



Jean-Claude JUNCKER
President of the European Commission

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Brussels, 21 09. 2015
Ares (2015) 3148461

Dear Ms O'Reilly,

Thank you very much for your letter of 24 July 2015 whereby you welcome the initiatives taken by the Commission to increase transparency and explain your views on the Commission's policy regarding the publication of its decisions on post term-of-office activities of former Commissioners and of the opinions of the Ad hoc Ethical Committee.

As concerns the figures mentioned in your letter, let me clarify that the Commission has adopted, as of end July 2015, 41 decisions concerning 95 post term-of-office activities of former Members of the previous Commission. Out of those 41 decisions, 21 were adopted following opinions delivered by the Ad hoc Ethical Committee.

Transparency is an important tool to reinforce the trust of the citizens and civil society organisations regarding decisions adopted by the Commission. Its decisions regarding post-mandate activities of former Commissioners are already made public through the official minutes of the Commission meetings.

The Commission fully cooperates with the interested NGOs and has already answered numerous requests for access to documents covering all the decisions taken by the Commission, many of them regarding academic and/or pro bono think-tank activities.

For the future, and in order to further increase transparency by facilitating access to the relevant information, the Commission will include in the EUROPA "Ethics and Transparency" webpage a link to the minutes of Commission meetings, each time a decision is taken by the Commission on former Commissioners' post term-of-office activities.

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Ms Emily O'REILLY
European Ombudsman

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However, the full and automatic publication of the Commission decisions and of the opinions delivered by the Ad hoc Ethical Committee cannot be envisaged as they may contain information which has to be protected, namely personal data and commercial information. A careful assessment of each document is necessary to strike the right balance between transparency and public scrutiny, on the one hand, and the protection of personal and commercial data, on the other hand. The fact that former Commissioners are public figures is not sufficient to justify a priori the full disclosure of every detail of their new professional activities and employment conditions once they have left the public office previously held. Regulation 1049/2001 allows the Commission to protect the above-mentioned data whilst granting public access to the information that can be disclosed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a long horizontal line with a stylized 'X' or crossbar at the beginning.