



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Mediation Service
Acting Mediator

Brussels, 14/01/2019
Mediation Service/GM/ah

Mr. Arun DOHLE
Against Child Trafficking
c/o Crown Business Center Schiphol Hoofddorp
Planetenweg 5
NL 2132 HN Hoofddorp

By registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt

Advance copy by email: ask+request-6135-802167d9@asktheeu.org

Dear Mr Dohle,

Subject: Your application for access to documents – Ref GestDem No 2018/6767

We refer to your e-mail dated 23/11/2018 in which you make a request for access to documents, registered on 13/12/2018 under the above-mentioned reference number once we had received your postal address.

You request access to *“my emails of 16.05.2016 and 16.06.2016 to all members of the European Commission about the situation of whistle-blower Mrs Roelie Post. Including all follow-up correspondence, registration sheets in ARES and phone logs”*.

Please note that due to the wide scope of your request, covering also areas falling under the responsibility of other Directorates-General, parts of your request have been attributed to other Directorates-General¹. This reply relates only to the documents held by the Mediation Service. You will receive the replies from the other respective Directorates-General in due course.

Your application concerns the following documents: *follow-up correspondence to you and to Mrs Roelie Post*.

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 (EC) No 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/EC² ('Regulation 2018/1725').

As you specifically request access to the correspondence relating to an identified individual, Mrs Roelie POST, please note that both the identification and the content of any possible documents falling under your request are personal data in the meaning of Regulation 2018/1725.

¹ GestDem 2019/0141 – DG HR

² Official Journal L 205 of 21.11.2018, p. 39.

Indeed, Article 3(1) of Regulation 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.³

In its judgment in Case C-28/08 P (*Bavarian Lager*)⁴, the Court of Justice ruled that when a request is made for access to documents containing personal data, the Data Protection Regulation becomes fully applicable⁵.

Pursuant to Article 9(1)(b) of Regulation 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’.

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

According to Article 9(1)(b) of Regulation 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 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.

Please note in this respect that according to the Commission decision C(2002) 601 of 6 March 2002 on the reinforced Mediation Service, the Mediator, Deputy Mediator and all other personnel of the Mediation service shall be bound by the duty of strict confidentiality with regard to all information received in their function as members of the Mediation Service.

³ 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*, request for a preliminary ruling, paragraphs 33-35, [ECLI:EU:C:2017:994](#).

⁴ Judgment of 29 June 2010 in Case C-28/08 P, *European Commission v The Bavarian Lager Co. Ltd*, EU:C:2010:378, paragraph 59.

⁵ 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 2018/1725.

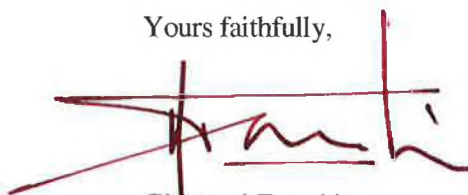
Consequently, I conclude that, pursuant to Article 4(1) (b) of Regulation 1049/2001, access cannot be granted to the personal data, as the need to obtain access thereto for a purpose in the public interest has not been substantiated and there is no reason to think that the legitimate interests of the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

In case you would disagree with the assessment that the redacted data are personal data which can only be disclosed if such disclosure is legitimate under the applicable rules on the protection of personal data, you are entitled, in accordance with Article 7(2) of Regulation 1049/2001, 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 07/075
B-1049 Brussels, or by email to: sg-acc-doc@ec.europa.eu

Yours faithfully,



Giovanni Fracchia
Acting Mediator