

Letter from the European Ombudsman to the European Parliament on the European Parliament's refusal to give public access to documents related to the EU-China Friendship Group - European Parliament reference: A(2021)648

Correspondence - 06/09/2021

Case 1542/2021/SF - Opened on 06/09/2021 - Decision on 28/01/2022 - Institution concerned European Parliament (No maladministration found) |

Dear Mr X,

The Ombudsman has received a complaint against the European Parliament concerning the Parliament's refusal to grant access to documents related to the EU-China Friendship Group and the suspension of its activities.

The Parliament has identified four documents as falling within the scope of the complainant's request. Following a confirmatory application, the Parliament maintained its refusal to give access to the four documents. The complainant would like the Parliament to disclose these documents in their entirety.

We have decided to open an inquiry into the complaint against the Parliament's decision to refuse access under Regulation 1049/2001.

Regulation 1049/2001 states that applications for access should be handled promptly. It is in line with this principle that the Ombudsman also seeks to deal with cases such as this as quickly as possible.

As a first step, we consider it necessary to review the four documents at issue in the complainant's request. I would be grateful if the Parliament could provide copies of these documents, preferably in electronic format through encrypted e-mail, [1] **by Friday, 10 September 2021** .

The documents subject to the public access request will be treated confidentially, along with any other material the Parliament chooses to share with us that it marks confidential. Documents of this kind will be handled and stored in line with this confidential status and will be deleted from the Ombudsman's files shortly after the inquiry has ended.



The Parliament's position has been set out in its confirmatory response. However, should the Parliament wish to provide additional views, to be taken into account by the European Ombudsman during this inquiry, we would be grateful if they could be provided to us within fifteen working days from the receipt of this letter, that is, **by 27 September 2021** .

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the inquiries officer responsible for the case, Ms Silvia Fuller.

Yours sincerely,

Rosita Hickey Director of Inquiries

Strasbourg, 06/09/2021

[1] Encrypted emails can be sent to our dedicated mailbox.