



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

Brussels, 15 July 2016

Dear President of the European Commission Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker,
Dear First Vice-President of the European Commission for Transparency Mr. Frans Timmermans,

We are writing to you in relation to the reports that ex-Commissioner Mr. Barroso will be taking up a role as an advisor and non-executive chairman to Goldman Sachs. We would like to take this opportunity to express our concerns about this case and to call on you to take swift and decisive action to curb any potential conflicts of interest.

The announcement has raised much media attention, notably because Mr. Barroso held a high-level EU position for over 10 years, during which he dealt with many issues related to the financial crisis, the Eurozone crisis and the sovereign debt crisis – all areas in which Goldman Sachs has had an enormous and more than questionable role.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) at Article 245 stipulates that Commissioners should “*behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance, after they have ceased to hold office, of certain appointments or benefits*”.

We would therefore like to call on you to do all that is within your power to ensure that Mr. Barroso respects his duty to behave in a manner that is in keeping with the dignity of the office of a Commissioner. Firstly we believe you should invite the Commission's ad hoc ethical committee to examine the case, and secondly you should call on the European Court of Justice to examine, under Article 245 TFEU, whether Barroso's should be deprived of his rights to a pension or other related benefits in light of his new paid relationship with Goldman Sachs.

We also call on you to reform the Code of Conduct for Commissioners in order to better fulfil the Treaty provisions, including by extending the cooling-off period for Commissioners to at least three years, commensurate with the transitional allowance that they are entitled to after leaving office.

In line with the recommendations made by the European Ombudswoman on 12 July 2016, we call for a review of the Code of Conduct that would also include the implementation of adequate sanctions if Commissioners or ex-Commissioners fail to abide by the highest standards of integrity, independence and impartiality.

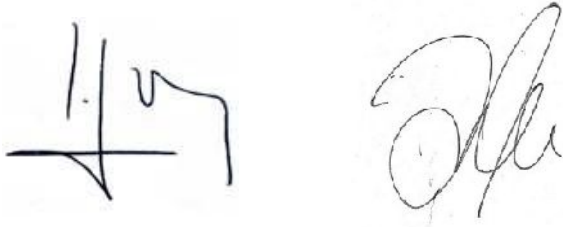
Finally, we call on you to improve your current policy of declaring meetings with lobbyists, so that your published lists of meetings includes also meetings with ex-Commissioners and other high-level officials once they take up a new function. We would like to take this opportunity to request that you provide us with a list of meetings held between European Commission staff and ex-Commissioners since the beginning of this term.

Thank you in advance for your attention. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Greens/EFA group:

Pascal Durand and Benedek Javor, co-chairs of the Transparency and Democracy Working Group

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is stylized and appears to be 'P. Durand'. The second signature on the right is more cursive and appears to be 'B. Javor'.

Sven Giegold, rapporteur of the own-initiative report on Transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sven Giegold' in a cursive script.

Philippe Lamberts and Rebecca Harms, co-Presidents of the Greens/EFA group

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Philippe Lamberts' and the second on the right is 'Rebecca Harms', both written in a cursive style.