Press release | 13.09.2012

Access to documents

MEPs endorse deal ensuring EP gets access to classified Council documents

The European Parliament today voted to adopt an inter-institutional agreement with Council under which the EP will get access to classified documents from the Council (1). After the vote, Greens/EFA MEP **Gerald Häfner**, who was the EP's rapporteur/draftsperson, stated:

"This agreement is crucial for strengthening the democratic functioning of the EU institutions and to the democratic oversight role of the European Parliament. Access to these classified documents is essential for the EP to be able to effectively exercise its functions, notably in view of its expanded competences under the Lisbon Treaty. A similar agreement already exists with the Commission and the agreement adopted today ensures this disparity is redressed.

"A case in point is international agreements, which must be consented by the EP to come into force: the EP should now get access to negotiating documents, which it was hitherto denied. This ensures the EP can input into the process and is not just presented with a text with which it does not agree, with no alternative but to reject, as was the case with ACTA. Ensuring international agreements are not concluded behind closed doors is essential to the democratic functioning of the EU and for ensuring the proper input of the democratically-elected European Parliament, and hence legitimacy in the eyes of European citizens."

(1) The EP will get access to all classified documents but for documents deemed top secret, it will only have access under certain conditions.

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