

15 December 2022

Cash for influence: civil society call for a clear and immediate response to the European Parliament corruption scandal

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

as civil society organisations working on transparency and ethics in the EU, we are deeply concerned by the corruption and lobbying scandal around vice President Eva Kaili. We ask for a clear, strong and immediate political response.

Parliament now has to make sure it defends the democratic process against undue influence of authoritarian regimes like Qatar, but also against other actors that exert their influence in problematic ways. This means more than fighting corruption. It means establishing safeguards against unethical ways of influencing EU policy-making in order to re-affirm the integrity of the institutions.

We therefore call for a comprehensive overhaul of transparency and ethics rules, with strong measures including

- 1. a fast-track and thorough investigation** of the scandal. For that purpose, Parliament should **install a special investigation committee**.
- 2. strengthening the Parliament's ethics rules, including for revolving door moves and second jobs.** There is a need for an independent ethics committee, equipped with sufficient resources and a robust mandate to strengthen the fight against conflicts of interest of EU decision-makers. This will require much more than currently envisioned in the negotiations about an independent ethics body.
- 3. improving lobby transparency rules, especially the quality of the transparency register,** which still contains major loopholes for undue influence and suffers from grossly insufficient disclosure, as the new scandal has shown (lobbying for non-EU governments is virtually absent from the register and a group implicated in the scandal had failed to join the voluntary register).
- 4. disclosing all MEP lobby meetings** to improve the early warning system for undue influence.

As long as the independent ethics body is not in place, we also encourage all MEPs and assistants to ring the alarm bell if you come across cases of undue influence and get in touch with us; we are at your service for following up such cases.

Kind regards,

Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation in the EU (ALTER-EU)
Transparency International EU
The Good Lobby