



Plenary sitting

B9-0581/2022

13.12.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement 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))

Sophie in 't Veld

on behalf of the Renew 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 the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament with respect to financial interests and conflicts of interest,
 - having regard its resolution of 16 September 2021 on strengthening transparency and integrity in the EU institutions by setting up an independent EU ethics body¹,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register²,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas integrity, transparency and accountability are essential for maintaining Union citizens' trust in the legitimacy of the political, legislative and administrative processes of the Union;
- B. whereas the ability of citizens and interest group representatives to influence decision-making in Parliament by way of arguments is a vital part of European democracy; whereas on the other hand, bribery and other inappropriate means of influencing are unacceptable, and in some cases even constitute a criminal act;
- C. whereas the current investigation into possible corruption within the European Parliament falls under criminal law; whereas the events are sad and shocking, but they show that the criminal justice systems works;
- D. whereas this should, nevertheless, prompt Parliament and the other EU institutions to tighten their rules on ethical behaviour, including by drawing on best practices in other democracies;
- E. whereas ethics standards already exist within the institutions, but are very fragmented and largely rely on a self-regulatory approach;
- F. whereas in its resolution of 16 September 2021, Parliament proposed concluding an interinstitutional agreement based on Article 295 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to set up an independent EU ethics body for Parliament and the Commission open to the participation of all EU institutions, agencies and bodies, and called for this body to also provide the participating institutions, agencies and bodies with training and active guidance;

¹ OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 159.

² OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1.

1. Is appalled by the revelations of corruption involving Members and staff of Parliament taking bribes from a non-EU country, most likely Qatar; commends the Belgian police and public prosecutor for their decisive action and affirms its complete support for their investigations, including through the sharing of all relevant information;
2. Is acutely aware that trust in democratic institutions is the first precondition on which the European Union is able to function; will make every effort to restore and strengthen citizens' trust in European democracy;
3. Stresses the need for full clarity on the origins of and the decision-making procedure for the visa liberalisation proposal for Qatar and, to that end, expects all EU institutions to make all relevant information and documents available without exception;
4. Considers that any Member who is under investigation for corruption should be immediately suspended from any official tasks on behalf of Parliament;
5. Suspends, until further notice, all parliamentary work concerning Qatar, including votes and missions, as no credible decision can be taken until the allegations have either been confirmed or dismissed;
6. Reiterates its call for an independent ethics body to be set up to ensure the consistent and full implementation of ethics standards across the EU institutions in order to guarantee that public decisions are taken in the spirit of the common good and with citizens' trust in the EU institutions in mind; calls for this ethics body to be granted investigative powers;
7. Recalls that this independent ethics body should work on establishing a common definition of 'conflict of interest' for the EU institutions based on the highest standards; notes the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's definition of conflict of interest: 'when an individual or a corporation (either private or governmental) is in a position to exploit his or their own profession or official capacity in some way for personal or corporate benefit';
8. Reiterates that the EU institutions should apply the highest ethical standards to prevent any cases of revolving doors or conflicts of interest, including with regard to appointments for senior positions in the EU institutions and agencies;
9. Calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal to set up the ethics body as soon as possible, in line with Parliament's resolution of 16 September 2021;
10. Believes that the EU Transparency Register should be strengthened by increasing the budget and the number of personnel, so that it is able to verify the information provided by applicants and registrants more thoroughly; believes furthermore that its scope should be expanded to include representatives of non-EU countries;
11. Calls on the European Ombudsman to monitor ongoing developments and to advise the institutions on improving their ethics rules and transparency;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the European Ombudsman.

