



European Defence Agency accepts Ombudsman recommendations on revolving doors

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The European Defence Agency (EDA) has accepted our recommendations concerning how it handled applications by its former Chief Executive to take positions at Airbus. The decision in this inquiry sets out the Ombudsman's views on when, in the public interest, it is appropriate to forbid an intended job. In assessing the request for authorisation of new employment, the EU institution should take into account whether the intended job will be related to matters worked on by the staff member in the last three years and could therefore lead to conflicts of interest. It should also take into account whether this risk can be adequately mitigated by imposing certain conditions and whether these conditions can be credibly monitored and enforced.

The Ombudsman's own-initiative inquiry, launched in 2021, looked into the EDA's decision to approve the former Chief Executive's application to be head of public affairs of Airbus Spain and strategic advisor for Airbus Defence and Space. The former Chief Executive left the EDA in January 2020 and started at Airbus in August of the same year. When approving the new positions at Airbus - one of the largest actors in the European defence industry - the EDA attached certain conditions. However, the Ombudsman found the conditions were insufficient when measured against the risks of lobbying occurring and that they could not be credibly monitored and enforced.

The Ombudsman recommended that in future the EDA should forbid its senior staff from taking up positions where there is a clear conflict of interest. It should also set out criteria for forbidding such moves and any applicants for senior posts should be informed about the criteria. The Ombudsman's decision in this inquiry is [here](#) .

