National legislation

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Each Member State of the European Union (EU) has its own law and legal system. Member State (MS) law can comprise both law at the national level (or national law, which is valid anywhere in a certain Member State) and laws which are only applicable in a certain area, region, or city.

Member States publish their law in their official language(s) and it is only legally binding in this/these language(s). For information purposes, certain acts of Member State law may also be available in one or more languages other than its official language(s).

Databases

Most Member States have a national database of their law - you can obtain this information by choosing one of the flags listed on the right side.

In addition, the European N-Lex database links most of the official national databases. N-Lex is an ongoing common project managed by the European Publications Office and participating national governments. Currently, it enables you to view the law of 27 Member States.

Furthermore, via the European Forum of Official Gazettes, you can access the websites of the organisations responsible for publishing the official gazettes of EU Member States (plus some EU candidate countries and the EFTA countries).

From the EU perspective, many laws of the Member States actually implement EU law. In particular, this is the case for national law implementing EU directives. If you are looking for such implementing measures, by which the Member States have incorporated certain provisions of EU law, then you can use the relevant search function at the EUR-Lex database.

Sources of law

Member States' law derives from various sources, in particular the constitution, the statutes or legislation (which can be adopted at national, regional or local level), and/or regulations by government agencies, etc. Furthermore, judicial decisions by Member State courts can develop into case law.

Areas of law

Traditionally, the law of the Member States is divided into private and public law.

- Private law or civil law is the area of law in a society that affects the relationships between individuals or groups without the intervention of the state or government.
- Public law governs the relationship between individuals and the state, its entities and authorities, the powers of the latter and the relevant procedures. Generally speaking, public law comprises constitutional law, administrative law and criminal law. Because of the particular nature of criminal law, it can also be regarded as a category in its own right.

To obtain detailed information on Member State law please select one of the flags listed on the right hand side.

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