

Letter to Commissioner Malmström concerning the European Commission's Future Trade Strategy

Correspondence - 20/08/2015

Case OI/10/2014/RA - **Opened on** 29/07/2014 - **Decision on** 06/01/2015 - **Institution concerned** European Commission (No further inquiries justified) |

Ms Cecilia Malmstrom Member of the European Commission Responsible for Trade European Commission

Strasbourg, 20/08/2015

Re: The European Commission's Future Trade Strategy

Dear Commissioner Malmström,

As you know, I very much welcomed the Commission's response to the Ombudsman's own-initiative inquiry into transparency in the TTIP negotiations (OI/10/2014/RA). [1]

In its opinion in that case, the Commission announced a range of measures in the area of transparency and public access to documents and confirmed that it is ready to examine whether these steps could be extended over time to other negotiations. The Commission added that it would have to do this within the context of the overall approach to transparency that will be set out by the Commission over the months ahead. [2]

I understand that part of this approach will be defined by the Commission in the new Trade Strategy that will be published in the form of a Commission Communication in the autumn. Given that the principle of transparency does not feature prominently in the existing Commission Communication, [3] I very much welcome the fact that the Commission intends to address this for the years ahead.

I look forward to reading the Communication when it is published and very much hope that it embeds, in the area of trade, the principle of transparency and the fundamental right of public



access to documents that you have constantly strived to further since you took over responsibility for this portfolio. As you know, such structural solutions reduce the need for individual requests and complaints to both the Commission and the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely,

Emily O'Reilly

[1] In its resolution on the TTIP negotiations of 8 July 2015, the European Parliament included, among its recommendations, that the Commission should " *implement the recommendations of the European Ombudsman, in particular relating to the rules on public access to documents* ". See point 2(e)(i) of the European Parliament resolution of 8 July 2015 containing the European Parliament's recommendations to the European Commission on the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

[2] See the opinion of the Commission in OI/10/2014/RA available at:
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/cases/correspondence.faces/en/58450/html.bookmark>
[Link]

[3] See Commission Communication entitled 'Trade, Growth and World Affairs - Trade Policy as a core component of the EU's 2020 strategy'; COM(2010)612.