

**Ms Christina Rafti**

Ambassador, Permanent Representative  
Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU  
61 Avenue de Cortenbergh  
B-1000 Brussels

**Ms Therese Blanchet**

Secretary General European Council  
Council of the European Union  
Rue de la Loi 175  
B-1048 Brussels

Brussels, 26 January 2026

**Voluntary measures have failed: Rules needed for sponsorship of EU Presidency**

Dear Ms Rafti and Ms Blanchet,

In 2019, foodwatch and Corporate Europe Observatory condemned the sponsorship by Coca-Cola of the Romanian Presidency of the European Union. The multinational, responsible not only for aggressive marketing of their sugar-rich and sweetener-rich beverages, but also for being one of the largest contributors to plastic waste pollution, must not be allowed the privilege of contributing to the events surrounding a presidency programme.

In 2019, foodwatch took this issue to the European Ombudsman who asked the Council to draw up guidelines<sup>1</sup>. These guidelines<sup>2</sup> have been in place since 2021 and it has seemed that in recent presidencies the involvement of large, controversial food multinationals as sponsors has been mainly avoided.

However the website of the Cyprus Presidency<sup>3</sup> shows Coca-Cola as a 'Gold sponsor' of the Presidency. This is unacceptable.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/decision/en/129649>

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9897-2021-REV-1/en/pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cyprus-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/presidency/transparency/>

We are writing to you to ask the Cyprus Presidency to publish this sponsorship contract and **immediately and publicly cancel this sponsorship agreement** and to make it a priority during the next six months, working with the Secretary General of the Council of the European Union, **to turn the guidelines into binding commitments that will prevent such sponsorships happening in the future.** If goods and services are needed for a Presidency, they should be procured and paid for under the usual laws.

We look forward to hearing from you from you and both this letter and your responses will be made public in the interest of better transparency.

Kind regards



Suzy Sumner  
foodwatch international



Vicky Cann  
Corporate Europe Observatory

cc Office of the European Ombudsman