




## Qatargate, one year on: what has (not) been done?

It has been one year since suitcases of cash revealed the most egregious corruption scandal ever to hit the European Parliament. While much was promised, our analysis finds stunningly little progress on reform that would prevent future scandals and secure the integrity of Parliament. This table analyses the 14 reforms announced by Parliament's president Roberta Metsola in the wake of the scandal. It looks at what—if anything—has been delivered so far, and where Parliament must improve.

### KEY

-  No progress
-  In progress
-  Completed

Thematic area	What was promised	What has been delivered	Our recommendation	Development evaluation
<b>European Parliament</b>				
<b>Conflicts of interest</b>	Improvements to declarations of financial interests. A new obligation to declare assets.	The new declarations have not been improved. On the contrary, a new declaration income threshold of €5000 per calendar year has been added, below which it is no longer compulsory for	The new threshold and the removal of the requirement to declare salaries from other mandates are a step back from the previous system. In an exercise supposed to make rules on integrity	

		<p>MEPs to declare outside remunerated activities. In addition, MEPs are no longer required to declare salaries which they receive for the exercise of a mandate in another parliament. A new obligation to declare assets has been added, but it will only apply to MEPs of the next legislative term.</p>	<p>stronger, MEPs should have voted for more transparency in their activities, not less. The disclosure requirements should be increased. In addition, the obligation to declare assets should be public and apply to sitting MEPs.</p>	
<p><b>Conflicts of Interest</b></p>	<p>Requirement for any Member who finds that they have a conflict of interest to immediately take the necessary steps to address it. Requirement for any office-holder in Parliament or rapporteur or shadow rapporteur to submit a declaration of conflict of interest. This obligation was also to apply to EP co-rapporteurs in multilateral assemblies and their committees.</p>	<p>MEPs shall “endeavour to resolve” conflicts of interest. Before taking up the office of power (committee assignment, rapporteur, shadow rapporteur, coordinators etc.), MEPs shall submit a declaration indicating whether they are aware of having a conflict of interest in relation to the responsibilities of that office and describe it. Under certain circumstances, the respective body can ban MEPs from holding these positions of power.</p>	<p>While it is positive that there is an additional check by responsible bodies on conflicts of interest, Parliament should introduce a ban on conflicts of interest: in case of a perceived conflict of interest, MEPs should not be allowed to hold an office of power related to that conflict.</p>	

<b>Revolving doors</b>	Introduction of a six-month 'cooling-off' period for former Members who wish to lobby the Parliament.	Achieved	The cooling-off period should be equal to the time during which an MEP receives a transitional allowance from the taxpayer (from five to 24 months, depending on the length of service). Six months are <u>purely symbolic</u> , as nothing substantial occurs in the first six months of a legislative term.	
<b>Changing Integrity Culture</b>	Centralised, complete, easily accessible and publicly available publication of information related to the integrity of parliamentary work.	The <u>integrity tab on the Parliament's webpage</u> has been slightly reformatted.	Information on individual MEPs' activities should be centralised and include their lobbying meetings and declarations of MEPs private interests. All of the above-mentioned information should be made available in a machine-readable format. The information should be linked to the Transparency Register and all other relevant institutional databases.	
<b>Participation in events</b>	Participation of interest and civil society representatives in events on Parliament's	Achieved	We are satisfied with this development, but the Transparency Register should	

	premises conditional on registration in the Transparency Register		be mandatory across all three EU institutions, for all interest representatives and third-country diplomatic representatives.	
<b>Lobbying</b>	Mandatory declaration of scheduled meetings with diplomatic representatives of third countries and third parties covered by the scope of the Transparency Register on specific reports or resolutions, for Members, APAs and staff.	MEPs and APAs shall publish all scheduled meetings related to parliamentary business.	This rule should apply to all MEPs, APAs, Political Group Staff and EP staff.	
<b>Friendship groups</b>	A ban on friendship groups with third countries will be enforced by banning activities or meetings of unofficial groupings of Members that could raise confusion.	Not achieved, and Parliament has not introduced any binding transparency obligations for these groups.	A ban on friendship groups or unofficial groupings must be implemented.	
<b>Access to Parliament</b>	Creation of a new entry log for all persons above 18 years old visiting the European Parliament premises, stating the date, time, and purpose of visit will be created. Exemption for journalists.	In progress	This should not serve as a substitute for the other rules governing transparency and publication of meetings.	
<b>Access to Parliament</b>	Replacement of permanent access badges with daily	Former Members are entitled to have access on a daily basis	Former Members should not receive special treatment. It	

	access badges for Former Members. Former Members and former staff no longer grant access to anyone else.	to the premises of the European Parliament. Following the cooling of periods of six months, Former Members who engage in lobbying will need the specific lobbyist badge.	is almost impossible to verify whether former members use their daily access badges to carry out lobbying activities or just to access the buildings.	
<b>Ethics training</b>	Regularly available training for Members throughout the legislature. Mandatory training for APAs on financial rules, compliance, conduct and whistleblowing, Mandatory training on whistleblowing for EP staff managers.	Achieved	This is positive, but trainings should be mandatory for MEPs as well.	
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	Strengthening of role of the Advisory Committee.	Under the new rules, the Advisory Committee is now composed of eight members instead of five. It shall proactively monitor compliance by Members with this Code of Conduct and its implementing measure. Alleged breaches can now be signalled directly to the Advisory Committee.	The Advisory Committee should comprise some independent and external members. Currently, it is entirely composed of sitting MEPs. The Committee should also be empowered to issue binding recommendations.	
<b>Foreign Interference</b>	Pushback against any foreign interference in Parliament's	Not achieved	To ensure more transparency and accountability of	

	work. Strengthening of checks and balances for Motions for Resolutions tabled with urgency that have been the target of undue influence.		individual members, Motions for Resolutions should follow a similar procedures as normal reports, with an assigned drafter and tabled amendments.	
<b>Interinstitutional cooperation</b>	Enhanced collaboration with law enforcement authorities in Member States.	Unknown, except for the cooperation with authorities involved in the specific Qatargate scandal.	Parliament should carry out an internal investigation to assess how the actions of some MEPs involved in Qatargate have influenced the work of the Parliament. Parliament needs to have a better collaborative culture with Union bodies as well, including OLAF and EPPO.	
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	Planned revision of list of sanctionable activities for Members. A system of warnings and reminders preceding sanctions was to be put in place in case of severe and systematic breaches	Minor revision has been adopted (forfeiture of daily allowance increased from up to 30 days to 60 days in cases of sanctionable breach.)	Deterrent fines should be introduced to make sure that breaches carry a cost. This would include financial penalties proportionate to the severity of misconduct.	