OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

The Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (Publications Office) is the publishing house of the institutions and other bodies of the European Union (EU). It is responsible for producing and distributing EU publications on all media and by all means.

The Publications Office, whose current organisation and operation are laid down by an interinstitutional agreement (Official Journal of the European Communities, L 183, 22.7.2000, p.12), is governed by a Management Committee, on which each institution is represented by its Secretary-General.

Although the Publications Office was not formally set up as an independent body until 1969, its origins go back to the Publications Service of the European Coal and Steel Community, which published, from 1952 onwards, the Official Journal of the European Coal and Steel Community, subsequently entitled Official Journal of the European Communities and now Official Journal of the European Union.

As a publisher, the Publications Office has a duty to offer the highest-quality service to its customers - the originating departments of the institutions and other bodies of the European Union - and to its public - the citizens of the European Union and people throughout the world who are interested in European affairs. In the field of new technologies, the Publications Office must place itself at the forefront of the publishing profession.

Under the provisions of the Treaties, the publication of certain titles, such as the Official Journal of the European Union or the General Report on the Activities of the European Union, is a legal obligation. Other titles are regarded as essential for the development of the Union and its policies, while some publications are intended as information channels for the general public or specific professional circles.

The Publications Office publishes the Official Journal daily in the 20 official languages of the Community and in Irish - a unique phenomenon in the publishing world. The planned enlargement of the European Union in 2007 will give rise to publications in the languages of the future Member States set to join the EU and in those of the candidate countries for later accession.

With the aim of bringing the Union closer to its citizens, the Publications Office cooperates on a continuous basis with the EU institutions, agencies and bodies to further enhance the transparency of the legislative process and of European policies and to facilitate access to the entire body of European legislation and information published in the L (Legislation), C (Information and Notices) and S (Public procurement) series of the Official Journal and on the related EUR-Lex and TED websites.

The Internet has had a major impact in terms of boosting the dissemination of Community information, the use of electronic media having become commonplace.

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