

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002399/25
to the Council
Marieke Ehlers (P/E), Sebastian Kruis (P/E)
(13 June 2025)**

Subject: Appointment of former President of the European Council Charles Michel as Distinguished Professor at the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS)

On 8 May 2025, former President of the European Council Charles Michel was officially appointed Distinguished Professor at the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS), a university that is established and managed by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, and therefore falls under the influence of the Chinese Communist Party.

Unlike former European Commissioners, a former president of the European Council is not subject to a ‘cooling-off period’, but merely needs the approval of their successor. According to media reports, President Costa approved the appointment without consulting or even informing the Council of his decision.

1. Can the Council confirm that it was neither consulted nor informed about this sensitive appointment, especially in times of escalating trade tensions with China?
2. Even though cooling-off periods do not apply to former presidents of the European Council, is this appointment not detrimental to the reputation of the Council and its commitment to human rights, the rule of law and de-risking and decoupling from China?
3. Why does the Council not impose cooling-off periods on former presidents of the European Council, by analogy with the rules applicable to European Commissioners?

Submitted: 13.6.2025

**Reply
(27 October 2025)**

It is not within the Council’s remit to answer questions concerning the President of the European Council, as the European Council is a separate institution.

Nonetheless, please note that the Code of Conduct applicable to Charles Michel in his capacity as the former President of the European Council contains the following provision:

‘If the former President intends to engage in an occupation within eighteen months after ceasing to hold office, he/she will inform the incumbent President of the European Council in good time, as far as possible with minimum four weeks notice. The incumbent President of the European Council will examine the nature of the planned occupation and, if he/she deems it appropriate, inform the European Council. (...)’⁽¹⁾.

In accordance with this Code of Conduct, Charles Michel informed President of the European Council Antonio Costa of his intention to take up a teaching position at the China Europe International Business School in China.

In accordance with the said Code of Conduct, President Costa examined the nature of the planned occupation, and did not deem it appropriate to inform the European Council.

⁽¹⁾ See the following on the European Council website: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/45515/code_of_conduct_pec_en.pdf