

Volume 14, Issue 4, 2012 - News

EU news

Commissioner Dalli resigns

On 16 October 2012, Commissioner John Dalli announced his resignation as a member of the Commission with immediate effect.

Mr. Dalli informed the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso of his decision following an investigation by OLAF, the EU's antifraud office, into a complaint made in May 2012 by the tobacco producer, Swedish Match. The company alleged that a Maltese entrepreneur had used his contacts with Mr. Dalli to try to gain financial advantages from the company in return for seeking to influence a possible future legislative proposal on tobacco products, in particular on the EU export ban on snus. As soon as the Commission received the complaint it immediately requested OLAF to investigate.

The OLAF final report was sent to the Commission on 15 October. It found that the Maltese entrepreneur had approached the company using his contacts with Mr. Dalli and sought to gain financial advantages in exchange for influence over a possible future legislative proposal on snus. No transaction was concluded between the company and the entrepreneur and no payment was made. The OLAF report did not find any conclusive evidence of the direct participation of Mr. Dalli but did consider that he was aware of these events.

The OLAF report showed clearly that the European Commission's decision-making process and the position of the services concerned have not been affected at all by the matters under investigation. The final OLAF report and its recommendations are being sent by OLAF to the Attorney General of Malta. It will now be for the Maltese judiciary to decide how to follow up.

After the President informed Mr. Dalli about the report received from OLAF, Mr. Dalli decided to resign in order to be able to defend his reputation and that of the Commission. Mr. Dalli categorically rejects these findings.

Mr. Barroso has decided that Vice President Maros Sefcovic will take over the portfolio of Mr. Dalli on an interim basis until a new Commissioner of Maltese nationality is appointed in accordance with article 246 (2) of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.

Published on : Wed, 16 Jan 2013