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THE LAW SOCIETY OF ENGLAND AND WALES  
THE LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND  
THE LAW SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

# The Law Societies

## JOINT BRUSSELS OFFICE

**GUIDANCE NOTE**

**HOW TO KEEP TRACK OF DEVELOPMENTS**

**IN**

**THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**INFORMATION SOURCES IN THE EU**

**ON THE INTERNET**

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# Electronic Sources of EC Law

## 1. Electronic sources of EU information

EU information can be accessed electronically via online databases, CD ROMs and the Internet. The amount of information has grown enormously and is much too lengthy to list here. A very useful publication 'The Directory of Online European Information' has been published by Landmarks in 1998, updated in 2000<sup>1</sup>. (£90). This provides a comprehensive listing of sources via online, CD and the Internet. A reference copy is available in the Law Society Library.

### (a) On-line databases on EC legislation and information

On-line hosts offering electronic access to EU information include Context, FT Information, and Lexis/Nexis.

Databases are usually based on Celex, the official database of the EU, covering full text of treaties, legislation in force and proposed legislation, European Court of Justice cases and Parliamentary questions. Often the databases also contain added value information. The OJ S series is available on-line as TED (Tenders Electronic Daily) which can be accessed through most of the on-line hosts.

### (b) CD-ROM databases on EC legislation and information

Major publishers of EU CD ROMs are Context, and Ellis (contact via Chadwyck-Healey in the UK.).

Contact addresses are:

Context – Grand Union House, 20 Kentish Town Road, London, NW1 9NR Tel 0207 267 8989

Ellis (contact via Chadwyck-Healey in the UK) – The Quorum, Barnwell Road, Cambridge, CB5 8SW Tel 01223 215 512

FT Information – Fitzroy House, 13-17 Epworth St, London, EC2A 4DL  
Tel 0207 825 8000

Landmarks – Avenue de Tervuren 402, B-1150 Brussels Tel 00 322 779 9549 Fax 00 322 779 9563.

Lexis/Nexis – Halsbury House, 35 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1EL  
Tel 0207 400 2500

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.landmarks.be/ONLINE/index.htm>

## **(c) The Internet**

The Internet has become an excellent source for EU research. The best sites are described below. This guide is intended as a useful list of Internet sites for EU information for the legal profession.

There follows a list of the sites in alphabetical order. Details of the main contents of the site are included together with any hints on how to search successfully.

### **CELEX**

[http://europa.eu.int/celex/htm/celex\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/celex/htm/celex_en.htm)

- Internet version of the Celex database.
- Text in all Member State languages.
- Priced and users have to subscribe.

### **Council of Europe**

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

- This site includes a documentary search facility for human rights case law and European treaties.
- There are also press releases issued by the Council of Europe and information on its role and functions.

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

<http://ue.eu.int/>

- Includes news, press releases, general information about the Council, policy areas relating to Common and Foreign Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs, details of the Presidency.
- Full text of the Treaties.
- "Access to Documents" database of Council Working Documents where available to the public, request procedure for documents not automatically accessible.

### **Directorate Generals**

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs_en.htm)

- Access to homepages of the Directorates-General and services of the Commission.

### **ECLAS**

<http://europa.eu.int/eclas>

- Catalogue of the Library of the European Commission.
- Good for checking bibliographic details.
- Access via user id and password which are obtained by registering.

### **EIRONLINE**

<http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/>

- Specialist subject database on industrial relations.
- Covers the European angle, 15 Member states plus Norway.

## EUR-LEX

<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex>

- Full text Official Journal L and C series.
- Full text of Treaties, eg. Treaty on European Union, EC Treaty, ECSC Treaty, EURATOM Treaty, Single European Act, Resolutions and Declarations, not the Amsterdam Treaty.
- Texts arranged under subject headings. Easiest to look at Directory first and then use database.
- Case law (this is a link to the ECJ site).

## EUROPA

<http://europa.eu.int>

- “Gateway to the European Union” Front page acts as a signpost to all EU institutions and other key internet sites, e.g. information on key policies, “what’s new” and up to date press releases.

## European Central Bank

<http://www.ecb.int>

- Gives contact details for the Bank, press releases, publications; key speeches etc.
- Successor tot the European Monetary Institute.
- Most important institution for Economic and Monetary Union.

## European Commission

<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/>

- Signpost to all the individual DGs.
- ‘What’s New’ page outlining recent developments.
- Profiles and portfolios of the Commissioners.
- Key speeches of President Romano Prodi.

## European Commission DG Competition

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/competition/index\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/competition/index_en.html)

- Divided up into **Antitrust** (anti-competitive behaviour) **Mergers**, **Liberalisation**, **State aids** and **International**.
- Legislation section containing the main instruments, eg. Block exemptions, general procedural rules, regulations.
- Selected items form the OJ C and L series.
- Full list of merger decisions.
- ‘What’s New’ site for recent developments.
- Newsletter, annual reports on competition policy, speeches and articles.
- Other competition sites around the world including the different competition authorities for each of the Member states and the US.

## European Commission DG Internal Market

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/en/index.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/index.htm)

- Related to development of the internal market, including free movement of goods, financial services, company law, professional qualifications, services and establishment.
- Includes news, publications, and links to related sites.

### **European Commission DG Justice and Home Affairs**

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/index_en.htm)

- Deals with creation of an area of freedom, security and justice: judicial co-operation in civil and criminal matters, police co-operation, asylum and immigration and border control.
- Information relating to funding programmes and EU grant applications.
- Includes news, publications, and links to related sites.

### **European Court of Justice Court of First Instance**

<http://www.curia.eu.int>

- Full transcripts of ECJ and CFI judgements and AG opinions.
- Able to search by case number, date, names, fields and words in text.
- Best place for copies of transcripts that are too recent to be indexed in other sources.
- Diary published each Friday for two weeks ahead, first week definite dates of hearings, second week provisional dates for hearings.
- Includes press releases relating to specific court decisions.

### **European Parliament**

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

- Overview of the European Parliament and details of all MEPs
- Plenary session reports
- Minutes of the European Parliament
- European Ombudsman information
- Legislative observatory (see below)
- Details of committees and calendar
- Rules of procedure
- Press release database

### **European Parliament Legislative Observatory (OEIL)**

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/oeil/en/>

- Use to trace the progress of legislative proposals by different search criteria.
- Words in title' is the most useful search. With a proposal in existence it is possible to see the different stages it has gone through and the latest position it has reached.
- See **Help** screen on how to search. \* is truncation; **And, or, not** are boolean operators. Use "" for phrases (eg "green paper"). Keep searches as simple as possible, unlikely to come up with too many responses.
- Gives the outcome of Council meetings (eg. Directive adopted, common position reached).
- Gives details of the European Parliament diary.

## IDEA

<http://europa.eu.int/idean.html>

- The electronic directory of the European institutions.
- In addition can search for Commission personnel under <http://europa.eu.int/comm/staffdir/index.htm>.

## Official Documents

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/index_en.htm)

- Part of the European commission's home page.
- Includes selected Work Programmes, Action Plans and Guidelines (eg. Commission's Work programme (2002, 2003, 2004), Single Market Action Plan.
- Selected Green Papers.
- Selected White Papers.
- Selective Commission communications.

## PRELEX

[http://europa.eu.int/prelex/rech\\_simple.cfm?CL=en](http://europa.eu.int/prelex/rech_simple.cfm?CL=en)

- PreLex database gives information and documents on the legislative proposals. Searching can be made by the COM DOC number of the proposal by choosing 'COM' for Series and then inserting year and number. Searches can also be made using the 'words in the title' option.

## Commission Press Room

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

- Updated on a daily basis (about 1 pm) to provide the press releases of key EU institutions (ie: European Commission, Council of the European Union, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, Economic and social Committee, Committee of the Regions  
NB : not the European Parliament)
- Truncation is automatic
- + is **and** connector; , is **or** connector. A space also equals **or**. Use “ ” to search a phrase (eg “human rights”)
- For political agreements, common positions, look for details of Council meetings

## Representation of the European Commission in the UK

<http://www.cec.org.uk/>

- Good sign-posting site to other places (eg. via publications).