



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR TRADE

Directorate R – Resources, Interinstitutional Relations, Communications and Civil Society
Transparency, Civil Society and Communication

Brussels,
TRADE.R.3/(2024)1990138

Ms Lora Verheecke
9 Rue du Bronze
1070 Brussels

*By email only – with request for
explicit acknowledgment of receipt:*
ask+request-14222-b812043d@asktheeu.org

Subject: Your application for public access to documents – EASE 2024/0926

Dear Ms Verheecke,

I refer to your application dated 13 February 2024, registered on 18 February 2024 under the above mentioned EASE reference number, in which you make a request for public access to documents under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001¹ ('Regulation 1049/2001'). Please accept our apologies for the delay in replying.

1. SCOPE OF YOUR REQUEST

You have been requesting public access to the following documents:

'All documentation (including but not limited to all email correspondence, attendance lists, agendas, background papers, transcripts and recordings) AND the meeting minutes/notes relating to the meeting between Valdis Dombrovskis and European Roundtable for Industry on 25th March 2022.'

We have identified **five documents** falling within the scope of your request:

- 01 – Ares(2021)7756974 – Meeting Request;
- 02 – Ares(2021)7647842 – Letter to EVP Dombrovskis;
- 03 – Ares(2021)7647842 – ERT's Membership list;
- 04 – Ares(2022)2409698 – Meeting Minutes;
- 05 – Ares(2024)3967797 – Speech_ ERT Meeting.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (Official Journal OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43).

2. ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS UNDER REGULATION 1049/2001

Having examined the requested documents under the applicable legal framework, I am pleased to grant partial public access to all identified documents, with only personal data redacted.

A complete disclosure of the documents is prevented by the exception concerning the protection of privacy and the integrity of the individual outlined in Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation 1049/2001 (for details please see below).

Copies of the accessible documents in their redacted version are enclosed to the present letter.

2.1. Protection of privacy and the integrity of the individual – Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation 1049/2001

2.1.1. ‘Personal data’

We disclose the identified documents only partially, as they contain certain personal data, which must be redacted in accordance with Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation 1049/2001, namely:

- the names/initials and contact information of Commission staff members not pertaining to the senior management;
- the names/initials and/or contact details of other natural persons – other than Commission staff members;
- handwritten signatures/abbreviated signatures and/or other handwritings of natural persons;
- other information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person.

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 (EU) No 2018/1725² (hereafter ‘Regulation 2018/1725’ or ‘Data Protection Regulation’).

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 Please note in this respect that the names, signatures, functions, email addresses, telephone numbers etc., and/or initials

² 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 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39.

³ Judgment in *Peter Novak v Data Protection Commissioner*, case C-434/16, points 33-35, ECLI:EU:T:2018:560.

pertaining to staff members of an institution are to be considered personal data⁴, as well as those of individuals belonging to third parties. As already indicated above, all documents contain such personal information.

2.1.2. Question of ‘transfer’ of personal data and conclusion

Article 9(1)(b) of Regulation 2018/1725 does not allow the transmission of these personal data, except if you prove that it is necessary to have the data transmitted to you for a specific purpose in the public interest and where there is no reason to assume that the legitimate interests of the data subject might be prejudiced. 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.

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.

2.2. Disclaimer(s)

You may reuse public documents, which have been produced by the European Commission or by public and private entities on its behalf, based on [Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the re-use of Commission documents](#)⁵. You may reuse the documents disclosed free of charge for non-commercial and commercial purposes, provided that the source is acknowledged, and that you do not distort the original meaning or message of the documents. Please note that the Commission does not assume any liability stemming from the reuse.

Furthermore, please note that documents containing content of third party origin, i.e. either documents entirely originating from third parties or documents containing parts of third party origin (like in the present case: **documents 01, 02 and 03**) are disclosed to you based on Regulation 1049/2001. However, disclosure of such third party content 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 them. The European Commission does not assume any responsibility from the reuse of those documents or parts of documents.

Finally, **document 04** was drawn up under the responsibility of the relevant official. It solely reflects the author's interpretation of the interventions made and does not set out any official position of the third party to which the document refers, which was not consulted on its content. It does not necessarily reflect the position of the Commission and, therefore, cannot be quoted as such.

⁴ Judgment in *Port de Brest v Commission*, case T-39/17, points 43-44, ECLI:EU:T:2018:560.

⁵ OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39.

3. POSSIBILITY OF A CONFIRMATORY APPLICATION

In accordance with Article 7(2) of Regulation 1049/2001, you are entitled 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 Secretariat-General of the Commission, either by

- **asking for a review via your portal⁶ account** (available only for initial requests submitted via the portal account), *or*
- **email** to sg-acc-doc@ec.europa.eu, *or*
- **letter post** to the following address:

European Commission
Secretariat-General
'Transparency, Document Management & Access to Documents' (unit SG C.1)
BERL 7/76
Rue de la Loi 200/Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels.

Yours sincerely,

[Electronically signed]

Maud LABAT
Head of Unit

Enclosures (5): List of documents,
5 documents (*partially redacted*).

⁶ <https://www.ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-request>