

Brussels, 5 February 2026

Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels

Dear President von der Leyen,

We are writing to express our profound concern regarding the recent participation of Commissioners Andrius Kubilius and Raffaele Fitto in press conference supporting a national candidate of an opposition party in Slovenia, which took place on Thursday, 5th February 2026 during the official campaign period just weeks before the general elections.

The S&D Group and Renew Europe Group firmly uphold the principles of independence, neutrality, and impartiality that must govern the actions of the European Commission and its members. These principles are clearly outlined in the Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission, which stipulates that Commissioners must avoid any activity that could compromise their independence or the perception thereof, particularly during politically sensitive periods such as election campaigns.

First, Article 9 of the Code of Conduct explicitly states that Commissioners must refrain from participating in national election campaigns in a manner that compromises their availability for service in the Commission or prioritises party commitments over their institutional duties. The involvement of Commissioners in a public press conference supporting a national candidate during the campaign period appears to be in direct contravention of this provision. Such participation risks undermining the Commission's reputation for neutrality and could be perceived as an improper use of institutional authority to influence national political processes.

Second, the Code of Conduct further emphasises that Commissioners must not engage in activities that create a conflict of interest or give rise to the perception of political bias (Article 2(6)). The mentioned participation of Commissioners, particularly in the final weeks before an election, sends a troubling signal that the Commission may not be fully detached from national political contests. This is especially concerning given the Commission's role as an independent institution that must remain above partisan politics.

Third, the Renew Europe and S&D groups believe that the Commission's credibility depends on its strict adherence to the principles of collegiality and discretion (Article 5). This appearance of Commissioners not only risks compromising these principles but also calls into question the Commission's commitment to acting in the general interest of the European Union, free from any appearance of partiality or political interference.

Considering these concerns, we respectfully request that you examine the circumstances surrounding the participation of Commissioners Kubilius and Fitto in this press conference. We also kindly ask that you take the necessary steps to reaffirm the Commission's commitment to the principles of independence and neutrality, and to ensure that such situations do not recur in the future.

We would appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further if needed. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Valérie Hayer President of the Renew Europe Group

Iratxe García Pérez, Leader of the S&D Group