

# REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE CONDUCT OF MEMBERS

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1 JANUARY TO 1 JULY 2014

## 1. Submission of Members' declarations of financial interests

As laid down in Article 4.1 of the Code of Conduct, Members who take up office in the course of the parliamentary term are required to submit their declarations of financial interests within 30 days. Since 1 January 2014, 12 new declarations were submitted to the President, each of them within the deadline set for this purpose.

Besides, Article 4.1 foresees that Members "*shall notify the President of any changes that have an influence on their declarations within 30 days of each change occurring*". Since 1 January 2014, 45 updated declarations were submitted to the President by 41 Members. The difference in figures is explained by the fact that 36 Members submitted one amended declaration each, while 4 Members updated their respective declarations twice.

These updated declarations included a total of 62 changes, i.e. in some cases more than one change was made in a single update.

On the substance, Sections (D), (A) and (I) were by far the most frequently amended Sections, with 23, 16 and 9 modifications respectively.

## 2. Closure of nine cases of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct referred to the Advisory Committee by President Schulz

### ➤ *Cases concerning Members who travelled to Azerbaijan to observe the Presidential elections*

By letter of 5 December 2013, the President referred to the Advisory Committee a request to examine all the aspects of the matter of individual travel by eight Members to observe the Presidential elections in Azerbaijan on 9 October 2013, in parallel to the official European Parliament election observation mission which had been authorised by the Conference of Presidents.

Following the referrals from the President, the Advisory Committee examined the circumstances of the alleged breaches, in accordance with Article 8.2 of the Code of Conduct. For the sake of due process, the Advisory Committee proposed all the Members concerned to be heard; three of them responded positively to this invitation.

In seven cases, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Member's late submission of his/her declaration of attendance pursuant to an invitation at events organised by third parties, prompted by a formal request for clarification from the Advisory Committee, constituted a breach of the Code of Conduct, but that the restitution of

this breach by the late submission of the declaration may lead to considering the consequences of this breach less significant.

On the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the President concluded that the seven Members concerned had breached the Code of Conduct, but made subsequent corrections and thus finally complied with it, albeit with a delay. Therefore, the President decided not to adopt a decision laying down a penalty.

In one case, the Advisory Committee found that the Member's timely submission of the correct information, using a wrong declaration form, did not constitute a breach of Code of Conduct.

In the last case, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Member concerned did not receive any external funding for his journey to Azerbaijan, was not obliged to submit any declaration relating to his travel and therefore did not breach the Code of Conduct.

In the two latter cases, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the President concluded that the Members concerned had not breached the Code of Conduct.

➤ *Case concerning a Member whose assistant lodged a total of 229 amendments which passed unnoticed*

By letter of 16 December 2013, the President referred to the Advisory Committee a request to examine all the aspects with regard to a Member whose assistant submitted a total of 229 amendments to two parliamentary reports concerning the EU Data Protection Directive, in his name, and went totally unnoticed until the incident was revealed by media.

Following the referral from the President, the Advisory Committee examined the circumstances of the alleged breach and heard the Member concerned, in accordance with Article 8.2 of the Code of Conduct.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the Member's organisation of his office, allowing for the possibility of 229 amendments being tabled as described, pointed a lack of diligence by the Member concerned, and consequently a breach of Article 1 of the Code of Conduct.

On the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendation, the President concluded that the Member had breached of the Code of Conduct. However, since the Member had recognised his wrongdoing and had taken the necessary measures to prevent it occurring again, the President decided not to adopt a decision laying down a penalty.