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By registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt

Lora Verheecke
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Belgium

Advance copy by email:
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Subject: Your application for access to documents – Ref GestDem No 2016/5971

Dear Ms Verheecke,

I refer to your email of 24 October 2016 in which you make a request for access to documents under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001¹ ("Regulation 1049/2001"), registered on 25 October 2016 under the above mentioned reference number.

You request access to "all communication, including emails, and documents (agenda, minutes, list of participants, etc) related to the meeting between Cecilia Malmström and CEPS on 20th October 2016".

We have identified the following documents that fall under the scope of your request:

- A chain of emails setting out the participation of Commissioner Malmström in the CEPS corporate meeting that took place on 20 October 2016 (Ares(2016)4875681) ("document 1");
- The formal invitation to the meeting, included as an attachment in the first email of the mentioned chain (Ares(2016)2866998) ("document 2");
- The list of participants to the meeting (Ares(2016)6104094) ("document 3");

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The speech delivered by Commissioner Malmström in the event (Ares(2016)6104094) ("document 4");

The report of the meeting (Ares(2016)6100209) ("document 5").

I am glad to inform you that full access can be granted to the content of the documents. However, some personal data have been withheld in documents 1, 2, 3 and 5 in accordance with Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation 1049/2001. In line with the Commission's commitment to ensure transparency and accountability, the names of the members of Cabinet are disclosed. For CEPS and its corporate members, the names of the staff occupying a position of Director or above are also disclosed. Copies of the accessible documents are enclosed.

Article 4(1) (b) of Regulation 1049/2001 provides that “[t]he institutions shall refuse access to a document where disclosure would undermine the protection of: [...] privacy and the integrity of the individual, in particular in accordance with Community legislation regarding the protection of personal data”.

The applicable legislation in this field is 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 Court of Justice has ruled that "where an application based on Regulation 1049/2001 seeks to obtain access to documents containing personal data" "the provisions of Regulation 45/2001, of which Articles 8(b) and 18 constitute essential provisions, become applicable in their entirety".

Article 2(a) of Regulation 45/2001 provides that "'personal data' shall mean any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person [...]". The Court of Justice has confirmed that "there is no reason of principle to justify excluding activities of a professional [...] nature from the notion of 'private life'" and that "surnames and forenames may be regarded as personal data", including names of the staff of the institutions.

In accordance with Article 8(b) of this Regulation, personal data shall only be transferred to recipients if they establish "the necessity of having the data transferred" and additionally "if

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5 Judgment in Rechnungshof v Rundfunk and Others, Joined cases C-465/00, C-138/01 and C-139/01, EU:C:2003:294, paragraph 73.
there is no reason to assume that the legitimate interests of the data subjects might be prejudiced". The Court of Justice has clarified that "it is for the person applying for access to establish the necessity of transferring that data".

I consider that you have not established the necessity of having the aforementioned personal data transferred to you. Moreover, it cannot be assumed on the basis of the information available, that disclosure of such personal data would not prejudice the legitimate interests of the persons concerned. Therefore, these personal data shall remain undisclosed in order to ensure the protection of the privacy and integrity of the individuals concerned.

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In case you would disagree with the assessment that the withheld data are personal data which can only be disclosed if such disclosure is legitimate under the rules of personal data protection, you are entitled, in accordance with Article 7(2) of Regulation 1049/2001, to make 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 Secretary-General of the Commission at the following address:

European Commission  
Secretary-General  
Transparency unit SG-B-4  
BERL 5/282  
B-1049 Bruxelles

or by email to: sg-acc-doc@ec.europa.eu

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]

Lutz Güllner  
Head of Unit

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8 Id., paragraph 107; see also judgment in C-28/08 P Commission v Bavarian Lager, EU:C:2010:378, paragraph 77.