



Council of the European Union  
General Secretariat

**Brussels, 24 October 2025**

**WK 13845/2025 INIT**

**LIMITE**

**AG  
INST  
PE**

*This is a paper intended for a specific community of recipients. Handling and further distribution are under the sole responsibility of community members.*

## **WORKING DOCUMENT**

---

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on General Affairs
Subject:	Agreement establishing an interinstitutional body for ethical standards for members of institutions and advisory bodies referred to in Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union – Presidency note

---

Delegations will find in Annex a note from the Presidency for discussion.

**I. STATE OF PLAY**

On 15 May 2024, eight European institutions and advisory bodies<sup>1</sup> (the ‘Parties’) signed an Agreement establishing an interinstitutional body for ethical standards for their members (‘Body’). The Agreement was published in the Official Journal of the EU on 17 May 2024, and entered into force twenty days later, on 6 June 2024.

Since then, the Parties have focused on implementing the Agreement, notably with a Memorandum of Understanding agreed on 25 November 2024 (ST 14891/24), and initial discussions on the Body’s Rules of Procedure as well as regarding the first group of independent experts that will be tasked with assisting the Body.

The Secretariat, currently chaired by the European Parliament, had identified two main strands of action, and created two working groups to focus on each of them. One was the working group on the Rules of Procedure, tasked with working on a first draft; the other was the working group on Ethical Standards, tasked with mapping existing rules within the Parties. In the Council, the first draft of the Rules of Procedure prepared by the Body’s Secretariat was presented by the Polish Presidency at the 6 February GAG and then discussed again on 3 March. The feedback gathered at those meetings was then transmitted to the other Parties, without further developments. The working group on Ethical Standards carried out a mapping of currently existing standards in the EU institutions, under the common understanding that such work was not meant to go beyond a mere mapping exercise at that stage. Furthermore, under the Hungarian and Polish presidencies, delegations held preliminary discussions around the procedure to select the first group of independent experts, with the aim to ensure that the Council remains a relevant Party in the process, despite not having the possibility of proposing its own names for the first round.

---

<sup>1</sup> The European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank, the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions.

However, progress came to a halt in February 2025, when the European Parliament communicated its inability to take positions on ongoing work at interinstitutional level before amending its internal Rules of Procedure. A report<sup>2</sup> was presented in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) to this end but was rejected by the committee on 14 May 2025. The rejection ended the procedure, preventing the report from moving to the next stage, namely a vote in plenary. Since then, the European Parliament has not clarified how it intends to proceed as regards its membership of the Ethics Body, namely whether it would be in a position to engage in interinstitutional discussions on the implementation of the Agreement.

## **II. ROLE OF THE CHAIR ACCORDING TO THE IIA**

Article 4 of the Agreement foresees that the representative of each Party shall chair the Body for a term of one year, following a rotation based on the list of institutions and bodies in the order laid down in Article 13(1) TEU. The Agreement also foresees the possibility for a Party to waive the right to chair the Body. As the end of the year of chairmanship by the European Parliament approaches, and as the Council is the next in line to hold this position, it is appropriate to start reflecting on the way forward.

It should be noted that chairing the Body entails a significant number of administrative and preparatory tasks, notably the coordination of the positions of the different Parties, the communication with and assistance to the independent experts and the preparation of the meetings of the Body at political level. This role will involve particularly intense work during the initial phase, when the Body will have to develop its Rules of Procedure, appoint its independent experts, and define the first set of common minimum standards.

According to Article 16 of the Agreement, the Party chairing the Body should also coordinate the work of the Secretariat, which will support the Body in its tasks at technical level. In line with the procedural arrangements for the Council's work related to the Body, the General Secretariat of the Council provides assistance by participating in the Secretariat of the Body, and it is therefore expected to take over its chairing from 1 January 2026.

---

<sup>2</sup> 2025/2044(REG)

### **III. WAY FORWARD**

Against this background and in order to prepare for the task of chairing the Body from January 2026, the Presidency would seek delegations' views on the continuation at Secretariat level of the work that was started on the drafting of the Rules of Procedure, which will provide the basis for the functioning of the Body.

Another outstanding issue is the selection of the first group of independent experts, which would eventually have to be addressed going forward. Further, work on the development of the common minimum standards should not start before the Body is set up, and the experts are selected, considering their expected prominent role in this process.

In line with the procedural arrangements mentioned above, the Presidency will keep GAG, and as the case may be Coreper, regularly informed of developments concerning the Body in a timely and transparent manner.