



Mr Jean-Claude Juncker  
President of the European Commission

Brussels, 24 September 2014

Dear Mr Juncker,

As your commissioners-designate are preparing for scrutiny by the European Parliament, it will have come to your attention that there are mounting concerns and criticism with regard to one of the members of your proposed College. Serious questions have been raised concerning Miguel Arias Cañete's suitability for the role of commissioner and, in particular, for the Energy and Climate Action portfolio for which he has been proposed. In addition to evidence of his unacceptable sexist attitude, Mr Cañete's candidacy has also raised a number potential conflicts of interest.

1. While his direct links to the oil industry were severed on 18 September 2014 (on the eve of his financial declaration), the sale of his personal shares in Petrolifera Ducar and Petrologis Canaris is still insufficient evidence for him to be able to claim to "avoid the slightest notion of potential conflict of interest". In fact his wife, son and brother in law all remain as either shareholders or board members of these companies.

2. According to investigations by independent NGOs and Spanish newspapers, there are serious suspicions that these personal and family interests have been partly hidden, through tax-evasion mechanisms, in a Netherlands based shell-company (Havorad BV). The €13million holding directly benefits companies bearing either Mr Cañete's or his family's name.

3. According to the Spanish press, his wife's activities as a land-owner with interests in commercial bull-breeding made her a beneficiary of CAP subsidies; subsidies for which Mr Cañete fought as Member of the European Parliament in 1996. Later, in 2002 she was under investigation for profits gained through possible access to privileged information due to her husband's position as Agriculture Minister.

All of this raises grave concerns on Mr Cañete's commitment to the general interest.

Mr Juncker, on 1 November you will be the new guardian of the Treaties, whose Art.17(3) TUE states that "The members of the Commission shall be chosen on the ground of their general competence and European commitment from persons whose independence is beyond doubt."

This raises three questions:

Were you aware of Mr Cañete's potential conflict of interest?

How do you intend to guarantee his compliance with the European Commissioners' Code of conduct?

How do you intend to guarantee that Mr Cañete's independence is actually beyond reasonable doubt?

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Harms

Philippe Lamberts

Co-Presidents  
Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament