AIG(2025)10

7 November 2025

**Council of Europe Access Info Group (AIG)**

**Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No.205)**

**Thematic monitoring** **on document management and preservation**

**Questionnaire to the Parties to the Convention**

1. **Introduction**

The Council of Europe Access Info Group (the AIG) has completed its baseline evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No.205, the Convention) by 15 Parties. It has also published its opinion on the definition of “official documents” according to Article 1, paragraph 2, sub-paragraph b, of the Convention. The AIG now continues its monitoring of the implementation of the Convention based on Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Convention. With this questionnaire, the AIG will collect information for the purpose of monitoring the issue of document management and preservation.

The efficient management of documents held by public authorities (see definition in Article 1, paragraph 2, sub-paragraph a, of the Convention) and the application of clear and established rules for their preservation ensures that documents are available and easily accessible. The AIG will, therefore, examine based on Article 9, paragraphs c and d, of the Convention, the issue of management and preservation of official documents.

Pursuant to Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Convention, and Rule 30.1 of its Rules of Procedure, the AIG will also invite non-governmental organisations to provide relevant information.

The reply to this questionnaire, along with any supporting documentation, should be submitted in one of the official Council of Europe languages (English or French).

1. **Questions**
2. How is management, preservation and archiving of documents by public authorities regulated? Please provide an official translation of the relevant regulations in one of the Council of Europe languages (English or French).
3. Are all documents held by a public authority registered? If so, what information about the documents is put on the register? Who is responsible for the registration? At which point does registration take place?
4. Are there any exceptions applied to the requirements for registration of documents based on their content?
5. Are there some instructions or policies in place as regards registration of correspondence sent directly to/from a public official?
6. Are the registers of official documents public?
7. Are electronic messages (emails, SMS messages, etc) treated in the same way as physical documents?
8. Do public authorities use a common system for registering documents, or does each public authority use its own system for registration?
9. What criteria do public authorities apply for storing official documents? For example, in what format and where documents are stored?
10. What criteria do public authorities apply for the retention of documents and what retention periods are applied?
11. What criteria do public authorities apply for transferring documents to archives?
12. What criteria do public authorities apply for eliminating/destroying documents?
13. Please describe case-law and/or practice which exist as regards document management and preservation (from courts, ombudsmen, information commissioners, etc).