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Grand coalition soft on ethical concerns

Selmayr

The European Parliament's Budgetary Control committee (CONT) has today voted on the discharge of the European Commission's budget. The Greens/EFA group tabled an amendment expressing concern at the lack of transparency and a possible breach of EU rules in the recent appointment of Martin Selmayr as Commission Secretary General but this was defeated by one vote.

Greens/EFA MEP **Bart Staes**, who sits on the CONT committee, comments:

"It beggars belief that the conservatives and liberals could not bring themselves to back criticism of the European Commission's handling of Martin Selmayr's appointment. Tomorrow's hearing should have been an opportunity to strongly challenge the Commission but the EPP and others blocked our demand to invite President Juncker and Selmayr to face questions and have a real debate. With serious concerns about cronyism, now is not the time for the grand coalition to be going soft on the Commission."

Greens/EFA MEP **Sven Giegold** adds:

"The Commission must increase its efforts towards transparency and integrity and have more open procedures for appointing its top staff. Issuing defensive statements in the middle of the night is not going to restore confidence. The Commission needs to learn that transparency and democratic scrutiny are in their best interests. We are now four weeks into a scandal that could have been avoided if the Commission was willing to present its candidate for a top job for proper scrutiny."

Background

Today's vote: The defeated Greens/EFA group amendment: "...Is concerned by the lack of transparency and a possible breach of Union's rules on recruitment by recent appointment of the Commission's President's Head of Office as the new Secretary General of the Commission; calls on the President of the Commission to provide the Discharge Authority with a thorough explanation of processes and procedures taken for this appointment". The Greens/EFA group also put forward an amendment calling for the discharge of the European Commission's budget to be postponed until there has been time for proper scrutiny. This was not supported by the majority in committee.

Tomorrow's hearing: The CONT committee will hold a hearing with Commissioner Oettinger on Selmayr's appointment tomorrow at 2.30pm: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20180327-1430-COMMITTEE-CONT> The Greens/EFA group had requested that President Juncker and Selmayr be invited, but this was opposed by EPP, S&D and ALDE.

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