

READING ROOM ADVICE

This advice considers how reading rooms operate, based on the one precedent we have of TTIP reading rooms. Reading rooms are one mechanism for sharing information with Parliament and there are other ways eg in camera briefings, but none are considered as leak-proof as reading rooms.

The TTIP reading room

The only time that reading rooms have been used before is in TTIP where they appeared in the European Parliament, the UK and in most Member States. We can't find any record of them being used for any other trade agreement, or during the passage of any other UK legislation.

The TTIP reading room is currently located in 1 Victoria Street and opened on 19 October 2016, though it is expected to move to the new DIT building on Whitehall Place in April. MPs were informed by Lord Price, Minister of State for Trade Policy at DIT that it would be open for half a day every week, with only Parliamentarians granted access. In practice, DIT officials have been more flexible in order to accommodate requests in line with other work priorities. They have to pre-book and are allowed in without any pens or equipment (pencils only) and accompanied by a BEIS official. Inside the small room are large amounts of paperwork which Parliamentarians may read but not take away. There is no help with interpreting documents.

Section 36

Section 36

What documents are provided in the TTIP reading room?

Update texts

- Reports of the negotiating rounds;
- Note on state of play of the negotiations;
- List of the EU and US negotiating documents

Negotiations texts

- Draft protocols (i.e., draft protocol on rules of origin)
- Elements for consideration in each chapter
- Draft EU requests (i.e draft EU request regarding public procurement)
- Papers on the first set of issues and elements for possible provisions in TTIP
- EU draft textual proposals for each chapter
- Negotiating documents for each chapter
- Draft chapters
- EU revised offers on chapters
- Draft consolidated text of chapters
- Draft common texts

EU Documents

- Non-papers on different sectors (i.e., raw materials and energy)

- Draft legal texts (i.e., draft legal text on trade in goods)
- Discussion papers (i.e. discussion paper on textiles)
- EU papers discussed with the US
- EU technical papers (i.e Paper on generics)
- Explanatory notes (i.e. explanatory note comparing US-EU second tariff offer)
- Sustainability impact assessment

Third Party Documents

- Regulatory discussions on sectors
- Scientific advice of specific issues
- US non-papers (i.e Non-paper on approach to recognition of regulated services)

Section 36

Section 36

Section 36