



How the European Commission dealt with a request for public access to documents concerning the EU-US Energy Security Task Force

Case 1998/2022/NH - **Opened on** 23/11/2022 - **Decision on** 17/07/2023 - **Institution concerned** European Commission (Solution achieved) |

The complainant, a civil society organisation, asked the European Commission for information and public access to documents concerning the EU/US Energy Security Task Force, which brings together representatives of the Commission and the US authorities to discuss energy security and cooperation. The Commission identified five documents as falling under the scope of the request. It disclosed two of these and refused to give access to parts of the three remaining documents. In doing so, it invoked exceptions under the EU legislation on public access to documents, arguing that disclosure could undermine the protection of commercial interests and international relations. The Ombudsman reviewed the documents at issue and found that it was not clear how the disclosure of the companies' names would specifically and actually undermine these interests. The Ombudsman therefore proposed that the Commission re-assess its position with a view to giving significantly increased public access. The Commission accepted the solution proposal and fully disclosed the documents. The Ombudsman welcomed the Commission's positive response to her solution proposal and closed the case.