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President of the European Commission urged not meet ‘behind closed doors’ with Prime Minister of Czech Republic

Alessandro · Wednesday, June 19th, 2019

Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, under investigation following a recent decision from the European Commission (EC) that he has significant conflicts of interest related to his private businesses, is reportedly planning to discuss his case behind closed doors with President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in a meeting in Brussels on Thursday.

The preliminary audit report from the EC has highlighted a direct conflict of interest since February 2017, and led to the decision that the Czech government should repay some €17 million of EU subsidies that Babiš’s company, Agrofert, received over the last two years.

“Principles of transparency and accountability should be followed no matter whether it is a head of government or representative of a European Institution,” said Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair of Transparency International. *“The law must be applied equally to everyone, and there should be no way for politicians to talk their way out of scrutiny.”*

In the immediate aftermath of the EC’s decision, Mr. Babiš [publicly stated](#) that he will ask President Juncker about the audit report.

“Given the Commission’s own findings of a conflict of interest and the ongoing investigation, President Juncker should not be meeting the Czech Prime Minister hidden from public scrutiny. There needs to be an open and accountable process to ensure this matter is addressed and the money returned,” said Nick Aiossa, Interim Director of Transparency International EU.

Today marks one year to the day since Transparency International’s national chapter in the Czech Republic [announced the discovery](#) of Prime Minister Babiš’s conflict of interest, after he was identified as the beneficial owner of Agrofert in the Slovakian register of beneficial ownership.

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