

Letter from the European Ombudsman to the European Commission concerning the transparency of the European Commission's interactions with representatives of the tobacco industry and request for further inspection

Correspondence - 31/01/2024

Case OI/6/2021/KR - **Opened on** 26/11/2021 - **Decision on** 19/12/2023 - **Institution concerned** European Commission (Maladministration found) |

Ms Ursula von der Leyen

President

European Commission

Dear President,

On 5 May 2022, my inquiry team conducted a meeting in this inquiry. Please find enclosed, for your information, the meeting report which will be published on the Ombudsman's website. The confidential annex will not be published.

I would like to thank your colleagues for their good cooperation during the meeting.

Based on the meeting, I have now decided that it is necessary for my inquiry team to inspect the following additional documents:

- The minutes of the meetings, (video-)calls, and any other interactions between tobacco interest representatives and Commissioners, their cabinets and/or Commission staff members, also below Director-General level in all DGs, the Secretariat-General and the Legal Service, which occurred in 2020 and 2021. To date, my inquiry team has been provided with some of the minutes of the meetings identified as having taken place. I would appreciate if you could provide any further minutes that have not yet been transmitted to my inquiry team, or confirm that no more minutes exist.



- The replies provided by the Commission to the access to document requests GESTDEM 2020/2580 and GESTDEM 2020/2583.
- Advice provided by DG SANTE to other DGs (for example by means of email exchanges between the respective DGs including at services level) in relation to meetings with tobacco interest representatives.
- Any internal guidelines and procedures for the execution of the controls concerning the information declared by registrants in the Transparency Register.

I would be grateful if the Commission could provide my inquiry team with access to the material requested by 15 January 2023.

Should your staff have any queries, they may contact the responsible Inquiries Officer, Ms Leticia Díez Sánchez or the Legal Expert, Ms Jennifer King.

Yours sincerely,

Emily O'Reilly European Ombudsman

Strasbourg, 08/11/2022