



## Press release

### **IBAC report presented to the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly**

On 22 April 2018 the Investigation Body set up by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe ("PACE") to look into allegations of corruption made against certain members and/or former members of the Assembly presented its report ([link](#)) to the Bureau of the Assembly.

The three members of the Investigation Body were Sir Nicolas Bratza (United Kingdom), former judge and former President of the European Court of Human Rights; Jean-Louis Bruguière (France), former judge in charge of investigations, in particular into cases related to terrorism and international expert on anti-terrorism issues; and Elisabet Fura (Sweden), former judge at the European Court of Human Rights and former chief parliamentary Ombudsman of Sweden.

The Investigation Body started its works in June 2017 and delivered its report on 15 April 2018, in accordance with its terms of reference and the decisions of the Bureau.

In the course of its investigation, the body obtained numerous documents and statements from various individuals, organisations and authorities. The Investigation Body also heard a total of fifty witnesses during six hearing sessions, which were held in the building of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The Investigation Body's terms of reference did not name any individual or identify any country in respect of which allegations of corruption and fostering of interests had been made. Nevertheless, in view of several NGO reports alleging efforts on the part of Azerbaijan to silence criticism in PACE in exchange for gifts and money the body focused its inquiry on such allegations concerning Azerbaijan.

In the course of the Investigation Body's work, further allegations of suspicious practices and activities within other countries were brought to the body's attention. The Investigation Body examined and pursued these allegations to the extent that they helped elucidate the matters within the scope of its review. However, due to the organisational, temporal and operational limitations of its mandate, the Investigation Body was unable to conduct a thorough investigation into all those allegations.

With regard to the general functioning of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Investigation Body found that the key deficiency related to the manner in which the decisions on appointments to different positions were made. This in particular concerned the lack of transparency and sufficient regulation of the procedures for such appointments.

As to the functioning of PACE in matters concerning Azerbaijan, the Investigation Body established that there was a group of persons working in PACE in favour of Azerbaijan. In this context, the Investigation Body found that, in their activities concerning Azerbaijan, several members and former members of PACE had acted contrary to the PACE ethical standards. In particular, the Investigation Body found that a number of former PACE MPs who had performed lobbying activities within the Assembly had acted contrary to the PACE Code of Conduct.

The body also established that there was a strong suspicion that certain current and former members of PACE had engaged in activity of a corruptive nature in favour of Azerbaijan.

In view of its findings and conclusions, the Investigation Body made a number of recommendations on the measures to be implemented to rectify the identified shortcomings and fill the gaps found in the Assembly's ethical framework.