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The European Commission needs to move quickly on Andrej Babiš' conflicts of interest

Alessandro · Monday, December 3rd, 2018

The European Commission needs to move quickly to protect millions of euros in EU funds from the conflicts of interest of Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, says Transparency International.

Following a [complaint](#) submitted by Transparency International in September, a leaked legal opinion from the European Commission has confirmed that Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš has a conflict of interest concerning his role as Prime Minister, his company Agrofert and its receipt of EU funds. Agrofert received €82 million in European Structural and Investment funds in 2017.

According to the [opinion](#), “the situation of Mr Babiš qualifies as a conflict of interest within the meaning of article 61(3) of the New Financial Regulation.” The document states that his impartiality and objectivity as Prime Minister in relation to the management of funds are compromised.

Following the recent developments, David Ondrážka, Director of Transparency International Czech Republic stated:

“It's checkmate for Prime Minister Babiš, Agrofert and its receipt of EU subsidies. We had good reason to bring this to the attention of the European Commission and now want to see this conflict of interest resolved and the money returned”.

The opinion has proposed a number of measures to resolve these conflicts of interest, including the ineligibility of Agrofert for future EU funding and the repayment of funds that have already been granted. Transparency International has [written today to the European Commission](#) requesting speedy clarification of the measures the Commission will put in place.

Carl Dolan, Director of Transparency International EU added:

“We have seen too many occasions in the past where EU funds have subsidised the concentration of power in Member States, leading us down the slippery slope to authoritarianism and systematic corruption. The Commission needs to move quickly and draw a line in the sand. It will send an important message that EU funds are shared funds for shared objectives based on shared values”.

In September, Transparency International Czech Republic [sent an open letter](#) to European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Cretu, after it was discovered that Mr Babiš entrusted 100% of the shares of his company Agrofert, a.s. into two trusts of which he is the beneficiary and

founder. The company is a beneficiary of both EU and local funds.

We are now asking the European Commission to take this issue up as priority and to provide detail on what its next steps will be. As the leading organisation in the fight against corruption, Transparency International remains available to meet with relevant parties and assist as this case moves forward.

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