



II CALRE AWARD “Stars of Europe”

Participation form

Regional legislative assembly: Flemish Parliament

Country: Belgium

President: Jan Peumans

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Type of project:

- a) Regional law:
- b) Administrative act:
- c) Procedure:
- d) Other: EU-database of the Flemish Parliament – helping members of the Flemish Parliament (and the Flemish citizens) in scrutinizing the European legislative process.

Date of issuing of the initiative: 2015 (start-up & development)

Reference period: 01/01/2015-31/12/2016 (Test period) – Since 01/01/2017 the EU-database is fully operational

Short description of the initiative:

According Protocol I on the role of the national parliaments in the European Union, that is attached to the Lisbon Treaty, the European Commission provides the national parliaments with all its legislative proposals, study documents and discussion papers (Green and White Papers). Being considered as a chamber of the Belgian national parliamentary system, the regional parliaments (including the Flemish Parliament) receive these documents as well, by way of a common email address, managed by the Senate. In total the Flemish Parliament's European Office receives about 2000 documents on a yearly basis. These documents are essential for the Members of Parliament to perform their duty to scrutinize the decision making process on the European level as well as the European Commission's policy (control on subsidiarity and control on the content of the European law proposals).

The European Office of the Flemish Parliament has to deal with several problems: the amount of documents published by the European Commission, the assessment of the relevance of every document and the fact that members of parliament only like to get informed on policy fields within their interest. If the Flemish Parliament's



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European Office would send 2000 documents to the members, they would all be flooded by information and not capable to manage the information.

In order to manage and administer the information stream and to bring the relevant information to the people involved, the European Office and the ICT department of the Flemish Parliament developed the EU-database.

The EU-database:

- The European Office makes a first selection out of all the documents it receives from the European Commission. Only these EU-documents that are relevant for the Flemish Parliament are recorded in the EU-database (EU- documents that can have an influence on a competence/ policy field of Flanders (environment, agriculture, culture, media, economics, infrastructure, ...)).
- The documents are recorded in the database in the Dutch language version and are assigned to a policy field of the Flemish Parliament. Everyone (not only members of parliament – but also civilians) can use the database (search possibility by topic, number, year, policy field, ...):
<https://www.vlaamsparlement.be/parlementaire-documenten/europese-documenten>
- Together with the EU-document (and the related annexes, Staff Working Documents and other EC-documents such as press releases, Q&A, infographics, ...) a summary of the document is published in the EU-database enabling the members of parliament to decide quickly if the EU-document is interesting for them. If so, they can read the full text of the document.
- If the EU-document is part of a wider initiative (e.g. white paper with implementing directives) links to the other EU-documents are added.
- The EU-documents recorded in the EU-database are also automatically linked to the webpages of the relevant and competent committee(s) of the Flemish Parliament: e.g. a document on education will appear on the Flemish Parliament 's intranet pages of the Committee on education. The chairman and the secretary of the committee on education will automatically receive an email alerting them that there is a new EU-document on education available.
- Everyone (members of Parliament, assistants of Members of Parliament, civilians, NGO's, ...) has access the EU-database and can subscribe to an email list to receive all a new published EU-documents on a specific policy field.
- If the EU-document qualifies for a subsidiarity scrutiny by the national parliaments of the European Union, everyone who indicated to be interested in the policy field concerned will receive an email as soon as the period of 8 weeks to submit a reasoned opinion on subsidiarity has begun.



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- During the period of 8 weeks in which the Flemish Parliament can issue a reasoned opinion, a green/red mark next to the EU-document in the EU-database will make clear that the Flemish Parliament still has (or has not anymore) the possibility to issue a reasoned opinion on subsidiarity.
- Every EU-document in our EU-database is also linked with the IPEX-database of the national parliaments of the EU, the REGPEX-database of the Committee of the Regions and the Legislative Observatory website of the European Parliament. These links are helpful to see if other parliaments have already taken a position on the concerned EU-document.
- All the initiatives of the Flemish Parliament on EU-documents (hearings, oral or written questions, parliamentary discussions, resolutions, reasoned opinions on subsidiarity, ...) are added to the EU-database. The EU-database is the most transparent source of information on the way the Flemish Parliament is dealing with the EU.
- The EU-database is a very open system: it is possible to add information and links from all kinds of sources when relevant: Flemish government, NGO's, other national or regional parliaments, academics, ...
- The system is also very open and accessible to the public: the database is public and everyone can register and receive an email each time a relevant EU-document regarding a specific policy field is being published.

Role of the regional Assembly:

The Flemish Parliament (European Office and ICT department) developed the EU-database internally and update it on a daily basis.



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Main features of the initiative

- The EU-database helps members of Flemish Parliament to scrutinize the EU decision-making process.
- It helps to make information, legislation and policy of the European Union accessible for a broad public.
- It connects different levels of governance (European level, regional level, national level).
- It is open to the public.
- The initiative has 4 main features:
 1. selection of relevant EU-documents (for Flanders and the Flemish Parliament)
 2. delivery of these EU-documents to the concerned Members of Parliament and the competent committees
 3. enrichment of the EU-document with relevant information that makes it suitable for political discussion (summary, adequate and important information provided by European institutions, Flemish government, NGO's, national and regional parliaments, ...)
 4. Creation of links between the different governance levels

Description of the consequences on the regions pointing out the positive European implications

- Helps the regional politicians, actors, NGO's and citizens to understand and overview the European decision-making process.

Forms with the description of the initiative must be sent by 2 June 2017 to the CALRE General Secretariat, at the following e-mail:

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