



# My CABINET Intranet

**ALERT LEVEL**  
Get your EUWARN app



## Ethics and Integrity

---

The code of ethics helps to win the trust of the public and underpin the credibility of the profession. Professionals are bound to respect their code of ethics and this is a good way to help protect the financial interests and the reputation of the Commission. When it comes to the European Commission, a public institution, we are like fish in a fishbowl: everybody is watching us from 360 degrees and our work is seen in a magnified way. That is why we all have to make sure that we know and respect.

In their daily work, staff have to keep in mind the basic principles of ethics. The rules of conduct and decision-making have to be guided by independence, impartiality, objectivity and loyalty. The staff must declare the conflict of interest, gifts, external activities, activities of the spouse or partner, any publication or conference linked to the questions related to the EU and, eventually, asks for the authorisation of the "Appointing Authority".




[Individual obligations](#)

[Rights and obligations of officials](#)


[General rules - Administrative notice](#)

## Commissioners and ethics

European Commissioners are subject to rules concerning ethics and integrity

-  [Your Commissioner: ethics and Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission](#) (source: [Vademecum and welcome pack for staff in Cabinets](#))
-  [Commissioners and ethics \(on Europa\)](#)
-  [Code of Conduct for Members of the European Commission \(on Europa\)](#)

## Cabinet staff and ethics

-  [Your ethical obligations as Member of Cabinet](#) (source: [Vademecum and welcome pack for staff in Cabinets](#))

**In addition, staff in the Cabinets should be aware of their individual obligations as staff members with regards to:**

## Conflicts of interests

Conflicts of interest are regulated by articles 11 and 11a of the Staff regulations. Staff are prohibited, during the performance of their duties, from dealing with any matter in which they have a direct or indirect personal interest that has the potential to compromise their independence and, by extension, the Commission's interests

Such situations can arise when:

- there is some link between the work and private interests of the person, or those of the family or partner;
- the person finds themselves in a situation that could reasonably lead to allegations being made of bias or partiality, in light of their personal interests.

The requests should be introduced in Sysper2 using the Ethics module.

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Gifts and Hospitality

### **Guidelines on gifts and hospitality SEC(2012)167 (annex 4)**

As a general rule, staff members should not accept any direct or indirect gift or hospitality offered by third parties. The term "staff members" includes officials, temporary agents, contractual agents and special advisors.

## Gifts

A gift can be: a sum of money or any physical object; the possibility to participate for free in events which are open to the public or are private in nature; any other advantage with a pecuniary value such as transport costs.

Indirect gifts are those which are not offered directly to staff members, but to a third party close to the staff member.

The principles are:

- Gifts should only be accepted if in line with or if required by social, courtesy or diplomatic usage. If such a gift is worth less than €50, authorisation will be assumed to have been granted by the Appointing Authority and no additional approval is needed.
- Gifts of this nature which are valued between €50 and €150 require the explicit prior permission of the Appointing Authority.
- No gift worth more than €150 should be accepted as it will not be authorised

Requests for prior permission for gifts and hospitality should be introduced in Sysper2 using the Ethics module.

If the AA refuses authorisation or if you refuse the gift, the latter should be returned to the source with an accompanying letter if possible or to OIB: OIB.OS.1 - DAV 1 1/255.

These presents, as well as the refused presents which could not be returned to sender, will be allocated to a charitable organisation chosen by OIB.

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Hospitality

Hospitality is defined as an offer of food, drink, accommodation and/or entertainment from any source outside the institution. The general prohibition on accepting hospitality without authorisation remains. It can only be accepted if in line with or required by social, courtesy or diplomatic usage.

The principles are:

- Prior permission of the Appointing Authority is presumed to be granted in cases of hospitality in the form of lunches or dinners strictly linked to the function of the official and where approval has been sought
- Prior permission of the Appointing Authority is also presumed in respect of occasional offers of simple meals, refreshments, snacks etc.
- In any other situation where the staff member consider that he should accept an offer of hospitality, the explicit prior approval of the Appointing Authority should be sought.

The requests for prior permission for gifts and hispitality should be introduced in [Sysper2](#) using the Ethics module.

The AA in Cabinets is the Head of Cabinet for members and Assistants.

If the AA refuses authorisation or if you refuse the gift, the latter should be returned to the source with an accompanying letter if possible or to OIB: OIB.OS.1 - DAV 1 1/255.

These presents, as well as the refused presents which cannot be returned to sender, will be allocated to a charitable organisation chosen by OIB.

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## External Activities

Staff who would like to undertake any type of work outside your institution, whether paid or unpaid, or to hold any office outside of the EU institutions, must first obtain permission from your appointing authority in order to ensure his/her, and thereby the Institution's, independence and integrity. The request must be submitted two months before the official plans to start working.

Permission may be refused if the work is liable to compromise your independence or prejudice the work of the EU.

In any case, such an external activity should **not**:

- be so **time-consuming** as to affect negatively your work at the Commission, or constitute a job in itself;
- give rise to any possible appearance of a **a conflict of interest** or be in some other way discreditable, so as to risk bringing the Commission into disrepute.

Permission granted under Article 12b is valid for a maximum of one year from the date of the decision, or a lesser period, which will be stated in the decision. If you wish to extend or renew your permission, you must submit a new application.

The Appointing Authority will assess each case on its own merits, but in principle, permission will likely be granted for voluntary work, charity work and the like, under the above-mentioned conditions.

You will not, however, be allowed, for example, to carry out the following types of work:

- outside work, whether paid or unpaid, in a liberal profession (e.g. architect, lawyer, etc);
- work in private companies, even if it is unpaid and the role is merely nominal;
- Teaching or other pedagogical work, whether paid or unpaid, for more than 100 hours per academic year, unless such work is deemed beneficial to the Commission.

In addition, the **maximum net annual remuneration** you may receive for any authorised external activities you undertake outside the EU institutions is EUR 10 000 per calendar year after deduction of taxes.

The requests for prior permission should be introduced in [Sysper2](#) using the Ethics module

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Professional activities during the CCP

Officials and temporary staff may, in exceptional circumstances and at his or her own request, be granted unpaid leave on personal grounds (CCP). Probationary officials are not eligible for CCP. Probationary officials are not eligible for CCP.

If an official plans on carrying out a professional activity during a leave of absence (CCP), prior authorisation must be attained to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

A request to apply for outside activity while on leave on personal ground should be introduced in [Sysper2](#) using the Ethics module

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Freedom of expression

The Staff Regulations grant staff the right to freedom of expression "with due respect to the principles of loyalty and impartiality." Obviously, these principles are primarily of relevance when the official expresses themselves with regard to professional or EU matters, especially with regard to publications or speeches.

If you are planning to publish an article, a book, to make a public speech, to submit a post on the web (non-anonymously) etc. on anything connected to your work or EU matters, you have the obligation to inform your Appointing Authority at least two months in advance (art.17a (2) Staff Regulations).

For publications or speeches on non-EU matters, full freedom of expression applies and you do not need any authorisation to publish.

You should bear in mind that if the publication or speech could be considered an external activity, in particular if under contract, and/or it entitles you to any financial payment, you must ask your Appointing Authority for prior authorisation before accepting. This rule is applicable regardless of whether your publication relates to EU matters or not.

It is also worth noting that royalties received for publications to which the Appointing Authority raised no objections, are not subject to the net annual ceiling of € 10 000 that applies to work you are authorised to undertake outside the Commission.

Requests to apply for a publication or a public speech should be introduced in Sysper2 using the Ethics module.

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Leave on personal grounds

**Officials and temporary staff** may, in exceptional circumstances and at their own request, be granted unpaid leave on personal grounds (CCP). **Probationary officials** are not eligible for CCP.

Requests to apply for CCP should be introduced in [Sysper2](#) using the Ethics module.

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Activities of a spouse or partner

The official has an obligation to inform the Appointing Authority if his spouse, partner is "in gainful employment". This is in order to prevent any appearance of a conflict of interest, which could arise because of your respective professional activities.

Prior permission should be introduced in Sysper2 using the Ethics module.

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Decorations and Honours

Staff members should not accept from any government or other source an honour or decoration without prior permission from the Appointing Authority, except for services rendered before the appointment or during special leave for military or other national service and in respect of such service.

To request prior permission, use the following form: [standard form](#) (annex 1) 

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Standing as candidate in elections

If you wish to stand for public office, such as standing as a candidate in any elections (municipal, regional, national or European), you should notify the Appointing Authority in advance (Article 15 of Staff Regulations), using the enclosed declaration form. After your Head of Cabinet has given his/her opinion, the Appointing Authority will decide whether, in the period up to the date of the election or appointment, you:

- have to make a request for leave on personal grounds (CCP);
- have to take annual leave;
- can be authorised to work part-time; or
- whether you can continue to work with no change to your working hours.

The Appointing Authority will inform you of its decision before the date of the election or appointment.

For these requests, the Director-General Human Resources and Security is the Appointing Authority for all staff grades and functions.

To request prior permission, please use the following form: [standard form](#) (annex 2)

## After the election

If you have been elected or appointed to a position, you must notify the Appointing Authority without delay. To do so, you must fill out another specific form and send it to the Appointing Authority. On the basis of your Head of Cabinet's opinion, the Appointing Authority of DG HR will decide the administrative steps that you must take (request for CCP, annual leave, part-time...). The current administrative practice is to require staff elected to national parliaments or the European Parliament to take special leave (CCP) for the whole term of office. If the Appointing Authority decides to allow staff to continue working as normal in the Commission, special leave of no more than 12 days a year may be granted on the basis of a duly substantiated formal request.

To request prior permission, use the following form: [standard form](#) (annex 3)

For more detailed information press [here](#).

## Outside activities after leaving the Commission

After leaving the Commission, former officials and temporary agents are still subject to some ethical principles, for example "to behave with integrity and discretion" as stipulated under article 16 of the Staff Regulations.

Before leaving former officials and temporary agents must sign a declaration extracted from the Staff Regulations concerning the protection of confidential documents and information. The declaration states that they are aware of their continuing obligations to the Commission after ceasing duties.

In particular, former staff members must "refrain from any unauthorized disclosure of information received in the line of duty, unless that information has already been made public or is accessible to the public".

Former officials or temporary agents are bound not to accept any duties of professional activities after leaving the Commission that would be incompatible with the interests of the European Union.

## Activity after leaving the Commission - Obligation to inform the Appointing Authority

**For two years** after leaving the Commission, a former official or temporary agent wishing to exercise an outside activity or assignment must apply to the Appointing Authority for authorization (Article 20 of the Commission Decision C(2018) 4048).

If the activity is related to the work carried out **during the last 3 years of service** and could lead to a conflict with the legitimate interests of the Commission, the Appointing Authority can forbid the staff member from undertaking it or give its approval subject to any conditions it sees fit.

For these decisions the Appointing Authority is the Director-General for Human Resources and Security.

The Appointing Authority will communicate its decision to the former official within 30 working days. If there is no reply from the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security (Appointing Authority) within this period, the decision is deemed to be positive.

To request prior permission, use the following form: [standard form](#)

For more detailed information press [here](#)

## Information and contacts

From 15 June 2018, all tasks related to ethics processes and performed so far by the Account Management Centre units have been taken over by the HR corporate unit HR.E.3 'Ethics and Ombudsman'. Feel free to contact, confidentially, HR Ethics using the [Staff Matters Portal\(SMP\)](#)

---

Last update: 12/5/2019 10:12 AM - Published by: HR.DDG.AMC.5 - Account Management Centre 5 - serving College, COMM, HOME, IAS, IDEA, JUST, OLAF, REFORM, SG, SJ, UKTF