



Letter to President Juncker and the College of Commissioners on the Commission's Code of Conduct

Brussels, 14 November 2016

Dear Commission President Jean Claude Juncker, Dear Commissioners of the European Union,

In the wake of the public outrage caused by the revolving door move of José Manuel Barroso to Goldman Sachs, [we sent President Juncker a letter](#) in which we called for an urgent reform of the Commission's ethics systems.

We thank you for [President Juncker's response](#), dated 18th October. However, we were discouraged by the lack of commitment in that letter to introduce any changes to the code of conduct, despite the repeated calls by the European Parliament, the European Ombudsman and employees of the European institutions as well as transparency NGOs and individual citizens.

This said, we welcome that on Wednesday 16th November the college of Commissioners is due to discuss and possibly decide on a prolongation of the cooling off period for ex- Commissioners. We read with interest President Juncker's proposals, [reported in Le Soir](#), to extend the cooling off period to three years for Commission Presidents and to two years for the other Commissioners.

Whilst this is certainly a step forward we are writing to reiterate our call for the **cooling off period for all Commissioners to be extended to at least three years**, commensurate with the right to a transitional allowance. We do not see why the President of the Commission should be under greater obligations than other members of the Commission, notably the Vice-Presidents. In addition, we think that stricter measures should be put in place for Commissioners serving two terms, as in the case of former President Barroso.

Furthermore, there are a series of other measures that must be urgently taken in order to improve the ethics system in general: the sanctions system needs to be reviewed and adapted to the various different types of potential conflicts of interest, and the ad hoc ethical committee should be reformed to match the standards set by the independent ethics bodies that exist, for example, in France.

We do welcome the fact that the Barroso case was referred to the ad hoc ethical committee, but we are still waiting for a specific answer to our request that the case be referred to the European Court of Justice. There is to date no jurisprudence on this subject matter, at a time when clarity on ethics and integrity is more essential than ever before.

We look forward to your response.
Many thanks in advance.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Greens/EFA group:

Pascal Durand and Benedek Javor, co-chairs of the Transparency and Democracy Working Group

Sven Giegold, rapporteur of the own-initiative report on Transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions

Philippe Lamberts, co-President of the Greens/EFA group