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Initiative für Transparenz und Demokratie



**Attention: Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament**

**Re: Response to joint NGO letter about transparency over financial interests of MEP Jean Luc Dehaene**

Brussels, 9 October 2012

Dear President Schulz,

In a joint letter earlier this year, Friends of the Earth Europe together with Corporate Europe Observatory, LobbyControl, and Spinwatch, raised specific concerns about the lack of transparency over the financial interests of Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Jean-Luc Dehaene, and the related risk of a potential conflict of interest<sup>1</sup>. We asked you to review the case thoroughly and take steps to address it.

Since 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012, Mr Dehaene has been allowed to exert stock options granted by the company AB Inbev worth around five million Euros. Mr Dehaene is bound by the obligations of the European Parliament code of conduct for MEPs: this includes a duty to be fully transparent about outside interests and to avoid any situation in which a potential conflict of interest could arise. Our earlier letter raised concerns that these duties were not being complied with. In particular, holding these stock options and being allowed to exert them, while sitting as a MEP, risks a potential conflict of interest. We have called on you to ensure that the Parliament authorities guarantee that Mr Dehaene fully complies with his obligations, and safeguards are put in place to avoid a potential conflict of interest in this particular case.

At the time of writing, almost five months after our first letter, we have not received any official response from you. Mr Dehaene updated his declaration of financial interests on 4<sup>th</sup> October to include '77,000 stock options AB Inbev' in category (H) – financial interests which might influence the performance of MEP duties<sup>2</sup>. However questions remain about steps taken by Mr Dehaene himself to comply with the obligations of the code, and also by the Parliament authorities to prevent any potential risk of a conflict of interest in this case. What happens if Mr Dehaene needs to vote on EU legislation that is highly relevant for beer producers? Can he still fulfil his MEP mandate without any conflict of interest?

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<sup>1</sup> Joint letter to President Martin Schulz by Friends of the Earth Europe, Corporate Europe Observatory, LobbyControl, Spinwatch, 15 May 2012

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-dif/28256\\_03-10-2012.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-dif/28256_03-10-2012.pdf)



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Furthermore we regularly receive media requests for comments in relation to how this case is being addressed, to which we are unfortunately not able to answer, except by referring to the lack of official response from your side.

Therefore we would like to repeat our request for your response to our letter and concerns as well as information on how this case is being dealt with.

We look forward to your response on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

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Friends of the Earth Europe

Olivier Hoedeman, Research Coordinator  
Corporate Europe Observatory

Nina Katzemich, EU Transparency Campaigner  
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