

The European Commission's refusal to grant public access to a legal opinion related to an alleged conflict of interest in Czechia

Case 193/2020/EWM - **Opened on** 18/02/2020 - **Decision on** 25/03/2020 - **Institution concerned** European Commission (No maladministration found) |

The case concerned the European Commission's refusal to grant public access to an opinion of its legal service regarding an alleged conflict of interest of the Czech prime minister.

The complainant considered that there was an overriding public interest in disclosure. In his view, the public should have access to the content of the legal opinion, so that individuals can form their own independent view of the case, which is in the public domain.

The Ombudsman found that the Commission was justified in withholding access to the legal opinion, at this stage. Disclosing the opinion, which is related to a wider ongoing audit procedure, could undermine its ability to conduct audits aimed at ensuring that EU funds are properly spent and that the rule of law is respected. She therefore closed the inquiry with a finding of no maladministration.