

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001752/24
to the Commission
Virginie Joron (PFE)
(18 September 2024)**

Subject: The appointment of an archaeologist to plan the digital aspects of European industry and manage day-to-day business in Brussels

Under democracy, governments are responsible for dealing with day-to-day business during election campaigns and after elections.

In Brussels, the Treaties give the European Parliament the power to exercise political scrutiny, in addition to its legislative and budgetary responsibilities ⁽¹⁾. The arrangements relating to the European Parliament's consent to and censure of the Commission are laid down in Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union. As Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen started campaigning ⁽²⁾ for a second term on 19 February 2024. So almost a year has gone by (from February or June 2024 to October 2024) during which certain decisions should not have been tolerated ⁽³⁾. The former Commissioner Thierry Breton, for his part, was astonished by this state of affairs ⁽⁴⁾.

In these circumstances, no MEPs could question or censure Commissioners' actions between the end of the last parliamentary term on 26 April 2024 and the constitutive sitting of 16 July 2024. Some MEPs may nevertheless have wanted to ask about the appointment, on 12 June 2024 ⁽⁵⁾, of an archaeologist to the post of Director for Planning, Finance and Digital Solutions within the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

The hearings of the new Commissioners start in September/October ⁽⁶⁾, as Parliament does not sit in August. Some new Commissioners, however, were already designated or announced during the summer. These included Kaja Kallas, who was appointed to the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in July.

The rules could do with being clarified:

1. Why has the Commission not published a full list of the kinds of decisions relating to essential and day-to-day matters that cannot wait for the new Commission to be installed?
2. Why hasn't it published a full list of the politically sensitive decisions that cannot be taken by Commissioners during the campaign or during the transition period, and that have to wait until the new Commission has been officially approved?

Submitted: 18.9.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(11 November 2024)**

Contrary to the impression given by the Honourable Member's question, the Commission was not operating in caretaker mode during the period she refers to as the 'campaign' period, nor was this the case from 26 April 2024, the date of the last plenary session of the European Parliament, to 16 July 2024, when the constitutive sitting of the newly elected Parliament was held.

In accordance with Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union, the Commission's term of office lasts 5 years, ending on 31 October 2024. It is only from that date onwards that the Commission might operate in a caretaker capacity until the new Commission is appointed.

¹ Articles 10 and 14 of the Treaty on European Union.

² <https://www.lopinion.fr/international/ursula-von-der-leyen-lance-une-campagne-dequilibriste>

³ [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=PV\(2024\)2495&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=PV(2024)2495&lang=en)

⁴ https://www.liberation.fr/international/europe/elections-europeennes-thierry-breton-declare-la-guerre-a-ursula-von-der-leyen-20240309_6GZ5FR47OVCTRE2L74ZMOWUDEA/

⁵ PV(2024) 2495 final, [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=PV\(2024\)2495&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=PV(2024)2495&lang=en)

⁶ https://www.liberation.fr/international/europe/kaja-kallas-une-femme-venue-de-lest-pour-diriger-la-diplomatie-de-lue-20240627_GPA5FK5BOBECDIPEOUG3V7HASA/, 27 juin 2024.