

Access to information

Dimension - Institutional Arrangements

Associated Key Factor:

Civil society and participation

Data Source:

Privacy International

Freedom of Information and Access to Government Records Around the World. Report 2003

<http://www.privacyinternational.org/issues/foia>

<http://www.privacyinternational.org/issues/foia>

General Availability:

Reporting unit:

Reporting level:

Reporting period: annually

Data available from 2000 to 2003

Data Source:

University of Frankfurt

http://www.rz.uni-frankfurt.de/~sobotta/FOI_European_Union.htm

<http://www.rz.uni-frankfurt.de/>

General Availability:

Reporting unit:

Reporting level: EU, national

The indicator:

Existence of information laws and access to information.

Description

Establishes whether in principle information is accessible. Access to information is the first step towards citizen involvement in policy-making.

At the European level, freedom of access to information with regard to European institutions is guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Violations may be brought to the attention of the European Court or the European Ombudsman.

At the national level, most countries have information laws that ensure that citizens have access to policy information.

How is it measured?

Monitoring of European, national legislation as well as of legal cases with national / European Courts or European Ombudsman concerning information access.

What are the advantages of the indicator?

The existence of information laws guaranteeing access to information is indicative of the commitment of different levels of government to democratic participation.

What are the disadvantages of the Indicator?

Alone the existence of information laws says little about institutional practices in this respect and citizen participation in policy-making more generally. Indicator must therefore be enlarged with case study material at the policy / institutional level and at different levels of government (European, national, sub-national).

What is the policy relevance of the indicator?

Taps on the democratic openness of political systems and willingness of specific policy sectors to engage in decision-making involving citizen participation

The Indicator is relevant for the following pathways of the FORESIGHT FOR TRANSPORT exercise:

	Transport Impact	External Determining Variable	Intermediate Variable	Contextual Information
Greater power for European level of decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A reorientation of European transport policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
More openness and participation in decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>