

Statement by Belgium

- Belgium welcomes the conclusion of the Agreement establishing an Interinstitutional Body for Ethical Standards, which is to contribute to promoting a common culture of ethics and transparency, in particular by developing common minimum standards for the conduct of members of institutions and advisory bodies and by fostering the exchange of best practices on the matter.
- Belgium recalls that the Council consists of representatives of each Member State at ministerial level who may commit their government (Article 16(2) TEU). Belgium's representatives are submitted to national rules on ethical behaviour, including when exercising their functions as Presidency of the Council. There is no legal basis in the Treaties allowing the Council to establish a harmonized set of ethical standards for Member States' representatives in the Council. Member States representatives cannot therefore be bound by the ethical standards to be developed by the Interinstitutional Ethics Body.
- Belgium firmly underlines that the citizens of the Union must be able to trust that any person exercising a mandate as member of a Union institution is bound by transparent rules establishing high ethical standards of public office, regardless of his/her particular status.
- Belgium agrees to convey information on the common minimum standards to be developed by the Body with its relevant national authorities, for information purposes.
- As an expression of its commitment to a common culture of ethics, Belgium commits to making publicly available, on the website of the Body, information on its national rules on ethical standards for the members of its governments which are relevant for the exercise of their responsibilities as Presidency of the Council of the European Union, during as well as in the six months preceding and following this period, in a spirit of transparency and mutual learning.