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## Transparency International EU welcomes resignation of Markus Pieper as EU SME Envoy

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Tuesday, April 16th, 2024

The resignation of Markus Pieper, the MEP appointed to the EU's newly-created role of EU SME Envoy, is a welcome step towards rectifying a deeply flawed recruitment procedure. It favoured a man from Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's own political party who was outqualified on all three of the Commission's own recruitment principles. Transparency International EU (TI EU) had been calling for an [investigation](#) into and [rescinding](#) of his appointment ever since news of it became public.

In resigning, albeit with **no apparent remorse**, Mr. Pieper himself made the right choice. But with serious suspicions of political cronyism, it should have been the Commission President who intervened and rescinded his appointment. The Commission has failed to recognise that this appointment process was flawed and mired in a potential conflict of interest. Restoring the integrity of recruitment at the Commission should have been a priority—instead, Mr. Pieper gets to leave his post on his own terms, without any Commission scrutiny or accountability. His resignation is not proof that the President will stop politicising the European civil service.

Shari Hinds, TI EU's policy lead on EU Political Integrity, said, "Markus Pieper's position was untenable from the moment he was appointed through a botched recruitment procedure that seemed more about installing a von der Leyen ally than the most competent candidate. The Commission must now demonstrate to everyone that Commission jobs always go to those best-qualified for them, not party friends."

The appointment for this now-vacant position, as with any new appointment, must now follow a transparent and objective recruitment process, free from party politics.

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