



10 April 2025

**Subject:** Upholding Transparency and the Right to Access EU Documents

Dear Ms. Anjinho,

We extend our sincere congratulations on your election as the European Ombudsman. Your leadership comes at a critical moment for the European Union, and we trust that under your mandate transparency, accountability, and public trust in EU institutions will be reinforced.

We are a coalition of organisations dedicated to upholding the principle of openness enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Our collective work focuses on ensuring that citizens can actively and meaningfully participate in the Union's democratic processes through timely and effective access to documents held by all EU institutions, bodies, and agencies.

We are increasingly alarmed by the systematic erosion of transparency standards and practices within the EU institutions - particularly in the flawed implementation of Regulation 1049/2001. The latest and most concerning example is the December 2024 revision of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, which drastically undermines transparency in access to documents. This move not only defies long-standing recommendations from your predecessor and rulings of the Court of Justice, but also raises serious legal and democratic concerns and has triggered legal challenges.<sup>1 2</sup>

Restrictive document management practices, the absence of real-time legislative transparency, and persistent failures to comply with legal timeframes severely undermine the fundamental right of access to EU documents. These shortcomings are not abstract violations of legal procedure; they have real consequences - excluding citizens from EU decision-making processes and weakening democratic oversight. As a group, we have reviewed these failures and published an in-depth analysis accompanied by recommendations in the report "Making the Right to EU Documents a Reality".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Internal review request No. 102 in the Commission's repository.](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?lgrec=fr&td=;ALL&language=en&num=T-146/25&jur=T>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.access-info.org/wp-content/uploads/Making-the-Right-to-EU-Documents-a-Reality\\_-\\_Recommendations-on-Implementing-Regulation-1049-3.pdf](https://www.access-info.org/wp-content/uploads/Making-the-Right-to-EU-Documents-a-Reality_-_Recommendations-on-Implementing-Regulation-1049-3.pdf)

Despite repeated findings by the European Ombudsman highlighting non-compliance with transparency obligations, there are instances where EU institutions continue to disregard these recommendations. We are particularly concerned by this trend, which erodes institutional accountability and undermines the effectiveness of the Ombudsman's role as a guardian of good administration. When institutions fail to act on the Ombudsman's decisions, they deny individuals a crucial avenue for redress and set a dangerous precedent for the rule of law within the EU.

As the Ombudsman, you have the power - and the responsibility - to ensure that transparency is not merely a theoretical principle, but is implemented by the institutions in practice. We urge you to:

- Advocate for more robust enforcement of Regulation 1049/2001 to reflect today's digital information landscape;
- Push for greater institutional commitment to proactive transparency, ensuring that key EU decision-making processes are open to public scrutiny in real time;
- Hold EU institutions accountable when they fail to meet their transparency obligations.

This is a pivotal moment for the future of transparency in the EU. Under your leadership, there is an opportunity to set a new standard - one where institutional openness is not optional, but a core pillar of democratic governance. We stand ready to support your efforts and work collaboratively to ensure that transparency remains at the heart of the EU's commitment to its citizens.

We would like to take this opportunity to request a meeting to discuss how we can engage with you on these critical issues.

We look forward to your response.

Signed:

1. Access Info Europe
2. ARTICLE 19
3. ClientEarth
4. Corporate Europe Observatory
5. European Environmental Bureau
6. LobbyControl
7. Transparency International EU