



## **ARTICLE 19 Freedom of Information Policy**

**April 2007**

### **Introduction**

ARTICLE 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression, has for many years campaigned for a right to access information held by public bodies as a basic human right. We believe that public bodies have an obligation to disclose information and that every member of the public has a corresponding right to receive information. Transparency enhances democracy and participation, reduces wrongdoing and leads to better public policies and practices.

In keeping with the spirit and beliefs of our organisation, we have drafted our own Freedom of Information Policy. This Policy, although necessarily simplified given the relatively modest scope of our activities, is fully consistent with our policies and standards on access to information held by public bodies. In particular, it is drafted with a view to respecting the public's right to know and it is based on the principle of maximum disclosure. In accordance with those principles, two main means of providing access are envisaged: first, we disclose a wide range of information on a routine basis, via our website ([www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org)). Second, all of the information we hold, subject to four limited exceptions, will be made available upon request.

### **Routine Disclosure**

The categories of information and documents listed in Annex 1 are available on our website and are, as relevant, routinely updated. Annex 1 itself is subject to annual review and updating. In rare cases, a document, or a part thereof, otherwise subject to routine publication may fall within the scope of the regime of exceptions, in which case it will not be made available.

### **Process for Requesting Documents**

### Making a request

Anyone may request information from ARTICLE 19 by the telephone (+44 (0)20 7278-9292), by email ([info@article19.org](mailto:info@article19.org)), by fax (+44 (0)20 7239-7660), by mail (6-8 Amwell Street, London, EC1R 1UQ, United Kingdom), or via any other practical means. A request may be directed to any ARTICLE 19 staff member. Where a request is not clear, we will ask for further clarification and, where necessary, provide assistance to a requester in formulating his or her request.

### Time limits

We will normally deal with requests within five working days. Where requests are not directed to the central contacts noted above (i.e. where they are directed to specific staff members), they will be dealt with within five working days of actual receipt of the request by that staff member, which may be delayed because of travel, sickness, holidays or such like. We will attempt to deal with urgent requests, where an adequate case for urgency has been made by the requester, within two working days.

### Form of communicating information

We will endeavour to provide the information in any form in which we hold it (normally electronic or print) or can generate it through an automated process (e.g. printing an electronic document), and in any language in which we have it.

### Fees

No fees will be charged for requests which are satisfied electronically (i.e. where the information is emailed). No fees will be charged for the first 50 pages of printed or photocopied material. Reasonable fees, based on actual costs relating to copying and dissemination, may be charged for requests which involve larger amounts of information. Where a request is for a document that we offer for sale, the regular price may be charged for that document.

## **Regime of exceptions**

We recognise four legitimate grounds for refusing access to information: personal information; legal privilege; confidentiality; and our ability to operate effectively.

### Personal Information

We will not disclose personal information about a natural third party which would breach his or her privacy or a legitimate privacy interest unless that person has consented or the information was provided on the clear understanding that it might be made public.

### Legal Privilege

We will not disclose information which is privileged from production in legal proceedings unless the person who is entitled to the privilege waives it. ARTICLE 19 will waive its own legal privilege unless to do so would put it at a disadvantage in legal proceedings or breach one of the other exceptions in this policy.

### Confidentiality

We will not disclose information where to do so would constitute an actionable breach of confidence or a related legal obligation. We will also not disclose information where it was provided to us in confidence and to disclose it would seriously prejudice our relations with the body that provided it, to the detriment of ARTICLE 19's interests.

### Ability to Operate Effectively

We will not disclose information where to do so would seriously undermine our ability to operate effectively, for example by seriously harming our relations with a third party, by inhibiting the provision of free and frank advice within the organisation or by putting the safety of our partners, contacts or staff at risk.

### Severability

Where only part of a document falls within the scope of an exception, the rest of the document, to the extent it may be reasonably severed from the exempt information, will still be disclosed.

### Public Interest Override

Information will still be disclosed even if it falls within the scope of an exception where this is in the overall public interest.

## **Appeals**

Anyone who believes that an ARTICLE 19 staff member has failed properly to apply this policy may appeal to the Executive Director (tel: +44 (0)20 7239-1184, email: [agnes@article19.org](mailto:agnes@article19.org)). Any such appeal shall be decided within five working days. Where the Executive Director is away from the office, the five working days shall commence from the date of his or her return.

### **Information Available on a Proactive Basis**

The following categories of information and documents are available on our website and, as relevant, are regularly updated.

#### About Article 19

What Article 19 does?

Organisation Chart

Mission Statement

List of staff with short biographies

ARTICLE 19 Policies

Audited Accounts

Newsletters

Constituent documents (Statute, Bye-Laws, Articles of Association)

List of partners

#### Project output

All documents produced as part of the output of a project or our core funded work, including:

- Publications
- Press releases and advocacy letters
- Legal analysis and briefs
- Standard-setting documents

**Last updated: April 2007**