



# ASK ABOUT THE EU

THE FOLKETING EU  
INFORMATION CENTRE





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## What is the EU Information Centre?

For most people it is difficult to comprehend what goes on in the European Union. Its many institutions, special procedures and rules can appear a bit labyrinthine. That's why the Folketing offers a hotline for you to turn to for answers to your questions. The EU Information Centre of the Folketing is a politically neutral information service providing factual answers to questions about the EU. Fast, impartial, factual and free of charge.

The EU Information Centre addresses a wide range of questions posed by many different users. We explain the fundamental structure of the European Union to pupils in primary and secondary schools, who often have little or no idea what happens in Brussels. We help university students find the most recent amendment to a particular consumer protection directive or the key figures on the economy in the Euro zone. And we help the sharp-witted newspaper reader understand the legislative process of the EU. In other words, we provide the answer to your specific question about the European Union.

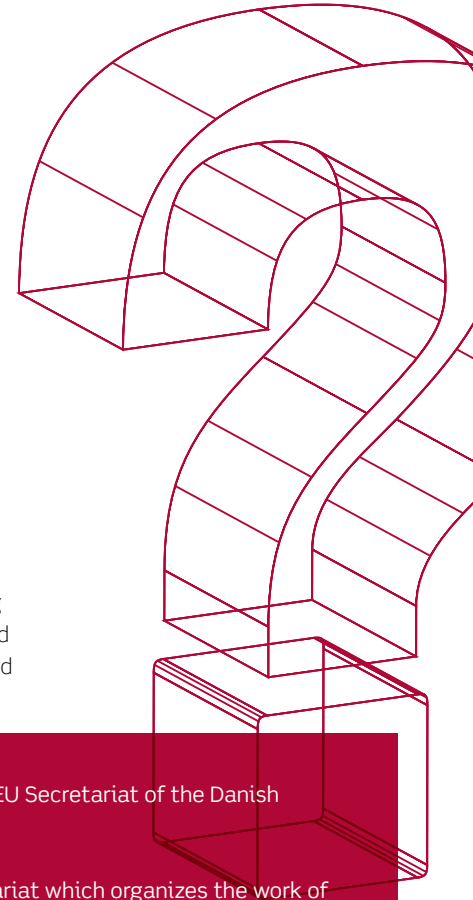
The Folketing set up its EU Information Centre in 1994. At the time, Denmark had been through two referenda on the Maastricht Treaty and the Edin-

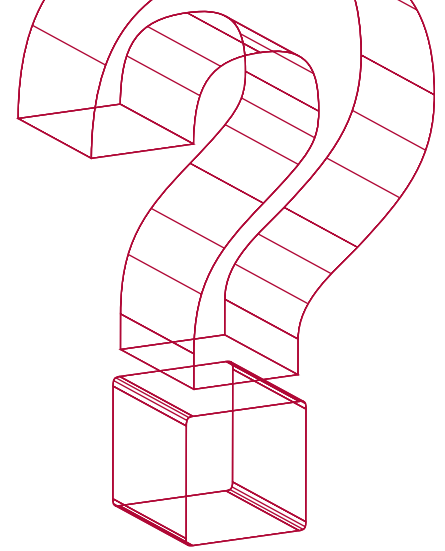
burgh decision. The public debate was divided along the lines of those in favour of and those opposed to the EU, with interpretations of the European reality which were often miles apart. It was against this background that the Folketing decided to set up a hotline which everybody could safely turn to for a factual and politically unbiased answer to their question.

The EU Information Centre is a part of the EU Secretariat of the Danish Parliament which consists of four units:

1. The European Affairs Committee Secretariat which organizes the work of this standing committee in the Folketing.
2. The EU Consultancy Service which conducts analyses of European affairs.
3. The Folketing's representative in Brussels whose tasks include reporting on the work of the European Parliament and Commission.
4. The EU Information Centre.

The EU Information Centre employs five information officers, a secretary and a number of students. We work closely with the staff in the rest of the EU Secretariat to ensure a high degree of professionalism.





## We will find the answer to your question

Since the EU Information Centre first opened its telephone lines in 1994, we have answered more than 140,000 enquiries. In years when a referendum was held, there have been a high number of questions. In an average, we receive around 10,000 enquiries a year.



The EU Information Centre closely follows work in the European Affairs Committee. We participate in their committee meetings and maintain an up-to-date picture of the European political agenda. Being part of the Folketing administration we have access to the European Affairs Committee's archive with its abundance of documents, which have been considered by the Folketing since the very first negotiations about entry into the Common Market. We can therefore offer privileged access to information about the EU. Thanks to our excellent contacts in the European and Danish administrations plus detailed knowledge of the many Internet search facilities, we nearly always find an answer.

In nine out of 10 instances we succeed in answering your question within 24 hours.

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?**

The Council of the European Union is often simply called the Council or the Council of Ministers. The Council is where ministers from each member country meet to adopt legislation and make decisions. The European Council, on the other hand, consists of the Heads of State and Government of the member state and the President of the European Commission. Their task is to determine the overall political guidelines for the European Union.

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## Our publications

The EU Information Centre issues a range of publications with both simple and more exhaustive answers to the most frequently asked questions about the European Union. The material can be ordered at [www.eu-oplysningen.dk](http://www.eu-oplysningen.dk) or direct by telephone. All our material is free and is also sent to schools.

### **EU FACT SHEETS**

A series of brief presentations about the various institutions, key policies and procedures, written in a language which is easily accessible.

### **Other publications**

The EU Information Centre publishes folders and books about selected topics, often chosen on the basis of the important items on the European political agenda. Our “bestselling title” is “117 questions and answers about the EU”. The book gives you an introduction to the EU, taking as its starting point the questions we encounter most frequently at the EU Information Centre. For those seeking more in-depth information, we offer almost 200 pages on the legislative process of the European Union.

### **Treaty texts**

Ever since the EU Information Centre was set up, enquirers have been able to order a compiled and up-to-date version of the European treaties.



### **POPULAR TITLES FROM THE EU INFORMATION CENTRE**

- EU Fact Sheets
- 117 questions and answers about the EU
- The Lisbon treaty – background facts and explanation
- European Union Legislation
- The EU treaties

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## [www.eu-oplysningen.dk](http://www.eu-oplysningen.dk)

In addition to answering questions and drawing up information material, the EU Information Centre runs Denmark's largest website about the EU. Here, you will find both material explaining about the EU and the most important documents from the European decision-making process.

### **Learn about the European Union**

We offer a number of different approaches to learning about the EU. You may choose to read about the history of the European Union, Denmark's relationship with the EU and about the European institutions and decision-making processes. Or you can scroll through a range of interactive presentations providing knowledge about the EU in sound and pictures. All of this forms part of the answer to the basic question: What is the EU?

### **Special topics pages**

Finally, we offer a number of web pages on special topics right from the structure of the EU budget to the European policy on climate change. Our web pages also allow you to delve further into topics such as the four Danish opt-outs, how the Folketing engages in the European decision-making process and how directives are transposed into Danish law.

### **Follow the consideration of EU matters**

The main focus of the website is the consideration of EU matters in Denmark, including the work of the European Affairs Committee of the Folketing. Every Commission proposal and communication is presented in an electronic file where you can find the relevant documents in relation to the matter in question. The approach makes it easy to see what stage of the legislative process the individual proposal is at and what the positions of the Government, Folketing and Danish interest groups are.

### **Live television from the European Affairs Committee**

Every Friday you can watch live television from the meetings of the European Affairs Committee. You can also see webcasts of previous meetings and of consultations with Ministers conducted in public.

### **More than 70,000 documents - just ask!**

In total, the EU Information Centre website contains over 70,000 documents. Plenty of opportunity for you to learn about the EU. And if you don't find what you are looking for or don't understand it when you find it, just ask us.



## HOW MANY LANGUAGES ARE USED IN THE EU?

There are 23 official languages in the European Union. New legislation can only enter into force once it has been translated into all of the 23 languages. This serves to ensure that all citizens and businesses get an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the legislation adopted by the EU. As an EU citizen, you are entitled to make enquiries to the European institutions in one of the official languages and subsequently receive a reply in the same language.

However, many documents are not translated into all the official languages. For internal purposes, the European Commission has three working languages: English, German and French, with English being the most frequently used one. In 2006, more than 1½ million pages were translated by the EU translation services.





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## Where to find us

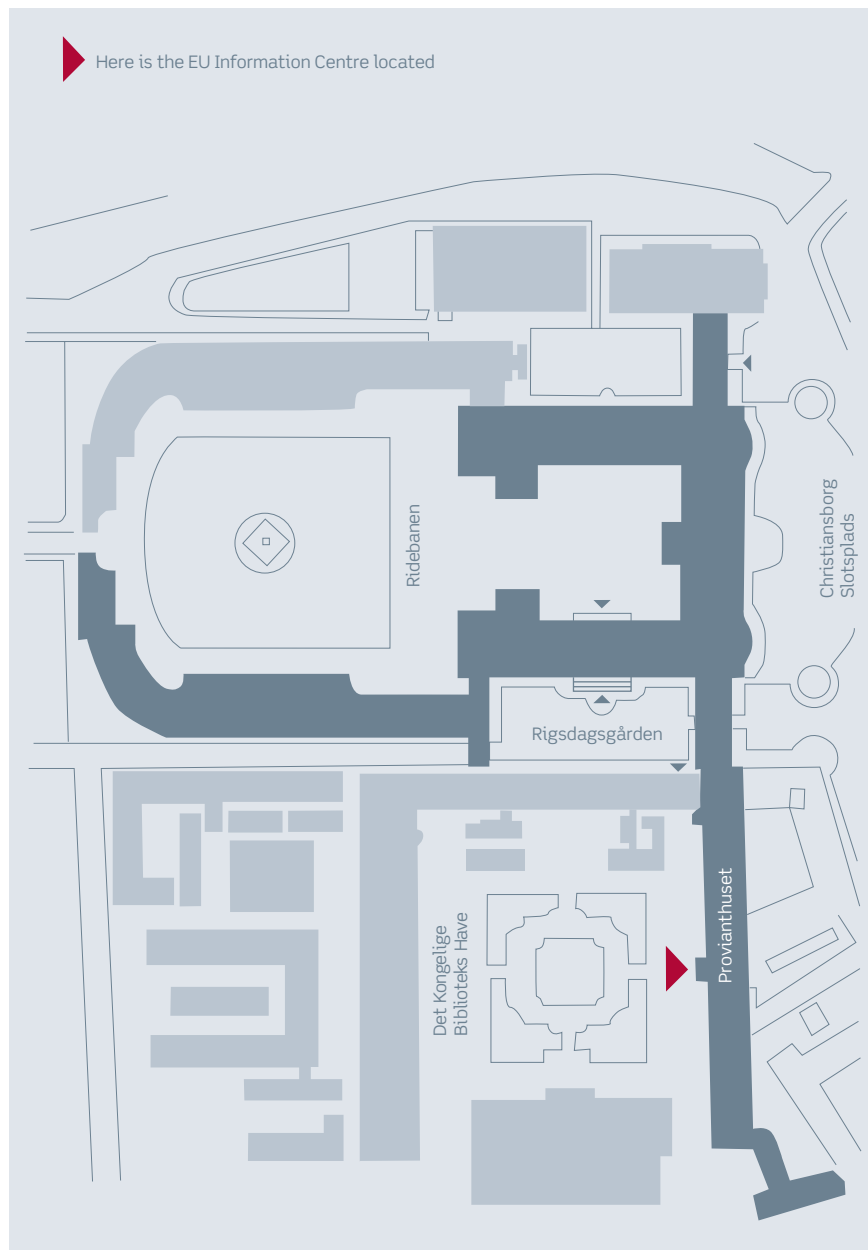
You may make enquiries to the EU Information Centre by phone, post or e-mail. You may also visit the EU Information Centre to ask your question in person, collect free material or receive help in finding information about the European Union on the Internet.

### Opening hours

Monday-Friday  
10.00 - 16.00

### Contact information

Folketingets EU-Oplysning  
Christiansborg  
DK-1240 København K  
Tel. + 45 3337 3337  
Fax + 45 3337 3330  
e-mail [euopl@folketinget.dk](mailto:euopl@folketinget.dk)  
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