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Ombudsman asks Council and Commission to publish more TTIP documents

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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, has called on the Council of the European Union to publish the EU negotiating directives for the on-going Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations with the US. She has also proposed to the European Commission a range of practical measures to enable timely public access to TTIP documents, and to details of meetings with stakeholders. She has opened investigations involving both institutions.

Emily O'Reilly explained: "The EU institutions have made a considerable effort to promote transparency and public participation concerning TTIP. I agree that not all negotiating documents can be published at this stage, there needs to be room to negotiate. However, concerns have been raised about key documents not being disclosed, about delays, and about the alleged granting of privileged access to TTIP documents to certain stakeholders. Given the significant public interest and the potential impact of TTIP on the lives of citizens, I am urging both these EU institutions to step up their proactive transparency policy."

Access to EU negotiating directives and other TTIP documents

The on-going TTIP negotiations aim to cut tariffs and to address differing technical regulations and standards between the EU and the US. If agreed, TTIP will be the biggest bilateral free trade agreement in history. Civil society organisations have, however, raised concerns that the EU's high environmental, health, and consumer standards risk being lowered.

The Ombudsman has opened these investigations to help ensure that the Council and Commission establish a more proactive approach to the transparency of these negotiations. The ultimate goal of the own initiative inquiries is to enhance

the legitimacy of the TTIP negotiations in the eyes of citizens. She has asked the Council and Commission to send their opinions on her concrete proposals by 30 September and 31 October 2014 respectively.

Her letter to the Commission is available at:
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/cases/correspondence.faces/en/54633/html.bookmark>

Her letter to the Council is available at:
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/cases/correspondence.faces/en/54634/html.bookmark>