



HOUSE OF LORDS

Report from the Commissioner for Standards

The conduct of Lord Adonis

Commissioner for Standards

The independent Commissioner for Standards is responsible for considering any alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct.

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Registrar of Lords' Interests

The Registrar of Lords' Interests advises members of the House and their staff on their obligations under the Codes of Conduct.

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Registers of Interests

A list of interests of members and their staff can be found online: www.parliament.uk/hlregister

Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme helpline

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The conduct of Lord Adonis

Summary of complaint

1. On 25 October 2021, my office received a complaint from a Mr Dirk Hazell, Leader of the UK European People's Party, regarding the conduct of Lord Adonis.¹
2. Mr Hazell alleged that Lord Adonis had failed to register his directorship of European Movement of the United Kingdom Ltd, on his Register of Interests, and was therefore in breach of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords.
3. Mr Hazell said that Lord Adonis' directorship of the European Movement of the United Kingdom Ltd was distinct from his registered category 10 interest as Chairman of the European Movement.

Relevant aspect of the Code

4. Paragraph 12 of the Code of Conduct states:

“In order to assist in openness and accountability members shall:

(a) register in the Register of Lords' Interests all relevant interests, in order to make clear what are the interests that might reasonably be thought to influence their parliamentary actions.”
5. Paragraph 54 of the Guide to the Code of Conduct says, “unremunerated directorships should be registered under category 10 (non-financial interests) so that in one category or another all directorships should be registered.”

Summary of investigation

6. I verified that Lord Adonis was listed as a director of the European Movement of the United Kingdom Ltd, and with that information decided that the complaint passed preliminary assessment and that an investigation was required.
7. I wrote to Lord Adonis on 28 October 2021 to provide him with a copy of the complaint, inform him that I had launched an investigation and invited him to submit a full written response to the allegations.
8. Lord Adonis responded to my letter on 29 October 2021. He told me:

“These two organisations are synonymous in practice and I therefore saw—and see—no reason to declare them separately. Article 21 of the constitution of The European Movement UK states:

‘21. Company

21.1 The Movement may utilise a Company incorporated under the Companies Acts (including company number 551817) for the purpose of pursuing the objectives of the Movement and that by the carrying out of whatever actions in pursuance of those objectives as the Movement may consider desirable;

¹ The investigation and report were completed by Akbar Khan.

21.2 The Members of the Company shall be the persons who are fully paid individual, youth, unwaged and low income members of European Movement

21.3 A Member of the Company shall cease to be a Member on ceasing to pay the annual membership fee applicable for their class of membership.’

There are numerous charities which use companies limited by guarantee as a vehicle for signing contracts and other documents so that the liability is that of the company rather than of the trustees (even if the trustees are synonymous with the directors of the company), and it is standard practice that when registering an interest they will mention only the charity. In terms of decision-making and accountability, all the actions of the company are undertaken by the officers, Executive and Council of the European Movement, which I chair. This includes the actions mentioned by Mr Hazell in his complaint.”

Finding

9. **The Code requires all directorships to be registered, even when the company is simply the corporate arm of a separately registered organisation.**
10. **While I accept that Lord Adonis thought he had satisfied the requirements of the Code, he failed to register an interest as required by the Code of Conduct.**
11. **I conclude that Lord Adonis is in breach of paragraph 12 of the Code of Conduct.**
12. **I consider this to be a minor breach of the Code and one for which remedial action is an appropriate outcome. As well as correcting his Register of Interests, I proposed a letter of apology to Lord Mance, Chairman of the Conduct Committee, would be sufficient remedial action in this case. Lord Adonis has since written to Lord Mance (see Appendix 1).**
13. I am grateful to Lord Adonis for his cooperation in this matter and for his prompt response.

**APPENDIX 1: LETTER FROM LORD ADONIS TO LORD MANCE,
CHAIR OF THE CONDUCT COMMITTEE**

Dear Lord Mance,

The Commissioner for Standards is about to report to you that I was in breach of the Code for not registering my directorship of the European Movement of the United Kingdom Ltd alongside my role—which is fully declared—as Chairman of European Movement UK. I had assumed that, because the first is simply the corporate arm of the second and does not operate independently, it was unnecessary to do this, but the Commissioner finds otherwise. I accept this finding, and I have amended my entry in the register accordingly. I also wish to apologise to you, as chairman of the standards committee, for this minor breach of the code, which was entirely inadvertent on my part.

Kind regards,

Andrew Adonis