

Access to Documents

What is a request for access to documents?

As provided for by the [Treaty on the Functioning of the EU](#), every citizen has the right to request documents held by the European institutions.

Commission staff therefore has the **obligation to reply** to such requests for all documents within the possession of their unit, **even if** these documents:

- were drafted for internal use or are classified;
- were not drafted by the Commission but by a third party (Member State, other institution, citizens, etc.).

Who does what?

Should you receive an application for access to documents from a citizen, **please forward it immediately** to the functional mailbox [TAXUD ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS](#) with the requested document and an appreciation on whether it can be disclosed to the public or not according to [Regulation \(EC\) No 1049/2001](#).

Unit R2 will draft the reply and check the legal grounds for accepting or refusing disclosure, in line with the Commission-wide guidance of the Secretariat-General.

What if the applicant is a public administration?

Since these applications are not made by citizens, it is up to the requested unit to **reply directly** to the administration, in 5 working days, on the basis of the duty of sincere cooperation laid down in the [Treaty on the European Union](#). Please copy [TAXUD ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS](#) in your reply.

What is the procedure?

Requests for access must be replied to **within 15 working days**. Failure to reply within this deadline would entitle the applicant to launch an appeal before the Secretary-General, the Ombudsman and the Court of Justice.

More information on the steps to be followed can be found inside [DG TAXUD practical guide](#).

Useful information

- Contacts: 

- Functional mailbox: [TAXUD ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS](#)
- [Secretariat-General - "Access to Documents" website](#)
- [Practical guide](#) issued by the Secretariat-General