

## EU Parliament backs resolution criticising Selmayr appointment - but falls short of demanding his resignation

Written by Martin Banks and Julie Levy-Abegnoli on 18 April 2018 in News  
News

MEPs have backed a motion calling on the European Commission to reassess the procedure used for the controversial promotion of EU official Martin Selmayr.



Berlaymont, European Commission | *Photo credit: Press Association*

Selmayr, the former head of cabinet to Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, was rapidly promoted to become Secretary-General of the Commission earlier this year.

The non-binding text adopted in Strasbourg on Wednesday says other candidates should be given the possibility to apply for the role, and describes the rapid two-step promotion as a “coup-like action”.

However, an amendment to the motion calling for the immediate resignation of Selmayr, a German

lawyer, was defeated during the voting on a show of hands.

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The resolution asks the Commission to adopt new rules on appointments by the end of the year, “fully ensuring that the best candidates are selected within a framework of maximum transparency and equal opportunities, and then reassess Selmayr’s appointment under the new rules.”

The Commission has insisted it did nothing wrong in appointing Selmayr and has stood by the decision to keep him in post.

Inge Gräßle, who chairs Parliament’s budgetary control committee, explained that while it was regrettable that Selmayr’s promotion was carried out in a way that stirred controversy, the committee did not find a legal basis for the Parliament to ask for his resignation.

She said, “We must respect the law. No matter how discontent we might be about the process, stable and correctly interpreted legislation gives the necessary certainty to every administration. That same legislation also expects us to respect the autonomy of the European institutions.

“The Commission must now take the next steps and should conduct open and transparent application procedures in the future.”

Inés Ayala Sender, the S&D group coordinator on the budgets committee, said, “The Selmayr scandal is the perfect example of the kind of European Union we fight against: murky deals with a full disregard to basic values such as transparency, integrity and equal opportunities.

“The way the European Commission has appointed its Secretary-General has rightly caused widespread disapproval and annoyance among our citizens, risking deteriorating the reputation of not only the Commission, but of all the EU institutions.”

The Spanish deputy said her group welcomed the resolution adopted in plenary and called on the Commission to review its procedure for the appointment of senior officials. She also said, “The Selmayr scandal was an embarrassing disgrace for the whole of the European institutions. We will use all that we have in our hands to make sure this won’t happen ever again.”

Commenting on behalf of the Greens/EFA group, Bart Staes said, “The Commission only has itself to blame for this scandal. Anointing their chosen candidate without any scrutiny was bound to cause outrage. Not only have they damaged their own reputation, they have cast doubt on the integrity of the EU institutions.”

Staes, a Belgian deputy, said, “We work hard to convince voters that the EU represents their interests and to tackle the pernicious myths of a self-serving old boys club. The Commission’s recent actions

have made this task that bit harder, but they can still do the right thing and re-open the appointment of the Secretary-General.

“We also expect a clear commitment that future selection processes will be open and transparent. All the EU institutions should make sure their houses are in order, including the Parliament where we hope that the proposals we have consistently put forward for years for improving recruitment of senior officials will at last be taken seriously.

### **About the author**

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