

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002868/25
to the Commission
Dick Erixon (ECR), Charlie Weimers (ECR), Beatrice Timgren (ECR)
(14 July 2025)**

Subject: Transparency and democratic accountability in Commission practices

In recent years, the Commission has been criticised for a pattern of opaque decision-making and lack of disclosure, raising concerns about democratic accountability in the EU. This includes the refusal to disclose key communications during major public procurement processes, restrictions on access to contracts with non-governmental organisations receiving EU funding and self-imposed exemptions from transparency rules in meetings with non-EU authorities ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾.

These practices raise concerns about democratic accountability within the EU and risk eroding public trust in EU governance. If the Commission expects Member States to uphold the rule of law and transparency, it must apply the same standards to its own conduct.

1. What concrete measures will the Commission take to improve institutional transparency, particularly in relation to high-level communications and procurement processes involving significant public funds?
2. Does the Commission consider it compatible with democratic principles that Members of the European Parliament can only access NGO funding contracts under confidentiality agreements, and if so, why?
3. Will the President of the European Commission commit to publishing a comprehensive list of meetings held between Commission officials and non-EU representatives since 2022, including the purpose and participants of such meetings?

Submitted: 14.7.2025

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(3 October 2025)**

The Commission is committed to transparency in its activities, applying strict rules concerning interest representation and publishing information on all meetings held with interest representatives.

This applies regardless of whether the interest representatives are from the EU or from a third country, and irrespective of where the meeting is held. As of 1 January 2025, these transparency rules also apply to all Commission staff with management functions ⁽¹⁾.

To protect the EU's international relations, meetings with representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies, or intergovernmental organisations are not covered by these rules, with transparency maintained through press releases and social media where possible.

Article 163 of the Financial Regulation ⁽²⁾ provides for the principle of transparency which must be respected throughout all phases of the process. Contacts with tenderers are allowed exceptionally in the circumstances provided by Article 172, also considering the type of procurement procedure.

These contacts must always take place in writing and all records of them must be kept in the procurement file. Records of the meetings and contacts with tenderers in a procurement procedure are subject to the rules on access to documents.

As a general rule, the date of the meeting is accessible after the signature of contract, however the minutes of the meeting and other content related information may be refused if they fall under the exceptions provided in art. 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 ⁽³⁾.

The content of tenders or specific offers of a tenderer benefit from a presumption of non-accessibility for a period of five years, but they can be protected even longer with additional specific justification.

NGO funding contracts, like other funding contracts, are not public documents. The Commission has provided access to the European Parliament in full compliance with the applicable legal framework ⁽⁴⁾.

¹ <https://brusselsignal.eu/2025/04/ec-admits-misuse-and-undue-lobbying-activities-in-grant-awards/>.

² <https://www.sullcrom.com/insights/memo/2025/May/EU-Court-Landmark-Ruling-Reinforces-Transparency-EU-Institutions>.

³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001292_EN.html.

⁽¹⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202403081, and https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202403082.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj/eng>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2001/1049/oj/eng>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:304:0047:0062:EN:PDF>.