



Transparency of decision making in the Council of the EU during the COVID-19 crisis

Case OI/4/2020/TE - **Opened on** 27/07/2020 - **Decision on** 24/03/2021 - **Institution concerned** Council of the European Union (No maladministration found) |

In the context of wider strategic work on the response of the EU administration during the COVID-19 crisis, the Ombudsman examined the work of the Council of the EU. In particular, the Ombudsman assessed the decision by the Council to derogate, temporarily, from its Rules of Procedure during the crisis, and the implications this has had for its decision-making process and the transparency thereof. The Ombudsman found that the Council should have made public, at an earlier stage, the options it considered how to operate in the context of the crisis. She also found that the Council initially did not make information publicly available on how it organises its 'informal ministerial meetings' and how its preparatory bodies continued their discussions on legislative and non-legislative files in the absence of physical meetings. While the Council has since taken steps to make these meetings more transparent, the Ombudsman took the view that more could be done and made four suggestions for improvement to this end. The Ombudsman closed her inquiry, but will continue to monitor the transparency of Council decision making in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.