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[Press release](#) | 12.07.2016

Transparency/ethics

Cañete fails to address conflict of interest concerns; full investigation must follow

EU climate and energy commissioner Cañete today appeared before the EP's Legal Affairs committee to answer questions on his links to a number of cases raising concerns about potential conflicts of interest and/or corruption (1). Commenting after the hearing, Green legal affairs and transparency spokesperson **Heidi Hautala** (MEP, Finland) said:

“Today’s hearing only served to highlight the major doubts about the suitability of Miguel Arias Cañete for the office of commissioner. Mr Cañete failed to allay concerns about the different conflicts of interest that have been raised as regards his and his family’s dealings in Spain, and this reinforces doubts about his compliance with the ethical standards required of an EU commissioner.

“There are clear holes in commissioner Cañete’s declaration of interests, notably as regards his links to the Rinconada company at the heart of the Panama Papers revelations. The Commission has stated that it does not consider it necessary to investigate the activities of Mr Cañete or his wife because they deem the Panama Papers revelations do not ‘entail a conflict of interest’. How can the Commission be so sure without even investigating? Avoiding conflicts of interest also implies refraining from unethical behaviour and this must be investigated.

“The ‘in camera’ nature of today’s hearing was extremely unsatisfactory and we are now calling for commissioner Cañete to testify before parliament’s inquiry committee into the Panama Papers revelations, which also implicated his family. Only by dealing with such an important case in a transparent manner can we address citizens’ legitimate lack of trust in the EU institutions. Parliament’s Legal Affairs committee also needs to assess the choice by EP president Schulz to keep this hearing ‘in camera’ and behind closed doors. There must be a clear procedure by which Parliament can properly investigate and avoid any potential conflicts of interest which might arise once commissioners are in office.”

(1) See this overview of the cases the Greens/EFA group believes need to be addressed by commissioner Canete

[/legacy/fileadmin/dam/Images/Transparency_campaign/list_of_cases_raising_doubts_about_Canete.pdf](#)

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Heidi Hautala

EP Vice-President, Member

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