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TI EU view on European Parliament ethics body vote: too little, too late

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Thursday, April 25th, 2024

The past weeks have seen the European Parliament dogged by a flood of accusations of MEP bribe-taking for [China](#) and [Russia](#). The allegations have proven that now, more than ever, an independent oversight body, with powers to monitor and sanction MEPs, is needed.

Today, the European Parliament has finally instructed the Parliament President to sign the agreement between the EU institutions on an ethics body that will not have any of [these powers](#). It will not be independent, nor will it have the mandate to investigate and sanction MEPs for wrongdoing.

The vote amounts to the bare minimum. MEPs had the chance today to vote for an amendment that would have called for a ban on paid side jobs. They voted against it, showing that once again elected representatives refuse to take conflict-of-interest risks seriously.

Tellingly, almost half of all MEPs still voted against this weak tool. The vote also narrowly survived eleventh-hour attempts to torpedo the resolution in its entirety, as political groups on the right attempted procedural trickery to water down the resolution, and ultimately [throw it out](#).

Shari Hinds, TI EU Policy Officer for Political Integrity, said:

“Today’s vote shows that if MEPs are to decide to impose integrity rules upon themselves, they will have to be dragged kicking and screaming to do so. Given that the European Parliament is about to face the most critical elections in its history, MEPs should be reassuring citizens that political integrity is their top priority, not engaging in further attempts to keep citizens in the dark.”

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