

Ombudsman welcomes publication of names following "revolving doors" inquiry

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The European Ombudsman, **Emily O'Reilly**, has welcomed the publication of names of certain senior officials who leave the European Commission for new jobs, including positions in the private sector.

The Commission has published the details of previous duties of the senior officials concerned, their new role outside the Commission, and its own assessment of possible conflicts of interest. The move, outlined in the Commission's reply to the Ombudsman, is in line with recommendations the Ombudsman issued in September 2014, and follows the new EU Staff Regulations in place since January 2014.

Ms O'Reilly stated: *"This is further progress from the Juncker Commission on transparency. Senior officials are entitled to take up new employment when they leave the Commission but the public should also be assured that thorough conflict-of-interest tests have been carried out.*

"Citizens' trust in EU institutions can be undermined by any perception that senior officials are influenced by potential future jobs, or that they may take up posts that involve lobbying their former colleagues. Transparency is also good for the morale of the many excellent and committed EU officials whose work can be undermined by the actions of the few who fail to observe the rules.

"I welcome the co-operation of Vice President Georgieva on this issue and indeed the legislators for making sure the issue was part of the Staff Regulation reform. I now call on all other EU institutions and agencies also to implement these transparency measures. "

The Ombudsman wrote to Commission Vice President Georgieva in early 2015 to underline the need for the Commission to explain the reasoning behind positive decisions on senior ex-officials' future employment.

The letter followed the Ombudsman's call on the Commission to strengthen its review processes for so-called "revolving door" cases. The Ombudsman in 2014 dealt with two complaints in which the Commission was accused of not properly implementing rules on ex-officials taking up employment elsewhere. During her investigation into these two cases, the Ombudsman inspected 54 files of former staff who had informed the Commission of their



intention to take up new jobs. She found deficiencies in how decisions on such cases are reasoned and documented.

EU staff regulations specify that all officials leaving EU employment must inform their institution of any proposed new employment during the two years after leaving their institution. Former senior officials are also not allowed to lobby their former colleagues for a period of 12 months following their departure.

The Commission has said it will publish the names of relevant officials once a year. This is the legal minimum timeframe required. The Ombudsman maintains her recommendation to the Commission to publish the names more regularly. She will now close her inquiry with a full analysis.