Inge Gräßle (EPP/CDU):

European Parliament calls for tighter rules for Code of Conduct for Commissioners

Code of Conduct for Commissioners should be mandatory and not voluntary

The rapporteur of the Budgetary Control Committee, Inge Gräßle MEP calls for more accountability and consistency in the "Code of Conduct" for Commissioners. These rules should also be applied to the Ad Hoc Ethics Committee who takes the final decision on suitable jobs for former Commissioners, up to 18 months following their departure from the Commission. "It is time to have truly independent members on this Committee rather than those prepared to accept that Commissioners hold other posts while still receiving transition funds", said Gräßle. "The total lack of transparency of this body is a decades-old stumbling block. It is unacceptable and against international standards."

The Budgetary Control Committee unanimously calls for a tightening up of the Code of Conduct for Commissioners. In an opinion report voted today, the Committee asked for a longer cooling-off period of 24 months instead of 18; the disclosure of all assets and liabilities of the Commissioners over 10,000 Euro, including those of dependent family members and standardizing the declarations of interest of the Commissioners.

Reading the explanations of the current code of Conduct is already "amazing" as it would appear that a long political career has no consequence in accumulating financial assets, stresses Inge Gräßle. The Committee regrets that there is no requirement for Commissioners to sell stocks related to the policy area for which they are responsible. The Code of Conduct should also specify clear application rules for the President of the Commission. "The cleanest solution would be a Commissioner Act, which would integrate the code of conduct, making its application mandatory and not, as currently, voluntary", Gräßle concluded.

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