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Thilo Bode
Executive Director Foodwatch International
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Number: 5421-39/2021-SPBR/2
Date: 21. 4. 2021

Subject: Response to Foodwatch International regarding sponsorship of the Presidency

Dear Mr Bode,

Thank you for your letter concerning our forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union. We welcome the effort and work of your non-profit organisation in the area of transparency and sponsorship of the Presidency.

The Republic of Slovenia supports recommendation of the EU Ombudsman on 6th January 2020 in the case 1069/2019/MIG on sponsorship of the Presidency of the Council of the EU and consequent draft guidelines of the General Secretariat of the Council. We hope that the latter guidelines will be soon agreed by all 27 Member States.

Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of the EU 2021 will be fully committed to transparency. Therefore we are pleased to respond your questions as it follows.

1. Will Slovenia be accepting corporate sponsorship of any event or activity connected to its Presidency of the EU?

There are significant expenses associated with holding the six-month Presidency, since the presiding Member State is responsible for the costs not covered by the Council's budget, in particular as regards the organisation of informal meetings, seminars, and social and cultural events on the occasion of the Presidency. That is why some Member States decide to use private sponsorships to cover some costs of the above-mentioned activities.

Slovenia's Presidency will not be dependent on such sponsorship. Nevertheless we acknowledge the fact that this could contribute not only to lower costs, but also to better results and more efficient performance of the Presidency. That is why Slovenia published a public appeal to potential partners. At the moment discussions and negotiations with potential partners are taking place.

Moreover we will beforehand carefully consider the possible impact of the choice of each sponsor (partner) on the reputation of the Council or the EU.

2. Which companies will be sponsoring which activities or events?

Slovenia will establish clear and transparent rules on sponsor (partner) selection, including award criteria based on good governance, the subject-matter of sponsorship and sponsorship benefits and, where appropriate, the publication of the list of selected sponsors (partners).

At the moment we haven't made a selection of partners and related activities or events. As soon as we will select the partners and when our Presidency's website will be operating we will publish the above-mentioned information on our Presidency website.

3. How can you prove that these sponsorship agreements will not affect, or be seen to affect any policy-making decisions during Slovenia's Presidency?

Slovenia's Presidency will put in place all measures necessary to avoid any conflict of interests and any possible reputational risks for the Council or the EU arising out of the sponsorship. We can guarantee that these sponsorship agreements will not affect, or be seen to affect any policy-making decisions during our Presidency. Slovenia will provide transparency in all procurement processes.

4. Which measures have Slovenia put in place to avoid that these activities can be perceived as activities of the Council? Can you guarantee that the logo of your sponsor will never be seen together with any logo connected to the EU institutions?

For every Presidency's activity, sponsored by a private sponsor (partner), there will be a noticeable notification on the invitation and sign during the course of the activity, notifying by whom activity is sponsored. Notification will also point out that it is not an activity of the Council.

There will be clear provisions in written contract with each sponsor (partner), which will forbid that the logo of our sponsors (partners) and any logo of EU institutions would be seen together. We will also observe and monitor closely all activities of our sponsors (partners). That is how we will make sure that Council's name or logo won't be used by the sponsor (partner) in its activities.

For further information we invite you to follow our website, which will be soon established. We can ensure you that Slovenia will put all its efforts to ensure transparency through its Presidency of the Council of the EU 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Iztok Jarc

Ambassador-Permanent Representative