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DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

on Former Commissioner Kadri Simson's Distinguished Fellowship at the Institute of Global Politics of the Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community,

Having regard to the Commission Decision of 31 January 2018 (C(2018) 700 final) on a Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission, and in particular Article 11(3) thereof,

Whereas:

- 1) According to the second paragraph of Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Members of the Commission, when entering upon their duties, shall give a solemn undertaking that, both during and after their term of office, they will respect the obligations arising therefrom and, in particular, their duty to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance, after they have ceased to hold office, of certain appointments or benefits.
- 2) Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that the Members of the institutions of the Union shall be required, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information of any kind covered by the obligation of professional secrecy, in particular information about undertakings, their business relations or their cost components.
- 3) Article 11 of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission establishes a specific procedure for the assessment of planned professional activities which the Members or former Members of the Commission intend to take up after they have ceased to hold office. The Commission shall examine the information provided in order to determine whether the nature of the planned activity is compatible with Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. If the planned activity is related to the portfolio of the Member or former Member, the Commission shall decide only after having consulted the Independent Ethical Committee, unless the planned activity falls within the scope of the exceptions set out in paragraph (3), notably as concerns academic activities (lit. (d)).

- 4) On 20 November 2024, Commissioner Kadri Simson informed the Commission of her intention to engage, after the end of her mandate, in an unpaid Distinguished Fellowship at the Institute of Global Politics of the Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. She informed that the fellowship will take place between mid-January and May 2025 and that her accommodation and travel expenses will be reimbursed.
- 5) The Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs presents itself as one of the leading schools for international and public affairs globally. Located in New York City, it is part of Columbia University and focuses on preparing students for careers in international relations, public policy, and related fields. The Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs is specialized in international relations and public policy education, consistently ranking among the top institutions in these fields.
- 6) The Columbia University has various collaborations, research initiatives, and academic programs involving European topics but these appear to be funded primarily through internal university resources, private donations, and grants from non-EU institutions. According to the European Commission's Financial Transparency System, the Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs does not receive direct European Union funding.
- 7) The Commission noted the academic nature of Former Commissioner Simson's envisaged Distinguished Fellowship and considered that it does not present any risk of incompatibility with her former function as Member of the European Commission or with the interests of the institution, provided she abides by all the relevant provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, namely Article 339, and of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission, in particular the duties of collegiality and discretion with respect to the Commission's decisions and activities during her term of office, as provided for by Article 11(1) of the Code in conjunction with Article 5 and the interdiction of lobbying the Members of the commission or their Staff, as set out in Article 11(4) of the Code.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

Former Commissioner Kadri Simson's envisaged post term of office Distinguished Fellowship at the Institute of Global Politics of Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs is compatible with the second paragraph of Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, subject to the respect of the duties set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in Article 11(4) of the Code of

Conduct for the Members of the Commission and in Article 11(1) of the Code in conjunction with Article 5.

Done at Brussels, on 11 December 2024.

The President
Ursula von der Leyen