



THE RIGHT TO KNOW

Concept Definition and Background Document*

Executive Summary

The Scientific Committee, May 2017

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The campaign for the affirmation of the public's right to know aims to tackle the erosion of the Rule of Law and human rights worldwide by working towards a global debate at all relevant governing Institutions and in civil society aimed at reinforcing and affirming the primacy of international human rights standards, citizen's participation, and effective accountability measures. We propose the adoption of a human and civil right to know as a key tool to achieving such goals and as a core element of the Rule of Law.

The conceptual definition and background document presents an overview of the main characteristics of this proposed human right, as (a) the citizen's civil and political right (b) to be actively informed of all aspects regarding the administration of all public goods (c) during the entire political process, in order to allow (d) for the full and democratic participation in public debate regarding such goods and (e) hold public goods administrators accountable according to the standards of human rights and the Rule of Law.

The public right to know is enabled through *an ecology of public debate, transparency and human rights instruments* (e.g. freedom of expression and press), which ensure that all relevant information as who, what, how and why is released to the public at any stage of the policy making process and that any limitations are themselves subject to public debate and control and review. This ecology of instruments is key to allowing true and pluralistic public debate and participation in a democratic society.

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