



## **The European Parliament's refusal to give public access to a document concerning its financial contribution to a voluntary pension fund for MEPs**

**Case 53/2023/NK - Opened on 13/01/2023 - Decision on 22/06/2023 - Institution concerned** European Parliament ( No maladministration found ) |

The complainant, a journalist, asked the European Parliament to grant public access to information on its financial contribution to a voluntary pension fund availed of by some Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The Parliament identified a 2022 management report as falling under the scope of the request but refused access. In doing so, the Parliament invoked an exception under the EU legislation on public access to documents, arguing that disclosure could undermine the commercial interests of the private company responsible for the fund.

Having inspected the document in question, the Ombudsman found that it contains much more information than the complainant requested, and agreed with the Parliament that it could not provide the complainant with meaningful, partial access to the document. Against this background, the decision to refuse access was justified.

However, the Ombudsman took the view that, where an EU institution cannot grant public access to a document, it should endeavour to provide applicants with the information that is relevant to their request(s). The Ombudsman thus suggested that the Parliament seek to



provide the complainant with the requested information, that is, a list of the individual investments made by the voluntary pension fund, as there is a clear public interest in this information.