

Lodz, 9 December 2016

The need for openness. The appointment of the head of the European Commission should be made in an open and roll call vote – position of the Civil Affairs Institute.

During the session held in Strasbourg on 13 December 2016 (Tuesday), a vote on the EP's new Rules of Procedure (the so-called Corbett's report) will be conducted. Kazimierz Ujazdowski, MEP, proposed the amendment that envisages appointment of the head of the European Commission in an open vote (Amendment No 139 in the final report, the original motion attached). The amendment received support from the Committee on Constitutional Affairs but the final word in this matter rests with the European Parliament.

The Civil Affairs Institute supports the solution proposed by Kazimierz M. Ujazdowski, MEP. In our view, one of the most crucial political decisions of the European Parliament should be made in an open and roll call voting.

Noteworthy, under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has acquired a new power – participation in the appointment of the head of the European Commission. The European Council, which constitutes a qualified majority, presents to the Parliament a candidate for the President of the European Commission and the Parliament appoints him/her by the majority of votes of its members. Pursuant to the effective Rules of Procedure, the appointment is made in a secret voting. In our view, secrecy is in no way justified in this case. A secret voting in general elections is to protect citizens against the abuse of political power. Yet in the event of decisions made by politicians there are no arguments against transparency. This is a condition for accountability of politicians before the public opinion.

We appeal to the MEPs for backing the openness of appointment of the head of the European Commission. Their position on this matter will show their voters whether they really care about citizens' access to the information or they prefer to hide the decisions they made. Today the EU needs to regain credibility with citizens. Openness certainly contributes to this.

Rafał Górski

President of Board
Civil Affairs Institute