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## COMMISSION WON'T APOLOGISE FOR OETTINGER'S 'RACIST AND HOMOPHOBIC' SPEECH

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EurActiv

The European Commission today (31 October) repeatedly refused to apologise for, or investigate, racist and homophobic remarks made by Germanys EU Commissioner in a secretly-filmed after-dinner speech.

Günther Oettinger described Chinese ministers visiting Brussels as slitty-eyed and chisellers at Wednesdays Hamburg speech. He also mocked women and gay marriage.

Oettinger, who is facing calls in Brussels and Berlin for his resignation, defended his comments in a newspaper interview on Sunday. He said they were sloppy but denied they were racist or homophobic.

Commission Chief Spokesman Margaritis Schinas repeatedly batted away demands by reporters for an apology.

We have nothing to add, he told incredulous journalists in Brussels.

Asked if there would be an investigation into the remarks, he said, We do not have an FBI at the Commission.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker promoted Oettinger to be in charge of the EU budget on Friday, after the shocking speech leaked online. Budget Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva is resigning to take a job at the World Bank.

Bulgaria's Borissov wants the ecology or regional development Commissioner portfolio

Following the resignation of Bulgarian Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva, the countrys Prime Minister, Boyko Borissov, said that he would discuss her replacement with Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker today (31 October).

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Describing a recent visit to Brussels by Chinese ministers in the speech, Oettinger said, Nine men, one party, no democracy. No female quota, and no women – which follows logically.

Unlike Germany, China does not have quotas for women in top jobs. The remark was interpreted as meaning women needed quotas to be successful.

All of them [the Chinese ministers] in suits, single breasted dark blue jackets. All of them had their hair combed from left to right, with black shoe polish on their hair, Oettinger said.

Oettinger defends Chinese 'slitty eyes' comment

Germanys European Commissioner Guenther Oettinger on Sunday (31 October) defended his use of the term slitty eyes for Chinese people which triggered outrage after they were revealed in a leaked recording of a speech to business leaders.

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Oettinger also made disparaging remarks about gay marriage, saying German politicians would probably introduce a law making gay marriage mandatory.

In a separate speech, Oettinger described the French-speaking Belgian region of Wallonia as a micro-region ruled by communists.

Wallonia had blocked progress on CETA, the EU-Canada trade deal, which was finally signed by the bloc on Sunday. The Walloons argued it was a secretive deal that would put jobs at risk.

Paul Magnette, the president of Wallonia, said, Will the European Commission be as tough against racist homophobes like Oettinger as they were against those who defended transparency and democracy? We will see.

Schinas said Juncker had been 100% focused on CETA over the weekend and had not spoken to Oettinger about his two speeches.

Members of the European Parliament will be able to grill Oettinger over his comments at a confirmation hearing for his new post early next year.

German Green MEP Jan-Phillip Albrecht said, This is the moment when EU leaders can prove that they wont let someone like Trump become/stay a top decision-maker.

EurActiv.com asked when Oettinger would next be meeting Chinese officials. Schinas said, Let us check and we will come back to you.

German Chancellor Angela Merkels spokesman today said she gave Oettinger her full trust. Observers noted she had used similar language about national ministers who were later forced to quit.

The Brief: Commissioner mocks Chinese and gay marriage

Digital Commissioner Günther Oettinger has mocked the Chinese, gay marriage, and former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröders divorce in a shock speech.

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Barroso cleared

Former European Commission head Jose Manuel Barroso did not breach EU ethics rules when he took a controversial top job at US investment bank Goldman Sachs after leaving office, an EU panel said Monday.

On the basis of the information provided \* there are not sufficient grounds to establish a violation of the duty of integrity and discretion in Barroso working for Goldman Sachs, the EUs Ad Hoc Ethical Committee said in a statement.

Barroso, however, had also not shown the considerate judgment one may expect from someone having held the high office he occupied for so many years, it said.

Barroso cleared of wrongdoing by EU ethics committee

Former European Commission President José Manuel Barroso did not breach EU ethics rules but he may have been unwise to take a controversial top job at US investment bank Goldman Sachs after leaving office, an EU panel said today (31 October).

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