

# Brussels rocked – EU Parliament Vice-President arrested in alleged Qatar corruption scandal

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## Corruption at EU's heart – Parliament Vice-President in Qatari cash case

**Hundreds of thousands in cash in bags, many arrested, immediate expulsions**

The biggest scandal in the history of the EU Parliament rocked Brussels on Friday. Bags containing hundreds of thousands in cash... Mass raids by the Brussels police... Charges of *“criminal organization, corruption and money laundering”*... Immediate expulsions of a Vice President and others from party and EU Parliament.

And on top of it all, this relates to **Qatar and the FIFA World Cup**. You simply could not invent this.

**At least five arrests, several EU countries**

## **involved, “bags of cash”**

According to Belgian media, Brussels police searched 16 homes on Friday, detaining five people including the EU Parliament Vice-President Eva Kaili.

Belgian and Italian media are reporting that Luca Visentini, Secretary General of the International Trade Union Confederation, and Pier Antonio Panzeri, an ex-MEP from Italy who chaired the EU Parliament’s Human Rights Sub-Committee (and also Kaili’s partner) were also detained. Others were arrested by Italian police using a European Arrest Warrant.

The Belgian daily newspaper, L’Echo, reported that **“several bags full of notes”** had been found during a search of Kaili’s Brussels home. A suitcase of cash is said to have been found with her father upon his arrest whilst allegedly fleeing on a train after being tipped off. Further arrests are understood to have taken place in Italy.

## **No official statement from the EU Parliament, only a tweet**

Whilst so far only charges have been brought and no-one has been convicted, within hours of the news breaking Vice-President Eva Kaili was :-

- Suspended as EU Parliament Vice-President
- Suspended from the Socialists and Democrats group in the EU Parliament
- Expelled from her left-wing Pasok party in Greece

Yesterday (Sat 10 Dec 2022) Roberta Metsola, the Italian President of the EU Parliament tweeted :-

*“Our [EU Parliament] stands firmly against corruption. At this stage, we cannot comment on any ongoing investigations except to confirm that we have and will cooperate fully with all*

*relevant law enforcement and judicial authorities. We'll do all we can to assist the course of justice."*

## **€600,000 in CASH has already been recovered in Friday's raids**

The Belgian Federal Prosecutor's Office said on Friday that it had already recovered **€600,000 in cash** in Friday's raids.

*"For several months, investigators of the Federal Judicial Police have suspected a Gulf country of **influencing the economic and political decisions of the European Parliament**. This is done by **paying large sums of money** or offering large gifts to third parties with a significant political and/or strategic position within the European Parliament."*

## **Vice-President Kaili and Qatar**

Following an in-depth investigation by Facts4EU.Org we can reveal an official visit to Qatar by Eva Kaili at the end of October.



**On 31 October** according to the Qatar government she met (amongst others) the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani during a visit to the country. (See photo.)

During the meeting they discussed *"the bilateral cooperation ties between the State of Qatar and the European Union"*, as well as other matters.

**By 23 November 2022** Eva Kaili was extolling the virtues of

Qatar's human rights record when addressing the EU Parliament.



*“Today’s World Cup is proof of how sports diplomacy can achieve a historical transformation of a country with reforms that inspired the Arab world. The ILO [International Labour Organisation] said **Qatar is a frontrunner in labour rights.**”*

*“Still some here are calling to discriminate them... they bully them and accuse everyone who talks to them or engages of corruption. But still, they take their gas, still having their companies profiting billions there.”*

– Eva Kaili, EU Parliament, 23 Nov 2022

**Note:** The Secretary-General of the International Trade Union Confederation was also amongst those arrested on Friday.

**On 01 December 2022** the Advisor to the Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Majed bin Mohammed Al Ansari, welcomed the ratification made by a Committee of the EU Parliament **to exempt the citizens of the State of Qatar from the entry visa to Schengen countries without conditions.**

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency:

*“Dr. Al Ansari indicated that the ratification of the exemption came as a result of the constant efforts made by the State of Qatar’s mission to European Union and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs **to ensure its unfettered passage**”.*

He noted that :

*“approval for the exemption included that **it does not need to***

*be presented in general deliberations session of the European Parliament, in order to be a final approval from the European Parliament.”*

## **Months of investigation before the police swooped**

Following months of investigation by the Belgian police it seems that despite her statements above, Ms Kaili is the one now being accused of corruption by the prosecuting authorities, together with members of her family and other prominent members of the Brussels clique.

It is very important that we make it clear that whilst people have been arrested, no-one has been convicted and they should therefore all be considered innocent unless and until the state proves otherwise.

The Qatari government has denied any involvement, with an official telling news agency AFP: *“We are not aware of any details of an investigation. Any claims of misconduct by the State of Qatar are gravely misinformed.”*

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