

Brussels, 23 April 2026  
(OR. en)

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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Public access to documents - Confirmatory Application - 20/c/01/26  
- Information to delegations

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Delegations will find attached:

- the request for access to documents sent to the General Secretariat of the Council on 6 March 2026 and registered on the same day (Annex 1);
- the reply from the General Secretariat of the Council dated 22 April 2026 (Annex 2);
- the confirmatory application dated 23 April 2026 and registered on the same day (Annex 3).

From: **DELETED**  
Sent: Friday, March 6, 2026 1:25 PM  
To: TRANSPARENCY Access to documents (COMM) <Access@consilium.europa.eu>  
Subject: Meeting with Etial on 25 November 2024

Dear Council access to documents team,

under Regulation 1049/2001, I wish to request any document held by the Council in connection to a delegation visit at the headquarters of the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal) in Riyadh, Saudi-Arabia on 25 November 2024. This request is meant to include any minutes of the meeting, e-mails with ETIDAL, or any other document held in connection with the meeting. For your reference, find a public mention of the meeting here:

<https://etidal.org/en/the-european-union-explores-etidals-efforts-in-combating-extremism/>

Kind regards,

**DELETED**



**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, 22 April 2026

**DELETED**

Email: **DELETED**

Ref. 26/0961

Request made on: 06.03.2026

Deadline extension: 27.03.2026

Dear **DELETED**,

Thank you for your request for access to documents of the Council of the European Union.<sup>1</sup>

As a reminder, you have requested “any document held by the Council in connection to a delegation visit at the headquarters of the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal) in Riyadh, Saudi-Arabia on 25 November 2024”.

We have identified the following document as falling in the scope of your request:

- “PSC members working visit to Riyadh - Briefing Package for EU PSC Ambassadors”.

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

Release of the information contained in this document would prejudice the international relations of the European Union, in particular with Saudi-Arabia, but also beyond, as it would reveal internal assessments related to relevant actors in the region as well as elements concerning EU's positioning on various of the matters at stake.

Disclosure of the document would therefore undermine the protection of the public interest as regards international relations. As a consequence, the General Secretariat has to refuse full access to the document.<sup>2</sup>

We have also looked into the possibility of releasing parts of the document.<sup>3</sup> However, as the information contained therein forms an inseparable whole, the General Secretariat is unable to give partial access at this stage.

You may wish to contact [the EEAS](#), as this body was the organiser of the visit.

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

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

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

**From:** **DELETED**

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2026 8:45 AM

**To:** TRANSPARENCY Access to documents (COMM) <Access@consilium.europa.eu>

**Subject:** Confirmatory application Ref. 26/0961

Dear Sir or Madam,

I hereby submit a confirmatory application regarding your decision of 22 April 2026 refusing access to the document identified as “PSC members working visit to Riyadh - Briefing Package for EU PSC Ambassadors”.

The refusal relies on Article 4(1)(a), third indent, of Regulation 1049/2001, on the ground that disclosure would prejudice the protection of the public interest as regards international relations. However, this exception must be interpreted and applied strictly, and the institution must demonstrate with concrete and specific reasons how disclosure would actually and foreseeably cause such harm. A general reference to “international relations” is not sufficient on its own.

In the present case, the Council’s reasoning appears insufficiently substantiated. My request concerns a delegation visit to Etidal in Riyadh, which publicly presents itself as the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology and describes itself as a non-profit organisation. Publicly available sources do not show a clearly defined institutional relationship between Etidal and the Saudi government that would make the blanket invocation of the international relations exception self-evident. On the contrary, the available information suggests that Etidal is a distinct entity with its own public profile and activities, including cooperation with third parties such as Telegram.

Against that background, the Council has not explained why disclosure of a briefing package about a visit to Etidal would, in itself, prejudice relations with Saudi Arabia or “beyond,” nor how the specific contents of the document would concretely reveal sensitive positioning that could not be protected through targeted redaction. A refusal based on broad and abstract assertions does not satisfy the requirements of Regulation 1049/2001.

I also note that the decision states that no partial access could be granted because the information forms an “inseparable whole”. That conclusion likewise requires a more specific explanation. The Council should identify the precise passages allegedly covered by the exception and assess whether partial access, including redaction of any genuinely sensitive elements, could be granted in line with Article 4(6).

For these reasons, I request that the Council review its decision and grant access to the document, in full or at least in part, subject only to any redactions that are demonstrably necessary and proportionate.

Yours faithfully,

**DELETED**