

**Major interpellation for written answer G-001001/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 139

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on behalf of the ID Group

**Subject:** The President of the Commission's interference in the Croatian elections – violation of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission

On Friday 3 July, the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen appeared in a promotional video for the Croatian political party *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* (HDZ) in the context of the recent national elections. She was filmed uttering the party's campaign motto *Sigurna Hrvatska* ('safe Croatia') in a corridor of the Commission building, while her official title appeared on screen.

This appearance has sparked outrage in the EU, as the President of the Commission is obliged to remain neutral. According to Article 9(3) of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Commission, Members 'shall abstain from making public statements or interventions on behalf of any political party or organisation of the social partners of which they are members'.

The Commission has expressed its regret over the incident, but has also sought to downplay its ramifications. While it accepted that technical mistakes were made <sup>1</sup>, it has boldly claimed that it was 'the kind of things [sic] which must be permitted' <sup>2</sup>, thereby implicitly denying that a breach of the Code of Conduct had occurred.

1. With particular regard to its Code of Conduct and the principle of neutrality, what is the Commission's assessment of its President's appearance in the aforementioned campaign video?
2. Was the video recorded by the Commission's services?
3. Will the Commission hold back from interfering in future elections in Member States and fully comply with its obligation to remain neutral?
4. What consequences will ensue for the President of the Commission in the light of her violation of the Code of Conduct?

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<sup>1</sup> *Euobserver*, 'Commission chief under fire for Croatia campaign video', 7 July 2020, <https://euobserver.com/institutional/148867>

<sup>2</sup> *StarTribune*, 'EU top official criticized for breaching code of conduct', 6 July 2020, <https://www.startribune.com/eu-top-official-criticized-for-breaching-code-of-conduct/571640452/>