**Reply form**

**on the Joint Consultation Paper on the review of SFDR Delegated Regulation regarding PAI and financial product disclosures**

12 April 2023ESMA34-45-1218

**Responding to this paper**

The ESAs invite comments on all matters in the Joint Consultation Paper and in particular on the specific questions in this reply form. Comments are most helpful if they:

* respond to the question stated;
* indicate the specific question to which the comment relates;
* contain a clear rationale; and
* describe any alternatives the ESAs should consider.

ESMA will consider all comments received by **4 July 2023.**

**Instructions**

In order to facilitate analysis of responses to the Joint Consultation Paper, respondents are requested to follow the below steps when preparing and submitting their response:

* Insert your responses to the questions in the Joint Consultation Paper in this reply form.
* Please do not remove tags of the type <ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_1>. Your response to each question has to be framed by the two tags corresponding to the question.
* If you do not wish to respond to a given question, please do not delete it but simply leave the text “TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE” between the tags.
* When you have drafted your responses, save the reply form according to the following convention: ESMA\_CP SFDR Review\_nameofrespondent.

For example, for a respondent named ABCD, the reply form would be saved with the following name: ESMA\_CP SFDR Review\_ABCD.

* Upload the Word reply form containing your responses to ESMA’s website (**pdf documents will not be considered except for annexes**). All contributions should be submitted online at [www.esma.europa.eu](http://www.esma.europa.eu) under the heading ‘Your input - Consultations’.

**Publication of responses**

All contributions received will be published following the close of the consultation, unless you request otherwise. Please clearly and prominently indicate in your submission any part you do not wish to be publicly disclosed. A standard confidentiality statement in an email message will not be treated as a request for non-disclosure. A confidential response may be requested from us in accordance with ESAs’ rules on access to documents. We may consult you if we receive such a request. Any decision we make not to disclose the response is reviewable by ESMA’s Board of Appeal and the European Ombudsman.

**Data protection**

The protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the ESAs is based on Regulation (EU) 2018/1725[[1]](#footnote-2). Further information on data protection can be found under the [Legal notice](http://www.eba.europa.eu/legal-notice) section of the EBA website and under the [Legal notice](https://eiopa.europa.eu/Pages/Links/Legal-notice.aspx) section of the EIOPA website and under the [Legal notice](https://www.esma.europa.eu/legal-notice) section of the ESMA website.

**General information about respondent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of the company / organisation | Allianz Global Investors GmbH |
| Activity | Investment Services |
| Are you representing an association? |  |
| Country/Region | Germany |

**Questions**

1. : Do you agree with the newly proposed mandatory social indicators in Annex I, Table I (amount of accumulated earnings in non-cooperative tax jurisdictions for undertakings whose turnover exceeds € 750 million, exposure to companies involved in the cultivation and production of tobacco, interference with the formation of trade unions or election worker representatives, share of employees earning less than the adequate wage)?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_1>

* **Alignment of PAI indicators with EU Sustainability Reporting Standards is much appreciated to ensure data availability as soon as CSRD reports are available (2025);**
* **To ensure sufficient data coverage, mandatory PAI indicators need to be mandatory indicators in ESRS as well;**
* **Additional mandatory indicators might impact the SI of a product through DNSH test. This may then have complicating consequences on the distribution side if a lower SI share has to be declared for products having been sold previously.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_1>

1. : Would you recommend any other mandatory social indicator or adjust any of the ones proposed?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_2>

* **As per our answer to Q1, alignment with reporting requirements for companies is crucial to ensure direct data availability. However, gaps will remain for Non-NFRD/Non-CSRD companies;**
* **Current PAI indicators 10 and 11 are challenging as they are qualitative in nature and hence subject to interpretation by (i) companies (self-disclosure), (ii) data providers (interpreting data provider by companies, in particular regarding “company commitments”), and (iii) FMPs (interpreting data provided by company’s and/or data providers). As a consequence, the consistent application and reporting on these indicators across the industry cannot be guarantueed;**
* **We observe severe challenges in respect of data availability and data quality for PAI indicator 12, as companies do not – or not consistently – report on such indicators. This is compounded by a lack of standardization of the reported metric, e.g. adjusted vs. unadjusted pay gap, considering only base salary or full compensation, reporting on only a specific branch of the company;**
* **Ideally, PAI indicator should measure really harmful activities to allow such indicators to be as relevant as possible for steering purposes. An example of where such distinction is not sufficiently made is the current energy consumption ratio (PAI 6), for which all energy sources receive the same treatment. In our view, renewable energy should not be part of this calculation, as its consumption does not have the same harmful consequences as the consumption of other sources of energy.**
* **Another example is the water intensity ratio (PAI 8), which does not differentiate between the use of fresh vs. saltwater. It is understandable why we should be limiting freshwater usage, as it is an increasingly scarce and valuable resource, but saltwater is not, and we should not consider the use of these water sources to be equally harmful. The use of water is needed for many processes (especially in manufacturing), and we should support companies to transition from freshwater to saltwater based processes by removing saltwater usage from the PAI mT calculation – based on the understanding that saltwater is not a finite resource and is necessary in many industrial processes.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_2>

1. : Do you agree with the newly proposed opt-in social indicators in Annex I, Table III (excessive use of non-guaranteed-hour employees in investee companies, excessive use of temporary contract employees in investee companies, excessive use of non-employee workers in investee companies, insufficient employment of persons with disabilities in the workforce, lack of grievance/complaints handling mechanism for stakeholders materially affected by the operations of investee companies, lack of grievance/complaints handling mechanism for consumers/ end-users of the investee companies)?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_3>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_3>

1. : Would you recommend any other social indicator or adjust any of the ones proposed?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_4>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_4>

1. : Do you agree with the changes proposed to the existing mandatory and opt-in social indicators in Annex I, Table I and III (i.e. replacing the UN Global Compact Principles with the UN Guiding Principles and ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work)? Do you have any additional suggestions for changes to other indicators not considered by the ESAs?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_5>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_5>

1. : For real estate assets, do you consider relevant to apply any PAI indicator related to social matters to the entity in charge of the management of the real estate assets the FMP invested in?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_6>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_6>

1. : For real estate assets, do you see any merit in adjusting the definition of PAI indicator 22 of Table 1 in order to align it with the EU Taxonomy criteria applicable to the DNSH of the climate change mitigation objective under the climate change adaptation objective?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_7>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_7>

1. : Do you see any challenges in the interaction between the definition ‘enterprise value’ and ‘current value of investment’ for the calculation of the PAI indicators?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_8>

* **The current value of investment must be based on a ‘four-quarter-snap-shot’, which initially takes into calculation the ‘price of one investment unit at year end’ and ‘number of investment units’ of four quarters. For holdings such as equity, the calculation is generally based on year end share prices and numbers of shares of each quarter. For debt, cash and other types of investments, the year end price and number of investments at each quarter have no relevance or are not available.**
* **Collecting sufficient financial data from private market investments to aggregate to entity level when adapting the ‘four-quarter-snap-shot’ calculation logic is highly labourious and a significant challenge for firms.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_8>

1. : Do you have any comments or proposed adjustments to the new formulae suggested in Annex I?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_9>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_9>

1. : Do you have any comments on the further clarifications or technical changes to the current list of indicators? Did you encounter any issues in the calculation of the adverse impact for any of the other existing indicators in Annex I?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_10>

* **The main challenges are in the sphere of data availability. It would be a significant improvement if regulators could provide or prescribe the necessary data infrastructure for companies to upload and verify their data. In the present situation firms are extremely dependent on a limited number of data providers. We are concerned about the high concentration of market power with these data vendors. We are of the view that a public database such as ESAP would  lead to improved transparency and comparability of reports, as well as ease reporting burden for smaller FMPs.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_10>

1. : Do you agree with the proposal to require the disclosure of the share of information for the PAI indicators for which the financial market participant relies on information directly from investee companies?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_11>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_11>

1. : What is your view on the approach taken in this consultation paper to define ‘all investments’? What are the advantages and drawbacks you identify? Would a change in the approach adopted for the treatment of ‘all investments’ be necessary in your view?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_12>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_12

1. : Do you agree with the ESAs’ proposal to only require the inclusion of information on investee companies’ value chains in the PAI calculations where the investee company reports them? If not, what would you propose as an alternative?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_13>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_13>

1. : Do you agree with the proposed treatment of derivatives in the PAI indicators or would you suggest any other method?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_14>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_14>

1. : What are your views with regard to the treatment of derivatives in general (Taxonomy-alignment, share of sustainable investments and PAI calculations)? Should the netting provision of Article 17(1)(g) be applied to sustainable investment calculations?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_15>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_15>

1. : Do you see the need to extend the scope of the provisions of point g of paragraph 1 of Article 17 of the SFDR Delegated Regulation to asset classes other than equity and sovereign exposures?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_16>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_16>

1. : Do you agree with the ESAs’ assessment of the DNSH framework under SFDR?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_17>

**We would like to emphasize the importance of continuing to allow financial market parties to define their own DNSH thresholds. This will ensure practicality and operational feasibility and avoids creating a disproportionately complex DNSH frameworks. At the same time, firms should be required to disclose their DNSH approach and thresholds to ensure full transparency and comparability for investors regarding the method and assumptions applied by firms. This transparency will create transparency on the level of scrutinity applied in the DNSH test.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_17>

1. : With regard to the DNSH disclosures in the SFDR Delegated Regulation, do you consider it relevant to make disclosures about the quantitative thresholds FMPs use to take into account the PAI indicators for DNSH purposes mandatory? Please explain your reasoning.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_18>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_18>

1. : Do you support the introduction of an optional “safe harbour” for environmental DNSH for taxonomy-aligned activities? Please explain your reasoning.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_19>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_19>

1. : Do you agree with the longer term view of the ESAs that if two parallel concepts of sustainability are retained that the Taxonomy TSCs should form the basis of DNSH assessments? Please explain your reasoning.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_20>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_20>

1. : Are there other options for the SFDR Delegated Regulation DNSH disclosures to reduce the risk of greenwashing and increase comparability?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_21>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_21>

1. : Do you agree that the proposed disclosures strike the right balance between the need for clear, reliable, decision-useful information for investors and the need to keep requirements feasible and proportional for FMPs? Please explain your answers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_22>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_22>

1. : Do you agree with the proposed approach of providing a hyperlink to the benchmark disclosures for products having GHG emissions reduction as their investment objective under Article 9(3) SFDR or would you prefer specific disclosures for such financial products? Do you believe the introduction of GHG emissions reduction target disclosures could lead to confusion between Article 9(3) and other Article 9 and 8 financial products? Please explain your answer.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_23>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_23>

1. : The ESAs have introduced a distinction between a product-level commitment to achieve a reduction in financed emissions (through a strategy that possibly relies only on divestments and reallocations) and a commitment to achieve a reduction in investees’ emissions (through investment in companies that has adopted and duly executes a convincing transition plan or through active ownership). Do you find this distinction useful for investors and actionable for FMPs? Please explain your answer.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_24>

* **We agree with the ESAs that it is essential to clearly specify and distinguish between commitments. Such a distinction is also valuable and actionable for FMPs as it allows them to be more transparent towards end investors on the actual purpose of the product. Between financed emissions and reduction in investee companies' emissions, the latter may not be a suitable parameter for investors, as they cannot effectively make – or be reasonably be expected to consider making – commitments for emission reductions at the level of investee companies without the willingness of these companies to deliver on greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions;**
* **The templates should offer sufficient flexibility to inform investors about all relevant features of the investment strategy beyond the reduction in financed emissions. This flexibility will provide an opportunity for FMPs to incorporate other types of product-level commitments than financed emission reduction that are currently available. Examples of such other types of commitments are: net-zero alignment levels/shares (where investee companies are categorized as net zero, aligned with a net zero pathway, committed to aligning, or not committed), and implied temperature rise, while a number of other metrics are currently being developed.**
* **We recommend that the “GHG emission reduction target” in RTS 62 (p.24) be reworded (broadened) into “climate commitment” to reflect such flexibility as discussed above. Based on such rewording, we would be of the view that for a specific product-level commitment “a set of disclosures developed by the ESAs below – and reflected in the relevant templates – should be applied”.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_24>

1. : Do you find it useful to have a disclosure on the degree of Paris-Alignment of the Article 9 product’s target(s)? Do you think that existing methodologies can provide sufficiently robust assessments of that aspect? If yes, please specify which methodology (or methodologies) would be relevant for that purpose and what are their most critical features? Please explain your answer.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_25>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_25>

1. : Do you agree with the proposed approach to require that the target is calculated for all investments of the financial product? Please explain your answer.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_26>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_26>

1. **: Do you agree with the proposed approach to require that, at product level, Financed GHG emissions reduction targets be set and disclosed based on the GHG accounting and reporting standard to be referenced in the forthcoming Delegated Act (DA) of the CSRD? Should the Global GHG Accounting and Reporting Standard for the Financial Industry developed by PCAF be required as the only standard to be used for the disclosures, or should any other standard be considered? Please justify your answer and provide the name of alternative standards you would suggest, if any.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_27>

We are in favor of greater standardization in GHG Accounting and Reporting across the industry, especially with a view to achieve more harmonized approaches. However, it is important to acknowledge that asset managers currently have mandates from their clients that adhere to other standards. Furthermore, in the future, some clients may prefer to maintain their own methodologies. For instance, while the Global GHG Accounting reporting standards may require the consideration of scope-3 emissions, certain clients may choose to focus only on scope-1 and scope-2 emissions, even if scope-3 becomes mandatory. In light of this, the asset management industry would benefit from a certain degree of freedom to incorporate flexibility into our approach. One option could be to include relevant information on alternative standards and methodologies, in the product level disclosure, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the reporting landscape. Pursuant to such approach, allow asset managers could then adopt a "comply or explain" approach, offering the opportunity for clients to deviate from certain standards but requiring clients to provide a clear rationale for doing so. This way, asset managers can continue to strike a balance between encouraging adherence to standardized practices to clients while accommodating clients' specific needs and preferences.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_27>

1. : Do you agree with the approach taken to removals and the use of carbon credits and the alignment the ESAs have sought to achieve with the EFRAG Draft ESRS E1? Please explain your answer.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_28>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_28>

1. **: Do you find it useful to ask for disclosures regarding the consistency between the product targets and the financial market participants entity-level targets and transition plan for climate change mitigation? What could be the benefits of and challenges to making such disclosures available? Please explain you answer.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_29>

**It can be challenging to provide detailed explanations regarding the consistency between the product targets and the entity level targets of the FMPs. Such detailed explanations – beyond the product-level investment strategy – are not relevant as information basis for investment decisions and are unlikely to be read or understood by most investors, and might create confusion. Entity level targets may be set interconnectedly but independently and are not always meant (or: designed) to align with product targets. Additionally, these explanations are unnecessary for and ill-suited to enhancing the accountability of the FMP. Firms are already required under the CSRD to report on the progress of their transition plan in the management report or the consolidated management report, in addition to other reporting (e.g. the annual progress report of NZAMI) which will/may be subject to voluntary or mandatory audit.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_29>

1. : What are your views on the inclusion of a dashboard at the top of Annexes II-V of the SFDR Delegated Regulation as summary of the key information to complement the more detailed information in the pre-contractual and periodic disclosures? Does it serve the purpose of helping consumers and less experienced retail investors understand the essential information in a simpler and more visual way?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_30>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_30>

1. : Do you agree that the current version of the templates capture all the information needed for retail investors to understand the characteristics of the products? Do you have views on how to further simplify the language in the dashboard, or other sections of the templates, to make it more understandable to retail investors?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_31>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_31>

1. **: Do you have any suggestion on how to further simplify or enhance the legibility of the current templates?**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_32>

**We appreciate the inclusion of PAI consideration in the dashboard as its one of the three pillars for the sustainability suitability assessment. Ideally the template structure should follow the structure of the dashboard on the top for easier navigation.**

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_32>

1. : Is the investment tree in the asset allocation section necessary if the dashboard shows the proportion of sustainable and taxonomy-aligned investments?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_33>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_33>

1. : Do you agree with this approach of ensuring consistency in the use of colours in Annex II to V in the templates?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_34>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_34>

1. : Do you agree with the approach to allow to display the pre-contractual and periodic disclosures in an extendable manner electronically?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_35>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_35>

1. : Do you have any feedback with regard to the potential criteria for estimates?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_36>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_36>

1. : Do you perceive the need for a more specific definition of the concept of “key environmental metrics” to prevent greenwashing? If so, how could those metrics be defined?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_37>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_37>

1. : Do you see the need to set out specific rules on the calculation of the proportion of sustainable investments of financial products? Please elaborate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_38>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_38>

1. : Do you agree that cross-referencing in periodic disclosures of financial products with investment options would be beneficial to address information overload?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_39>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_39>

1. : Do you agree with the proposed website disclosures for financial products with investment options?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_40>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_40>

1. : What are your views on the proposal to require that any investment option with sustainability-related features that qualifies the financial product with investment options as a financial product that promotes environmental and/or social characteristics or as a financial product that has sustainable investment as its objective, should disclose the financial product templates, with the exception of those investment options that are financial instruments according to Annex I of Directive 2014/65/EU and are not units in collective investment undertakings? Should those investment options be covered in some other way?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_41>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_41>

1. : What are the criteria the ESAs should consider when defining which information should be disclosed in a machine-readable format? Do you have any views at this stage as to which machine-readable format should be used? What challenges do you anticipate preparing and/or consuming such information in a machine-readable format?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_42>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_42>

1. : Do you have any views on the preliminary impact assessments? Can you provide estimates of costs associated with each of the policy options?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_43>

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<ESMA\_QUESTION\_SFDR\_43>

1. Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)