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Open letter to the Members of the Bureau of the European Parliament

Michiel van Hulten · Friday, September 9th, 2022

The following letter was sent on 9 September 2022 to the Members of the Bureau of the European Parliament on the appointment of the new Secretary-General. A pdf version is available [here](#).

Dear President,

Dear Vice-Presidents,

According to [EU Observer](#), on Monday you will interview candidates for the role of Secretary-General of the European Parliament and potentially take a decision on who to appoint.

Before the summer holiday, [French journalist Jean Quatremer](#) and [Politico Europe](#) reported that a secret deal had been reached between political groups Renew, The Left and the European People's Party that would see Alessandro Chiochetti, President Metsola's current Head of Cabinet, installed as Secretary-General. In return, the other groups in the deal would be rewarded with other top jobs, including through the creation of a brand-new 13th Directorate-General in the EP secretariat. According to [Politico Europe](#), The Left's Sanna Lepola is the only internal candidate to lead the new DG, which seems extraordinary for such a senior and highly coveted role. We are writing to request that you **abandon this backroom deal** and take urgent steps **to improve the transparency and integrity of the EP's recruitment procedures**, not least by establishing clear rules to allow better oversight and accountability.

The aforementioned deal stands in stark contrast with the 2018 Parliamentary resolution on "[Integrity policy of the Commission, in particular the appointment of the Secretary-General of the European Commission](#)", in which you called for greater transparency when appointing top EU officials.

In February 2018, when the European Commission fast-tracked the appointment of President Juncker's Head of Cabinet Martin Selmayr as Secretary-General of the institution, the European Parliament was understandably outraged, calling it "a coup-like action which stretched and possibly even overstretched the limits of the law".

As you will recall, the Parliament's criticism was echoed by the European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, who [opened an investigation](#) into the unprecedented elevation of Mr. Selmayr, and found four instances of maladministration by the Commission.

In the aftermath of the Selmayr scandal, the Parliament [called on the Commission](#) "to adopt a new

procedure for appointing its Secretary-General, ensuring that the highest standards of transparency, ethics and the rule of law are upheld.

It is deeply regrettable that your institution, which had been so outspoken in its criticism of another institution's outrageous abuse of procedure, now seeks to do the same thing with the backdoor appointment of your next Secretary-General. As recently as May, Members [voted in a resolution](#) to call on the Secretary-General "to ensure transparency and fairness during senior management appointment procedures".

In our [2021 study](#) of the integrity and ethics regimes of the EU institutions (in which, alone among the three main institutions, the European Parliament [refused to participate](#)), we observed that: "urgent action is needed to bring hiring practices at the EP, in particular for management positions, into line with the requirements of applicable law, in particular the EU Staff Regulations and EU Treaty in principles on good governance and an open and accountable administration." This finding is still applicable today as it is clear that when it comes to the Parliament's attitude to transparency and integrity, a double standard exists.

We therefore urge you to respect your 2018 resolution, abandon this sordid backroom deal, and launch a truly transparent process for the appointment of a new EP Secretary-General.

Your sincerely,

Michiel van Hulten
Director
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