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Oettinger Eurozone scandal

Retract or resign - cross-party MEPs call on Oettinger to withdraw statement

In response to the scandalous comments by EU commissioner Günther Oettinger, published in the Bild Zeitung last week (1), a cross-party group of over 150 MEPs have written to Commission president Barroso calling for Günther Oettinger to retract his statement or resign as EU commissioner. The initiative was organised by Portuguese Greens/EFA MEP Rui Tavares and will be presented to EP president Jerzy Buzek by Greens/EFA co-president Dany Cohn-Bendit at tomorrow's conference of presidents, with a view to president Buzek presenting the letter to Commission president Barroso. Commenting on the initiative and the statement by Günther Oettinger, **Rui Tavares** said:

"Last week's scandalous statement by Günther Oettinger was completely unacceptable from an EU commissioner, supposedly tasked with defending the European interest. The statement is inherently anti-European and undermines attempts to bolster European solidarity in the face of the current crisis. The only symbol such an act would represent is a symbol that the EU no longer stands for common European values or interests.

"Coming from a European commissioner, such a glib statement cannot simply be glossed over. Günther Oettinger must be forced to retract his statement or resign.

"This letter shows MEPs do not think that this is a question of peripheral against central countries or southern against northern Europeans, but of standing up for European ideals instead of succumbing to ignorant populism."

(1) Günther Oettinger was quoted by the Bild Zeitung as saying that the flags of countries with excessive deficits should fly at half-mast in front of EU buildings, adding that this would be a "symbol" that would have a strong "deterrent effect".

In less than two working days of the European Parliament, 151 MEPs from all political groups and from all EU Member States have signed this letter, including 5 vice-presidents of the European Parliament, a president and vice-presidents of political groups and several former members of national governments.

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