



# Press release No. 1/2015

## Ombudsman: “Further steps to increase TTIP transparency necessary”

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The European Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration in the EU institutions and bodies. Any EU citizen, resident, or an enterprise or association in a Member State, can lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman offers a fast, flexible and free means of solving problems with the EU administration.

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**The European Ombudsman, Emily O’Reilly, while welcoming the real progress by the European Commission, has made a series of recommendations on how to further increase the transparency of the on-going Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations with the US. The recommendations relate to public access to consolidated negotiating texts, greater proactive disclosure of TTIP documents and increased transparency as regards meetings that Commission officials hold on TTIP with business organisations, lobby groups or NGOs.**

Emily O’Reilly stated: “The Commission has made real efforts to make the TTIP negotiations more transparent. I am aware that the Commission at times needs to talk to the US confidentially to be able to negotiate effectively. However, US resistance to publishing certain TTIP documents is not in itself sufficient to keep them from the European public. The Commission has to ensure at all times that exceptions to the EU citizens’ fundamental right to get access to documents are well-founded and fully justified.”

#### **Lobbying transparency also for Commission directors, heads of units, negotiators**

The Ombudsman’s investigation into the transparency of the TTIP negotiations, opened in July 2014, was triggered by concerns about key documents not being disclosed and about the alleged granting of privileged access to certain stakeholders. She received more than 6000 emails in reply to her public consultation on this matter. The report on this consultation is available here:

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/cases/correspondence.faces/en/58643/html.bookmark>

Taking into account the Commission’s first steps to increase TTIP transparency, as well as the contributions to her public consultation, the Ombudsman concluded that further steps are needed to increase the legitimacy of the negotiations in the eyes of the public. She, therefore, calls on the Commission to establish a comprehensive list of public and non-public TTIP documents and for greater proactivity concerning the publication of documents, including agendas and minutes of meetings with lobbyists.

The Ombudsman also calls on the Commission to extend the transparency obligations as regards meetings with stakeholders to the levels of Commission directors, heads of units, and negotiators. EU officials involved in the TTIP negotiations should only meet with interest representatives who are registered in the Transparency Register.

The Ombudsman’s full decision is available here:  
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/cases/decision.faces/en/58668/html.bookmark>