

European Parliament/Council/European Commission/Court of Justice/European Central Bank/European Court of Auditors/European Economic and Social Committee/European Committee of the Regions Agreement: establishing an Interinstitutional Body for Ethical Standards for Members of Institutions and advisory bodies

2024/2008(ACI) - 25/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 301 votes to 216, with 23 abstentions, to **conclude an Agreement** between the European Parliament, the Council, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank, the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions, establishing an Interinstitutional Body for Ethical Standards for Members of Institutions and advisory bodies mentioned in Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union.

The European Parliament today ranks amongst the most transparent legislatures in the world. There is a need to address the shortcomings stemming from the current ethics framework, which is fragmented across the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, with different rules, procedures and levels of enforcement.

In 2021, Parliament proposed to set up an ambitious, genuine and independent ethics body. The Commission presented its proposal for the establishment of an interinstitutional ethics body on 8 June 2023, putting forward a standard-setting body. This proposal fell far short of the ambition put forward in Parliament's resolutions, mainly lacking in capacity to examine individual cases and potential breaches of ethical rules as well as to recommend sanctions.

An interinstitutional ethics body will contribute to strengthening trust in Union institutions and their democratic legitimacy, as well as to building an institutional culture based on the highest ethical standards.

Ethics body

Parliament welcomed the Agreement enabling the development of strong common ethical standards and the exchange of best practices, and allowing for individual cases to be examined by the independent experts at the request of an institution or an advisory body that is a party to the Agreement regarding any declaration of their Members. However, it regretted that the European Council decided not to join the Agreement.

Financing

Members take the view that the resources made available must enable the proper functioning of both the interinstitutional body for ethical standards (the 'Body') itself composed of one representative of each

party to the Agreement and the five independent experts assisting the institutional representatives and joining the Body as observers, as well as any necessary support therefor.

Transparency

Parliament called for the Body to lead by example on transparency by publishing all recommendations, annual reports, decisions and records of spending in a machine-readable open data format available to all citizens, and in accordance with the applicable data protection rules, including, inter alia, the written opinion of the independent experts on the institutions' self-assessments.

Moreover, Parliament recalled its position that the Body should be able to investigate on its own initiative alleged breaches of ethical rules by officials and staff of EU institutions and to conduct on-the-spot and records-based investigations using the information that it has collected or that it has received from third parties.