Nicolaus Kern

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Chairman of the European Affairs committee
Member of the Legal Affairs committee

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Mrs. Emily O'Reilly
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Own-initiative investigations into composition and transparency of Commission's expert groups

Dear Mrs. O'Reilly,

The European Ombudsman is a key European institution fostering the much-needed deeper engagement of the European Union with its citizens. Therefore, I was very pleased to hear your announcement in October 2013 to make more strategic use of the Ombudsman's own initiative power to investigate systemic problems within the EU administration.

The investigations opened by your institution so far cater to expectations that the European Ombudsman will fulfil its supervisory and controlling role with greater verve. In particular, the investigation launched into the composition and transparency of the Commission's expert groups has caught my intention. As a first step, you have asked interested persons and organisations for feedback on how balanced the representation of relevant areas of expertise and interest is in different groups, how transparent the groups are and how well the application procedures work. On a similar matter, the issue of the predetermining role and dubious selection process of the expert groups of the European Council was raised at the Landtag NRW.

As chairman of the European Affairs committee of the Landtag NRW I would like to invite you to present the cornerstones of your mandate as well as report on the progress of your investigation into the aforementioned issue at one of our upcoming committee sessions.

As regards the investigation into the Commission's expert groups I would be grateful if the following questions could be addressed:

- What is the state of affairs as regards the investigation opened into the composition of the 14 "civil dialogue groups" which will serve as advisory bodies for the common agricultural policy?
- What general feedback have you received on the call for opinions on the composition, transparency and influence of the Commission's expert groups?
- What is your take on the composition of the "civil dialogue groups" which serve as advisory body for the TTIP negotiations?
- What other strategic own-initiative investigation are planned for the coming months?

The next committee sessions will take place in Düsseldorf on **September 26th**, **October 24th** and **November 21st**, 2014, 10.30 pm.

Please let us know if you or a representative from your institution will be able to attend one of the sessions as our honorary guest.

Yours sincerely,

Nicolaus Kern