



The European Commission's refusal to give public access to documents concerning a project under the EU Defence Industrial Development Programme

Case 1980/2022/NH - **Opened on** 10/11/2022 - **Decision on** 14/03/2023 - **Institution concerned** European Commission (No maladministration found) |

The complainant, a journalist, asked the European Commission to grant public access to documents concerning the EU Defence Industrial Development Programme and the EU Preparatory Action on Defence Research, in particular the largest project that received funding. The Commission identified two documents as falling within the scope of the request (a project proposal and grant agreement) but refused to disclose them. In doing so, it invoked exceptions under the EU legislation on public access to documents, arguing that disclosure could undermine the public interest as regards security and defence, as well as commercial interests.

The Ombudsman inquiry team [inspected the documents \[Link\]](#) in question and found that the Commission was justified in refusing access due to the sensitive nature of the documents. The Ombudsman [closed the inquiry \[Link\]](#) with the conclusion that there was no maladministration by the Commission.