

Commission code of conduct: MEPs call for detailed declarations of interest

The European Commission should revise its code of conduct for Commissioners, to ensure that their declarations of interests give a complete picture of the financial situation and activities of a Commissioner and his or her family, said MEPs in a non-binding resolution voted on Thursday. The “cooling off” period for ex-Commissioners should be prolonged to 36 months, they added.

MEPs advocated prolonging the “cooling off” period, before ex-Commissioners may take private sector jobs in their areas of expertise, from 18 to at least 36 months. In a recent statement, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker proposed 24 months for ex-Commissioners, and 36 months only for the Commission President.

The declaration of financial interests must include present or past interests or activities from the last two years, says the text. MEPs also recommend that Commissioners should declare all their interests as “shareholders, company board members, advisors and consultants, members of associated foundations”, as well as close family interests and changes that took place when their candidatures were made known.

In the event of conflict of interest identified while in the office, the Commission President should follow Parliament’s recommendations for resolving the conflict or Parliament may recommend withdrawing confidence in that Commissioner and when appropriate depriving him or her of the rights to a pension and other benefits, says the text.

Bigger role for Parliament’s Legal Affairs Committee

MEPs called for a bigger role for Parliament’s Legal Affairs Committee in analysing the declarations of financial interests, verifying that they have been duly completed with the right content and assessing whether a conflict of interest may be inferred.

Clearance from this committee on the absence of any conflict of interest should be a precondition for holding the hearing of a Commissioner-designate by the committee responsible for his/her future portfolio, says the resolution.

MEPs stress that the committee should be given enough time to make a detailed assessment and that while observing confidentiality, it should publish its final conclusions and make recommendations, e.g. that a Commissioner should either renounce certain financial interests or

that changes should be made in his or her portfolio.

The resolution was passed by 615 votes to 5, with 6 abstentions.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

Further information

[Draft resolution on Commissioners' declarations of interests – guidelines](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Pascal Durand \(Greens/EFA, FR\)](#)

[European Commission: Code of conduct for Commissioners \(20.04.2011\)](#)

[European Commission: Ethics for commissioners](#)

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