

The European Commission's refusal to give public access to documents concerning an audit of pelagic and tuna fisheries in Ireland

Case 757/2022/MIG - Opened on 06/05/2022 - Decision on 16/09/2022 - Institution concerned European Commission (No maladministration found) |

The complainant, an organisation representing Irish fishermen, asked the European Commission to grant public access to documents related to an audit on the monitoring by the Irish authorities, notably regarding the weighing of pelagic fish and tuna catches. The Commission refused access, invoking an exception under the EU's legislation on public access to documents and arguing that disclosing the documents could undermine an ongoing administrative procedure aimed at implementing recommendations resulting from the audit.

The Ombudsman inquiry team inspected the documents at issue and met with Commission representatives. Based on this, the Ombudsman concluded that the Commission was justified in refusing access to the documents in question. However, the Ombudsman encouraged the Commission to reconsider whether it can make the two reports public, once the follow-up to its audit has been finalised.