



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 24 November 2004 (29.11)
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NOTE

from :	French delegation
to :	Working Party on Legal Data Processing
Subject :	Paris Conference – "Law via the Internet" Paris conclusions

The participants at the Paris Conference on "Law via the Internet",

Representatives of national public authorities or international institutions, members of legal research institutes, teachers and researchers, magistrates, practitioners of or specialists in the processing and publication of legal information, continuing the process begun by the Montreal Declaration,

- ▶ **Declare** that the dissemination of law in intelligible form on a medium accessible to all citizens is a guarantee of their equality before the law and that the development of information technology must contribute as extensively as possible.

- ▶ **Consider** that it is the responsibility of those who draft rules of law:
 - to promote exhaustive, coherent dissemination of them, in the original version but also in consolidated form, and in an official version provided free of charge in authenticated digital format;

- to extend freely accessible legal data to include any national or local administrative document that contributes to understanding the meaning and development of legal provisions;
 - to support the development of technologies to:
 - assist in legal drafting which would make it possible not only to evaluate the impact of drafts on the existing corpus but also to consolidate the texts they are intended to modify,
 - provide language assistance and automated navigation in order to facilitate access for citizens of one State to the texts applicable in another State.
- ▶ **Undertake** to encourage all initiatives designed to:
- improve the intelligibility of the law by developing computer-assisted technologies for the production and consolidation of laws;
 - promote coordinated consolidation of national and international laws;
 - facilitate the approximation of legislation and judicial decisions by setting up a network to allow access to the law applicable in any place, at any time and in any circumstance;
 - intensify exchanges of technology on automatic anonymisation so that the dissemination of case law is not hampered by an over-restrictive interpretation of privacy protection requirements;
 - help each university to ensure free dissemination of its doctrine of law allowing better understanding of each country's national laws and case law;
 - organise durable storage of national and international legal data on electronic media.

Montreal Declaration on Public Access to Law

3 October 2002

Legal information institutes of the world, meeting in Montreal, declare that:

- Public legal information from all countries and international institutions is part of the common heritage of humanity. Maximising access to this information promotes justice and the rule of law;
- Public legal information is digital common property and should be accessible to all on a non-profit basis and, where possible, free of charge;
- Independent non-profit organisations have the right to publish public legal information and the government bodies that create or control that information should provide access to it so that it can be published.

Public legal information means legal information produced by public bodies that have a duty to produce law and make it public. It includes primary sources of law, such as legislation, case law and treaties, as well as various secondary (interpretative) public sources, such as reports on preparatory work and law reform, and resulting from boards of inquiry.

Therefore, the legal information institutes agree:

- To promote and support free access to public legal information throughout the world, principally via the Internet;
- To cooperate in order to achieve these goals and, in particular, to assist organisations in developing countries to achieve these goals, recognising the reciprocal advantages that all obtain from access to each other's law;

- To help each other and to support, within their means, other organisations that share these goals with respect to:
 - Promotion, to governments and other organisations, of public policy conducive to the accessibility of public legal information;
 - Technical assistance, advice and training;
 - Development of open technical standards;
 - Academic exchange of research results.

Made at the 4th Law via the Internet Conference in Montreal on 3 October 2002 by representatives of the following legal information institutes:

- Australasian Legal Information Institute
- British and Irish Legal Information Institute
- LexUM/Canadian Legal Information Institute
- Hong Kong Legal Information Institute
- Legal Information Institute (Cornell)
- Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute
- University of the West Indies Faculty of Law Library
- Wits University School of Law

