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COVER NOTE

From: Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director

date of receipt: 8 June 2023

To: Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

Subject: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Court of Justice, the European Central Bank, the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions
Proposal for an interinstitutional ethics body
- Letter by President von der Leyen to H.E. Mr Ulf Kristersson, Prime Minister of Sweden

Delegations will find attached the letter by President von der Leyen to H.E. Mr Ulf Kristersson, Prime Minister of Sweden.

Encl.: Letter of 8 June 2023



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen
The President

Brussels,

Dear Prime Minister, *dear Ulf*

I would like to inform you that the Commission adopted today a Communication entitled 'Proposal for an interinstitutional ethics body'. This communication is accompanied by a draft agreement between the institutions and advisory bodies listed in Article 13 of the Treaty on the European Union, and by a financial statement.

This proposal follows my commitment in the Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2019-2024 to support the creation of an ethics body common to all EU institutions and to work closely with the other institutions to achieve this.

The reason is that the institutions of the European Union must be equally open and beyond reproach on ethics, transparency, and integrity if Europeans are to maintain trust in the Union. Ethics is a cornerstone of the functioning of the European institutions, and irreproachable ethical behaviour is expected from the members of all institutions.

The interinstitutional ethics body, once in place, would be tasked with developing common ethical standards which all institutions and advisory bodies should respect and commit to implement in their own internal rules for their members. The objective is to ensure a common baseline in the applicable rules of the institutions and to create a mutual understanding of what ethical behaviour is expected of persons holding the highest functions in the European Union.

The future body would therefore represent a new determining element for creating a common institutional culture within the European Union based on common minimum standards. It would hence contribute to strengthening citizens' trust in the institutions and their members.

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H.E. Mr Ulf Kristersson
Prime Minister of Sweden

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The interinstitutional ethics body, as proposed by the Commission, has been designed to ensure that it is focused on tasks with added value which do not duplicate existing and functioning structures. The set-up and competences of the proposed body reflect the complex and sensitive issues of institutional balance, institutional autonomy and the legal framework of the Treaties, which have been raised in the interinstitutional contacts that have preceded the initiative.

I am pleased to invite you to take part in the interinstitutional discussions on this proposal for a joint agreement to establish an interinstitutional ethics body. In this context, I would be grateful if you could designate a representative to participate in the discussions with the Commission for a first in-person meeting in the afternoon of Monday 3 July 2023 in Brussels. Vice-President Věra Jourová will be representing the Commission in the discussions.

These discussions will be important in defining the way forward for the creation of this inter-institutional ethics body and thus for establishing, for the first time, a mechanism of coordination between the institutions on the ethical standards applicable to their respective members. I am convinced that our common aim is to propose solutions that are legally sound, meaningful, feasible and that ensure the high level of integrity that European citizens expect of those holding the highest functions at EU level.

Yours sincerely,



Ursula von der Leyen

Annexes:

Communication 'Proposal for an interinstitutional ethics body'

Draft agreement

Financial statement