



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Secretariat-General

The Secretary-General

Brussels,

Ms Margarida DA SILVA  
Corporate Europe Observatory  
Rue d'Edimbourg 26  
1050 Brussels

**Subject: *European Political Strategy Centre***

Dear Ms Da Silva,

I acknowledge receipt of your e-mail of 6 March 2015 in which you raise a series of questions concerning the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) and the appointment of the Head of the Centre.

The EPSC was established by decision of the President of the European Commission of 1 November 2014 (C(2014) 9001). The EPSC reports directly to the President. Its core tasks are strategic analysis and policy advice to the President on matters related to the policy priorities, as defined by him in his Political Guidelines, as well as outreach to decision-makers, think tanks and civil society.

The EPSC is currently being built up. Its management plan, covering the main areas of its work will be published shortly, as is the case for all other Commission services. The Head of the EPSC provides overall strategic orientation and manages the EPSC within the framework set by the President and the management plan.

The functions of Head and Deputy Heads of the EPSC are filled either by officials seconded pursuant to Article 37, paragraph (a), of the Staff Regulations or by temporary staff engaged pursuant to Article 2(c) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants.

Ms Ann Mettler was engaged as a temporary agent under Article 2(c) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union. Ms Mettler was designated by the President because of her experience, knowledge and competence in a wide variety of areas, including competitiveness, growth and digital market.

The Commission has rules on conflict of interest which were applied in this case and in accordance with Article 11 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Mettler filled in the required declaration.

This declaration and all other relevant aspects were carefully assessed by the Commission. It did not identify any risk of conflict of interest which would have stood in the way of her recruitment. It must be underlined in this connection that a former professional activity in a similar field does not in itself constitute a conflict of interest. Candidates are selected on the basis of their specific professional experience. However, once engaged, they must cease any activities which might be perceived as leading to a conflict of interest. In line with these principles, Ms Mettler has given up her position as Vice-chair of the Global Agenda Council on Europe.

The Commission did not see any reason to exclude particular organisations from the outreach and communication activities which constitute one of the core tasks of the EPSC. However, in order to avoid any possible perception of conflict of interest, Ms Mettler will not be involved in tender procedures which have any connection or link with the Lisbon Council. Furthermore, all events organised by the EPSC with external stakeholders (including information on the agenda, list of speakers and main outcomes) will be published on the EPSC website, which is currently being developed. The Commission has thus availed itself of the necessary measures to avoid any appearance of a risk of conflict of interest with the previous roles of Ms Mettler.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Day', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Catherine Day