



## Ombudsman welcomes Council response on presidency sponsorship guidelines

News - 07/05/2020

The Ombudsman has welcomed the Council of the EU's decision to consider issuing guidelines on corporate sponsorship for Member States holding the six-month EU presidencies.

Ms O'Reilly had in January 2020 recommended the Council take this action following a complaint by foodwatch International, which took issue with the private company sponsorship of the Romanian Presidency. In her analysis during the inquiry, the Ombudsman noted that there is a risk that commercial sponsorship could be perceived by the wider public as giving a sponsor some influence over EU policy- and law-making. Ms O'Reilly also noted, during the inquiry, the Council's argument that it has no responsibility for informal events organised by Presidencies in their own countries but suggested that the public does not draw such distinctions and perceives these activities as linked to the EU. Welcoming the [Council's response to her findings \[Link\]](#) the Ombudsman said: "EU presidencies *represent and set the work programme of the Council of the EU* and so need to be conscious of the image they present to the public ." The Council already provides Member States with practical, procedural and strategic advice on the Presidency. The Ombudsman has suggested the Council could extend this advice to include guidance on commercial sponsorship, covering, for example, the transparency of commercial sponsorship or the use of the EU logo.