

Recommendation R(81)19 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted on 25.11.1981

"The following principles apply to natural and legal persons. In the implementation of these principles regard shall duly be had to the requirements of good and efficient administration. Where such requirements make it necessary to modify or exclude one or more of these principles, either in particular cases or in specific areas of public administration, every endeavour should nevertheless be made to achieve the highest possible degree of access to information

I. Everyone within the jurisdiction of a member state shall have the right to obtain, on request, information held by the public authorities other than legislative bodies and judicial authorities.

II. Effective and appropriate means shall be provided to ensure access to information.

III. Access to information shall not be refused on the ground that the requesting person has not a specific interest in the matter

IV. Access to information shall be provided on the basis of equality.

V. The foregoing principles shall apply subject only to such limitations and restrictions as are necessary in a democratic society for the protection of legitimate public interests (such as national security, public safety, public order, the economic well-being of the country, the prevention of crime, or for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence), and for the protection of privacy, and other legitimate private interests, having, however, due regard to the specific interest of an individual in information held by the public authorities which concerns him personally

VI. Any request for information shall be decided upon within a reasonable time

VII. A public authority refusing access to information shall give the reasons on which the refusal is based according to law or practice

VIII. Any refusal of information shall be subject to review on request."