



Plenary sitting

B9-0587/2022

13.12.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on suspicions of corruption from Qatar and the broader need for transparency
and accountability in the European institutions
(2022/3012(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on suspicions of corruption from Qatar and the broader need for transparency and accountability in the European institutions (2022/3012(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Qatar, in particular that of 21 November 2013 entitled ‘Qatar: situation of migrant workers’¹ and that of 23 November 2022 on the situation of human rights in the context of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar²,
- having regard to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas high-ranking politicians, including Parliament’s Vice-President Eva Kaili, political staffers, lobbyists and their families, are alleged to have taken improper payments from Qatar in exchange for policy-making influence in the European Parliament;
- B. whereas a law enforcement operation carried out by Belgian, Italian and Greek authorities has resulted in the seizure of over EUR 600 000 in cash, computers and mobile phones, and the arrest of eight individuals so far, four of whom have been charged with corruption, money laundering and organised crime;
- C. whereas in the case of this scandal, it is alleged that an NGO by the name of Fight Impunity was used as a vehicle to facilitate the laundering of illicit funds, calling into question the legitimacy and integrity of NGOs affiliated with certain political groups or MEPs;
- D. whereas there is an unfortunate history of corruption, money laundering and participation in organised crime at various international organisations and such cases represent a growing threat to the integrity and legitimacy of the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council in particular;
- E. whereas in September 2019, two Belgian dailies, *L’Echo* and *De Tijd*, revealed details of the record of the interrogation of a former Belgian intelligence agent and reported on a preliminary investigation into Commissioner Reynders, who was accused of corruption and money laundering in relation to the construction of an embassy in Kinshasa and also the sale of cheap artworks at inflated prices, with payments alleged to have been accepted from arms dealers and a Democratic Republic of the Congo presidential candidate;
- F. whereas Commissioner Jourová owes her high position to the support of billionaire and former Prime Minister of Czechia Andrej Babiš, who is suspected of money laundering

¹ OJ C 436, 24.11.2016, p. 42.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0427.

and misappropriation of European funds;

- G. whereas last year, the French daily *Libération* described a scandal involving Court of Justice of the European Union judges and the Commission, accusing the judges and important EPP politicians of conflicts of interest and trading in influence;
- H. whereas *Libération* also revealed that the Commission and the authorities of several Member States had pressured the European Anti-Fraud Office not to investigate the case and so far, the EU institutions have taken no action with regard to the reports;
- I. whereas the ‘recruitment’ of senior European lawmakers and officials by totalitarian regimes – to effectively ‘switch sides’ and represent the nefarious agenda of totalitarian regimes against the interests of Western democracies – not only constitutes a deeply divisive and pressing concern, but raises the issue of targeting procedures among hostile countries and calls into question the lack of rules concerning the employment opportunities available to senior lawmakers and officials once they have left public office;
- J. whereas the value of certain officials to totalitarian regimes lies not only in their rank within institutions or governments, but rather also in their intimate familiarity with and knowledge of internal procedures and how to overcome the internal checks and balances inherent in Western democracies;
- K. whereas the targeting and recruitment of such senior officials promptly after their departure from public office represents not only a tremendous opportunity for hostile powers, but also a serious national security threat, which lays bare the need to regularly revise and reform internal checks and balances regarding departure or retirement rules, policies and procedures in order to deny nefarious actors the means to engage in effective bribery, recruitment and compromising activities;
- L. whereas the development of the Nord Stream pipelines, to the detriment of Euro-Atlantic security and EU energy security and in spite of the protests of several Member States, represents one of the most egregious instances of Western democratic lawmakers and leaders being co-opted by nefarious state actors;
- M. whereas Qatar plays a major role in financing Islamist groups in Europe, including notably organisations associated with the Muslim Brotherhood; whereas most of the funding is provided by Qatar Charity to help build mosques and Islamic centres in Europe, with the aim of strengthening the Islamist identity and entrenching political Islam in Muslim communities throughout Europe; whereas the Qatar-funded Al Jazeera news channel is known for and has been implicated in the spreading of disinformation and propaganda globally;
- N. whereas Qatar won the FIFA World Cup bidding process amid credible allegations of bribery and corruption; whereas authoritarian regimes have used the sponsorship and hosting of international sporting events to improve their international reputation, a practice also known as ‘sportswashing’, with examples including the 2014 Sochi Olympics and 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, the 2022 Beijing Olympics in China and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar;

1. Underlines that the recently uncovered corruption scandal at the very top of Parliament's governance structure has exposed hypocrisy and double standards that cannot be tolerated;
2. Stresses the urgent need to reinforce deterrence against corruption and the co-option and recruitment of institutional officials and senior lawmakers by hostile foreign powers;
3. Points out that this scandal is only the tip of the iceberg, as many other international institutions, including the Commission, the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors, have also been accused of, to say the least, unethical and legally dubious activities;
4. Deplores the fact that those representing these discredited institutions have had the audacity to criticise and admonish Member States for alleged failures concerning the so-called rule of law; strongly condemns the double standards and hypocrisy of the EU institutions in this regard;
5. Underlines the fact that this corruption scandal is the result of the impunity and lack of accountability that run rampant in the European Parliament;
6. Stresses that penalties for corruption must not be purely symbolic and that the EU should set an example that deters all other officials;
7. Calls for MEPs to be held accountable for both their statements and their actions;
8. Calls for a full assessment of all EU institutions' compliance with the values set out in Article 2 TEU, in particular the rule of law;
9. Insists that no new institutions should be established that, like all the others, will be prone to corruption and foreign influence – rather, the thorough evaluation of the functioning of the EU institutions should be left in the hands of the Member States, who are the 'masters of the Treaties' and have the power to constitute and shape the institutions according to their sovereign will;
10. Calls for a critical analysis of Parliament's and the other EU institutions' working procedures, conducted by an impartial, external entity;
11. Calls, therefore, for a special committee with representatives from the Member States to be set up to assess the fulfilment of values by the EU institutions; calls for special attention to be paid to lobbying and high-level corruption by Russia over the years, such as in the case of the Nord Stream pipelines, as well as the influence of other malicious players, such as Iran and China;
12. Stresses the importance of the Member States gaining increased control over the institutions and the need to refrain from establishing 'ethics bodies' made up of international institutional officials that tend to attack Member States without meaningful political accountability;
13. Demands that, until the aforementioned assessment has been carried out, all shortcomings have been remedied and all risks have been averted, the EU institutions refrain from singling out Member States for alleged deficiencies;

14. Calls for the full application of whistle-blower rules within the EU institutions and for the establishment of an effective transparency register of lobbyists within the EU;
15. Strongly condemns the use of sportswashing; calls on international sports federations and sports organisations in general not to be susceptible to authoritarian regimes and their bribes and to fully ensure the integrity and fairness of sport;
16. Condemns and expresses grave concern about the Qatari funding of Islamist organisations and religious institutions in Europe and calls on the Qatari Government to cease such funding immediately;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.