

## European Parliament scandal highlights urgent need for reforms

**Brussels, 12 December 2022** - The weekend's 'Qatar corruption' scandal in which Belgian prosecutors charged European Parliament Vice President Eva Kaili and three others for illicit lobbying unveiled to many that the EU has a corruption problem. At The Good Lobby we have known this for a while; hence our effort at equalizing access to power.

Professor Alberto Alemanno, The Good Lobby Founder, has qualified the scandal as “the most shocking in the history of EU integration, potentially capable of triggering not only serious regulatory reform but also a major transformation in EU political culture.”

The Good Lobby argues that the EU must use this latest integrity scandal as a springboard for real reform.

Here are four reforms that would help to safeguard against corruption:

First, EU institutions should establish a common, independent ethics authority, endowed with sufficient resources, investigation and sanction capacities. This is what European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pledged when entering office but has so far failed to follow through on. Here's the [study](#) that was solicited by the European Parliament's rapporteur and served as a basis for the proposal currently considered by Commissioner Jourova.

Second, the rules in force on transparency, conflicts of interest and revolving doors in the European institutions (in particular the codes of conduct of the institutions) must be strengthened by imposing reporting obligations for all members of the Parliament. While the Parliament's ruling Bureau has long opposed such an obligation in the name of the freedom of their electoral mandate, MEPs must now accept to report all their meetings as an opportunity to demonstrate their actual freedom from special interests.

Third, lobbying from third countries – be it by embassies or third parties – must also be published in the EU Transparency Register. Right now, governments are exempted from the EU's already meager transparency rules. Likewise, meetings with representatives of third countries should be disclosed by all EU institutions, including by individual MEPs.

Fourth, the EU Transparency Register must become mandatory through the adoption of a legislative act – as opposed to a mere inter-institutional agreement – and be strengthened by additional resources. Ultimately, a clear commitment is needed from all institutions to only accept meetings with registered lobbyists and to publish all lobby meetings on a central website that is linked to the common EU transparency register.

“Ultimately, the scandal taking place is an ugly one. Its very ugliness should motivate the EU’s political leaders to finally make things right,” adds Professor Alberto Alemanno.

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