



MEP Awards & The Parliament Magazine
Rue du Trône 60
1050 Brussels
Belgium

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Open letter to The Parliament Magazine and MEP Awards

Dear team behind *MEP Awards* and *The Parliament Magazine*

I am writing you this open letter regarding this year's [MEP Awards](#), and my nomination in the *Health and wellbeing* category.

To be honest, I, as many other progressive MEPs throughout time, had my doubts when I was first nominated to this year's MEP Awards. With the clear links to corporate lobbying, it is, I think, only natural for many of us to have such hesitations.

Yet, I also thought it nice to have been nominated and recognised for the work done in the European Parliament. Yes, there was vanity involved, but whom, in the end, can say they do not succumb to that from time to time.

Furthermore I thought, and again it might have been the vanity talking, that if I were to win in my category, maybe I could use it to raise attention about important issues I feel very passionate about: not least the fight against asbestos, and protecting workers from carcinogenic and mutagenic substances. That, I thought, would outweigh the concerns, especially since the category I was nominated in, did not have a corporate sponsor.

Sadly, this changed, and I now find myself in a category nominated by the pharmaceutical company *Novartis* - a company that has been accused of bribery of politicians in an EU-member state, Greece. A case that consequently meant that the company accepted to pay hundreds of millions in penalties to the US government, [to resolve violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act \(FCPA\)](#). The case is, in fact, still causing waves and scandals in Greece, as highlighted by both some of [my good colleagues](#) and [the press](#). All things that should have naturally had them disqualified as a sponsor.

I do not know at what point in time this controversial sponsor was actually added to the category. What I do know is that when my office first received notification about the nomination, sponsors were listed for a couple of the many categories, but not for the *Health and wellbeing*-category. When a bit later we checked again, there was still no sponsor listed and to be honest we let it be at that. As events have shown, we should have been much more vigilant.



Why am I even writing this in an open letter to you, you might ask? It is a good question and to be honest, normally I would not do it this way. But then again, normally I would not expect to suddenly have a sponsor imposed on a category I am nominated in, and even less so such a controversial sponsor, one that has been criticised for a bribery scandal, involving politicians from an EU country.

Could I not have reacted before you might also ask? Yes, I probably could, and had I known before, I would have. But, to be honest, like most other people in the so-called Brussels Bubble, I do not exactly check the MEP awards website very often, and we certainly had not anticipated that a sponsor, let alone a controversial one, would be added - especially without first checking with the nominees if it would lead us to withdraw.

In hindsight, I admit I should have trusted my gut instinct and from the beginning told you "no thank you", that part of the blame is for me to bear. However, at the same time you most certainly should not impose sponsors after publishing nominations, and without a doubt ought not to accept nominations from companies involved in such scandals. That part of the blame must go directly to the MEP Awards.

It is with the above in mind that I am writing to inform you of the following:

In the same way that I do not want to support companies involved in such scandals or with such allegations levelled against them, I also do not wish to be part of a nomination involving them.

Therefore, I have to tell you that I will **not** accept the title if I should I win, that I will **not** take part in the event itself and that I would like to request that my name be withdrawn from the 2022 MEP awards.

I trust you to act swiftly on this.

Kind regards

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