



Eurogroup
The President

Lisbon, 29 November 2019

Ms Emily O'Reilly
European Ombudsman

Re: Transparency of the Eurogroup Working Group (SI/2/2019/EA)

Madam,

Further to my previous reply to you concerning the matter you raised in your letter dated 13 May, I am glad to come back to you with additional elements, namely the Eurogroup's latest decisions concerning its transparency.

As you know, I do not take transparency issues lightly and this is why I have been looking for ways to improve it further at Eurogroup level, building on the initiatives of 2016, while respecting legal and institutional limits.

Further to my initiative, the Eurogroup reviewed its current transparency policy and agreed on a list of actions.

As concerns the Eurogroup Working Group (EWG), ministers agreed on two further steps: first, to make the webpage explaining the role and function of the Group more informative and second, to publish the calendar of its meetings. These additional steps, combined with the information already available and the detailed briefings provided to journalists by the EWG President on the preparation of Eurogroup meetings, ensure that information on the preparatory work of the Eurogroup is provided to the press and the public at large.

As regards the transparency of the Eurogroup's work, ministers decided to make the agenda of their meetings public much earlier than has been the practice hitherto, in order to accommodate the information needs of the public. Furthermore, they agreed to make the Eurogroup summing-up letters more detailed, where such action is warranted, and to create an online repository of publicly available Eurogroup documents to facilitate citizens' access to information. Additional explanation about the citizens' right to request documents held by the General Secretariat of the Council has been added to the website too.

This takes into account the need to strike the right balance between being transparent, respecting the applicable legal confidentiality requirements, making sure the public interest as regards the financial and economic policies of the euro area member states is not jeopardized, and ensuring an effective and efficient decision-making process, which citizens rightly expect from ministers, especially in crises. I believe that in the current legal and institutional setting this is the best result we can achieve.

I trust that you will appreciate this sincere effort and the action, under our existing constraints. Going forward, we stand ready to review these arrangements at regular intervals to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

I would like to conclude by reassuring you again that the Eurogroup takes transparency matters very seriously and will continue to do so in future.

Kind regards,



Mário Centeno
Eurogroup President