

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000358/25
to the Commission**

Pascale Piera (Pfe), Anne-Sophie Frigout (Pfe), Marie-Luce Brasier-Clain (Pfe), Mathilde Androuët (Pfe), Catherine Griset (Pfe), Julie Rechagneux (Pfe), Christophe Bay (Pfe), Séverine Werbrouck (Pfe), Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe), Malika Sorel (Pfe), Aleksandar Nikolic (Pfe), Julien Sanchez (Pfe), Elisabeth Dieringer (Pfe), Tomáš Kubín (Pfe), Barbara Bonte (Pfe), Anna Brylka (Pfe), Nikola Bartůšek (Pfe), Ton Diepeveen (Pfe), Jorge Martín Frías (Pfe), Jorge Buxadé Villalba (Pfe), Ondřej Knotek (Pfe), Tomasz Froelich (ESN), Markus Buchheit (ESN), Hans Neuhoﬀ (ESN), Erik Kaliňák (NI), Katarína Roth Nevedálová (NI), Diana Iovanovici Șoșoacă (NI), Kateřina Konečná (NI), Nicolas Bay (ECR), Fernand Kartheiser (ECR)
(27 January 2025)

Subject: Former Commissioner Thierry Breton’s new lobbying activities for Bank of America

On 15 January 2025, the Commission gave the green light for Thierry Breton’s new role lobbying for the Global Advisory Board of Bank of America ⁽¹⁾.

However, according to Articles 245 and 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, as a former European Commissioner, he is bound by ‘the duty to behave with integrity and discretion’ and to ‘not disclose information’ covered by the obligation of professional secrecy, including post term of office.

The Commission’s Ethical Committee rightly pointed out in its opinion that there is nevertheless ‘a link between former Commissioner Breton’s portfolio responsibilities and the scope of the notified activity’, given the size of his portfolio.

1. How does the Commission justify the obvious contradiction between, on the one hand, its decision to authorise Breton taking up this role for a foreign entity and, on the other hand, him being prohibited from using any information acquired during his term of office, when that mandate is precisely why he was asked to join the advisory board?
2. Will it at long last review the composition of the Ethical Committee, whose members are ‘appointed by the Commission, on a proposal from the President’ (Article 12(4) of the Code of Conduct), with a view to making it properly independent?

Submitted: 27.1.2025

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(3 April 2025)

Former Commissioners are free to continue their professional careers following their term of office as Members of the Commission.

This is a fundamental right enshrined, *inter alia*, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In line with Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Article 11 of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission, the Commission assesses former Commissioners’ envisaged post term of office activities in order to ensure the best possible balance between Former Commissioner’s individual right to work with the obligations of integrity and discretion to which they remain submitted following their term of office. There is therefore no contradiction whatsoever in the Commission’s approach.

The decision adopted by the Commission in reply to Mr Breton’s notification ⁽¹⁾ contains the appropriate conditions and restrictions to ensure that his activity for the Bank of America complies with the principles of integrity, discretion, confidentiality and collegiality to which he remains submitted.

Article 12(4) of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission indeed stipulates the procedure to appoint the Members of the Independent Ethical Committee and lays down the criteria under which they are chosen.

The Committee is perfectly independent, and the Commission does not intend to review the above-mentioned provision.

¹ ¹Commission Decision C(2025)9000 final

(¹) Decision C(2025) 9000 of 15 January 2020, available on the following website: https://commission.europa.eu/about/service-standards-and-principles/ethics-and-good-administration/commissioners-and-ethics/former-european-commissioners-authorised-occupations_en