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EU EMPLOYEES SET TO HAND IN PETITION AGAINST BARROSO

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EurActiv

Tens of thousands of EU officials and citizens have signed a petition calling for a suspension of pension rights to former European Commission President José Manuel Barroso for taking a job at Goldman Sachs.

The petition, started by EU employees, has gathered roughly 152,000 signatures and will be presented on Wednesday (12 October) to the top level of EU institutions.

According to a press release, this is the first time that EU staff have launched such an initiative to defend the European project and to call for more ethics at the highest level of the institutions.

After the European Ombudsman asked the current president of the European Commission to address widespread concerns and clarify the institutions position on the appointment of his predecessor, Jean-Claude Juncker opened a probe into whether Barroso breached EU ethics guidelines.

In a letter to the European Unions official watchdog, Juncker also said that Barroso will now be received as a lobbyist rather than as a former president.

EU sources told EurActiv.com that the decision was significant and political □ meaning it was not motivated by the letter of EU law but rather a response to the outrage caused by Barroso taking the job.

JUNCKER FORCES BARROSO TO FACE HUMILIATING SECURITY CHECKS IN BRUSSELS

José Manuel Barroso will face humiliating security checks after Jean-Claude Juncker, his successor as European Commission President, stripped him of the privileges traditionally offered to visiting dignitaries in Brussels.

EurActiv.com

While the petition was started by EU employees, it gathered more than 151,000 signatures from citizens in all European countries, including 70.000 from France, 20.000 from Belgium, 55.000 from Germany.

The petition asks the Commission, the Council and the Parliament to act urgently and strongly to restore confidence in the European project with greater transparency and outreach towards the citizens.

The signatories proposed an independent investigation whether Barroso has respected his duties of integrity and discretion in line with Article 245 of the Treaty. The petition also calls for stronger, enforceable rules under the Code of Conduct for Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Commissioners.

This decision to go and work for one of the banks most implicated in the subprime crisis that led to the financial crisis of 2007-2008 – the worst since the Great Depression – as well as one of the banks most involved in the Greek debt crisis, having helped Greece dissimulate its deficit before speculating in 2009-2010 against it in full knowledge of the unsustainability of its debt, is a further example of the irresponsible revolving-door practices, which are highly damaging to the EU institutions and, even if not illegal, morally reprehensible, reads the declaration put out by the EU staff.

Barrosos revolving door move highlights the weakness of current rules for former Commissioners – while his appointment by the banking giant has caused much outrage, no rules have apparently been broken. This is a clear indication of the need to thoroughly revise revolving door regulations, said Vicky Cann from The Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU) in a recent opinion.

BARROSOS REVOLVING DOOR SCANDAL MUST BRING TOUGHER RULES

If the Goldman Sachs appointment of ex-European Commission president Barroso does not push the Commission to crack down on the ever turning revolving door, nothing will, writes Vicky Cann on behalf of ALTER-EU.

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