

Access Info Europe

Calle Cava de San Miguel 8, 4c
28005 Madrid



Commissioner Vera Jourová
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200 / Wetstraat 200
1040 Bruxelles / Brussel

5 February 2020

Dear Commissioner Vera Jourová,

Access Info Europe is writing to urge you, in your new role as Commissioner for Values and Transparency, to ensure that the Commission upholds its previous commitment to publish proactively data on the Commissioners' mission expenses.

We are most concerned that, in spite of a 2017 pledge to ensure transparency around missions and mission expenses, all the previously public data for 2018 and 2019 has been taken off the main Commission website, wiping out the previous step towards transparency and accountability.

We have been informed by the Secretariat General Transparency Unit that this data has been archived, using the Archive-It system, but links via the Commission's own archive pages do not work, so you have to know that the archive exists. Even when we were given a link, we found it hard to navigate, slow to respond, and there are days when the archived pages cannot be accessed. This means that, to all practical effects, no European citizen will find the missions information.

We recall that in early 2018, the Commission started to publish proactively information on mission expenses every two months. Even this publication is somewhat buried inside the website, and it does not appear in search engines, meaning that the average citizen is unlikely to find it. Furthermore, the data is published in small chunks, so getting an overview takes a huge amount of time.

To address this, Access Info is today publishing a copy of the data on our website in an easily accessible format. We urge the Commission to also make the Commissioners' expenses data available in an easy-to-find, user-friendly way, and update in as near to real time as possible.

We urge you to follow best practices for open data and open government and to make the full dataset available in a machine-readable, downloadable, format. It should be indexed so that search engines can find it and the database itself should be searchable. This should be done for both the historical data and for the data on the new Commission going forward.

In line with your mandate to promote greater transparency of the European Union, we urge you to address this issue as a matter of priority.

Yours sincerely



Helen Darbishire
Executive Director