

Regulation (EC) No 1367/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006 on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to Community institutions and bodies

## TITLE II

### ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

#### *Article 3*

#### **Application of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001**

Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 shall apply to any request by an applicant for access to environmental information held by Community institutions and bodies without discrimination as to citizenship, nationality or domicile and, in the case of a legal person, without discrimination as to where it has its registered seat or an effective centre of its activities.

For the purposes of this Regulation, the word ‘institution’ in Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 shall be read as ‘Community institution or body’.

#### *Article 4*

#### **Collection and dissemination of environmental information**

1 Community institutions and bodies shall organise the environmental information which is relevant to their functions and which is held by them, with a view to its active and systematic dissemination to the public, in particular by means of computer telecommunication and/or electronic technology in accordance with Articles 11(1) and (2), and 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001. They shall make this environmental information progressively available in electronic databases that are easily accessible to the public through public telecommunication networks. To that end, they shall place the environmental information that they hold on databases and equip these with search aids and other forms of software designed to assist the public in locating the information they require.

The information made available by means of computer telecommunication and/or electronic technology need not include information collected before the entry into force of this Regulation unless it is already available in electronic form. Community institutions and bodies shall as far as possible indicate where information collected before entry into force of this Regulation which is not available in electronic form is located.

Community institutions and bodies shall make all reasonable efforts to maintain environmental information held by them in forms or formats that are readily reproducible and accessible by computer telecommunications or by other electronic means.

2 The environmental information to be made available and disseminated shall be updated as appropriate. In addition to the documents listed in Article 12(2) and (3) and in

Article 13(1) and (2) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, the databases or registers shall include the following:

- a texts of international treaties, conventions or agreements, and of Community legislation on the environment or relating to it, and of policies, plans and programmes relating to the environment;
- b progress reports on the implementation of the items referred to under (a) where prepared or held in electronic form by Community institutions or bodies;
- c steps taken in proceedings for infringements of Community law from the stage of the reasoned opinion pursuant to Article 226(1) of the Treaty;
- d reports on the state of the environment as referred to in paragraph 4;
- e data or summaries of data derived from the monitoring of activities affecting, or likely to affect, the environment;
- f authorisations with a significant impact on the environment, and environmental agreements, or a reference to the place where such information can be requested or accessed;
- g environmental impact studies and risk assessments concerning environmental elements, or a reference to the place where such information can be requested or accessed.

3 In appropriate cases, Community institutions and bodies may satisfy the requirements of paragraphs 1 and 2 by creating links to Internet sites where the information can be found.

4 The Commission shall ensure that, at regular intervals not exceeding four years, a report on the state of the environment, including information on the quality of, and pressures on, the environment is published and disseminated.

#### *Article 5*

### **Quality of the environmental information**

1 Community institutions and bodies shall, insofar as is within their power, ensure that any information that is compiled by them, or on their behalf, is up-to-date, accurate and comparable.

2 Community institutions and bodies shall, upon request, inform the applicant of the place where information on the measurement procedures, including methods of analysis, sampling and pre-treatment of samples, used in compiling the information can be found, if it is available. Alternatively, they may refer them to the standardised procedure that was used.

#### *Article 6*

### **Application of exceptions concerning requests for access to environmental information**

1 As regards Article 4(2), first and third indents, of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, with the exception of investigations, in particular those concerning possible infringements of Community law, an overriding public interest in disclosure shall be deemed to exist where the information requested relates to emissions into the environment. As regards the other exceptions set out in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, the grounds for refusal shall be interpreted in a restrictive way, taking into account the public interest served by disclosure and whether the information requested relates to emissions into the environment.

2 In addition to the exceptions set out in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, Community institutions and bodies may refuse access to environmental information where

disclosure of the information would adversely affect the protection of the environment to which the information relates, such as the breeding sites of rare species.

#### *Article 7*

### **Requests for access to environmental information which is not held by a Community institution or body**

Where a Community institution or body receives a request for access to environmental information and where this information is not held by that Community institution or body, it shall, as promptly as possible, but within 15 working days at the latest, inform the applicant of the Community institution or body or the public authority within the meaning of Directive 2003/4/EC to which it believes it is possible to apply for the information requested or transfer the request to the relevant Community institution or body or the public authority and inform the applicant accordingly.

#### *Article 8*

### **Cooperation**

In the event of an imminent threat to human health, life or the environment, whether caused by human activities or due to natural causes, Community institutions and bodies shall, upon request of public authorities within the meaning of Directive 2003/4/EC, collaborate with and assist those public authorities in order to enable the latter to disseminate immediately and without delay to the public that might be affected all environmental information which could enable it to take measures to prevent or mitigate harm arising from the threat, to the extent that this information is held by or on behalf of Community institutions and bodies and/or those public authorities.

The first subparagraph shall apply without prejudice to any specific obligation laid down by Community legislation, in particular by Decision No 2119/98/EC and by Decision No 1786/2002/EC.