



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0065

Public access to documents - report 2022 - 2024

European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2026 on public access to documents - report covering the years 2022 - 2024 (2025/2137(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and in particular Articles 1, 9, 10, 11 and 16 thereof,
- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Article 15 thereof,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter), and in particular Articles 41 and 42 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1367/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006 on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to Community institutions and bodies²,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 30 April 2008 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (COM(2008)0229),

¹ OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2001/1049/oj>.

² OJ L 264, 25.9.2006, p. 13, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/1367/oj>.

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 21 March 2011 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (COM(2011)0137),
- having regard to its position at first reading of 15 December 2011 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents³,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 February 2025 entitled 'Commission work programme 2025' (COM(2025)0045) and to its annexes thereto, and to the intention expressed there to withdraw the proposals COM(2011)0137 and COM(2008)0229 to amend Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents,
- having regard to Commission Decision (EU) 2024/3080 of 4 December 2024 establishing the Rules of Procedure of the Commission and amending Decision C(2000) 3614⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2017 on transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions⁵,
- having regard to Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2021 on public access to documents⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 July 2023 on public access to documents - annual report for the years 2019-2021⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2024 on the time the European Commission takes to deal with requests for public access to documents⁹,

³ OJ C 168 E, 14.6.2013, p. 159.

⁴ OJ L, 2024/3080, 5.12.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/3080/oj>.

⁵ OJ C 337, 20.9.2018, p. 120.

⁶ OJ L 305, 26.11.2019, p. 17, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1937/oj>.

⁷ OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 54.

⁸ OJ C, C/2024/4014, 17.7.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/4014/oj>.

⁹ OJ C, C/2024/6560, 12.11.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/6560/oj>.

- having regard to the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR),
 - having regard to the judgments of the General Court of 17 July 2024 in Cases T-689/21, *Auken and Others v Commission*, and T-761/21, *Courtois and Others v Commission*¹⁰,
 - having regard to the judgment of the General Court of 14 May 2025 in Case T-36/23, *Stevi and The New York Times v Commission*¹¹,
 - having regard to the reports and decisions of the European Ombudsman, in particular Special Report OI/2/2022/OAM¹² and the decisions in cases 1316/2021/MIG¹³ and 1499/2021/SF¹⁴,
 - having regard to Rule 122(7) and Rule 149 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A10-0011/2026),
- A. whereas the EU Treaties guarantee every citizen the right to democratic participation and transparent decision-making, requiring EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to grant the public access to documents; whereas this fundamental right of access to documents, protected by the Treaties and the Charter, enables effective citizen scrutiny¹⁵, and should therefore be exercised proactively;

¹⁰ Judgments of the General Court of 17 July 2024, *Auken and Others v Commission*, T-689/21, ECLI:EU:T:2024:476, and *Courtois and Others v Commission*, T-761/21, ECLI:EU:T:2024:477.

¹¹ Judgment of the General Court of 14 May 2025, *Stevi and The New York Times v Commission*, T-36/23, ECLI:EU:T:2025:483.

¹² European Ombudsman, 'Special Report of the European Ombudsman in her strategic inquiry concerning the time the European Commission takes to deal with requests for public access to documents (OI/2/2022/OAM)', 21 September 2023.

¹³ European Ombudsman decision of 12 July 2022 on the European Commission's refusal of public access to text messages exchanged between the Commission President and the CEO of a pharmaceutical company on the purchase of a COVID-19 vaccine (case 1316/2021/MIG).

¹⁴ European Ombudsman decision of 27 June 2022 on the Council of the European Union's refusal to give full public access to documents related to negotiations on the draft 'Digital Markets Act' (1499/2021/SF).

¹⁵ Article 10(3) TEU, read in the light of recital 13 of the preamble thereto and Article 1, second paragraph, and Article 9 thereof, and Article 15 TFEU.

- B. whereas the CJEU has affirmed that public access to documents is an essential part of participatory democracy; whereas it has ruled that public scrutiny of information used in legislative activities is a precondition for the proper functioning of democratic powers and the exercise of democratic rights; whereas the CJEU has also stressed that transparency is inherent in the legislative procedure and that decisions must be taken as openly and as close to citizens as possible;
- C. whereas Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 recognises the particular importance of providing even broader access to documents when EU institutions act in their legislative capacity and underlines the particular need to ensure direct access to legislative documents;
- D. whereas citizens legitimately expect transparency, efficiency and accountability from public authorities, and the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies should respond to those expectations in a clear and comprehensible manner; whereas openness and good governance in the functioning of the EU and its decision-making process are essential to building citizens' trust in the EU and to ensuring greater legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability of the administration; whereas the principles of openness and transparency should govern not only the decision-making process but also the way in which a text is drafted;
- E. whereas timely access to reliable and accurate information is crucial for safeguarding against misinformation and effectively countering the spread of disinformation; whereas delays in granting such access undermine this process;
- F. whereas the EU is founded on representative democracy and its institutions, bodies, offices and agencies must uphold the highest standards of transparency and integrity to enable robust public scrutiny and meaningful citizen participation in good governance;
- G. whereas the role of the European Ombudsman has been essential in safeguarding public access to documents, including through the recommendations set out in Special Report OI/2/2022/OAM; whereas the EU institutions must ensure that the European Ombudsman can continue to exercise this role effectively;
- H. whereas the European Ombudsman's strategic inquiry outlined in that Special Report revealed systemic and significant delays by the Commission, particularly in its handling of confirmatory applications (requests by applicants to review its initial response) following initial refusals to grant citizens access to documents;
- I. whereas in Case 1499/2021/SF, the Ombudsman found unequivocally that the Council's refusal to give full public access to documents related to legislative negotiations constituted maladministration;

- J. whereas no penalties are provided for in the event of failure to comply with the 15-day deadline under Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 on granting or refusing access to documents;
- K. whereas Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 acknowledges the importance of granting broad access to documents when EU institutions act in their legislative capacity and emphasises the necessity of ensuring direct access to legislative documents;
- L. whereas in May 2021, a journalist requested access to documents, including text messages between the Commission President and Pfizer, but the Commission stated that it held no such records on the basis of internal registration rules; whereas the way in which the Commission handled the case is a matter of concern; whereas the European Ombudsman concluded that this response from the Commission constituted maladministration and presented several recommendations as a follow-up of the case, including on how to record text messages, and recommended a renewed search, in line with the public access obligations under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001; whereas on 14 May 2025, the General Court annulled the Commission decision to withhold the text messages; whereas, according to the Court, the Commission failed to provide a plausible explanation to justify not possessing the messages¹⁶;
- M. whereas, under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, text messages qualify as ‘documents’ when they concern matters relating to the policies, activities or decisions falling within an institution’s sphere of responsibility, since a ‘document’ is defined as any content, whatever its medium (on paper, in electronic form or as a sound, visual or audiovisual recording); whereas this does not mean that all text messages exchanged must be registered and accessible, but only those relating to the EU’s policies, activities or decisions; whereas the Commission may still refuse to grant full public access to such messages where one of the exceptions provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, such as the protection of commercial interests, applies;
- N. whereas on 6 October 2025, the Commission published in the Official Journal (C/2025/5423) a formal withdrawal of legislative proposals, in particular COM(2011)0137 and COM(2008)0229, both aimed at amending Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 on public access to documents, in the light of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, citing the absence of any foreseeable agreement, following years of legislative deadlock since 2011; whereas this continued impasse

¹⁶ Case T-36/23, *Stevi and The New York Times v Commission*, press release:
<https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2025-05/cp250060en.pdf>.

raises concerns that reliance on the 2001 framework alone may no longer suffice to effectively reinforce the right of public access to EU documents in a modern institutional and technological context;

- O. whereas the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies presents both opportunities and challenges for ensuring accurate and transparent information within the EU and its institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, while appropriately designed and governed AI systems can help detect and mitigate misinformation and disinformation and thereby support an informed public discourse, provided that their deployment fully respects fundamental rights, promotes accountability and upholds high standards of transparency in order to maintain public trust and strengthen democratic governance;
- P. whereas in Case C-588/21 P¹⁷, concerning an application by non-profit organisations requesting access to technical standards on the safety of toys, the Court of Justice held that the Commission should have recognised an overriding public interest under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, justifying the disclosure of such harmonised standards;
- 1. Strongly emphasises that transparency and access to documents constitute fundamental rights under EU law, essential for ensuring transparent, democratic, accountable and meaningful citizen participation;

Annual reports on public access to documents

- 2. Notes that in 2024, the Commission amended its transparency framework by adopting revised Rules of Procedure, in an attempt to clarify rules on public access to documents under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001; underlines that concerns were raised by some stakeholders about the revised rules, in particular about the definition of what qualifies as a ‘document’, the additional exceptions to the obligation to register documents or presumptions of non-disclosure, the compliance of that definition and these exceptions and presumptions with established CJEU case-law, and the fact that they would undermine transparency, which would represent a step backwards, and would also undermine the uniform application of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001;
- 3. Observes that in 2024, the Commission received 6 938 initial access to document requests and 641 confirmatory applications, marking a

¹⁷ Judgment of the Court of Justice of 5 March 2024, *Public.Resource.Org Inc., Right to Know CLG v European Commission and Others*, C-588/21 P, ECLI:EU:C:2024:201.

- 7 % increase in confirmatory applications compared to 2023¹⁸; observes that in 2023, the Commission received 7 274 initial access to document requests and 599 confirmatory applications, marking a 43 % increase in confirmatory applications compared to 2022¹⁹; observes that in 2022, the Commission received 7 410 initial access to document requests and 418 confirmatory applications, marking a 17,8 % increase in confirmatory applications compared to 2021²⁰;
4. Highlights that the Commission, in dealing with confirmatory applications, decided to grant partial or full access to documents in 51 % of cases in 2022, 85 % of cases in 2023 and 60 % of cases in 2024; notes that confirmatory applications increased while initial requests decreased, and that the ratio of decisions reversed at the confirmatory application stage; points out that this illustrates a failure to assess initial requests thoroughly;
 5. Highlights the fact that, by 31 December 2024, Parliament's Public Register of Documents contained 918 803 references (up from 898 267 at the end of 2023); notes that the overall positive response rate remained high at 91 %, with applications handled within approximately nine working days on average²¹;
 6. Acknowledges that the Commission received the most access to documents requests out of all the EU institutions, with its Secretariat-General and Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety receiving the most requests;
 7. Observes that in 2024 the Commission issued 5 542 initial-stage replies and 305 confirmatory replies, while the other EU institutions have also made progress in their efforts to improve transparency: the Council's register contained over 527 000 documents by the end of 2024, with more than 72 % of them publicly available, and it

¹⁸ Commission report of 19 May 2025 on the application in 2024 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (COM(2025)0239).

¹⁹ Commission report of 3 July 2024 on the application in 2023 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (COM(2024)0266).

²⁰ Commission report of 13 September 2023 on the application in 2022 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (COM(2023)0523).

²¹ European Parliament, 'Public Access to Documents 2024 - European Parliament's Annual Report', Directorate-General for the Presidency, Transparency Unit, May 2025.

processed over 2 800 access requests, mainly from civil society and academia, granting full or partial access in 85 % of cases²²;

8. Welcomes these trends as they highlight the EU's ongoing commitment to transparency amid complex legal and political challenges; notes, however, that in 85 % of the reviewed cases, the Commission did not take a decision within the legal time limits and that, in 60 % of the cases, the delay amounted to more than 60 working days;

Recent developments

9. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 4(6) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, even where certain information must be withheld on the basis of justified reasons, partial disclosure should be considered and the remaining parts of the requested document must be released, taking into account the overriding public interest in transparency and disclosure, which encompass the principles of sound governance, institutional efficiency, democratic accountability and enhanced civic engagement in the decision-making process;
10. Firmly believes that a strong and consistent commitment to public access to documents and to transparency constitutes a fundamental pillar of the EU's democratic system, enhancing citizens' engagement and participation and contributing to good governance and sound financial management; believes, considering the current context of hybrid threats and warfare, that it is important to help counter conspiracy narratives and disinformation, and that committing to this will contribute to reinforcing the EU's resilience against foreign interference and attempts to undermine its integrity;
11. Considers that applying a proactive approach and adopting faster, less cumbersome and more accessible procedures for handling complaints against refusals to grant access would help to ensure effective transparency, prevent legal disputes and avoid unnecessary costs and burdens;
12. Expresses concern over the persistent over-classification of official documents by EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, which is in breach of the principle of transparency; reiterates its long-standing call, as conveyed in its previous resolutions on public access to documents, for the establishment of clear, consistent and legally binding rules governing the classification and declassification of documents in order to safeguard democratic accountability;
13. Notes with concern that common problems that people face when requesting access to documents are the refusal of access by

²² Commission report of 3 July 2024 on the application in 2023 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (COM(2024)0266).

institutions, bodies or agencies on the basis of insubstantial arguments and the inconsistent handling of similar access to documents requests by the institutions;

14. Expresses concern regarding the frequent use of the exceptions in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 to refuse to provide full access to documents; stresses that transparency and access to documents must remain the general rule, while a limited number of legitimate exceptions, as defined in the relevant legislation, for example for security reasons, may be invoked and must be interpreted strictly; recalls that according to the EU Ombudsman, any exception or restriction on public access to documents or information, including legislative documents, should be exceptional and limited to what is absolutely necessary; reiterates that an institution, body, office or agency invoking one of the access exceptions for documents under this article must make an objective and individual case-by-case assessment; calls for the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to integrate these assessments into their practices for providing access to documents;
15. Calls on the Commission to ensure transparency of decisions taken in comitology; recalls that in the comitology procedure, the CJEU considered that revealing Member States' positions does not as such undermine the decision-making process²³;
16. Expresses concern about the difficulties in accessing documents from some EU agencies, and these agencies' prevention of public access to documents and proper scrutiny; stresses the need for greater transparency and proactive access to documents from EU agencies; calls, furthermore, for the EU agencies to implement Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 in their policies on access to documents; calls, in particular, on the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) to grant the European Parliament timely access to its documents, in particular information and analysis on safe countries of origin and safe non-EU countries, in line with Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 on the European Union Agency for Asylum²⁴, in order to strengthen democratic oversight; calls for the obligation imposed by Article 17 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 to report annually on the implementation of the Regulation to be extended to all other EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies covered by Article 15 TFEU;
17. Deplores the continued absence of meaningful follow-up by the Commission and the Council in response to recommendations made

²³ See judgment of the General Court of 14 June 2023, *Covington & Burling and Van Vooren v Commission*, T-201/21, ECLI:EU:T:2023:333.

²⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010, (OJ L 468, 30.12.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2303/oj>).

in previous Parliament reports on access to documents; further deplores the fact that the EU institutions do not proactively publish many documents related to legislative files, preventing citizens from knowing which documents actually exist and thus impeding their right to request access to documents;

18. Regrets the current difficulties in gaining access to detailed information from the Commission on the implementation and enforcement of EU law; calls, therefore, on the Commission to ensure the transparency of decisions taken in infringement procedures;
19. Calls on the Commission to ensure the transparency of decisions taken concerning the EU budget, in particular with regard to EU funding to non-EU countries and in the field of migration and security, including information on the amount, purpose and source of funding, in order to ensure that Parliament and the public can exercise scrutiny of the implementation of the EU budget;
20. Reiterates its concern about the pattern of systemic delays by the Commission in responding to confirmatory applications outlined by the European Ombudsman's inquiry in its Special Report OI/2/2022/OAM, finding that structural shortcomings, insufficient resourcing and ineffective communication ultimately dissuaded individuals from exercising their right of access; regrets the fact that the Commission has not yet fully implemented some key recommendations of the Ombudsman, in particular those relating to meeting deadlines, nor demonstrated a tangible commitment to implement them; calls on the Commission and the Council to adopt necessary measures to ensure compliance with the Ombudsman's recommendations and to address core issues such as persistent delays, lack of engagement with applicants and inadequate transparency in high-profile cases; urges the Commission to correct its systematic delays in processing requests for public access to documents; believes that possible sanctions or consequences should be provided for in the event of institutions failing to respond to requests for access to documents;
21. Regrets the fact that several legislative proposals presented by the Commission were submitted without an accompanying impact assessment or without a duly justified derogation from the obligation to provide one; underscores that the co-legislators must be fully informed of the underlying evidence supporting legislative initiatives in order to respect the transparency of the legislative process; calls on the Commission to ensure that all future legislative proposals comply with fundamental rights and are grounded in robust, verifiable data that clearly demonstrate their necessity, proportionality, expected effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, and are accompanied by a comprehensive impact assessment; urges the Commission, moreover, to ensure full transparency in the selection

of stakeholders consulted during the preparation of legislative proposals and sufficient time for broad public consultations;

22. Deeply regrets the lack of transparency in the Council, which still persists; deeply regrets that recent analyses continue to highlight a lack of proactive publication and registration practices; recalls that according to Article 16(8) TEU, the Council must meet in public when it deliberates and votes on a draft legislative act; underlines that designating most preparatory documents in ongoing legislative procedures as 'LIMITE' represents a disproportionate restriction on citizens' right to access legislative documents; stresses that in order to enable citizens to fully exercise their right to access documents, all legislative documents produced and/or circulated should also be listed in a user-friendly public register; urges the Council to improve its rules and procedures on transparency, including the accessibility and classification of legislative documents; highlights, in addition, the CJEU's case-law recognising the public's right to access documents produced by Council working groups acting in the context of the legislative process; notes, however, that access still needs to be actively requested; notes with serious concern the findings on the Council's refusal to grant access to trilogue documents, such as the Council's general approaches, four-columns documents, agendas, summaries of outcomes and minutes of trilogues;
23. Reiterates that the Council must uphold higher transparency standards; stresses that interinstitutional trust is undermined when one institution persistently refuses to grant public access to documents relevant to EU decision-making;
24. Stresses that international agreements have a binding legal effect and shape the development of EU legislation; insists, accordingly, on the imperative of ensuring full transparency throughout the negotiation process by granting Members of the European Parliament timely and unrestricted access to all relevant documents; recalls that, under Article 218(10) TFEU, the European Parliament must be 'immediately and fully informed at all stages of the procedure';
25. Welcomes the judgment of the CJEU in *Stevi and The New York Times v Commission* as an important contribution to the line of case-law that has fostered transparent practices in the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies; notes that the CJEU's decision leaves room for a modernised interpretation of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 in the light of contemporary communication practices and evolving transparency expectations; recalls that the CJEU clarified that the right of access to documents extends to all relevant formats and cannot be circumvented by internal registration rules or selective record management practices; calls, therefore, on all EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to proactively preserve,

register and make accessible all official documents, in all relevant formats, which could include, for example, digital communication and text messages when they concern public affairs;

26. Considers that the way in which the President of the Commission dealt with the access to document request in that case has decreased trust in the Commission; regrets the Commission's persistent refusal to explain why no access could be granted to the requested documents; notes that the judgment underscores the duty to proactively retain documentation to ensure the effective exercise of the right of access;
27. Notes in this regard that registering a document is a consequence of the existence of a document and not a prerequisite for its existence, and that the Commission cannot rely solely on the absence of registration in its system to establish that it does not hold requested documents; strongly believes that losing or deleting a document only because of the mere action of declaring a document 'short-lived' fundamentally undermines the principle of transparency and good governance, which poses a dangerous precedent for future handling of access to documents requests;
28. Is concerned by the lack of transparency the Commission has displayed in the publication of COVID-19 purchase agreements; highlights that the CJEU considered that the Commission did not give the public sufficiently broad access to the purchase agreements for COVID-19 vaccines²⁵;
29. Calls for the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to implement a policy of transparency by design and publish documents in a proactive manner with the ultimate aim of ensuring that citizens can fully exercise their right of access to documents and perform their scrutiny role;
30. Urges the Commission to acknowledge that citizens' exercise of the right to transparency and access to documents is not a sign of distrust that should therefore be limited or thwarted, but rather presents an opportunity for the EU institutions to demonstrate how decisions are made and to increase society's trust in the EU;
31. Notes with concern that at present, citizens can only challenge the refusal of an access to document request or the lack of a timely response when deadlines are not met by making a complaint to the Ombudsman, whose recommendations are unfortunately not legally binding, or by bringing court proceedings against an institution before the CJEU, which entails an extremely lengthy and costly process with uncertain outcomes, creating an unreasonable burden that deters citizens who wish to challenge a decision to refuse

²⁵ Cases T-689/21 *Auken and Others v Commission* and T-761/21 *Courtois and Others v Commission*.

access; highlights that the very high legal fees involved have a chilling effect on citizens and civil society on their right to access justice and to an effective remedy protected under the Charter;

Recommendations

32. Notes the adoption of the Commission's revised internal rules on access to documents and the questions raised regarding their compatibility with the Charter, the TEU, the TFEU and Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 and notes that cases are pending before the General Court of the European Union; urges the Commission to review its rules on record management and archives in the light of relevant case-law and clarify or adjust them so as to reach the highest level of transparency in line with the requirements and spirit of Article 15 TFEU and Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001; considers that this will contribute to the democratic credibility of the EU;
33. Calls for the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to adopt accessible procedures for handling complaints about refusals to grant access and measures to ensure that citizens can challenge decisions where needed; recalls that the EU institutions are obliged to provide tailored answers and not rely solely on general presumptions of non-disclosure;
34. Takes note of the Commission's withdrawal of its 2008 and 2011 proposals to revise Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001; regrets this decision to withdraw them after years of stalemate without a clear roadmap, timeline or meaningful consultation, thereby missing a key opportunity to modernise the existing and outdated framework; strongly recommends that the Commission study various national laws and practices regarding access to documents, including in Member States where there are higher standards on transparency than at EU level;
35. Calls on the Commission to table an updated and more ambitious proposal that incorporates CJEU and ECtHR case-law, takes into account Parliament's recommendations, including its position of 2011 on the proposed revision of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, and includes sanctions for failure to respect transparency rules; calls, furthermore, on the Commission to narrow exceptions to strictly necessary cases and set an ambitious new EU standard for openness and public access to documents; calls, pending an updated proposal, for Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 to be interpreted strictly and applied consistently in line with relevant case-law and the principle that the broadest possible access should be ensured;
36. Emphasises that the European Parliament should set a good example by proactively disclosing documents in accordance with its established practice on legislative transparency and by extending this approach to documents related to legislative files and work, for

example to agendas and minutes of coordinators' meetings and agendas of the Conference of Presidents;

37. Reiterates its call on the Commission to immediately address the systemic delays in the handling of confirmatory applications by adopting a pro-active approach, improving internal procedures, allocating sufficient human and financial resources on the basis of a thorough needs assessment and ensuring timely and transparent communication with applicants, in order to uphold legal obligations and support public trust and participation;
38. Recommends that EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies publish advice on their websites on what information should be included in an application for access to documents under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, in order to facilitate the processing of such applications;
39. Underlines that environmental information held by public authorities is of public interest and that the public should, according to the Aarhus Convention, benefit from broad access to this information; deplores the fact that refusal to provide access to information about the effects of emissions on the environment, such as in the area of chemical pollution, may negatively impact public health and the protection of citizens from dangerous substances;
40. Welcomes the introduction of a rapid review procedure by the European Ombudsman in cases of refusal to access requests;
41. Calls for the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to develop and offer training programmes for all relevant staff, in particular for those managing documents and decision-making processes, in order to promote an internal culture of transparency, accountability and good governance;
42. Calls for decisions denying access requests to be taken following an objective and individual case-by-case assessment, communicated without undue delay and accompanied by a reasoned and specific justification, in accordance with relevant case-law; reminds all EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies that any decision denying public access to documents must be limited to what is absolutely necessary and strictly interpreted, in order to allow for public scrutiny and democratic credibility by ensuring that citizens understand why access has been denied and can make use of the legal remedies available where needed;
43. Calls for the establishment of an independent oversight mechanism that regularly reviews classification and declassification practices;
44. Calls on the Commission to be more transparent regarding contracts with third parties; calls on the Commission to be more proactive in

publishing as much information as possible on tender procedures in line with Parliament's previous calls²⁶;

45. Calls for the EU institutions to fully and swiftly follow up on decisions and recommendations taken by the Ombudsman following complaints about refusal of access to document requests; calls for the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to adopt swifter, more accessible and further simplified procedures for handling complaints about refusals to grant access and measures to ensure that citizens can challenge decisions when needed; recommends, in this context, appointing senior officials or independent experts with the capacity to review, without undue delay, appeals concerning access to document requests;
46. Calls for full transparency regarding the use of artificial intelligence systems in EU institutions' decisions and procedures, including the publication of detailed information on algorithms, training data and impact assessments;
47. Underlines that a lack of knowledge about whether documents actually exist may impede citizens in exercising their right to request access thereto; stresses that ensuring that citizens are able to understand, follow in detail and participate in the legislative process is a legal requirement under the Treaties and the Charter, and a basic requirement for democratic scrutiny and democracy in general; calls, therefore, for targeted awareness-raising and information campaigns to be conducted at both EU and national level to inform citizens of their rights of access to documents and of the tools and procedures available to them to exercise these rights;
48. Emphasises that international agreements carry binding legal effect and shape the development of EU legislation; insists, accordingly, on the imperative of ensuring full transparency throughout the negotiation process, by granting Parliament timely and unrestricted access to all relevant documents; calls for Parliament to be immediately and fully informed at all stages of the procedure in accordance with Article 218(10) TFEU;
49. Urges the Council to improve its rules and procedures on legislative transparency; calls for the proactive and timely publication of the Council's general and partial approaches and all Council preparatory documents on legislative files, including the positions of each Member State and minutes from working group meetings, establishing their publication as standard practice at all decision-making stages, in accordance with the principle of democratic participation enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter;

²⁶ For instance, in its resolution of 9 September 2025 on public procurement. Texts adopted, P10_TA(2025)0174.

50. Calls for the EU institutions to fully comply with the judgment of the General Court in Case T-540/15²⁷ concerning access to four-column documents; further calls for the EU institutions to proactively publish other trilogue documents, such as agendas, summaries of outcomes and minutes of trilogues;
51. Underlines that transparency must go hand in hand with accountability; calls for the introduction of regular audits by the European Ombudsman on institutional compliance with transparency obligations;
52. Calls for a user-friendly system to be introduced on Parliament's website where for each roll-call vote, the text voted on and the voting results by group and by Member of the European Parliament are visible, in line with Parliament's previous call for more transparency and for user-friendly tools to make procedures in Parliament more accessible for citizens;
53. Calls strongly for the EU and the Member States to apply the findings and recommendations of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee and the Ombudsman, while respecting their own international commitments under the Aarhus Convention and the rule of law;
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54. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

²⁷ Judgment of the General Court of 22 March 2018, *De Capitani v Parliament*, T-540/15, ECLI:EU:T:2018:167.