

WORLD

## U.S Clarifies That Self-Declared EU Envoy Candidate Isn't Up for Post

It turns out that Ted Malloch, the would-be ambassador, was never in running for Brussels post



Ted Malloch portrayed himself as President Donald Trump's choice for envoy to the European Union. U.S. officials say he isn't—and never had been. PHOTO: FRANK AUGSTEIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

*By Drew Hinshaw in Warsaw, Laurence Norman in Brussels and Felicia Schwartz in Washington*

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European officials have tried for months to learn whether to take seriously a euroskeptic American who presented himself as President Donald Trump's preferred pick for ambassador to the European Union.

Now officials in Washington say that he is not and never was a candidate.

Since Mr. Trump took office, top officials and journalists in Europe have sought out Ted Malloch, a university professor who has asserted he is Mr. Trump's likely choice for the Brussels post.

EU officials regarded his prospective candidacy as a real—and troubling—possibility. Mr. Malloch has urged every EU country to vote on leaving the bloc.

Officials in Washington said nothing, fanning speculation.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini broached the issue Feb. 9 in Washington during her first meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, then on Feb. 20 in Brussels upon the visit of Vice President Mike Pence, senior EU officials say. She was told that no decision on a new ambassador had been taken, according to a senior EU official. No further information was ever communicated.

The European Parliament's main political parties declared him *persona non grata*.

Speaking in Poland last week to the country's top politicians, who called him "Mr. Ambassador," Mr. Malloch pledged to convey their concerns to Mr. Trump.

"I think he's a candidate to be a candidate," said Robert Winnicki, a Polish member of parliament who met with Mr. Malloch. "I think it's a serious idea."

"Everybody here thinks he's a representative of President Trump," said Rafal Pankowski, a political-science professor at private university Collegium Civitas in Warsaw.

This week Mr. Malloch addressed a gathering in Brussels that billed him as "the possible new U.S. Ambassador to the EU."

Mr. Malloch, told after the Brussels conference that the Trump administration denied he was a candidate, said: "I'm not aware of that."

The State Department said this week that Mr. Malloch isn't a candidate for the ambassadorship. A White House official said Mr. Malloch never was under consideration.

Mr. Trump is on his first visit to the EU's capital as president for meetings with top European and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization leaders. The new U.S. administration has yet to fill dozens of important posts, including appointing ambassadors to the EU and NATO.

The State Department—the normal point of contact for foreign governments—has often been sidelined in both decision making and public communication, officials say.

In that void, countries like Poland say they're turning to outside sources on Mr. Trump's thinking. Sometimes those people do indeed have close links to the White House. Other times, not so much.

Mr. Malloch told reporters in Brussels he had interviewed twice for the position at Trump Towers and maintained close contacts in the White House.

He acknowledged he had not yet been nominated for anything but said the White House would eventually release a public announcement on the position: "I frankly thought this would come to fruition months ago," he said. "But I don't control that schedule."

A White House official said Mr. Malloch was never in consideration for any post, and never served in any capacity for the campaign.

Mr. Malloch has stirred controversy by appearing frequently in western media to attack the EU. He has encouraged some countries to drop the euro, which he predicts will soon crash. He has said he could help the EU go the same way as the Soviet Union—a comment he said this week had been meant as a joke.

Those comments exacerbated mistrust between Washington and Brussels.

European officials have long worried about Mr. Trump's commitment to America's allies on the continent, after his pre-inauguration criticism of the EU and NATO and his pledge to pursue warmer relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Mr. Malloch has worked at Henley Business School at the University of Reading, in Reading, England. In the past, he has said he has been knighted, nominated for an Emmy, and appointed to the board of the World Economic Forum—all honors disputed by the institutions that award them.

Mr. Malloch denies he embellished his past, but said Tuesday he can't discuss the accusations further, because there could be "potential legal suits" over the accusations. The Financial Times earlier reported the alleged embellishments.

—Rebecca Ballhaus in Washington contributed to this article.

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