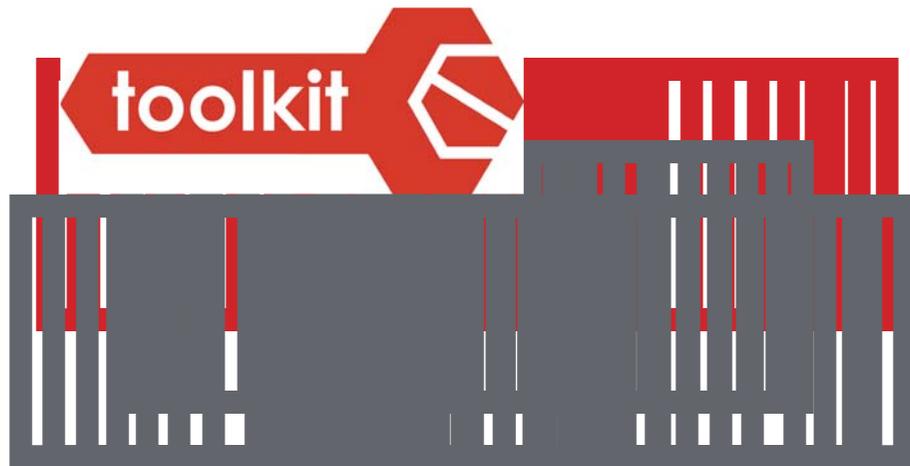
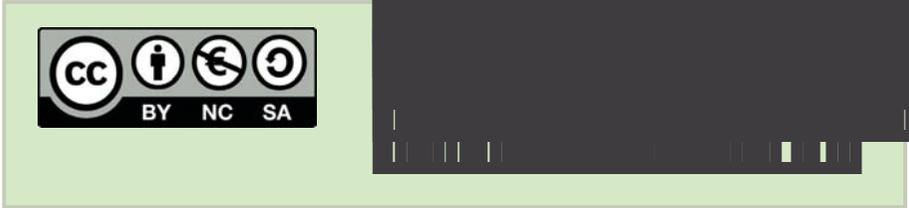
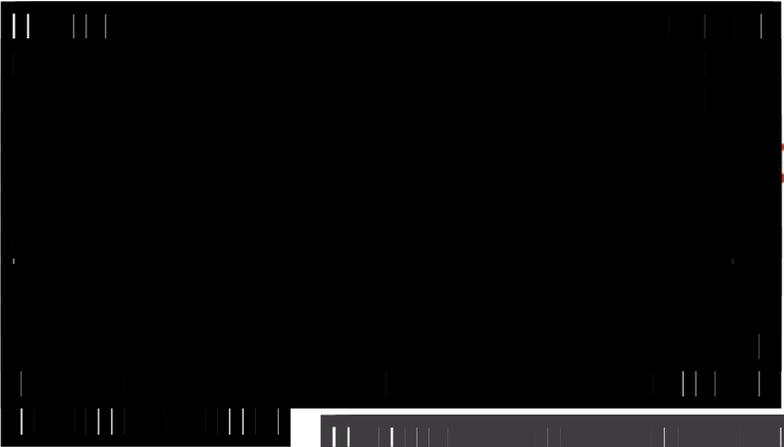


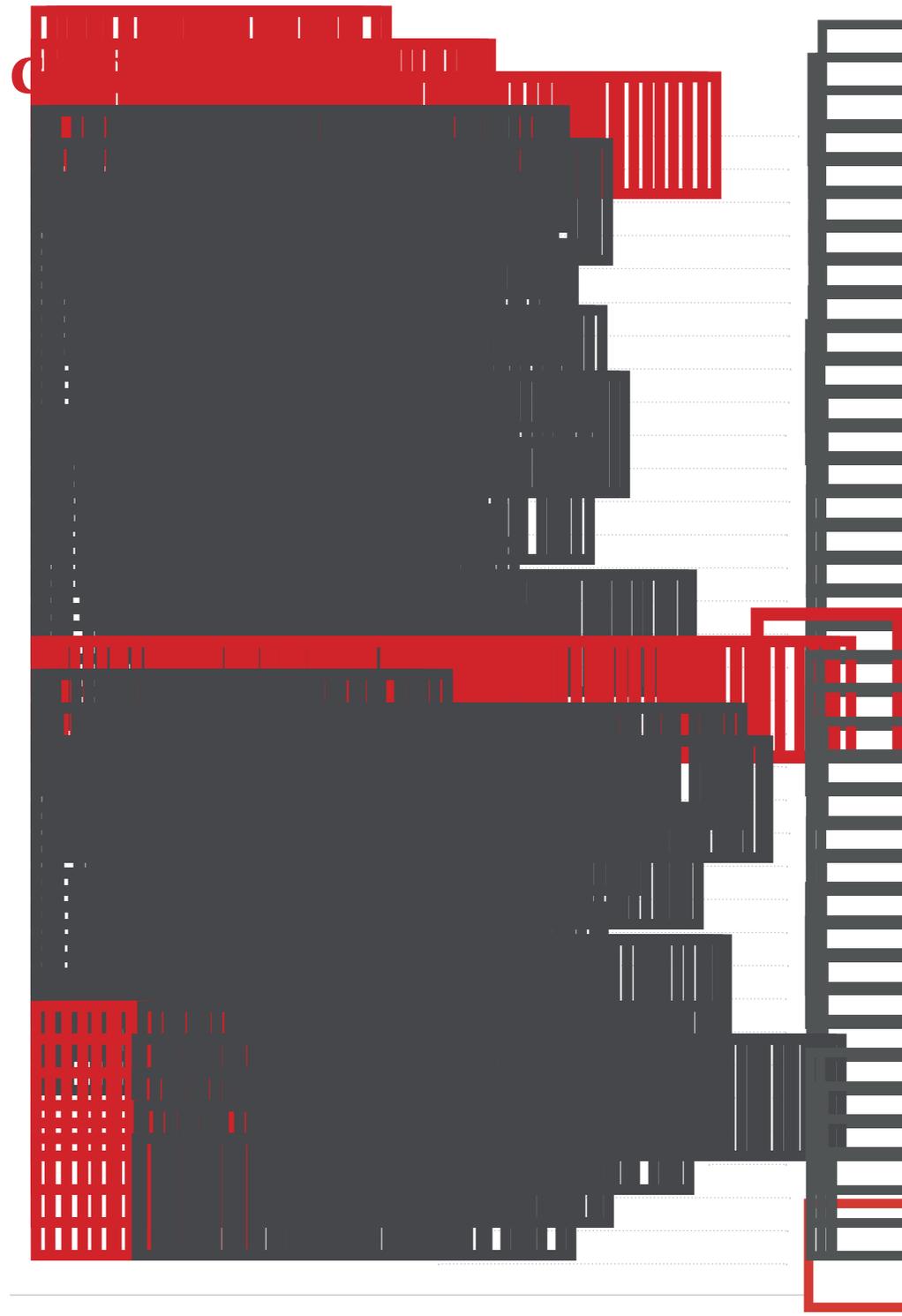
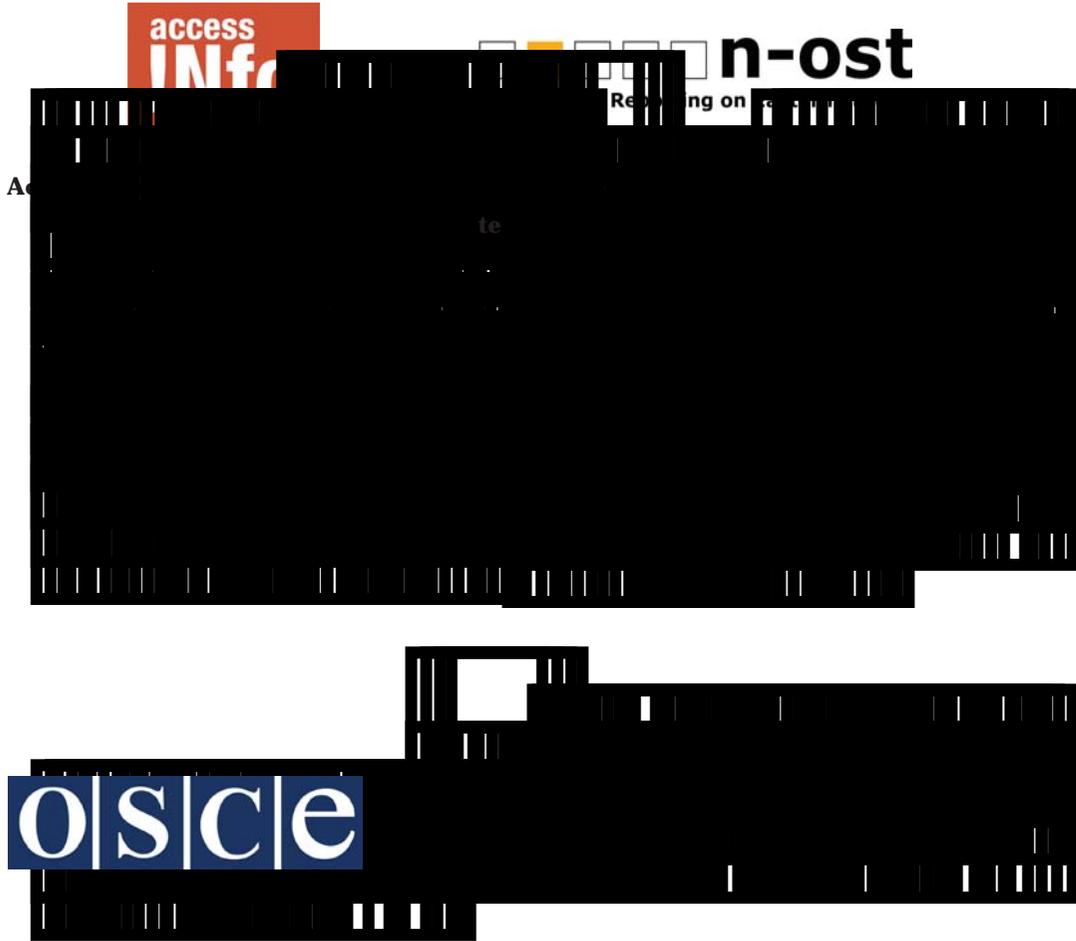
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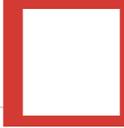


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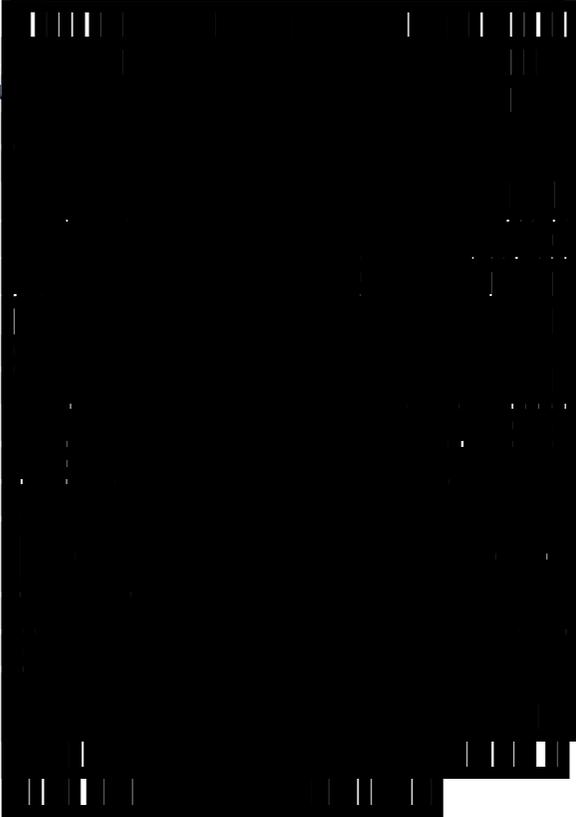
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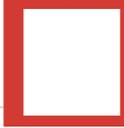
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TIP! Plan ahead to save time:

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TIP! Get help to address problems with spokespersons: If you are finding that official spokespersons are angry at you for using the access to information law, then talk to the Legal Leaks team and/or your local access to information organisation or journalists' association. These NGOs might be able to raise your concerns and perhaps organise a training session for spokespersons to explain journalists' rights under the law. They should also be able to support you in your discussions with government about giving proper treatment to formal access to information requests submitted by journalists.

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TIP! Submit multiple requests: If you are unsure where to submit your request, there is nothing to stop you submitting the request with two, three or more bodies at the same time. In some cases, the various bodies will give you different answers, but this can actually be helpful in giving you a fuller picture of the information available on the subject.

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TIP! For international requests, use the embassy: If you do not live in the country where you want to submit the request, you can sometimes send the request to the embassy and they should transfer it to the competent public body. You will need to check with the relevant embassy first if they are ready to do this – sometimes the embassy staff will not have been trained in the right to information and it's safer to submit the request directly to the relevant public

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[Redacted]

TIP! Tell them you are a journalist: *If the law says only individuals can request information but you want to let the public institution know that you are a journalist, you could always write your request on your media organisation's letterhead, if this is acceptable with the organisation. Another option is to mention in the letter or e-mail that you are a journalist and/or who you work for. ... or don't tell them that you are a journalist:* *if you send an e-mail from your work address, it will often be obvious that you are a journalist, e.g.: jsmith@dailytimes.com. If you don't want to give the game away, it might be worth using a different address, such as a gmail/hotmail/yahoo account.*

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TIP! Mention your right to information: Usually the law does not require that you mention the access to information law or freedom of information act, but this is recommended because it shows you know your legal rights and is likely to encourage correct processing of the requests according to the law. We note that for requests to the EU it's important to mention that it's an access to documents request and it's best to make a specific request.

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unclear or discourage a response. Specific and clear requests tend to get faster and better answers.

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minutes of all planning committee meetings held between July and September 2009" "Annual expenditure reports for the Ministry's purchase of IT equipment (including computers and printers) for the years 2007 and 2008."

TIP! Hide your request in a more general one: If you decide to hide your real request in a more general one, then you should make your request broad enough so that it captures the information you want but not so broad as to be

case studies
Leaks Website

hospital, when you submit the request for information about the spending on medicines, you might want to announce this on air and also post news about the request on your website. You can update the information as and when you get a response to the request – or if the deadline passes and there is no response you can make this into a news story as well. Doing this has the additional benefit of educating members of the public about the right of access to information and how it works in practice.

TIP! Anticipate the exceptions:

If you think that exceptions might be applied to your request, then when preparing your questions, separate the question about the potentially sensitive information from the other information that common sense would say should not fall under an exception. Then split your question into two requests.

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TIP! Make it public that you have submitted the request: Another strategy which journalists can use to avoid refusals is to write or broadcast a story that the request has been submitted. This can put pressure on the public institution to process and respond to the request. **For example:** if your radio station is following a controversial story about a shortage of medicines in a local

TIP! Visit the public body to inspect the files: *If you live near where the information is held (for example you live in the capital where the documents are kept), you can also ask to inspect original documents. This can be helpful when researching information that might be held in a large number of documents that you'd like to have a look through. Such inspection should be free of charge and should be arranged at a time that is reasonable and convenient for you.*

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TIP! Use the copy. *You might want to scan a copy of your request before posting it or scan the request that has been submitted which has the official stamps on it. This makes a good image to illustrate your story and to post on*

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cally, although these days it's usually possible to scan documents which are not already digitalised and then to send them as an attachment by e-mail.

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he applicant for a copy of the official document, which should be reasonable and not exceed the actual costs of reproduction and delivery of the document. Take

TIP! Check the rules about fees: Before you start submitting a request, check the rules about fees. That way, if a public official suddenly asks you for money, you will know what your rights are.

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TIP! Avoid copying costs: To avoid copying costs, mention in your request that you would prefer information in electronic format. That way you will avoid paying a fee, unless of course the information is not available electroni-

TIP! State which format you prefer. In your request state politely but firmly which format you prefer. If you want information electronically, make sure to give your e-mail address. The advantage of electronic information is that it usually saves you from paying the photocopying and postage fee, and delivery of the information is often faster.

TIP! Start out simple. In all countries, it is better to start with a simple request for information and then to add more questions once you get the initial information. That way you don't run the risk of the public institution applying an extension because it is a "complex request".

TIP! Find out about appeals in advance. If you are not sure what to do for the first stage of appeal, contact the office of your Information Commission/Commissioner or Ombudsman and they will be able to help you. If you don't have such a body, try phoning the institution which issued the refusal and asking them. If you still are having problems, then let Access Info know about it and we will try to help you, for example, by giving you the contact of an NGO

TIP! Appeal based on the public interest: *If you have been refused information that you wanted for a story you are working on, it might help to state in your internal administrative appeal that the information is needed for a media story and to state that there is a public interest in knowing that information. It's also important at this point to refer to your rights under the access to information law and/or constitution. (Of course, if you don't want the public authority to know you are working on a story, then don't mention it).*

TIP! Make a standard template for appeals: *Once you have drafted the first internal administrative appeal with references to the law and your rights, just keep the letter in your computer and you'll find that you have a template for future appeals. That will save you time as it should only need a little bit of changing depending on the content of the other requests.*

TIP! When you get the information, think laterally. *What does the information tell you? What is missing? If you were a government decision-maker, would the information be enough to take fact-based decisions? Your story can be*

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TIP! Mention the Right to Information in your stories. *Defend your right to information by letting the public know about the existence of the access to information law and how it is and is not working.*

Write to the Legal Leaks Help Desk - helpdesk@legalleaks.info

II. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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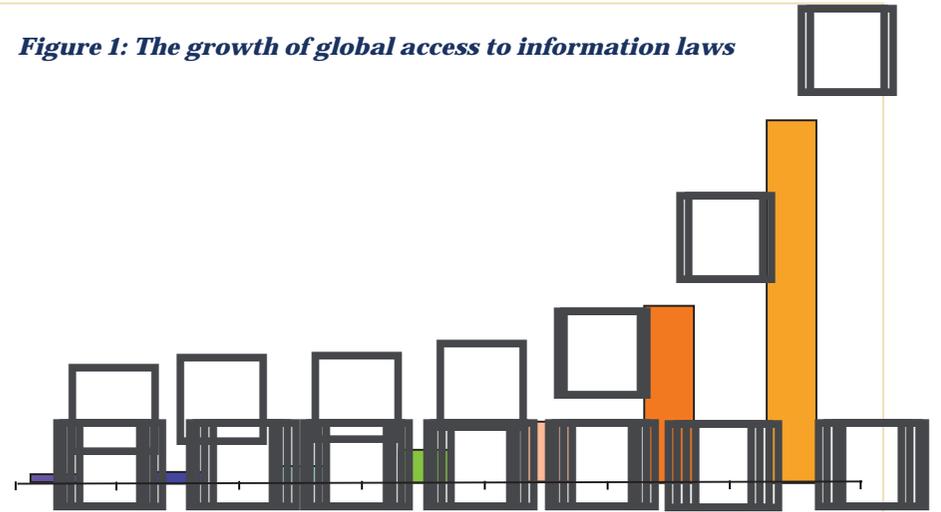
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Figure 1: The growth of global access to information laws



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3. I've been thinking: is access to information really a human right?

Yes! The right of access to information is a fundamental, universal human right.

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Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without restriction.

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of all individuals to request and receive information held by public bodies.

right of the individual to receive such information and the positive obligation of the State to ensure that such information is available.

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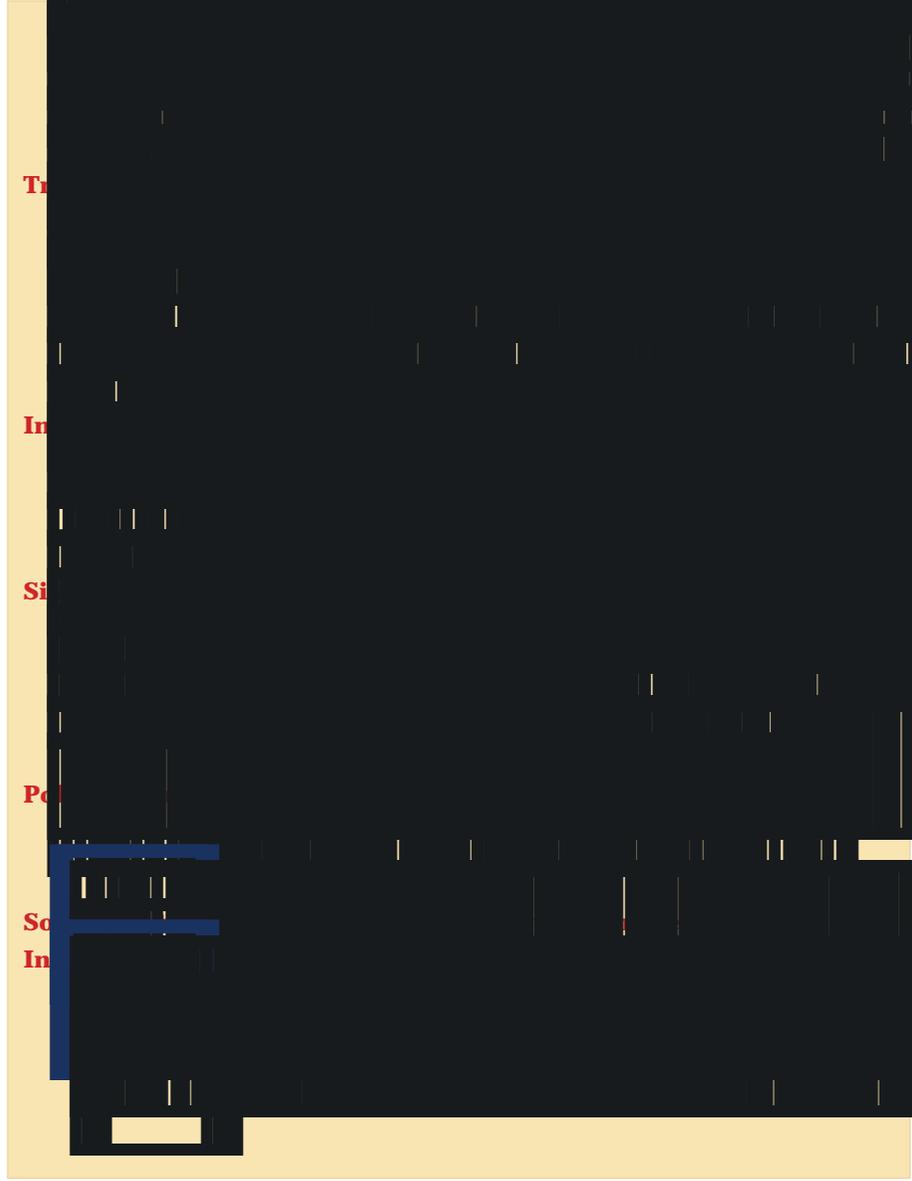
TIP! Go to www.Right2INFO.org to check the language of your national constitution and see whether it gives you a right of access to information, or at least mentions "freedom of information" or "freedom of expression". Knowing this can be useful if you are trying to persuade a public official that you know your rights and are ready to defend them in order to get the information you are looking for.



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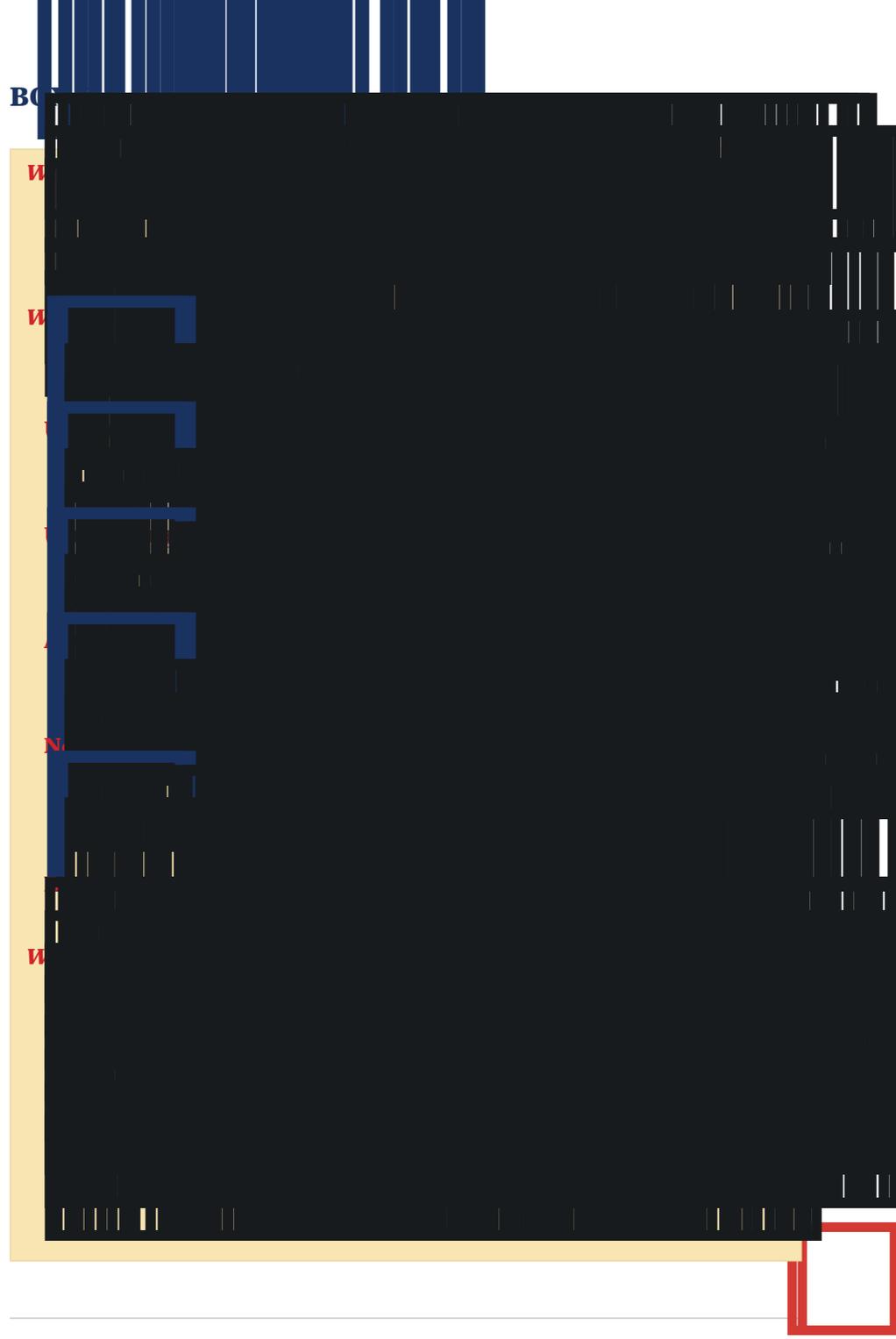
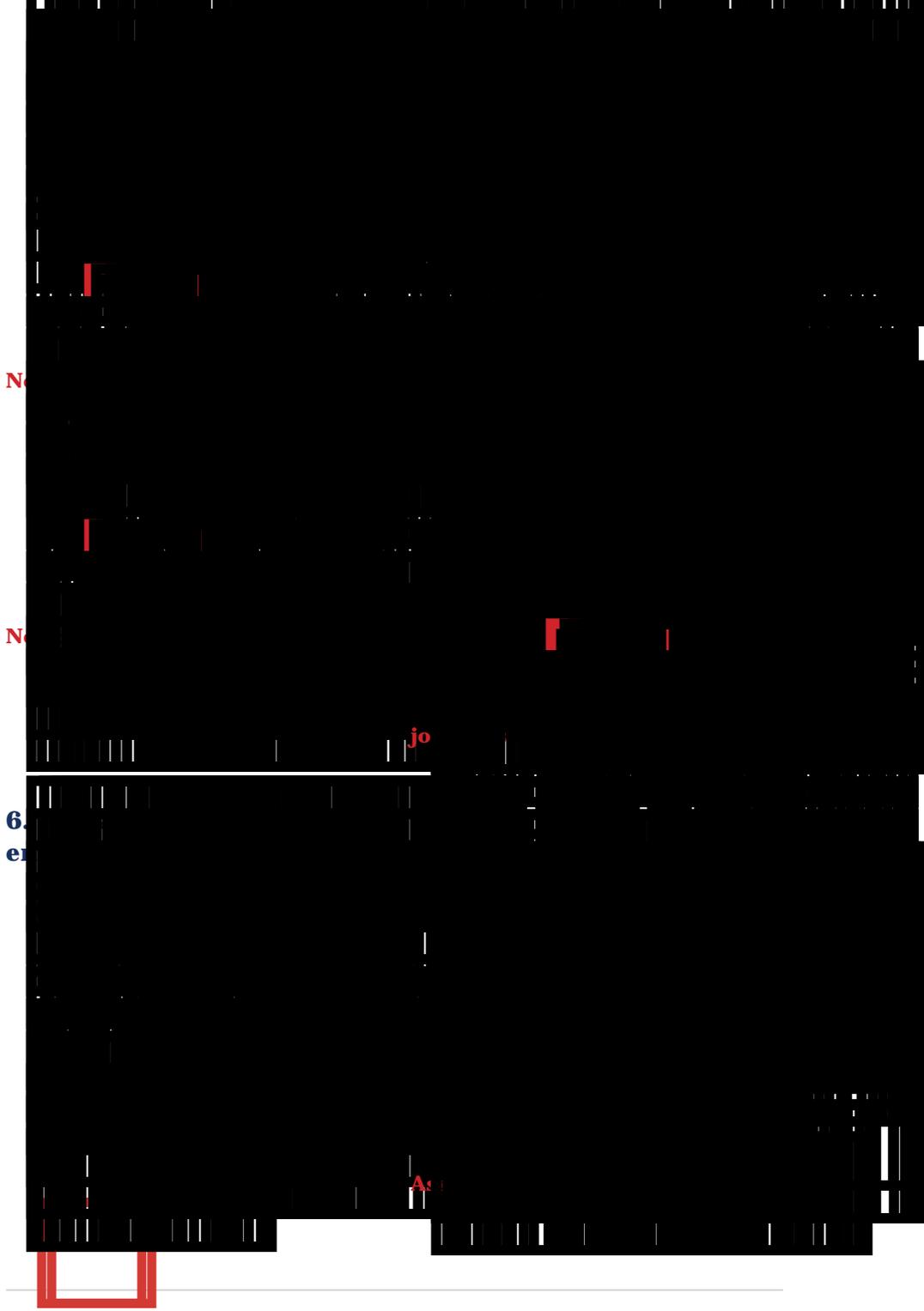
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How the money: If the body interested in is not covered by the access to information country, then think if it has another body. For example, the bodies which operate with ... have to submit reports to ... which is providing the fund ... the principle of follow the ... ask for those reports.

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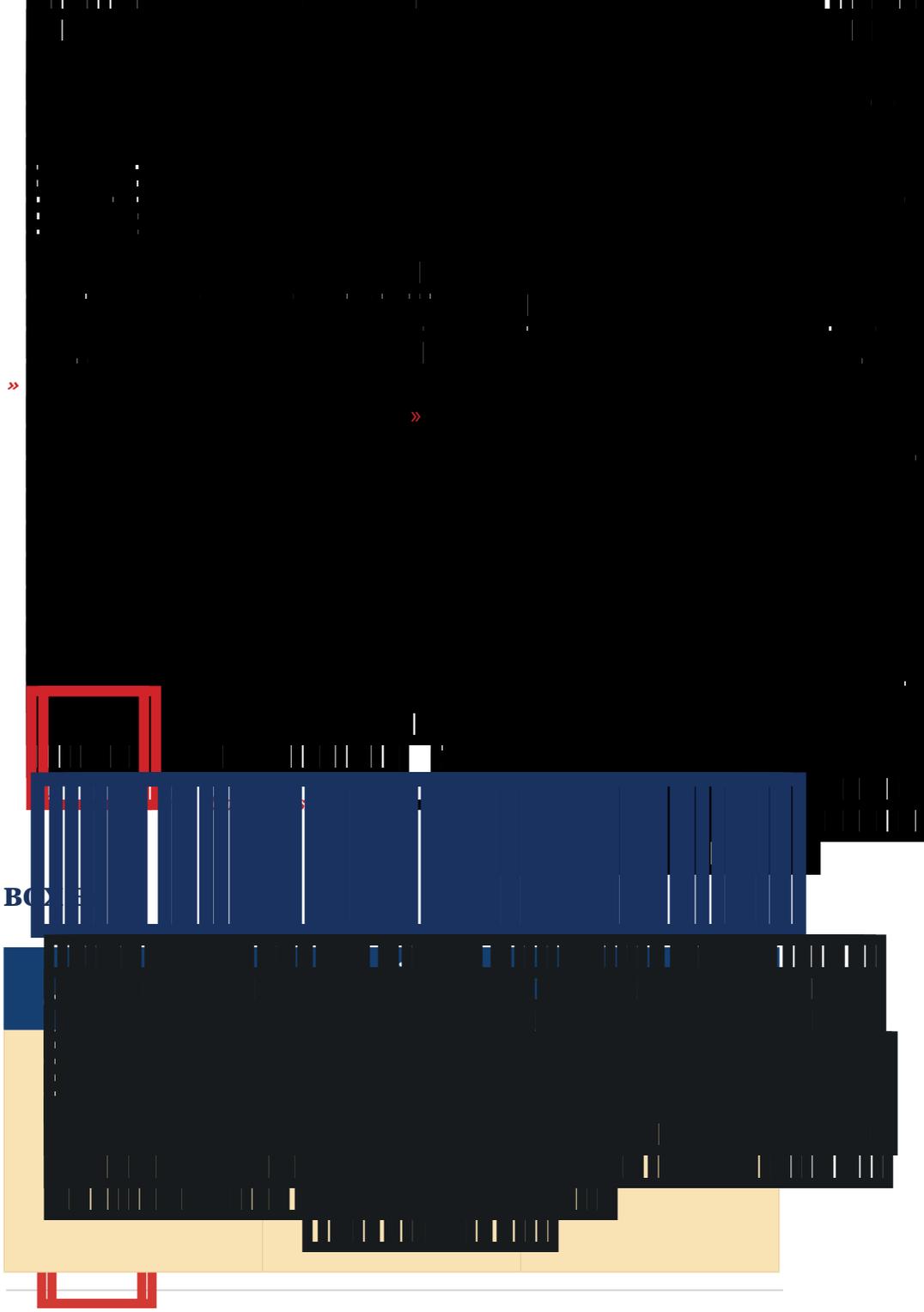
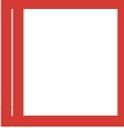
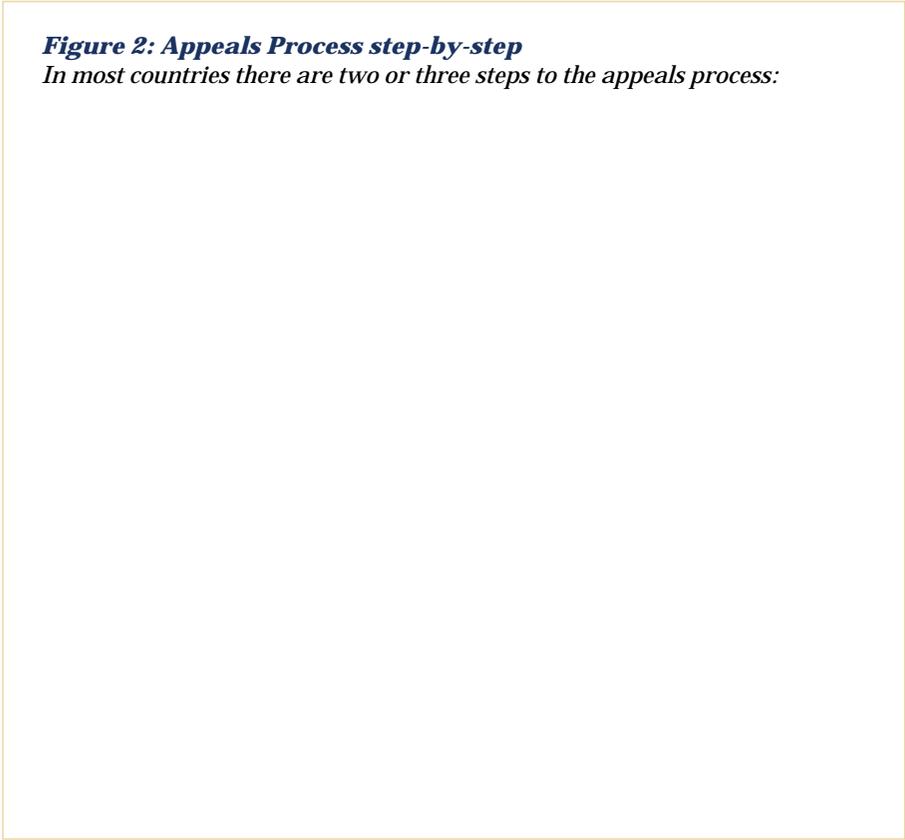


Figure 2: Appeals Process step-by-step

In most countries there are two or three steps to the appeals process:



III. DATA SECURITY FOR JOURNALISTS

1. Risk Assessment: How do I conduct an assessment of my security risks?

Could you provide me with a flow chart that I can use to do this? I need solutions that are not too geeky or complicated and I just need to be told what I should do, not to be given options because I am a busy

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3. Which is the safest form of telephonic communication?

... make phone calls with a source, ... worried that someone will

secretly listen

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2. I'm afraid that my notebook computer will get stolen.

I can't afford to lose my research data, so I would prefer to store

it online. Is it

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No

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No

4. Using mobile phones: How to use a mobile phone?

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5. Security using e-mail accounts

communicate
confidential source, should I use

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6. Remembering Passwords

I have too many accounts that I need passwords for. In order to remember them I sometimes use the same passwords and often they're not very secure. Is there a way to n

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7. How to I protect the secu-

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7. How should I store and back up my data?

How can I ensure that my data is stored in a secure location that means that I never have to worry about losing it and that no one else can access it?

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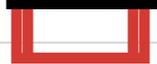
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8. What is your advice for using online tools? *I have created a Google Drive folder for my data.*

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where I can put information that interests me personally, but which is to [redacted] to [redacted] pa [redacted]

9. What about the borders between my professional and private life? *I am a journalist who travels a lot and makes friends with the people I meet. Some of those are also sources. Is it safe to communicate with them by Facebook and similar social networking sites?*

10. Caught on Camera

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11. I travel a lot, should I change my behaviour depending on where I am? *I travel all over the world, or in what types*

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TIP! *Before travelling, check the fo*
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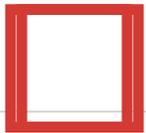
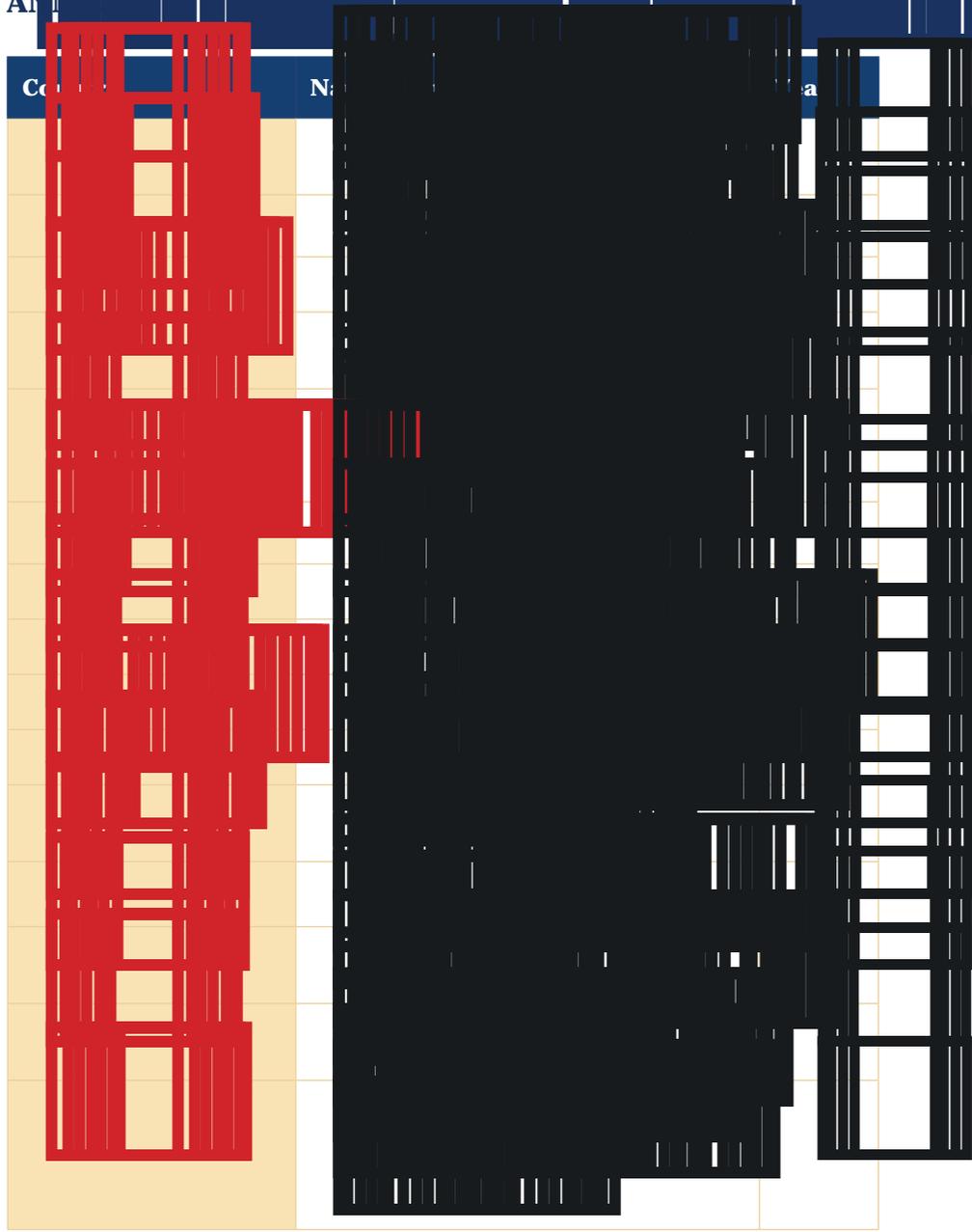


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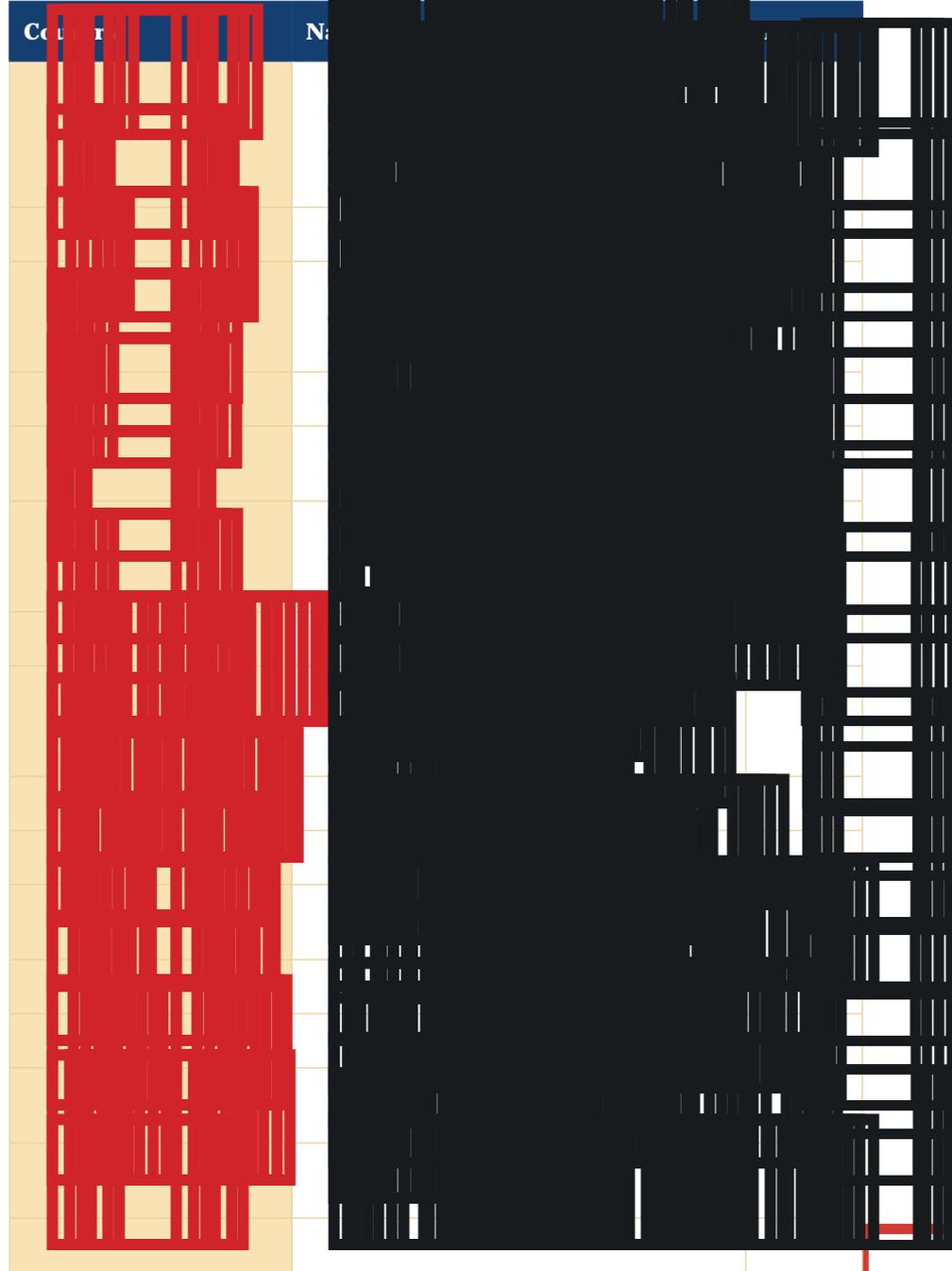
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Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
Belgium FIRST ALWAYS THEN	<i>Commission (fédérale) d'Accès aux Documents Administratifs</i>
Belgium FIRST THEN	<i>Appeal Instance on access to administrative documents and the re-use of public sector information</i>
Belgium FIRST ALWAYS THEN	<i>Commission d'Accès aux Documents Administratifs (specific to the French Community of Belgium)</i>
Belgium FIRST THEN OR	<i>Ombudsman for Human Rights</i>

Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
Bulgaria FIRST OR	<i>No oversight body – appeal to courts</i>
Canada FIRST THEN	<i>Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada</i>
Canada FIRST THEN OR	<i>Ombudsman</i>
Canada FIRST THEN	<i>No oversight body – appeal to courts</i>
Denmark FIRST THEN OR	<i>Folketingets Ombudsman</i>



Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
Estonia	
FIRST OR OR	<i>Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate - oversees implementation of the Public Information Act</i>
Finland	
FIRST OR	<i>Parliamentary Ombudsman</i>
France	
FIRST AND THEN	<i>Commission on Access to Administrative Documents (CADA) – decisions not binding but can appeal to Administrative Tribunal for enforcement</i>
Georgia	
FIRST THEN THEN	<i>No oversight body</i>

Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
Germany	
FIRST THEN OR	<i>The Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information</i> <i>Some Länder have Freedom of Information laws overseen by Commissioners:</i> <i>Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Saarland, Sachsen-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein</i>
Greece	
FIRST THEN	<i>Greek Ombudsman</i>
Hungary	
FIRST OR	<i>Parliamentary Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information - decisions are not binding</i>
Iceland	
FIRST	<i>Information Committee (In Icelandic only)</i>

Appeal Outcome by Country	Oversight Body
IT	
FR	<i>Office of the Information Commissioner – can order disclosure</i>
THEN	
THEN	
Italy	
FIRST	<i>Commissione Per L'accesso Ai Documenti Amministrativi</i>
THEN	
Kosovo	
FIRST	<i>Ombudsperson Institution</i>
THEN	
OR	
Kyrgyz	
FIRST	<i>Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic</i>
OR	
Latvia	
FR	<i>Latvian Ombudsman's Office – but not responsible for the access to information law!</i>
THEN	

Appeal Outcome by Country	Oversight Body
Latvia	
FR	<i>No oversight body</i>
THEN	
Latvia	
FR	<i>The Seimas Ombudsmen's Office</i>
THEN	
OR	
Macedonia	
FR	<i>Commission for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Information- can ensure</i>
THEN	
Moldova	
FR	<i>No oversight body</i>
THEN	
Moldova	
FR	<i>No oversight body</i>
OR	



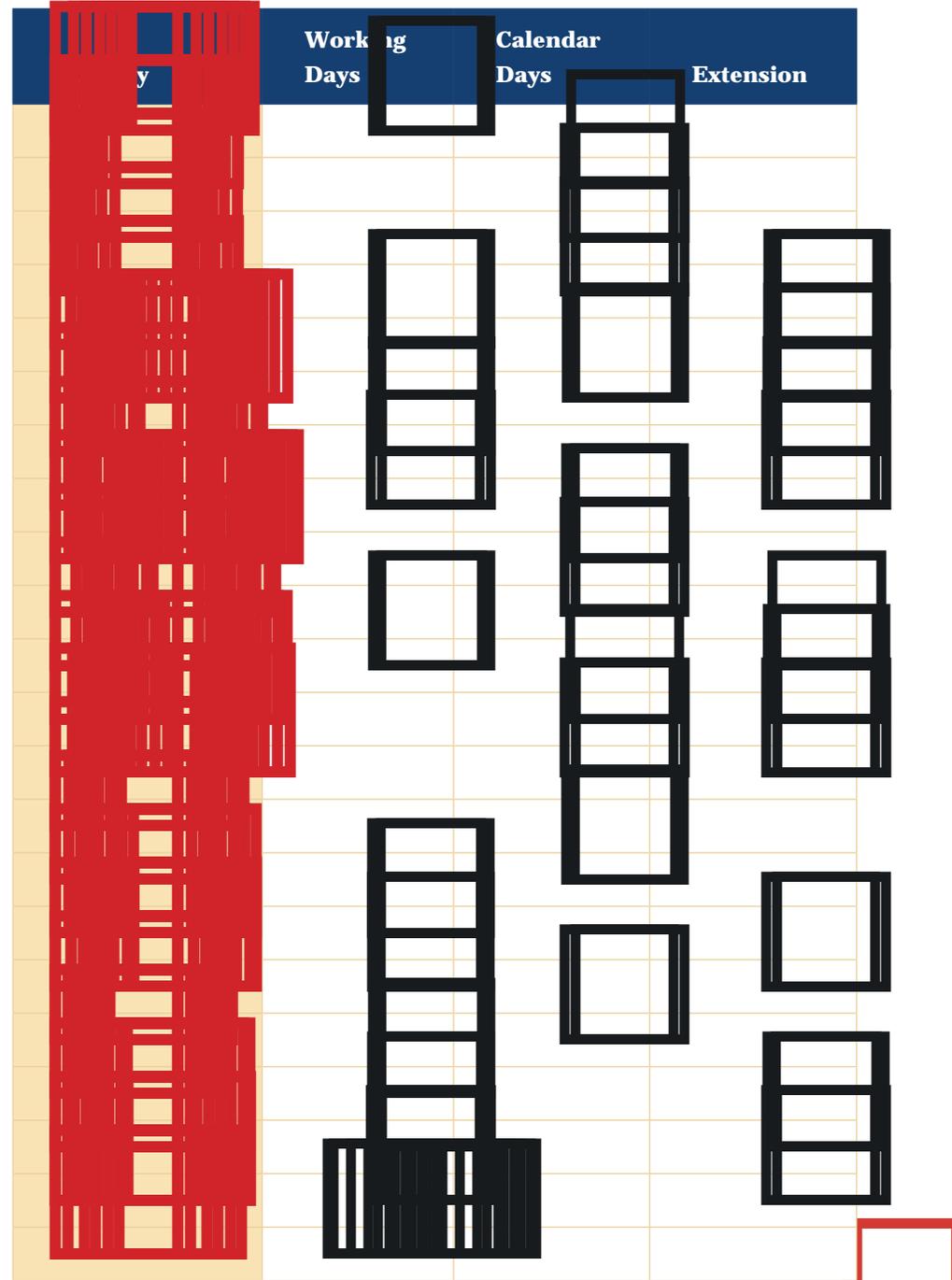
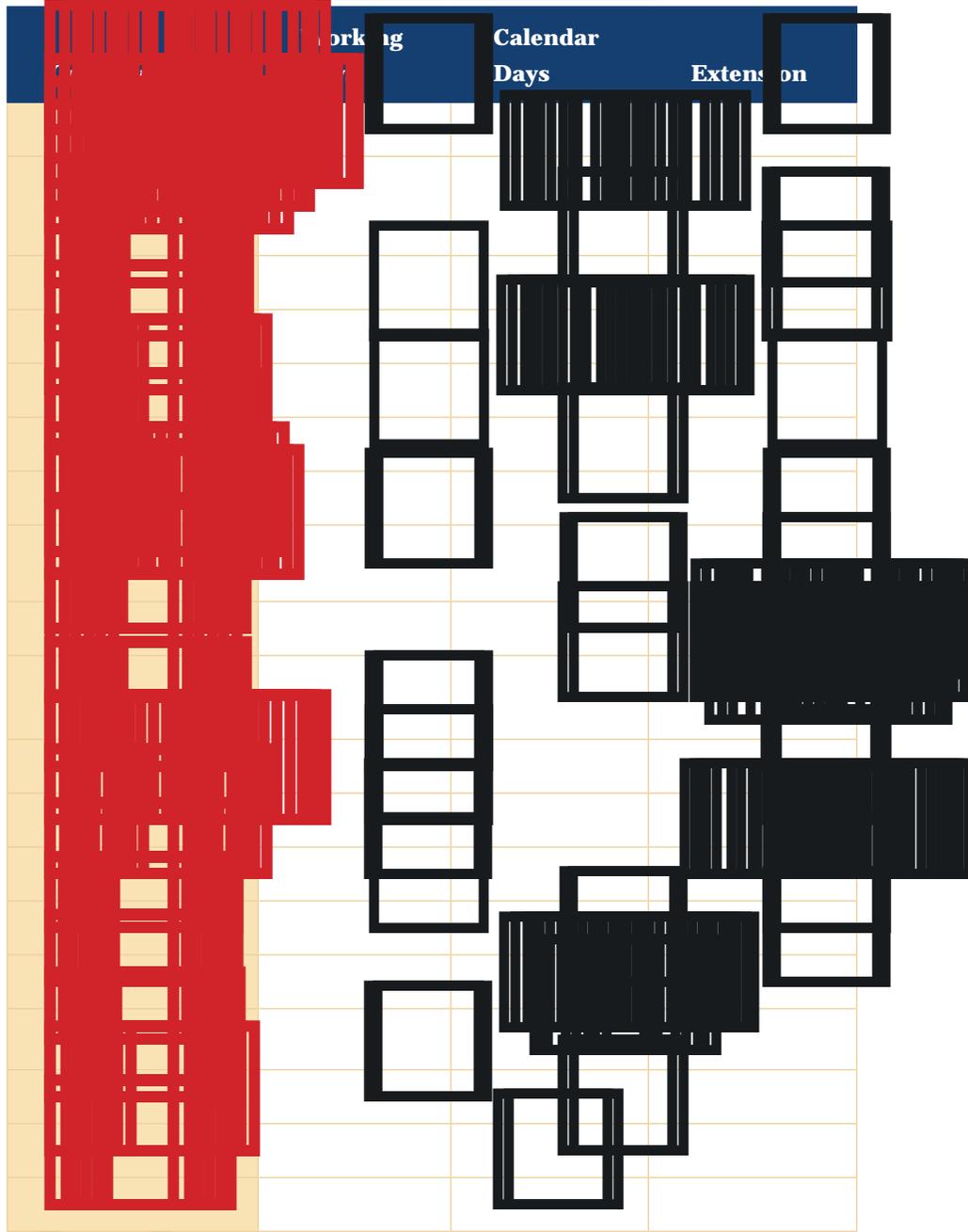
Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
Netherlands	
FIRST THEN THEN	<i>(National Ombudsman: has no specific mandate so the normal appeal is via the</i>
Netherlands	
FIRST	<i>Sivilombudsmannen</i>
OR	
Poland	
FIRST THEN	<i>Can complain to Office of the Commissioner for Civil Protection</i>
Poland	
FIRST	<i>Commission on Access to Administrative Documents</i>
THEN	
Romania	
FIRST THEN THEN	<i>Courts can order disclosure. Ombudsman occasionally handles access concerns</i>
Romania	
FIRST	<i>No oversight body</i>
THEN	

Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
Serbia	
FIRST THEN THEN	<i>Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection - rulings are binding, final and enforceable.</i>
Slovakia	
FIRST THEN	<i>No oversight body – appeal to courts</i>
Slovenia	
FIRST THEN THEN	<i>Information Commissioner - decisions become binding upon the expiry of the term for launching an administrative dispute</i>
Sweden	
FIRST THEN THEN ALSO	<i>Parliamentary Ombudsman Riksdagens Ombudsmän - issues recommendations</i>

Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
S	
F	<i>The Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner</i>
T	<i>Mediates and issues recommendations which can be appealed before the courts.</i>
T	
Tajikistan	
F	
OR	
T	
F	<i>Board of Review of Access to Information</i>
THEN	
Ukraine	
F	
THEN	<i>No oversight body</i>

Appeal Options by Country	Oversight Body
UK	
F	<i>The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)</i>
T	
T	
UK - Scotland	<i>Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner</i>
F	
THEN	
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