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Access Info Europe

Activity Report

2014

Message from the Executive Director

New Laws, Bad Laws, Better Laws

2014 was an exciting year for the right of access to information, as the world reached and passed the landmark of 100 access to information laws, it was also a year in which Access Info Europe increased its focus on the implementation of those laws in practice, combined with standard setting and policy development to strengthen levels of transparency in key areas of democratic life.

For the Access Info team headquartered in Madrid, an important development was the entry into force on 10 December 2014 of Spain's transparency law, a full eight years after we started campaigning for it. The question now is whether the law, which is in a disappointing 70th position in the global RTI Rating and has been criticised by both the EU and the OSCE, is strong enough to change a culture of secrecy in a country in which 57% of requests are met currently with administrative silence.

Europe is hugely contradictory when it comes to the right to information, the continent has the best and the worst of the world's laws: Serbia and Slovenia's laws continue to top our global RTI Rating but at the bottom we find Italy and Austria, both countries where we campaigning actively for law reform. The RTI Rating is a powerful advocacy tool, as evidenced by, for example, its use during 2014 in the successful campaign to abolish fees for information requests in Ireland.

Challenging Transparency Blackspots

A key part of Access Info's work is asking the question "can we actually get the information. Mapping levels of transparency in practice is an essential part of our work. From our multiple requests, from those submitted by partners and people we train, and from monitoring outcomes via our EU request platform AsktheEU.org, we have identified that obtaining even basic **information about how government functions** can be a significant challenge.

Hence, in 2014 Access Info started a major new project to map the levels of transparency of decision making in ten countries across Europe and at the EU level. The first step has been to define which documents should be created in a decision-making process, knowing that we have challenges with even some basic documents such as minutes of meetings or documents submitted by lobbyists, and that record keeping is an issue. Abuse of the privacy exception is a related problem, resulting in denial of information such as the names of public officials in key decision-making meetings.

Next year, we will be evaluating country by country the availability of key decision making information.

In 2014 our research also revealed numerous **transparency blackspots** across Europe, that range from difficulties obtaining information needed for defence of human rights, such as the lack of data about policing of protests across Europe, to the near-impossibility for investigative journalists to get full access to company ownership registers if they do not pay for the data, to finding out about lobbying on policies that will affect us all, including the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the labelling of the content of food products.

Once we identify obstacles to access to information, Access Info defines strategies to challenge them.

These strategies may include taking appeals to Information Commissioners or to court. In 2014 we secured access to a large number of documents from the UK's Foreign Office about negotiations in Brussels in a case before the UK's Information Tribunal that was directly influenced by our 2013 win at the European Court of Justice for access to EU documents. Our company register transparency project resulted in a successful court challenge that secured access to the Czech company register and another case is ongoing in Slovenia after a successful appeal to the Information Commissioner was challenged in court by the company registry.

Policy Proposals and New Standards

For broader structural problems, litigation may not be enough, and we work to develop policy solutions and even new standards on how to open up information on particular issues.

Access Info Europe's Open Government Standards, launched in 2013, have been taken up in various ways by civil society, including for evaluating national Open Government Partnership action plans and as part of a tool to measure open governance by Transparency International.

Access Info Europe's mapping of the lack of information about who really owns the media across Europe led to the development of *Ten Recommendations on Transparency of Media Ownership*, which have been widely endorsed by civil society and are helping shape the policy debate in the European Union and Council of Europe.

Lobbying is another area where there is a pressing need for a policy and legal framework to ensure accountability of the impact of private interests on decision making. Access Info Europe has developed standards on *Lobby Transparency via the Right of Access to Information* and is working with leading lobby control organisations globally to define and promote a legal framework for regulation and transparency of lobbying.

A Global Focus

Access Info is focused on the European region and is increasingly active at the global level, contributing our expert knowledge, combined with experience of policy and standards development, and strategic campaigning skills, to solving the challenges faced by the transparency community worldwide.

To this end we work closely with civil society, governmental and inter-governmental actors, recognising the value of partnerships in ensuring impact. A full list of the networks we belong to, as well as our many project partners, can be found on our website.

I would like to take this opportunity personally to thank the dedicated members of the Access Info team as well as all our friends and colleagues around the world for their enthusiastic commitment, creative ideas and open collaboration as we strive together to advance open, participatory, and accountable governments.

Helen Darbishire
Executive Director & Vice President

The Right to Information: Standards and Laws

Access Info Europe continues to be a leading player in the global community on defining standards for the right of access to information and working to translate these into government policies and into laws that give effect to this fundamental right.

Our standard-setting work in 2014 has focused on advancing access to information in two specific areas that are key to democratic life: lobbying by private interest groups and ownership of the media. Without transparency and accountability in both these areas, citizen participation in governance and in public debate about the democratic process is seriously frustrated.

Measuring compliance with international standards is also core to our work. We continue to run, together with the Centre for Law and Democracy, the RTI Rating, which assesses the quality of the world's access to information laws, and has is proving to be a powerful advocacy tool that has had a positive impact in a number of countries.

Lobby Transparency

There is increasing recognition that without transparency, accountability and regulation of lobbying of government by private interests groups, the democratic process is severely compromised.

"It is not sufficient to place the burden on lobbyists to publish information: public bodies have an obligation to be transparent about their relations with interest groups."

Helen Darbishire,
Executive Director of
Access Info Europe.

As the international community gives more attention to regulation of lobbying, Access Info's focus is on advancing the legal and policy framework for transparency of lobbying.

Our standard-setting document Lobby Transparency via the Right to Information contains a series of recommendations on the types of information which public bodies should make available, in most cases proactively. These include details of meetings with lobbyists, copies of submissions by interest groups, and a clear indication of which information has been taken into consideration when making a decision.

Access Info is working with Transparency International, the Sunlight Foundation, the Open Knowledge Foundation, and ALTER-EU to develop a set of International Lobby Transparency Standards.

From Standards to Policy to Transparency

The European Union has become the focus for making lobby transparency work in practice, and it is likely to define the standards that will be followed in the rest of Europe.

In 2014 Access Info was part of the Europe-wide Politics for People Campaign which successfully secured the support of over 1,400 European Parliament candidates for lobbying

transparency and EU transparency more broadly, of whom 180 were elected, almost a quarter of all MEPs in office. Of these 14 came from Spain, thanks to the strong campaign run by Access Info.

Civil society activism over the past few years through the ALTER-EU Coalition, which has over 200 CSO members, also resulted in the incoming European Commission demonstrating a renewed commitment to lobby transparency. First steps have been taken to put this into practice, including the 25 November 2014 decision proactively to publish information about meetings between high level officials and lobbyists.

There remains much to be done: although a "mandatory" lobby register should be introduced in 2017 there are concerns about how binding it will in fact be on all lobbyists; meetings information is now being published, but only for high level officials and the actual names of the lobbyists are being excluded from some reports.

Access Info meanwhile continues to demand greater lobby transparency in other countries. In Spain, together with other organisations, we called for regulation of lobbying along with full transparency of lobbying of executive and legislative branches of government. Access Info is also supporting the lobby transparency campaign in Italy. Actions in 2014 included meetings with parliamentarians and, in April 2014, a high level public debate with the Vice President of the Italian Parliament, Luigi Di Maio, with other panellists being Helen Darbishire of Access Info and Pascoe Sabido of Corporate Europe Observatory.

Transparency of Media Ownership

Transparency of media ownership is essential in a democratic media system. The public can know who is shaping the news and concentrations of ownership can be addressed.

During 2014, Access Info Europe promoted the Ten Recommendations on Transparency of Media Ownership, designed to shape government policies and the legal framework.

The Ten Recommendations were developed through widespread consultations with civic and governmental actors, and following extensive research by Access Info Europe and the Open Society Program on Independent Journalism across Europe that revealed that in most countries it is impossible to get a clear picture of who owns the media: in only 8 of 20 countries surveyed is it possible to obtain the names of

owners with a share of over 5% in broadcast media outlets, and in just 5 countries is this information available to the public for free or at minimal cost for the print media. These numbers drop even further when looking at information about indirect or beneficial ownership of companies.

To back up campaigning to promote the recommendations, during 2014 Access Info gathered good practice case studies from countries with better regulation - Austria, Croatia, Georgia, Norway, and United Kingdom.

The Ten Recommendations have been presented at high level events including a one day seminar organised by the European Commission in October 2014. To date they have been signed by more than 50 civil society organisations and individuals.
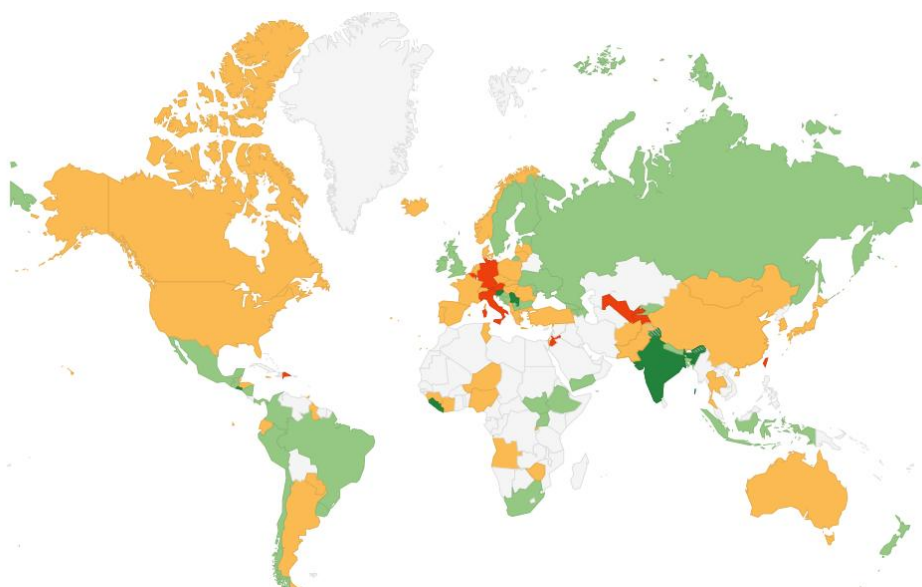
http://www.access-info.org/media-ownership-transparency

RTI Rating: From Analysis to Policy Recommendations

In 2014 the world hit and passed the 100 mark, with 102 access to information laws in force by the end of the year.

Access Info Europe and the Centre for Law and Democracy continue to evaluate the quality of these laws on paper against the 61 indicators in the RTI-Rating.

We track global trends, identify gaps between the international standards and the legal framework, make policy proposals in key areas such as the recognition of the right of access to information as a fundamental right, the scope of the access to information laws, or the mandate and power of Information Commissioners. International organisations including the OECD and the World Bank have used the RTI Rating as a reference. Transparency International has incorporated data from the Rating into its Open Governance Scorecard.

In 2014, civil society used this powerful comparative tool to advocate for law reform in a wide range of countries including Austria, Canada, Italy, Morocco, Pakistan and Tunisia. A successful campaign in Ireland, supported by RTI Rating data, led to repeal of the fees for making freedom of information requests.

Having an Impact on Transparency in Practice

European Union Transparency

The European Union takes decisions that affect 505 million citizens across a 28-country region as well as having an impact globally. Transparency is essential for genuine accountability of and public participation in decision making inside the Brussels bubble, now the second largest lobby capital in the world.

Access Info Europe works to promote a strong legal framework for EU transparency, urging for the EU's access to documents rules to be strengthened. We monitor levels of access in practice, issue reports, take legal challenges, join other organisations on specific demands, publish reports, and participate in public consultations.

The Council of the European Union

In May 2014, Access Info Europe published an analysis of requests to the Council of the EU which found that it was not respecting time frames, applied too many extensions to requests (32% of all requests), and did not inform all requesters of their right to appeal when information was denied.

The majority of requests sought information about the decision-making process, something which the EU treaties mandate should be as open as possible. In spite of this, less than one third of requests (19 requests or 28%) were successful, resulting in the full disclosure of documents to the person seeking it. Answer times were average 20 rather than 15 working days but partial denials took an average of 49 working days.

Discussions with the Council over the findings and recommendations proved valuable in understanding of internal processes. An immediate impact was better acknowledgements with clearer explanations about timeframes and appeals processes.

Monitoring Impact of Access Info's European Court of Justice win for access to Council decision making documents:

During 2014 Access Info continued to monitor the impact of the ruling by the European Court of Justice granting access to Member State positions on draft legislation.

Access Info Europe was able to obtain information about the positions of Member States during negotiations on food labelling and an environmental campaigner received information about the revision of the Directive on nuclear power plant safety.

Evaluation of a sample of 20 requests submitted via AsktheEU.org indicated where information was held, access was generally granted to the names of Member States. Of particular concern was that for eight of these requests the information was not held, pointing to problems with record keeping.

Indeed, a document leaked in March 24 and published in July 2014 after a confirmatory application submitted by Access Info, revealed ongoing discussions inside the Council about how to react to the our Court victory, including evaluation of two options: either to provide access to the names of delegations as a matter of course, or, simply stop recording the names of member states in Council documents.
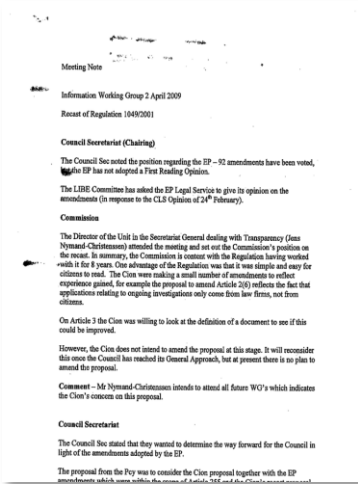
EU Transparency Blackspots	EU Transparency Bright Spots
New Hurdle when making a request: On 1 April 2014 the European Commission introduced a new requirement that requires all requesters to provide a postal address as a precondition for registering their request. Access Info Europe has challenged this policy in letters to the Commissions new Vice President Frans Timmermans and as part of an ongoing appeal to the Ombudsman.	**Information obtained as a result of 12 information requests** submitted by Access Info and Transparency International's EU Office about the EU's transparency systems was used by TI do develop a report on EU integrity systems. The recommendations included that the European Parliament, Commission and Council should record and disclose all input received from lobbyists/interest representatives for draft policies, laws and amendments in a standardised legislative footprint format.
Members of Parliament out of reach of right to ask: Lobby documents submitted to MEPs are excluded from the right of access to documents from the European Parliament Access Info Europe found as part of an investigation into lobbying around food labelling. In another ongoing case that we provided support on, a Slovenian journalist was denied access to information about MEPs expenses using public funds on grounds of the right to privacy.	**The European Ombudsman actively promoting improved transparency in practice**. The Ombudsman issued a number of recommendations in favour of transparency during 2014, including in favour of TTIP transparency and greater lobby transparency. The European Central Bank released a letter sent to the Irish government in 2010, requested via AsktheEU.org, after a Decision from the Ombudsman. Access Info Europe has engaged with the European Ombudsman in a variety of ways, including through submission of complaints about lack of transparency, participation in consultations, helping test new register of European Ombudsman documents, briefing the Ombudsman's staff on the Open Government Partnership
Expert Groups too closed: Access Info Europe raised concerns about the lack of transparency in the composition and functioning of Expert Groups as part of a consultation run by the European Ombudsman. We recommended that members of the public should be provided with more information on how to participate in Expert Groups and that information should be published in a searchable, machine-readable format.	
Commissioner's Travel and Hospitality Expenses a "Private Matter": In July 2014 the European Commission refused to reveal details of spending on travel and hospitality by the outgoing Commissioners on grounds of protection of their personal privacy. After an appeal by Access Info Europe, the total spending for each Commissioner per year was release but not more than this.	**European Parliament votes to increase transparency of decision-making:** Access Info welcomed the 26 February 2014 decision by the European Parliament to bring greater transparency to its decision making by recording and publishing records of final voting in committee. The decision applies to all final votes on resolutions and legislation. It also makes it compulsory to record and publish the final votes by MEPs in plenary on non-binding resolutions.

National Campaigns

Access Info works throughout Europe to promote and defend the right of access to information in law and practice. Some highlights of our activity in 2014 are shown on the map below.

UK Access to Documents Win

As a direct result of Access Info Europe's win against the Council of the EU for the names of Member States in documents on the EU's transparency negotiations, Access Info Europe scored an important victory in the UK in May 2014 when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) pulled out of a case before the UK's Information Tribunal resulting in cancellation of a court hearing due on 20-21 May. The FCO provided Access Info Europe with full information on negotiations in Brussels to revise the European Union's transparency rules.

Spain Gets a Transparency Law

2014 was the year Spain's Transparency Law came into force at the national level on 10 December, coincidentally International Human Rights Day, eight years after Access Info stared campaigning for it.

The pressing need for this law was demonstrated again in 2014 when the annual report published with colleagues from Civio, revealed that a full 57% of requests made via Tuderechoasaber.es the year before were ignored by public bodies in Spain.
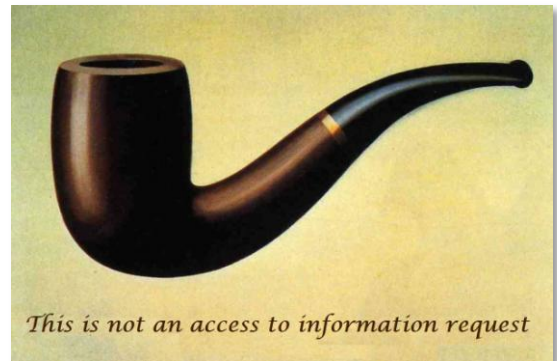
Even knowing the weakness of this law – something which in February the European Union called on Spain to strengthen given that it scores just 73 out of 150 in the RTI Rating and is in 70th position globally – this might have been a moment for celebration. Hope soon turned to frustration because of the obstacles submitting requests via the new Transparency Portal, which requires requesters to have an electronic ID, limiting exercise of the right to a small percentage of Spanish citizens.

Access Info, along with other members of the Coalición Pro Acceso we were vocal in expressing our disappointment and submitted a complaint to the Spanish Ombudsman. As a temporary solution, we are assisting requesters to file requests via the Tu derecho a saber.es platform and continuing to monitor implementation of the law.

A case to the European Court of Human Rights

In April 2014 Access Info Europe presented a case against Spain to the European Court of Human Rights challenging the refusal to recognise a right of access to information following a seven-year legal battle to obtain information from the Ministry of Justice about anti-corruption measures.

The case is based on a request filed by Access Info Europe in 2007 for information about how Spain is implementing the UN Convention against Corruption and the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. The Supreme Court stated that this was "not a request for information" and that, "The Constitution gives only the [legislative] chambers such a right, precisely so that they can exercise political control over the Government".

This is not an access to information request

Spain and OGP

Spain is still a member of the Open Government Partnership, and this year the Government presented its second national action plan. In April, we met with the government to discuss open government, and were later sent the draft action plan, which the government proceeded to call a public consultation, although they asked us to forward on the document if we wanted other civil society organisations to also make comments.

The final action plan, upon which we had made comments and recommendations, was not as ambitious as we had hoped, given the recommendations we made.
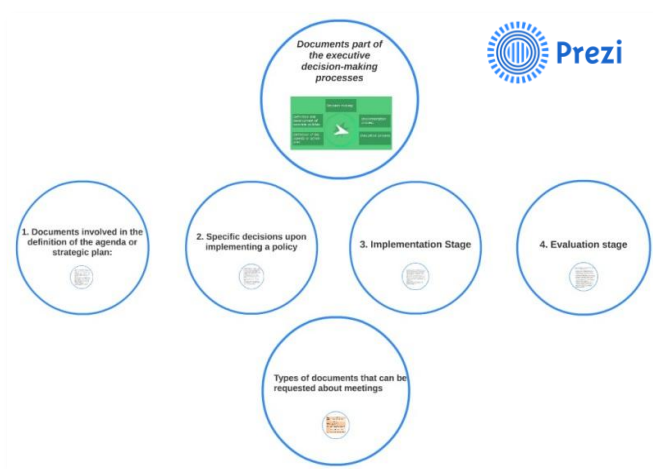
Threats to Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression in Spain

Spain saw various threats to access to information and freedom of expression throughout 2014, and Access Info worked to make sure international institutions and the public were made aware of this. We condemned police violence against journalists in March, as well as join other organisations in writing to the UN Committee on Human Rights to investigate human rights violations in Spain.

Access Info Europe worked with the International Press Institute (IPI) to organise the first International Press Freedom Mission to Spain. We helped organise a training session for journalists on defamation, and with the IPI representatives we met with various media outlets to discuss press freedom and access to information. The concluding report from the mission, published the day after the transparency law came into effect, criticised the threats to freedom of information and expression in Spain.

Decision-Making Transparency

Without transparency there can be no public participation in decision making, accountability of public bodies is seriously undermined, and it's impossible to track and counter the disproportionate influence of private lobbyists.

In spite of all the progress made with the right of access to information in recent years, it is still remarkably hard to obtain information about how decisions are taken, by whom and based on which evidence.

Access Info has identified the documents generated in typical national decision-making process and those specifically produced at the EU level.

Together with partners in ten countries, we have started to map transparency of decision-making in law and practice. The legal analysis includes checking the obligation to create and make public key classes of information.

A focus for requests in the first phase of the project is minutes of meetings related to a particular policy or decision-making process. We are also testing availability of documents submitted by lobbyists and external interest groups. The mapping will identify the blackspots in decision-making transparency and which exceptions are invoked to deny access.

Business Transparency: Company Ownership

Seeking to secure access to Company Registers using the right of access to information, and to counter the current practice in most countries whereby company register information is only freely accessible if it is accessed record-per-record, Access Info in 2014 continued work with the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project to request access to national company registers across Europe for free and in a reusable format.

Mapping under this project revealed that bulk access to the company registers is usually only for a fee which can range from €10,000 in Macedonia, to €75,000 in the Netherlands, to €286,000 in Estonia, thus limiting public access to this information to only those who can afford to pay.

Working with investigative journalists in 32 countries, Access Info Europe pursued access using the national access to information laws. In May 2014, Access Info and its partners obtained an important victory in the **Czech Republic** in that we managed to secure free access to the bulk of the company register. With the help of a local lawyer we filed a series of appeals, which

initially resulted in limited access to the bulk of the company register in January 2014. A follow-up request campaign led by our partners in the Czech Republic in April and supported by a group of journalists eventually resulted in the Czech government uploading to the company register website a full copy of the database on 30 May 2014, which is freely available for bulk download. The database includes the names of individuals connected to each company, but information about the business area or concession of the company is missing, as is the names of the company's shareholders.

In **Slovenia**, following an appeal presented in 2013, the Information Commissioner ruled that, since we had made clear that the database would be used for non-commercial purposes, the Company Register should be provided for free, although with a prohibition on searching by name through the personal data in the register. The Slovenian Business registry has challenged this decision and a Court case is ongoing.

Access Info Europe and the OCCRP are now working with Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice who are coordinating the provision of pro bono legal support in order to map and develop strategies overcoming the multiple legal obstacles to securing free and open access to company register databases. This potential litigation approaches will complement campaign activity.

The research and campaigning by Access Info is running in parallel to broader civil society campaigns for creation of and access to **registers of beneficial owners of companies**, information needed by investigative journalists, and for human rights, anti-corruption and tax justice work. Access Info has been monitoring developments and engaged in campaigning activity, including with the Financial Transparency Coalition, the UNCAC Civil Society Coalition and in Spain with InspirAction and Oxfam Intermon.

Access for Rights

Access Info Europe supports civil society groups engaged in protection of human rights to make requests for information. We provide strategic and technical support, we help design information requests campaigns, and we help evaluate findings from a right to information perspective. The data sets are then made available on the Access Info Europe website for other groups to use.

Police and Protest

Police behaviour during protests has become an important issue given the increased number of street demonstrations in the wake of the financial crisis.

Access Info's mapped levels of transparency through requests submitted to 42 police forces across Europe about the legal framework for and the actual use of different types of equipment during policing of protests.

The research revealed an appalling lack of lack of transparency about police activities during protests.

We did, however, have some positive examples where information was provided. For example, nine police forces disclosed information about which types of equipment they are permitted to use during protests, ranging from batons, shields and handcuffs, to dogs, tear gas, and even rubber bullets in Croatia, Estonia and Latvia.

Knowing whether the police have been trained is essential to evaluating compliance with human rights norms. Just five police forces (12%) – England, Germany, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, and Sweden – provided this information.

Similarly just ten countries (24%) disclosed information about evaluation reports. Notably the Northern Irish police force provided us with links to such reports, indicating good practice of publishing this type of information proactively.

The Findings

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countries surveyed **provided full information** to a set of five questions about the law governing use of equipment during protests, the training on its use, the quantities and nature of equipment held, and post-protest evaluations.

There was **administrative silence** from a full

22/42

countries, in spite of various follow up attempts.

13/42

police forces contacted **responded to requests about the legal framework** governing the use equipment during protests. This is basic information that should be provided to anyone who asks for it.

10/42

countries **provided information** about whether police are **permitted to use equipment** such as batons, shields, water cannons, and rubber bullets.

10/42

countries **provided any evaluation reports** on the actual use of such equipment in protests situations.

37/42

countries **failed to provide** any **information about the training** given to police on use of equipment.

Recommendations to Police Forces

Specific recommendations that Access Info Europe sent to the relevant police forces:

» That senior police management reviews and improves the training of relevant officials on their obligations under national access to information legislation to respond to requests: Administrative silence is never and option.

» That all the police forces in this study review the way in which they collect, manage, and make available information about their activities. Information should be made available on line in places which make it easy to locate and in formats which permit easy download and reuse of the data.

There should be proactive disclosure of key information, including the rules and regulations governing police action, about the equipment permitted during protests, and evaluation reports, particularly after any problems which arise or violence which ensues during the policing of protests.

Empowering Users with the Right to Information

Legal Leaks for Journalists

The Legal Leaks Toolkit developed by Access Info Europe and n-ost, along with the accompanying training and help desk, are designed to empower journalists to recoup their role as public watchdogs using the right of access to information.

In 2014, with the support of UNESCO and the European Commission, Access Info Europe carried out a series of trainings for journalists in the Western Balkans, with events in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. In total we trained around 100 journalists in 7 Countries.

The Toolkit is now available in the generic English language version as well as in 13 versions tailored to national legal framework and translated versions for:

The Legal Leaks training covered data journalism, how to request information in European countries and from the EU, training on how to analyse and present data obtained, including use of data visualisation techniques. Follow-up legal advice through a Help Desk is delivering ongoing support to journalists and bloggers. For more information on this please check:

http://www.access-info.org/ati-in-journalism

Working Globally To Promote Transparency

Access Info Europe continues to be one of the leading organisations globally working to advance the right of access to information in the areas of policy, standards, law and practice.

We strongly believe in networking and collaboration between civil society globally. In all of our projects and campaigns we work with partner organisations.

We are also active members of the key international communities working on the right of access to information, on open government, and on anti-corruption.

The RTI Community

Access Info acts as the secretariat for the global Freedom of Information Advocates Network, a community of over 200 organisations founded in 2002, which is the premier knowledge-sharing forum for more than 800 right to information experts.

In July 2014, we hosted in Madrid a FOIAnet Steering Committee meeting to drive strategic planning for the network, we organised the elections for a new FOIAnet Steering Committee, and we redesigned and relaunched the FOIAnet website.

The Open Government Movement

Access Info Europe engages in the open government movement by bringing our particular expertise on standards, policy, and monitoring.

The Open Government Standards have contributed to the development of Lobbying Transparency Standards and to the Open Governance Scorecard, developed by Transparency International with expert input from Access Info Europe during 2014, which is currently being piloted in five countries.

Access Info continued to participate actively in the Open Government Partnership. At the OGP Regional Meeting in Europe, held in Dublin on 8-9 May 2014, we organised a panel on "Open Government: standards and indicators for measuring progress." Measuring levels of open government remains a challenge but panellists agreed it is possible to do so, and that more accurate monitoring is essential to ensure genuine advances.

Given the patchy progress being made on open government, Access Info Europe is also active in calling for real change. On Open Data Day, we reiterated our call for governments to take the basic step of ensuring that all data released in digital format is also in open format.

In September, Access Info Europe joined 107 civil society organizations from around the world, including the Sunlight Foundation, the Latin American Legislative Network, Open Knowledge, and Transparency International chapters, in launching a global campaign for transparent and accountable legislatures.

Earlier in the year, we also joined the Stop Secret Contracts campaign which calls on world leaders to end secrecy in public contracting.

The Anti-Corruption Movement

Access Info Europe acts as the European coordinator of the UNCAC Coalition, a global network of civil society groups promoting implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption.

Access Info supports the campaigning activity of the UNCAC Coalition with activities including commissioning and editing case studies for the UNCAC Coalition blog to raise awareness of success stories in combating corruption as well as of the ongoing challenges.

We also conduct outreach to expand the membership and support gathering of signatures for joint campaigns, such as the call made on International Anti-Corruption Day, 9 December, on governments to get serious about tackling corruption by more effective implementation of the UNCAC.

If you have read this far…

You'll probably want to ask a question now.

Go ahead, ask the EU!

Or ask any other country! Freedom of information technologies will take your questions anywhere:

Australia

Croatia

United Kingdom

Ukraine

Germany and Austria

Italy

Spain

Czech Republic

Romania

Collaborators and Supporters

Access Info Europe takes this opportunity to thank all of our team and our supporters.

Essential to our work and successes are the contributions of our dedicated team, board members, consultants and collaborators, volunteers and interns. The core team is Helen Darbishire, Victoria Anderica, Pam Bartlett Quintanilla, Andreas Pavlou, Álvaro Rodriguez and Luisa Izuzquiza. Special thanks in 2014 go to: Daniel Bezares Susín, Juanjo Cordero, Carlos Cordero Sanz, David Goldberg, Gergana Jouleva, Maeve McDonagh, Ivan Szekely, Lydia Medland, Fiona Harrison, Joe Balson, Emeline Ledent, Fernando Remiro, Inés Medem, and Elli Palaiologou.

We are grateful to all our donors: the Open Society Foundations, Adessium Stichting, UNESCO, the European Commission, the Isvara Foundation, the Open Society Information Program, ALTER-EU, the Journalism Development Network, Transparency International, and Citizens for Europe. Funding for work to promote and defend the right of access to information in Europe is scarce, and Access Info Europe would not be able to achieve all that we do, nor have the impact which we have, without the invaluable support of these donors.

We are also hugely grateful to the private individuals who have supported our work with donations, as well as those who have helped us with contributions of their invaluable time, ranging from pro bono legal advice to helping on admin tasks in the office.

Access Info Europe

Income and Expenditure Accounts

Financial Year 1 January 2013 – 31 December 2013

Income

Grants and Project funds		372,703.04
These funds comprise:		
» Open Society Foundation	110,119.50	
» Adessium Stiching	72,640.00	
» UNESCO (via the European Commission)	63,345.00	
» Open Soc. Program Independent Journalism	56,006.16	
» FOIAnet Grant via Open Society	25,160.42	
» International Press Institute	12,001.16	
» Swiss Cooperation Poland / Cities on Internet	7,683.20	
» Isvara Foundation	7,532.00	
» Open Society Information Program	7,091.38	
» Alter EU	3,825.00	
» Journalism Development Network (OCCRP)	3,100.00	
» Transparency International	2,800.00	
» Citizens for Europe	2,000.00	
» Robert Bosch Stiftung (unspent returned)	-600.78	
Honoraria Conferences & Consultancies		11,125.92
Reimbursement travel / Per diems		4,203.32
Donations private individuals		269.68

Total Income € 388,301.96

Expenditure

Personnel & Management Costs

Executive Director (with tax, social security and health insurance)	58,206.00
Staff and professional collaborators (inc. tax and social security)	113,935.13
Consultants & Researchers	24,183.55
Internship Allowances	3,613.20
Accountants, Payroll	4,156.79
Legal services	369.50
Sub-total	**€ 205,064.17**

Operating and Project costs

Accommodation	8,857.71
Bank charges (includes transfer fees)	771.68
Conference Room Hire + Event Refreshments	4832.80
Depreciation Office Equipment & Furniture	1098.99
Design - Graphic & Web	8888.90
Gifts (in lieu of accommodation) and presents	136.33
Insurance – Office, Liability, Travel, Health	1717.44
Office & IT Equipment	1123.01
Office cleaning	2497.32
Office rental	26,136.00
Office supplies, consumables, newspapers, books	569.00
Postage and couriers	443.52
Printing	4145.74
Refreshments and business meals	2243.83
Re-Grants to Partners	3484.16
Software	22.34
Tax interest payments, charges	842.81
Telephone/internet/mobile/Skype	2,721.62
Translators / Interpreters	3,663.90
Travel (includes long distance and local ground transport)	16,805.10
Utilities – Electricity, Gas & Water	1,383.70
Web domains	247.70
Web hosting	1,625.69
Sub-total	**€ 94,725.89**

Total Expenditure   € 299,790.06

BALANCE   € 88,511.90