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European Union

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Setting up an independent EU ethics body  
- Draft reply

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The delegations will find in annex the **revised** draft reply to the letter of the European Commission on the creation of an independent ethics body to all EU institutions, following the meeting of the Working Party on General Affairs on 20 June 2022.

**Draft reply to the letter of the President of the Commission of 18 March 2022 on the establishment of an EU ethics body**

Dear President,...

On behalf of the Council, President Macron would like to thank you for your letter of 18 March 2022 on behalf of the Commission regarding the establishment of an independent and common to all EU institutions ethics body. He tasked me to reply on his behalf.

The Council recalls its strong commitment towards an always more transparent, effective, and accountable European Union. It is in such a spirit that the 27 Member states signed the Transparency Pledge launched on 23 September 2021. Striving for a Union that enjoys full trust of its citizens also requires ensuring that the EU Institutions should be open and respect the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct.

In that regard, the Council takes note of your commitment in your Political Guidelines for the Commission 2019-2024 to support the creation of an independent ethics body common to all EU institutions and to engage to make this happen. The Council also takes note of the resolution on “strengthening transparency and integrity in the EU institutions by setting up an independent EU ethics body” adopted by the European Parliament on 16 September 2021, and of the reply to this resolution made by the Commission on 18 February 2022.

The Council shares the Commission's assessment that the design of a common EU ethics body ~~could~~ **would** touch upon sensitive issues, in particular as regards the principle of institutional balance and the decision-making autonomy of each institution. The attribution of competences to each Institution as well as their respective roles and particularities, as established in the Treaties, must be respected. In this respect, the Council highlights that its Members are **bound by** ~~subject to~~ their respective national rules on ethical standards.

The Council thanks the Commission for this consultation, and stands ready to analyse, in light of the principles recalled above, any upcoming proposal the Commission would table.

(Courtesy formula)