

Press Release

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The Good Lobby lodges a complaint against Viktor Orbán

Ahead of the EU ambassador's meeting discussing the role of the Hungarian EU Presidency on Wednesday (10 July), The Good Lobby has lodged a complaint against Viktor Orbán.

It argues that the Hungarian EU Presidency has breached – and may continue breaching – the duty of sincere cooperation and spirit of loyalty among Member States, by falsely presenting his foreign visits as acting on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Here's the text of the complaint lodged before the Council, which is tasked to ensure the respect of such principles under Art. 24(3) TEU ("Member States shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations").

According to Professor Alberto Alemanno, "Orbán's secret foreign trips are already undermining the EU's effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations and represent a manifest breach of the principle of mutual political solidarity among Member States".

Background

Since assuming the rotating Presidency of the EU Council on 1 July 2024, the Hungarian government – led by its Prime Minister Viktor Orbán – has undertaken four major visits – to Kyiv (Ukraine), Moscow (Russia), Susha (Azerbaijan), Beijing (China) and currently plans one to Washington, DC (USA) and Jerusalem (Israel).

The Hungarian government has organised these visits in secret – as publicly acknowledged by Viktor Orbán in an interview with Die Weltwoche – and yet presented them as part of the Hungarian Presidency, as epitomised by the systematic use of the Hungarian Presidency's logo.

As a result, several EU leaders, including the President of the EU Council and the High Representative, quickly blasted these visits for lacking authorisation and stressed that Orbán was not representing Brussels.

Yet no formal action has been undertaken against the Hungarian government while acting as holder of the Council Presidency, despite these visits already undermining joint EU positions.

As one may reasonably expect Viktor Orbán (and his Presidency) to plan more surprise visits – equally damaging the external representation of the Union –, this complaint intends to remedy such an omission by drawing the attention of the Council, as well as the EU Commission President von der Leyen and High Representative Josep Borrell and ask them to put an end to these ongoing violations by the holder of the rotating Presidency of the Council.

Complaint

The Good Lobby respectfully submits that the Hungarian Presidency has:

- Acted beyond the competences conferred to it, as those do not entail any external representation of the Union which is the responsibility of the President of the European Council (at the head of state or government level Union (Art. 15(6) TEU); and of the EU Commission, notably, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (at Ministerial level) under (Art. 27(2) TEU).
- Departed from the principle of mutual political solidarity among Member States and spirit of loyalty, as required by Art 24(3) TEU ("The Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and shall comply with the Union's action in this area..., work together to enhance and develop their mutual political solidarity... refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations"), and more broadly, the principle of sincere cooperation, as enshrined in Article 4(3) TEU ("the Union and the Member States shall, in full respect, assist each other in carrying out tasks that flow from the Treaties" and "The Member States shall...refrain from any measure which could jeopardise the attainment of the Union's objective").

What's Next

We understand that EU ambassadors will discuss the role of the Hungarian EU Presidency when they meet on Wednesday (10 July), following a request from Poland.

While Poland's request has been endorsed by 16 Member States, others like France suggest handling the matter politically and Italy is insisting on keeping the discussion confidential.

It will be up to the Council Legal service to define what is the role – if any – of the Council Presidency in Common Foreign and Security Policy, and what the principle of mutual political solidarity among Member States and spirit of loyalty, as required by Art 24(3) TEU.

A complaint to European Ombudsman and/or legal actions may follow.

Find the full text of the complaint [HERE](#).

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