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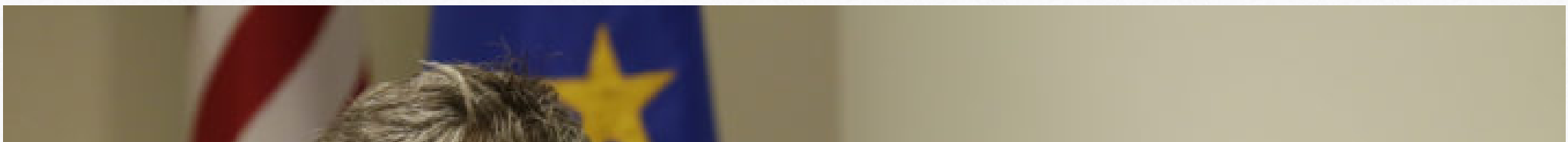
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European Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager speaks during a news conference at the EU Delegation in Washington | Yuri Gripas/AFP via Getty Images

# Call to publish commissioners' travel expenses

Campaign group wants details of all official travel to be made public.

By **QUENTIN ARIÈS** | 1/26/17, 5:44 PM CET | Updated 1/27/17, 6:09 PM CET

Campaigners are demanding that the European Commission release detailed travel costs of official trips taken by European commissioners.

Access Info Europe, a NGO, is urging citizens and activists to make systematic [document requests](#) for the 2016 travel expenses of the 28 European commissioners.

“We are mobilizing members of the public to help break the secrecy about how European citizens’ taxes are being used on official travel,” said executive director Helen Darbshire.

The watchdog has received some documents from the European Commission but says it denied many requests, citing commissioners’ privacy. The released documents show Jean-Claude Juncker’s [expenses](#) for a trip to the G20 in Turkey in November 2015 were €67,602 for three days. Juncker’s costs included daily allowances, plane travel and accommodation. That is “a reasonable price,” according to an accountant familiar with the travel expenses of leaders.

The European Commission on Friday said the plane journey taken by Jean-Claude Juncker and his team to the G20 in Turkey had to be booked at the last minute. They were supposed to travel with

the Belgian Air Force but the flight was canceled because of a “security/safety incident.”

Requests for copies of Commission contracts with airlines were also [denied](#) by the Commission. An EU official said “the rule is quite simple: you have to take every time the cheapest travel option.”



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A European Commission spokesperson insisted “We are very transparent. You will not find international public institutions as open and ready to provide documents.”

The last available full-year figures for commissioner travel expenses are from 2013 when they spent [€3.3 million on travel](#).

While the Commission encourages commissioners to publish a public agenda, including where they will or have traveled to, there are many gaps in the information publicly available.

In addition to basic overall cost information withheld from the public, other missing information

includes: which staff members travel with a commissioner; whether any security staff traveled in advance of the commissioner to official venues; whether or not a commissioner has extended their official trip to spend time at the destination privately; and what elements of the trip were offered cost-free to the commissioner by host government or organization.

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