How the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) handled a request for public access to documents related to online child sexual abuse

Case 1167/2023/PB - Opened on 13/07/2023 - Institution concerned European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation

The complainant asked the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) to grant public access to documents related to online child sexual abuse, including exchanges with the European Commission concerning draft EU legislation on online child sexual abuse, as well as exchanges with US and UK-based organisations. Europol identified four documents concerning exchanges with the Commission, but refused to disclose these documents. In doing so, it invoked exceptions under the EU's legislation on public access to documents, arguing that disclosure could undermine public security and an ongoing decision-making process. It identified no other documents as falling under the request.

The Ombudsman opened an inquiry and sought to inspect the documents in question and meet with Europol.