



*Syndicat du Personnel des Institutions Européennes  
Le Président*

Brussels, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## **NOTE TO THE COLLEGE**

**Subject: Reform of the Code of Conduct applicable to members and former members of the Commission / Barroso - Kroes cases**

Reading the interview of President Juncker given to newspaper "Le Soir", last November 5, we were happy to note his intention to reform the code of conduct by increasing the cooling-off period from 18 months to 3 years for the President and 2 years for the Commissioners.

Nevertheless, President Juncker said he was not sure that, as Commissioners, you could accept his proposal which, however, seems absolutely minimalist.

This proposal will be submitted to you by President Juncker for analysis. On this occasion we would like to draw your attention to the crucial impact of your decision on the credibility of our institution and the perception that the outside world can draw from it.

Thus, during the presentation of the transparency register, First Vice-President Timmermans rightly pointed out that the first mission of the College is to regain the confidence of citizens.

This confidence which has been profoundly challenged by the more than unfortunate management of the Barroso and Kroes cases, notably by:

- the initial underestimation of these cases;
- the clumsy first steps taken by the spokesman to trivialise them and bring them back to facts affecting only the persons concerned;
- the equally clumsy defence of the supposedly exemplary nature of the Code of Conduct while the obligations contained therein fall short of those imposed on ordinary staff ...

The attitude of our institution has had the effect of provoking increasingly virulent political and media reactions, more critical positions of the Ombudsman and, last but not least, the vote of the EP at its plenary session on 26 October.

In this respect, we can only recall the 153,000 signatures collected by the petition "Not on our behalf" launched by a spontaneous collective of staff members of the institutions. Among the signatures collected, there are thousands of colleagues working for our institution.

For our part, as soon as these cases were known, we, as R & D, have constantly drawn attention to the need for the Commission to abandon its lethargic attitude and clearly

distance itself from the mistakes of the Barroso Commission members. In this regard, we are pleased to provide you with a document covering all the steps we have taken (see Annex).

In view of the above, by accepting President Juncker's invitation to reform the Code of Conduct, you still have the possibility of starting to give an adequate response that will be, finally, equal to the gravity of the situation and to the expectations of European staff and citizens.

In this respect we would like to invite you to go beyond the minimalist proposal put forward by President Juncker regarding the duration of the cooling period by considering a clear reinforcement of the procedures likely to ensure the respect of these rules and to make it possible to penalise proven violations.

In this context it should be noted that the opinion of the ad-hoc Ethical Committee alone is not sufficient to provide all the necessary assurances.

**Reforming the Code of Conduct and to get to the bottom of Barroso and Kroes cases is what the "last-chance Commission" must do to begin to regain the trust of citizens and to meet the expectations of its staff.**



Cristiano SEBASTIANI  
Président

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Annex: Barroso-Kroes file