Mr Terry Davies, Secretary General  
Council of Europe  
Avenue de l’Europe  
67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France  

CC. Ms Mireille Paulus, Secretary to the Committee of Ministers  
Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee, PACE  

Re: Request for Information re Convention on Access to Official Documents  

Dear Mr. Davies  

We are writing to make a request for information from the Council of Europe.  


We understand that the Rapporteur Group made a recommendation on whether or not the Convention on Access to Official Documents should be redrafted in the light of the concerns raised by PACE. We have been informed that the outcome of that meeting is not public. The next stage in the decision-making process is a final decision by the Committee of Ministers (Ministers’ Deputies) on 27 November.  

We wish to know:  
- what the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights recommended to the Committee of Ministers with respect to the draft Convention on Access to Official Documents;  
- the list of all the participants in the meeting;  
- the positions taken by each of the governments present on whether or not to open the Convention for redrafting.  

We note that the Council of Europe Recommendation 2002(2) on Access to Official Documents states that wide public access to documents is necessary for “encouraging informed participation by the public in matters of common interest”. It is clear that development of the world’s first binding convention on Access to Official Documents is a matter of significant public interest and hence it is imperative that there be public participation in and scrutiny of the process by which this Convention is concluded. Access to information is essential for democratic debate and defence of human rights, values which the Council of Europe is mandated to uphold and promote.  

Yours sincerely  

Helen Darbishire, Access Info Europe