



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY

The Director-General

Brussels, 14 February 2025

To the attention of Mr Arun DOHLE

By email: ask+request-15356-
7b9843f2@asktheeu.org

Subject: Your application for access to documents – Ref EASE 2025/7112

Dear Mr Dohle,

I refer to your email of 22 December 2024, in which you make a request for access to documents, registered on 23 December 2024, under the above-mentioned reference number.

Your request for access to documents concerns documents in relation to a decoration handed by the then Foreign Minister of Belgium, Mr Didier Reynders, to the former Secretary-General of the Commission, Ms Catherine Day, on 7 November 2016. More specifically, you request the following:

“All documents related the Decoration handed by Didier Reynders to former Secretary-General Catherine Day on 7 November 2016. Request to be allowed to receive such Decoration. Agreement. List of invitees. And any other documents related to this Decoration.”

After having examined your request, I would like to inform you that the Commission does not hold any documents that would correspond to the description given in your application.

As specified in Article 2(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, the right of access as defined in that regulation applies only to existing documents in the possession of the institution. Since no such documents are held by the Commission, your request cannot be fulfilled.

Please note that former EU officials are not required to seek permission before accepting a decoration or honour from any government or any other source outside the institution for which they worked. This is in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 11 of the Staff Regulations ⁽¹⁾. At the time of accepting the "Grand Officier de l'Ordre de Léopold" decoration, Ms. Catherine Day was no longer an EU official in active service.

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

⁽¹⁾ Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

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

via your EASE portal ⁽²⁾ account or,

by mail, to:

European Commission Secretariat-General Transparency, Document Management & Access to Documents (SG.C.1) BERL 7/076, B-1049 Brussels

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

Yours sincerely,

Electronically signed
Stephen QUEST

c.c.: HR-ETHICS@ec.europa.eu ;
HR-ACCESS-TO-DOCUMENTS@ec.europa.eu

⁽²⁾ <https://www.ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-request>