Finding European Directives, Regulations and Decisions

There are two forms of European Union (EU) legislation: primary legislation embodied in the Treaties and secondary legislation in the form of Regulations, Directives and Decisions which are used to implement the policies set out in the Treaties.

The Treaty of Rome (Art.189) defines the various categories of secondary legislation:

“A Regulation shall have general application. It shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States. A Directive shall be binding, as to the result to be achieved, upon each Member State to which it is addressed, but shall leave to the national authorities the choice of form and methods. A Decision shall be binding in its entirety upon those to whom it is addressed.”

Citing Secondary Legislation

Regulations, Directives and Decisions are individually numbered in an annual sequence. Regulations are issued with the Community prefix and document number preceding the year:

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1442/2001 of 16 July 2001 on the authorisation of transfers between the quantitative limits of textiles and clothing products originating in the Republic of India

Directives and Decisions are issued with the year preceding the document number and Community prefix:


Finding a Directive or Regulation in Glasgow University Library

The main collection of European Regulations and Directives are on Level 7 in EEC Periodicals.

Directives, Decisions and Regulations are published in the Legislation Series of the Official Journal of the European Union, which is commonly referred to as the OJ L. The OJL is shelved in the EEC Pers section on Level 7 at (EEC Pers OF 240) We hold this in paper until the end of June 2013. From the 1st of July 2013 the online version of the Official Journal on Eur-Lex became legally authorative for all years.

The full text of all Regulations, Decisions and Directives in force can be found on the EUR-Lex website. For help and advice on locating this material online, please see the following directions, or speak to staff on Level 7 of the library.
Finding a Directive or Regulation on EUR-Lex

Step 1: Access to EUR-Lex

EUR-Lex is a database of the complete collections of EU legal texts in all the official languages

Step 2: Searching if you know the directive, regulation or decision number

From the home page, select the year, number and type of document and press Search.
Step 3: Searching if you don't know the directive or regulation number

There is a simple search, accessed by clicking the Simple tab of the search box on the home page.

Alternatively, an advanced search can be accessed by clicking on the Advanced Search option.
Step 3: Search Results Display Screen

To access full text of directive, regulation or decision – click on the html or pdf option to view