



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Directorate B - Investment, Innovative & Sustainable Transport  
**B.4 - Sustainable & Intelligent Transport**

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Mr. Barnaby Pace  
Global Witness  
Rue Belliard 53  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

***By registered email with  
acknowledgment of receipt:***  
[ask+request-10964-  
af4a892a@asktheeu.org](mailto:ask+request-10964-af4a892a@asktheeu.org)

Dear Mr Pace,

**Subject: Your application for access to documents – GESTDEM 2022/2069**

We refer to your e-mail dated 7 April 2022 in which you make a request for access to documents, registered on 19 April 2022 under the above mentioned reference number.

You request access to the following documents:

*- All documents—including but not limited to correspondence, emails, minutes, notes (hand written or electronic), audio or video recordings, verbatim reports, operational conclusions, lines to take, briefings, and presentations—related to the meeting on March 23 between Filip Alexandru Negreanu Arboreanu and ExxonMobil Petroleum & Chemical;*

We have identified the following document as falling within the scope of your application:

- **Annex 1:** email exchange between representatives of ExxonMobil, FuelsEurope and members of the Cabinet of Commissioner Vălean with the subject matter “*Thank you Call 23/03/2022 Exxon Fuels Europe 18 03 2022*”, between 17 and 18 March 2022, with the reference Ares(2022)3315900.

Concerning the document listed above, we have come to the conclusion that it may be partially disclosed. A complete disclosure of the identified document is prevented by the exception concerning the protection of privacy and the integrity of the individual outlined in Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European

Parliament, Council and Commission documents<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter ‘Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001’), because it contains the following personal data:

- the names/initials and contact information of Commission staff members not pertaining to the senior management;
- the names/initials and contact details of other natural persons;
- other information relating to identified or identifiable natural persons, in particular references to their functions, to the extent that these would enable their identification.

Pursuant to Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, access to a document has to be refused if its disclosure would undermine the protection of privacy and the integrity of the individual, in particular in accordance with European Union legislation regarding the protection of personal data.

The applicable legislation in this field is Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter ‘Regulation (EU) 2018/1725’, or ‘Data Protection Regulation’).

In particular, Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 provides that personal data ‘means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person [...]’. The Court of Justice has specified that any information, which by reason of its content, purpose or effect, is linked to a particular person is to be considered as personal data<sup>3</sup>.

In its judgment in Case C-28/08 P (*Bavarian Lager*)<sup>4</sup>, the Court of Justice ruled that when a request is made for access to documents containing personal data, the Data Protection Regulation becomes fully applicable<sup>5</sup>.

Pursuant to Article 9(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, ‘personal data shall only be transmitted to recipients established in the Union other than Union institutions and bodies if ‘[t]he recipient establishes that it is necessary to have the data transmitted for a specific purpose in the public interest and the controller, where there is any reason to assume that the data subject’s legitimate interests might be prejudiced, establishes that it is proportionate to transmit the personal data for that specific purpose after having demonstrably weighed the various competing interests’.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, OJ L 145, 31.05.2001, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 205 of 21.11.2018, p. 39).

<sup>3</sup> Judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 20 December 2017 in Case C-434/16, *Peter Nowak v Data Protection Commissioner*, ECLI:EU:C:2017:994, paragraphs 33-35.

<sup>4</sup> Judgment of 29 June 2010 in Case C-28/08 P, *Commission v Bavarian Lager*, ECLI:EU:C:2010:378, paragraph 63.

<sup>5</sup> Whereas this judgment specifically related to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data, the principles set out therein are also applicable under the new data protection regime established by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

Only if these conditions are fulfilled and the processing constitutes lawful handling, in accordance with the requirements of Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, can the transmission of personal data occur.

According to Article 9(1)(b) of the Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, the European Commission has to examine the further conditions for a lawful processing of personal data only if the first condition is fulfilled, namely if the recipient has established that it is necessary to have the data transmitted for a specific purpose in the public interest. It is only in this case that the European Commission has to examine whether there is a reason to assume that the data subject's legitimate interests might be prejudiced and, in the affirmative, establish the proportionality of the transmission of the personal data for that specific purpose after having demonstrably weighed the various competing interests.

In your request, you do not express any particular interest to have access to these personal data nor do you put forward any arguments to establish the necessity to have the data transmitted for a specific purpose in the public interest. Therefore, the European Commission does not have to examine whether there is a reason to assume that the data subject's legitimate interests might be prejudiced.

Notwithstanding the above, please note that there are reasons to assume that the legitimate interests of the data subjects concerned would be prejudiced by disclosure of the personal data reflected in the documents, as there is a real and non-hypothetical risk that such public disclosure would harm their privacy and subject them to unsolicited external contacts.

Consequently, I conclude that, pursuant to Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, access cannot be granted to the personal data contained in the requested documents, as the need to obtain access therefore a purpose in the public interest has not been substantiated and there is no reason to think that the legitimate interests of the individuals concerned would not be prejudiced by disclosure of the personal data concerned.

Please note that the documents originating from third parties are disclosed to you based on Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001. However, this disclosure is without prejudice to the rules on intellectual property, which may limit your right to reproduce or exploit the released documents without the agreement of the originator, who may hold an intellectual property right on it. The European Commission does not assume any responsibility from their reuse.

In accordance with Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, you are entitled to submit a confirmatory application requesting the Commission to review this position.

Such a confirmatory application should be addressed within 15 working days upon receipt of this letter to the Secretariat-General of the Commission at the following address:

European Commission  
Secretariat-General  
Unit C.1. 'Transparency, Document Management and Access to Documents'  
BERL 7/076  
B-1049 Brussels, or by email to: [sg-acc-doc@ec.europa.eu](mailto:sg-acc-doc@ec.europa.eu)

The COVID-19 outbreak undoubtedly has an impact on the process of handling access to documents requests under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001. Given the large-scale teleworking of the Commission services, all replies, which should normally be sent via

registered post, currently are sent only by e-mail. In this regard, we kindly ask you to confirm receipt of this email.

Yours faithfully,

Kristian HEDBERG  
Head of Unit

Enclosure: 1 annex.