The European External Action Service's (EEAS) refusal to grant public access to documents concerning the European Peace Facility

Case 124/2022/NH - Opened on 20/01/2022 - Institution concerned European External Action Service

The complainant asked the European External Action Service (EEAS) to grant public access to the 'Integrated Methodological Framework' for assistance measures under the European Peace Facility, which is the funding programme for external actions that have military or defence implications. The Framework sets out guiding principles and possible concerns to be addressed when assisting partners in the military and defence areas in the context of these actions. The EEAS refused access, invoking an exception provided for under the EU's rules on public access to documents and arguing that disclosing the documents could undermine the protection of the public interest as regards defence and military matters, as well as international relations.

The Ombudsman opened an inquiry, inspected the document in question and requested a meeting with the EEAS in order to obtain additional clarifications.