

Dear Ms Cann,

First, apologies for my late reply.

I can confirm that our rules stipulate that, outside of public events or public debates, access to the Council Press Centre is limited to accredited journalists, Council staff, and delegates. The guidelines on the annual accreditation you mention are also guiding principles for the granting of daily accreditations. As you would expect, the system of verifications and checking of requested documents can be executed in a more complete and thorough manner for the annual accreditation scheme than is sometimes the case for daily accreditations.

The General Secretariat of the Council keeps a record of individuals granted access to our premises. This information is kept for a limited duration (one year) in accordance with our data protection rules. Based on the verification we are currently undertaking, if it appears that a person has been granted a daily press access without fulfilling all criteria required to qualify for it, we will take steps to ensure that this does not happen again in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Romain SADET

Head of team - Media policy, planning and press centre

Council of the European Union

General Secretariat

Press office - Media operations unit

www.consilium.europa.eu

Disclaimer: The views expressed are solely those of the writer and may not be regarded as stating an official position of the Council of the EU

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From: Vicky Cann

Sent: Monday, April 03, 2017 4:39 PM

To: SADET Romain

Cc: PRESSE CENTRE; SCHULTZ-NIELSEN Erik

Subject: Re: Questions on access

Hi Romain

Please could you let me know when I can expect an answer to these follow-up questions?

Thanks

Vicky

On 16/03/2017 17:18, Vicky Cann wrote:

Hi Romain

Thanks for the reply. I have a few follow-ups:

- to clarify, if no public event or public debate is occurring, then there should be no access to the press centre for anyone (professionals, citizens etc) who does not have accreditation?
- do the guidelines here https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/conditions-for-annual-accreditation-dg-comm_en.pdf apply to those who have been given daily accreditation passes?
- does the Council have a record of which people with accredited passes were in the building on a given day?
- what investigations are you undertaking into the photo and will you inform me of the outcome?

Thanks in advance,

Vicky Cann

On 14/03/2017 13:36, SADET Romain wrote:

Dear Madam,

Thanks for your email and questions.

As set in the rules applicable, the access to the Press Centre is primarily reserved for media representatives, members of delegations and Council staff. Other professionals may be granted access for a meeting with a press office representative or in case of public events taking place in the premises other than press activities (e.g. public conferences are regularly organised in the press centre as the press room is the only theatre style room in the Council premises). Citizens may also request to access the press centre on a Council day in order to follow the public debates on the TV screens there. They may access the premises only during public debates.

Media representatives who do not hold an EU inter-institutional press badge may be granted a daily accreditation badge (badge with a red P). To request such a badge they must provide on arrival an ID and a press card or letter from their editor. The Council may further investigate on accreditation requests should it thinks the person would not fulfil the criteria as set by the EU inter-institutional committee to be define as a media representative coming from a bone fide media organisation (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/conditions-for-annual-accreditation-dg-comm_en.pdf).

Regarding the photo you mention, we were not aware of it but are investigating the case in order to better understand if and how those persons had access to the Council press centre. The personal information regarding individuals who had access to our premises cannot be communicated to external parties as per our privacy rules.

Best regards,

Romain SADET

Head of team - Media policy, planning and press centre

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-----Original Message-----

From: Vicky Cann

Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2017 12:43 PM

To: PRESSE CENTRE

Subject: Questions on access

Hi

I am writing an article on who has access to the Council and I wonder if you might be able to help. I was asked to put my questions in an email:

- if a person in the press centre has an access pass with a red P on it, what does this signify?

- your website says that "Delegations from member states and candidate countries have access to the press centre. Other professionals, diplomats and visitors may also have access under certain conditions, depending on events in the press centre." Under what circumstances do "professionals.... and visitors" have access to the press centre, especially during ministerial meetings?

- are there any bans on lobbying in the Council building, including the press centre? By lobbying, I would mean contacts between member state/ EU officials and ministers with private interests where the latter put forward their views on a certain topic

- is there a way to check how an individual was able to access the Council and press centre on any given date ie. if I were to provide you with a name of an individual and a date, what records do you have about that person's presence in the Council building?

- what checking do you do to verify that someone requesting a press pass is indeed a journalist?

- have you seen this photo in a Transparency International report from 2016 (page 20) which appears to show industry lobbyists inside the Council, during a ministerial meeting? How do you respond to this:

<https://transparency.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/21-09-2016-Fishing-report-web.pdf>

I'd be pleased to receive your reaction as soon as possible.

Cheers

Vicky

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Vicky Cann

Lobbycracy campaigner

Corporate Europe Observatory