



Plenary sitting

B9-0580/2022

13.12.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on suspicions of corruption from Qatar and the broader need for transparency
and accountability in the European institutions
(2022/3012(RSP))

**Jaak Madison, Marco Zanni, Marco Campomenosi, Jean-Paul Garraud,
Gunnar Beck, Nicolaus Fest, Harald Vilimsky, Gerolf Annemans, Tom
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on behalf of the ID Group

European Parliament resolution on suspicions of corruption from Qatar and the broader need for transparency and accountability in the European institutions (2022/3012(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 83(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which lists corruption and money-laundering as particularly serious crimes with a cross-border dimension,
 - having regard to Article 9 of Protocol (No 7) to the Treaty on European Union and the TFEU,
 - having regard to Parliament's ordinary legislative procedure concerning listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (Kuwait, Qatar) (2022/0135(COD)),
 - having regard to Rules 15, 21, 51, 71, 132, 198, 207 and 208 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Belgian police carried out raids on the homes of various socialist politicians on 9 and 12 December 2022 following several months of investigations; whereas these individuals are suspected of participation in a criminal organisation, money laundering and corruption; whereas Qatar is thought to have influenced the economic and political decisions of the European Parliament by paying large sums of money and offering exorbitant gifts;
- B. whereas, in connection with the investigation, its Vice-President Eva Kaili has been arrested; whereas she has since been suspended by the S&D Group; whereas the offices of MEP Eva Kaili have been sealed pending further investigation; whereas the offices of the accredited parliamentary assistants of MEP Maria Arena and MEP Marc Tarabella have also been allegedly sealed off; whereas MEP Eva Kaili's father is also allegedly involved in the scandal; whereas the offices of secretariat staff members have also allegedly been sealed by the police;
- C. whereas former MEP Pier Antonio Panzeri has also been arrested in connection with the case after more than 500 000 euro in cash was found at his home; whereas former MEP Panzeri is President of the Brussels-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) 'Fight Impunity'; whereas numerous Members of the S&D Group and other Social Democrat institutions have been playing a role in this organisation;
- D. whereas Members of Parliament cannot claim immunity when they are caught in the act of committing an offence;
- E. whereas MEP Eva Kaili, MEP Marc Tarabella and MEP Alessandra Moretti, all

Members of the S&D Group, none of them a Member or substitute Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), all voted in favour of the LIBE committee's vote on visa liberalisation for Qatari nationals (2022/0135(COD));

- F. whereas MEP Eva Kaili defended Qatar's human rights record in her speech in Parliament on 21 November 2022, hailing the country as 'a frontrunner in labour rights' for its decision to scrap a migrant workers' sponsorship system¹;
 - G. whereas MEP Marc Tarabella has suspended himself from the S&D Group; whereas MEP Maria Arena has stepped down as Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights; whereas MEP Pietro Bartolo has stepped down as rapporteur on the file relating to visa liberalisation for Qatari nationals; whereas MEP Andrea Cozzolino has stepped down as S&D coordinator for urgent cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (under Rule 144);
 - H. whereas the Commission has been pursuing a deal to increase liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports from Qatar since even before the start of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas Qatar has mostly committed its LNG production long-term to other parties;
 - I. whereas Commission President Ursula von der Leyen declined to answer questions about her Vice-President Margaritis Schinas's relations with Qatar at a press briefing on Monday, 12 December 2022; whereas Commissioner Schinas represented the EU at the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup last month and has been criticised by MEPs over his tweets in recent months praising Qatar's labour reforms;
 - J. whereas Parliament has repeatedly failed to enact the application of anti-money laundering (AML) rules to NGOs by declining to expand the scope of existing rules accordingly;
- 1. Expresses its grave concern about the reports of corruption, bribery, money-laundering and facilitation of foreign interference by socialist politicians in the European Parliament; unequivocally condemns any type of foreign interference in the European institutions and denounces the fact that the S&D Group in particular has allowed itself to be infiltrated by agents of a non-EU country;
 - 2. Considers that only the tip of the iceberg has so far been discovered; regards the current findings scandalous and incriminating and instructs its President to set up an independent body to investigate the case; demands that this investigation include a thorough investigation of Qatar's lobbying activities in the form of a comprehensive written report listing all meetings with Qatari officials and representatives, analysing the existing incentives for former MEPs to engage in lobbying under the guise of NGO activities, as well as a detailed written report of the procedure that led to the LIBE committee's report on third countries whose nationals are subject to or exempt from a visa requirement (2022/0135(COD));

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-11-21-INT-1-137-0000_EN.html.

3. Recalls that under Article 9 of Protocol (No 7), immunity does not apply in cases where Members have been caught in the act of committing an offence; waives the immunity of those Members who are under investigation but who have not been caught in the act of committing an offence;
4. Concludes that the independence of the European Parliament has been seriously compromised; insists that a thorough investigation be conducted; notes the failure of the Special Committees on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (INGE and ING2), and therefore calls for the resignation of the Chair of the ING2 committee; insists on the need to establish a new committee of inquiry pursuant to Rule 208, to ascertain political responsibility, evaluate which files may have been compromised as a result of this foreign interference and democratic manipulation, verify the exact role of NGOs and other interest representatives under the guise of human rights defenders, and how to remedy to these problems; notes that a former Member has also been involved in the scandal and instructs the new committee of inquiry to investigate whether any files may have been compromised during the previous term; further urges an investigation into whether principles of transparency and the code of conduct have been violated in other instances;
5. Instructs its President to annul all files that may have been affected, specifically the one relating to visa liberalisation for Qatari nationals (2022/0135(COD)); instructs the LIBE committee to appoint a new rapporteur pursuant to Rule 51 for the aforementioned file and to restart the procedure from scratch; suggests opening a separate ordinary legislative procedure for visa liberalisation with Kuwait;
6. Instructs all Members to immediately disclose any ties to or benefits received from Qatar or the NGOs involved; instructs all rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs to disclose their past meetings with officials and representatives of Qatar and the NGOs involved; calls for Qatar and the NGOs involved to be prohibited from lobbying and that they be removed from the lobby register;
7. Notes with concern that a number of Members, namely MEP Eva Kaili, MEP Marc Tarabella and MEP Alessandra Moretti, took part in the LIBE committee vote on the file without being Members or substitute Members of this committee; calls for an investigation into the motivation behind such substitutions;
8. Notes with concern that, during the shadow meetings, a link between the gas deal with Qatar and visa liberalisation for Qatar was discussed; stresses that the rapporteur disclosed no meetings with either the Commission or with officials or representatives of Qatar;
9. Considers that the EU's demand for gas is jeopardising the quality of its legislation; regrets the link between the EU's supposed values and its trade policy, as the EU's trade policy seems to render its legislation partial and self-interested, thereby exposing the EU's hubris with regard to the values it claims to uphold;
10. Calls for the immediate suspension of the Members of Parliament and staff members involved in the scandal pending the outcome of the investigation; insists that Vice-President Kaili be replaced in accordance with the principles set out in Rule 15 of its

Rules of Procedure;

11. Calls on the Commission to study whether broadening the scope of AML rules, particularly by including NGOs, would have prevented these events from taking place;
12. Instructs the President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.