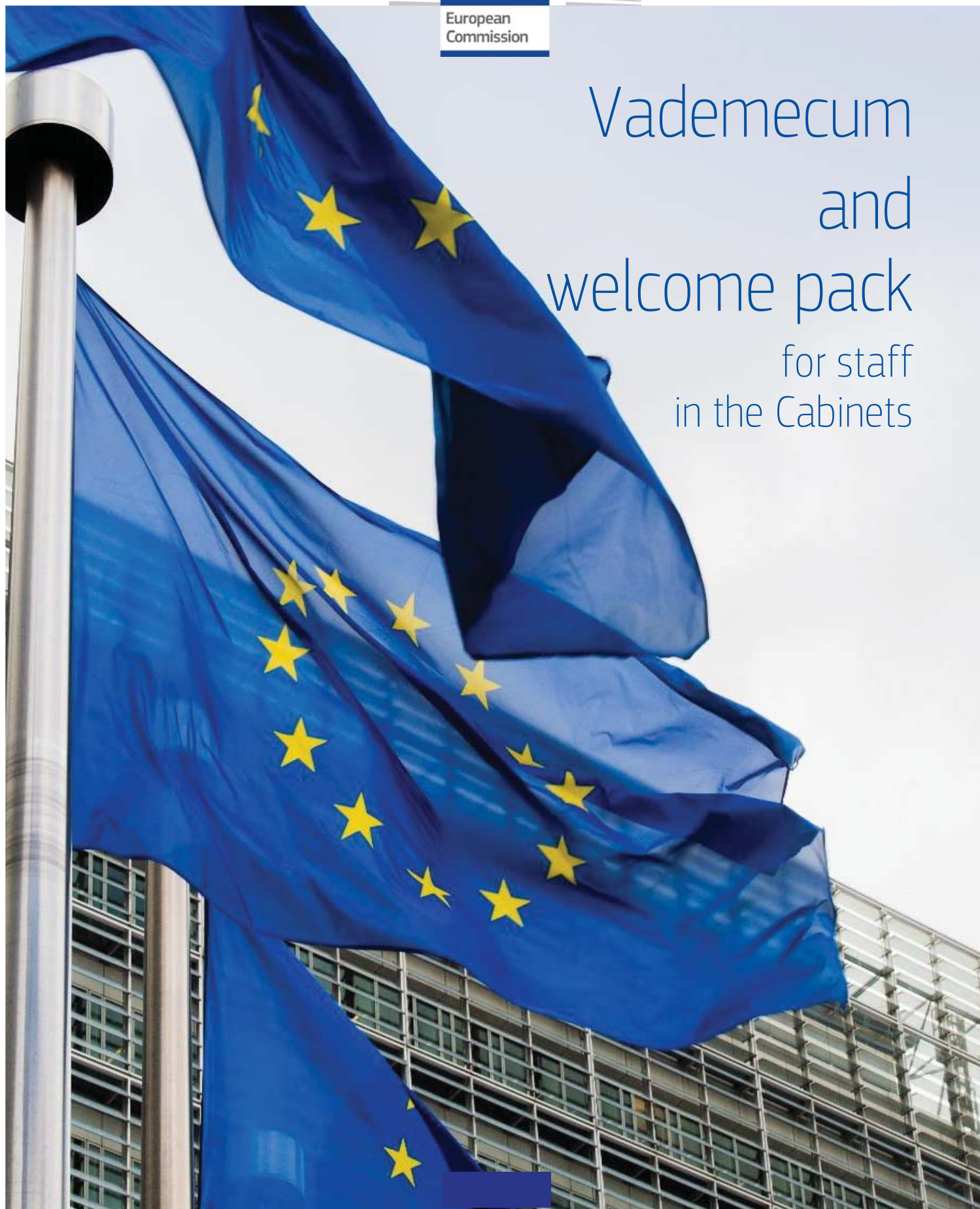




# Vademecum and welcome pack

for staff  
in the Cabinets



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## 1. Your ethical obligations as Member of Cabinet

Solid ethical behaviour helps to protect the credibility and reputation of the Institution. The European Commission is under constant scrutiny by the public, media and other institutions, and any error or failure can harm the credibility and reputation of the whole College.

This is very important in the case of the Cabinets, whose members must know and respect the rules in place, avoiding any conflicts of interest or favouritism in their contacts with different stakeholders.

The European Commission expects high standards of behaviour from its staff. High ethical standards are an important element in building trust in the Institution, and therefore in building trust in the European project. In their day-to-day actions, staff are expected to carry out their duties objectively, independently, impartially, and to conduct themselves solely with the interests of the EU in mind. All staff in the Cabinets should keep in mind the basic ethical principles and rules in their daily work.

Key ethical obligations for staff are set out in Title II of the Staff Regulations (SR), (Articles 11 through to 26). These standards are supplemented by implementing rules in the form of Commission Decisions and guidelines. Staff remain subject to certain provisions even after leaving the service.

Staff must refrain from dealing with matters in which they have a personal interest, such as to impair their independence, and must notify any such situations to the appointing authority. Staff must declare also gifts, external activities, activities of the spouse or partner. Consideration must also be given as to how a given situation could appear in the eyes of an impartial outside observer.

Staff have a right to freedom of expression. However, this right must be seen against the Staff Regulation's obligations relating to the duty of loyalty and the principle of impartiality, the obligation to behave in a manner in keeping with the dignity of the function, as well as in light of the obligation not to disseminate information not in the public domain. In concrete terms, staff must notify the appointing authority of any intention to publish on the work of the EU.

Ethical conduct also extends to the way that staff behave in the workplace. The Staff Regulations bans harassment, whether psychological and/or sexual, and the Commission has put in place both a formal complaints procedure, as well as informal ways of addressing allegations of harassment, by means of mediation or through a network of confidential counsellors.

Breaches of ethical obligations – or indeed, of any provisions of the Staff Regulations, are liable to disciplinary follow up. This provision also applies to staff who have left the service.

Cabinet staff should read the publication [Practical Guide to Staff Ethics and Conduct](#).

More information is also available on the [CabiNet website](#).

## 2. Your Commissioner: ethics and Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission

Members of the Commission have to respect a number of ethical obligations linked to their mandate. As member of Cabinet, you can support your Member to respect and fulfil these obligations on a daily basis and thereby help to protect the integrity and reputation of the European Commission and its Members as a whole.

The obligations of the Members of the Commission are enshrined in Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission sets out how these principles and obligations must be implemented in practice. The Code contains specific rules on different areas:

- Members' declarations of interests;
- the specific procedure to follow in case a Member has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interests;
- the use of Commission resources by Members;
- expenses on receptions and professional representation in the framework of a Member's institutional activities;
- missions of Members;
- acceptance of gifts, hospitality, decorations, prizes and awards for Members (gifts are understood as advantages with a pecuniary value like physical objects or free entries to events which are normally only accessible in return for payment; hospitality is understood as an offer of food, drink, accommodation and/or entertainment from any source outside the institution);
- transparency requirements as regards contacts with interest representatives;
- external activities of Members during the term of office;
- Members' participation in national and European politics during the term of office; and
- post-term of office activities of Members.

Cabinet staff who plan meetings or missions for their Member of the Commission or accompany him or her to events should be aware of these provisions. The Commission and the Members are under constant scrutiny by the public, media and other institutions. Any negligence can harm their integrity and reputation. You should also be aware that the granting of patronage to an event by a Member of the Commission is subject to a number of conditions.

The Secretariat-General is available for any question that Members or their Cabinets might have concerning the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission.

### **Contact**

Secretariat-General - Unit SG.C.2 – 'Ethics, Good Administration and Relations with the European Ombudsman

- e-mail: [SG UNITE-C2](#)

*Courses for managers relating to specific priorities, procedures or processes in place:*

Ethics & Integrity

To make staff aware of the rules governing staff conduct and the prevention of and reporting of fraud and irregularities ('Whistle-blowing') as well as to raise staff awareness on keeping the highest standards of ethics and integrity in the Commission.

Dealing with Lobbyists

For all staff dealing routinely or occasionally with lobbyists. Its aim is to make participants feel more confident and comfortable when dealing with lobbyists by:

- Understanding the various forms lobbying can take and the different actors that may act as lobbyists;
- Being aware of the benefits and potential pitfalls of meeting lobbyists;
- Effectively pull information from, and provide information to, lobbyists while respecting the Commission's rules and regulations.