Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997. **EC**

Treaty of Nice, 2003. **EC**

Treaty of Lisbon, 2009.

Consolidated version of the Treaties post-Amsterdam (from Eur-Lex)

5.2 Secondary legislation

The main instruments of secondary legislation are ***regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations** and **opinions.*** The definition of each according to article 189 of the Treaty of Rome is as follows:

A *Regulation* is of "general application." It is "binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States." It is cited: *(institution) [no.]/[yr]*

A *Directive* is "binding as to the result to be achieved, upon each Member state to which it is addressed" but leaves "to the national authorities the choice of form and methods." It is cited: *[yr]/[no.]/[institution]*

A *Decision* is "binding in its entirety upon those to whom it is addressed". Cited in similar way to a directive.

Recommendations and *Opinions* "have no binding force."

N.B. Secondary legislation is printed in the Official Journal (O.J.)

5.3 Official Journal

The *O.J.* is divided into 2 main series - L and C series. A third series (S series), which contains details about tenders, is also available on the Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) database. The CE series, is available in electronic format only and contains copies of COM docs and an increasing amount that was previously in the C series.

The EDC has the *O.J.* in paper format from 1952 onwards (the early editions are a 'Special Edition'); you can also view the full-text of the O.J. from 1998 onwards on Eur-Lex.

L series - Legislation **EC**

The L series is published daily and divided into 2 sections. The first contains acts whose publication is obligatory, e.g. Regulations; the second section contains acts whose publication is not obligatory, e.g. Directives, decisions etc.

C series - Information and Notices **EC**

The C series is publishes several times a week. It includes preparatory acts, euro exchange rates and notices from the institutions.

5.4 Other documentation

The EDC is arranged on the shelves in the following special classification scheme, consisting of institutional and subject sections.

EC   European Communities

EC/1   Commission

EC/2   Council

EC/3   European Parliament

EC/4 Court of Justice

EC/5 Economic and Social Committee

EC/6 European Investment Bank/European Central Bank

EC/7 Committee of the Regions

EC/A General economic affairs

EC/AL Regional policy

EC/B Financial and monetary affairs

EC/C Industry

EC/CL Energy

EC/CM Coal and steel

EC/D Agriculture

EC/E Competition

EC/F Trade

EC/G External affairs

EC/H Social affairs

EC/HA Labour and employment

EC/HB Social welfare

EC/HD Education

EC/HL Population

EC/HN Environment

EC/J Law

EC/K Transport

EC/T Science and technology

EC/TC Natural resources

The vast majority of publications can be located using the Library Catalogue. If you are browsing within a subject category on the shelves, you should note that the categories are arranged into serial and individual publication sequences. Both are arranged in alphabetical order by title.

www.le.ac.uk/library

6. Electronic sources of information

6.1 Databases

The following databases are recommended for searching for EU information. It should be noted that some can be used only by University of Leicester staff and students because of licensing restrictions.

WestlawUK, Lexis Library

Westlaw and Lexis provide access to full-text EU legislation and cases. Access is for University of Leicester staff and students only.

Eur-Lex

The EUR-Lex portal aims to be a 'one stop shop' for European Union legislation in force, providing the complete electronic archive of legal and juridical texts from all the institutions. Domains included are: Official Journal, Treaties, Legislation in force, Legislation in preparation (e.g. COM docs), Case law, Parliamentary questions, Documents of public interest.
URL: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm

PreLex

A very useful database for tracing the progress of EU legislation, PreLex follows all Commission proposals (legislative and budgetary dossiers, conclusions of international agreements) and communications from their transmission to the Council or the European Parliament right through to their adoption or rejection by the Council, their adoption by Parliament or their withdrawal by the Commission. Links allow users to access directly the electronic texts available (COM documents, Official Journal, Bulletin of the European Union, documents of the European Parliament, press releases).
URL: http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/apcnet.cfm?CL=en

Agreements Database

"Each year the European Community concludes a number of Agreements with third countries, as well as with international organisations. These Agreements may be of an extensive nature, such as Trade, Cooperation and Development and Association Agreements or they may cover a wide range of specific subjects including: textiles; fisheries; customs; science and technology; transport; etc." This website provides details of these agreements in a searchable database.
URL: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/agreements.aspx?lang=en

ECLAS

ECLAS is a bibliographic database consisting of ca. 200,000 completed catalogue records in the domain of European affairs; about 7,000 new records are added annually. It includes journal articles and websites, as well as books. About 20 DGs manage and catalogue their departmental collections in ECLAS.
URL: http://ec.europa.eu/eclas/F

Summaries of Legislation

Contains details of policies of the EU.
URL: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/index_en.htm

RAPID

Database of press releases, memos and speeches from the Commission and Council. However, it should be noted that not all D-Gs include their Press Releases in RAPID and individual sites might also have to be searched.
URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/

CORDIS

CORDIS, the Community Research and Development Information Service, is a free service provided by the European Commission's Innovation/SMEs programme. CORDIS offers access to a wide range of information on EU research and innovation development activities.
URL: http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html

⭐ **TED - Tenders Electronic Daily**
Database of tenders published in the Official Journal S Series.
URL: http://ted.europa.eu/

⭐**EUROVOC**
Useful thesaurus of EU vocabulary. Helpful for searching EU databases effectively using subject terms or key words.
URL: http://europa.eu/eurovoc/

7. How to find

The following sections detail the main research tools for finding legislation, cases and documentation. Some of them will provide you immediately with the required information but some are simply indexes to point you in the right direction.

7.1 Legislation

By number.:
Westlaw/Lexis/Eur-Lex
Official Journal. Methodological index. **EC**

By title:
Westlaw/Lexis/*Eur-Lex*
Directory of Community Legislation in Force... **EC**

By subject/keyword:
Westlaw/Lexis/*Eur-Lex*
Official Journal. Alphabetical index. **EC**
Directory of Community Legislation in force **EC**
(N.B. Use the *EUROVOC* thesaurus to find the relevant descriptor for your subject)

Preparatory legislation (*COM* docs):
Westlaw/Lexis/*Eur-Lex*/*PreLex*
Documents. 1987- **Ref.EC**
Index to documents of the European Commission **Ref.EC**

7.2 Cases
Westlaw/Lexis/*Eur-Lex*
Court of Justice
Index A-Z : numerical and alphabetical index of cases before the Court of Justice of the European Communities since 1953, 1999. EC & LAW REF 349.4 EUR
Common Market Law Reports (index in 3rd volume of each year) LR/5A and on WestlawUK

7.3 European Parliament reports
European Parliament
Documents. 1987- **Ref.EC**
Index to documents of the European Commission 1981-1987 **Ref.EC**

7.4 Books/articles
The Library Catalogue includes details of all individual items in the EDC (but not periodical articles). Search by title, keyword, subject etc.
ECLAS (European Commission Libraries Catalogue)
The Library has numerous databases that include journal articles relating to the European Union. Staff and

students are recommended to use their My Subject pages for more information or contact the Information Librarian for Official Publications.

8. Current awareness

Official Journal **EC**

Agence Europe. Daily bulletin of EU developments. **EC**

Europa. Site of the European Commission. Newsroom updated daily.

RAPID. Database of press releases, updated daily.

Bulletin of the European Union Monthly. **EC**

European Law Review. Bi-monthly. **PER 340 and on WestlawUK**

9. Further reading

European Information Association *Quick Guides*. **OFF PUBS REF EC**

Clinch, P *Using a law library,* 2001. **340.072 CLI**

Holborn, G *Butterworths legal research guide.* 2002. **LAW REF 340.07 HOL**

10. Contact details

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