

Brussels, 7 May 2026
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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Public access to documents - Confirmatory Application - 23/c/02/26
- Information to delegations

Delegations will find attached:

- the request for access to documents sent to the General Secretariat of the Council on 13 March 2026 and registered on 16 March 2026 (Annex 1);
- the reply from the General Secretariat of the Council dated 30 April 2026 (Annex 2);
- the confirmatory application dated 6 May 2026 and registered on the same day (Annex 3).

From: document-request@cis.consilium.europa.eu <document-request@cis.consilium.europa.eu>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2026 9:18 PM
To: TRANSPARENCY Access to documents (COMM) <Access@consilium.europa.eu>
Subject: Consilium - Electronic Request for Access to documents [ENGLISH]

This e-mail has been sent to access@consilium.europa.eu using the electronic form available in the Register application.

This electronic form has been submitted in ENGLISH.

Title

DELETED

First name

DELETED

Family name

DELETED

E-mail

DELETED

Occupation

NGO

I submit this request as a representative of an organisation.

Name of the organisation

DELETED

Full postal address

DELETED

Telephone

Requested document(s)

Minutes Africa Working Party

- 1) Meeting 16 July 2025
- 2) Meeting 10 July 2025
- 3) Meeting 9 July 2025
- 4) Meeting 2 July 2025
- 5) Meeting 18 June 2025
- 6) Meeting 11 June 2025
- 7) Meeting 4 June 2025
- 8) Meeting 28 May 2025
- 9) Meeting 14 May 2025
- 10) Meeting 7 May 2025
- 11) Meeting 30 April 2025
- 12) Meeting 16 April 2025

1st option

EN

2nd option

FR



Council of the European Union

General Secretariat

Directorate-General Communication and Information - COMM

Directorate Information and Outreach

Information Services Unit / Transparency

Head of Unit

Brussels, 30 April 2026

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E-mail: **DELETED**

Ref. 26/1067

Request made on: 13.03.2026

Registered on: 16.03.2026

Deadline extension: 09.04.2026

Dear **DELETED**

Thank you for your request for access to documents of the Council of the European Union.¹

As a reminder, you have asked access to the Minutes Africa Working Party of the following:

- 1) Meeting 16 July 2025
- 2) Meeting 10 July 2025
- 3) Meeting 9 July 2025
- 4) Meeting 2 July 2025
- 5) Meeting 18 June 2025
- 6) Meeting 11 June 2025
- 7) Meeting 4 June 2025
- 8) Meeting 28 May 2025
- 9) Meeting 14 May 2025

¹ The General Secretariat of the Council has examined your request on the basis of the applicable rules: Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43) and the specific provisions concerning public access to Council documents set out in Annex II to the Council's Rules of Procedure (Council Decision No 2009/937/EU, OJ L 325, 11.12.2009, p. 35).

- 10) Meeting 7 May 2025
- 11) Meeting 30 April 2025
- 12) Meeting 16 April 2025

Please note that COAFR (Africa Working Party) does not have public Outcome of Proceedings. On the other hand, COAFR has non-public operational conclusions.

We have identified the following documents that fall in the scope of your request:

- 2025-07-16-COAFR Op Concl - SEC018925: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 16 July 2025"
- 2025-07-10-COAFR Op Concl - SEC018425: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 10 July 2025"
- 2025-07-09-COAFR Op Concl - SEC018225: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 9 July 2025"
- 2025-07-02-COAFR Op Concl (Part 2) - SEC017625: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 2 July 2025"
- 2025-07-02-COAFR Op Concl (Part 1) - SEC017525: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 2 July 2025"
- 2025-07-02-COAFR Op Concl - SEC017625 COR1: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions (corrected version), Africa Working Party, 2 July 2025"
- 2025-06-18-COAFR Op Concl - SEC016225: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 18 June 2025"
- 2025-06-11-COAFR Op Concl - SEC015325: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 11 June 2025"
- 2025-06-04-COAFR Op Concl - SEC014725: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 4 June 2025"
- 2025-05-28-COAFR Op Concl - SEC014625: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 28 May 2025"
- 2025-05-14-COAFR Op Concl - SEC013525: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 14 May 2025"
- 2025-05-07-COAFR Op Concl - SEC011625: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 7 May 2025"
- 2025-04-30-COAFR Op Concl - SEC011025: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 30 April 2025"
- 2025-04-16-COAFR Op Concl - SEC010625: "COAFR COPOL – Operational Conclusions, Africa Working Party, 16 April 2025"

These documents originate from the European External Action Service and are intended for internal use by EU Member States and EU institutions.

I regret to inform you that access to the documents mentioned above cannot be given for the reasons set out below.

The documents contain operational conclusions, including Member State discussions and positions, disclosure of which could harm relations with third countries.

Release of the information contained in these documents would prejudice relations between the European Union and its partner countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, as it would disclose sensitive assessments and positions, thereby affecting the EU's and its Member States ability to conduct its external relations effectively.

Disclosure of these documents would therefore undermine the protection of the public interest as regards international relations. As a consequence, the General Secretariat has to refuse access to the documents.²

We have also looked into the possibility of releasing parts of the documents.³ However, as the exception to the right of access applies to their entire content, the General Secretariat is unable to give partial access at this stage.

Pursuant to Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, you may ask the Council to review this decision within 15 working days of receiving this reply. Should you see the need for such a review, you are invited to indicate the reasons thereof.

Yours sincerely,

Fernando FLORINDO

² Article 4(1)(a), third indent, of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

³ Article 4(6) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

To the General Secretariat of the Council
Directorate-General Communication and Information
Directorate Information and Outreach
Information Services Unit / Transparency
By email: access@consilium.europa.eu

6 May 2026

Subject: Confirmatory application under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001
Ref. 26/1067

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to your reply of 30 April 2026 (Ref. 26/1067) concerning my request for access to COAFR (Africa Working Party) documents.

Pursuant to Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, I respectfully request a review of this decision.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the sensitivity that may arise in the context of EU external relations. As an organisation engaged in research on conflict dynamics, natural resource governance, and international peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa, International Peace Information Service (IPIS)[HYPERLINK "mailto:peter.danssaert@ipisresearch.be"](mailto:peter.danssaert@ipisresearch.be) is mindful of the need to protect legitimate diplomatic interests.

At the same time, I believe that the current refusal may be broader than necessary under Regulation 1049/2001, and that a more proportionate approach—particularly through partial access—would be both feasible and consistent with the Regulation.

- (1) The refusal appears to treat the requested documents as uniformly sensitive. However, given the nature of COAFR discussions, it is likely that sensitivity varies across different parts of the documents.
- (2) In particular, it may be possible to grant access—at least in part—to:
 - factual reporting and background elements,
 - general orientations of EU engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa,
 - discussions that reflect positions already expressed in public EU policy frameworks,
 - or redacted versions excluding specific sensitive passages.
- (3) IPIS would welcome any form of partial or staged access that respects legitimate confidentiality concerns while enhancing transparency.
- (4) There is a clear and specific public interest in transparency regarding EU policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa.
- (5) IPIS conducts field-based research on issues such as:
 - conflict financing and mineral supply chains,
 - governance and security dynamics,
 - EU external action in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

- (6) Access to even partial information on COAFR discussions would meaningfully contribute to:
- evidence-based policy analysis,
 - informed public and academic debate,
 - and constructive engagement with EU external action.
- (7) Given the geopolitical, economic, and human rights implications of EU engagement in the region, transparency plays a key role in ensuring accountability and policy coherence.
- (8) Without prejudice to the constructive approach above, I would respectfully submit that the reasoning provided in the initial decision raises several issues under Regulation 1049/2001:
- (8a) The refusal relies on general statements regarding potential harm to international relations, without identifying the specific content at issue or explaining how disclosure would concretely and actually cause such harm.
- (8b) The decision suggests a categorical approach to COAFR operational conclusions. In the absence of a recognised general presumption, the Council is required to carry out a genuine individual assessment of each document.
- (8c) The conclusion that the exception applies to the entire content of all documents is not substantiated. A more granular assessment appears necessary.
- (8d) The documents relate to meetings held in 2025. The decision does not address whether the sensitivity of the information persists at present.
- (8e) The decision does not engage with the possibility that an overriding public interest in disclosure may exist, particularly in light of the importance of EU-Africa relations.
- (9) In light of the above, I would be grateful if the Council could:
- reconsider its assessment of the requested documents,
 - carry out a more detailed, document-specific review,
 - and explore possibilities for full or partial disclosure, including through redactions where appropriate.
- (10) IPIS remains fully open to a pragmatic and constructive solution that balances transparency with the protection of legitimate interests.
- (11) Should the confirmatory decision maintain a refusal, I kindly request that it provide detailed reasoning addressing:
- the specific harm linked to disclosure,
 - the assessment of each document or category of information,
 - the feasibility of partial access,
 - and the consideration of overriding public interest.

This would ensure full compliance with Regulation 1049/2001 and the duty to state reasons.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

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