

HANDBOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

Introduction
to the activities of the PACE
anti-corruption platform

Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Committee on Rules of Procedure,
Immunities and Institutional Affairs of the
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.



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The Council of Europe and the fight against corruption

The Council of Europe, with 47 member States, is the leading regional human rights organisation in Europe and works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It has a unique expertise in the field of combating corruption and money laundering and pursuing asset recovery through its multidisciplinary approach, which consists of three interrelated elements: the setting of European norms and standards; monitoring of compliance with the standards; and capacity building/technical advice offered to individual countries and regions. Independent expert monitoring bodies in this area are the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) which conduct country-by-country monitoring in their respective field of expertise.

The added value of Council of Europe presence and partnership in member and non-member States can be found in many aspects of its work but especially on what the Council can offer, in technical assistance and co-operation: allowing access to experience and knowledge in mainstreaming the European acquis; sharing tools that can be used when implementing international standards given its unique ability to use its monitoring mechanisms; coordinating, supporting and hosting professional networks which promote better international co-operation in criminal matters. These networks and exchange of good practices have served as capacity building promoters and created strong links among homologue practitioners, professionals and government structures that share common goals and objectives when tackling economic and organised crime and its trans-frontier effects.

For this purpose, the Council of Europe works in close partnership with the European Union, and co-operates with the United Nations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and others, and with partner countries in its neighbourhood and worldwide.

<http://www.coe.int/corruption>

A Parliamentary dimension of Council of Europe anti-corruption activities

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe brings together 318 parliamentarians from 47 European countries, representing 820 million people. Its mission is to uphold the shared values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law that are the "common heritage" of the peoples of Europe. In its 65 years of existence, PACE's role as a "human rights watchdog", a motor of ideas and a forum for debate has triggered positive change, defused conflict, and helped to steer the continent towards an ever-evolving set of shared values.

Corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon which affects many areas and falls within the purview of various thematics, such as politics, political party funding, transparency in decision-making, lobbying, economy, organised crime, money laundering, trafficking in human beings, public health, sports, environment, natural resources, media, gender equality, and so on. Combating corruption therefore requires exploring new approaches, and the Parliamentary Assembly is willing to take a major role in this effort.

The Assembly has recently recalled, in Resolution 1943 (2013) on corruption as a threat to the rule of law, the importance of a stronger parliamentary dimension in the Council of Europe's general machinery for combating corruption. It then decided to promote a co-operation platform with the aim of:

- promoting the ratification and implementation of Council of Europe conventions and recommendations on the fight against corruption, in particular GRECO recommendations, among national parliaments;
- taking stock of national anti-corruption initiatives, sharing good practices and brainstorming together on new working methods and approaches to tackling corruption effectively;
- collecting information about the ongoing activities of the Council of Europe anti-corruption bodies, the initiatives of other key international players in the anti-corruption field, and statistical and correlation data from NGOs and civil society related to a given country or corruption trends in specific areas.

This co-operation platform, launched on 8 April 2014, brings together representatives from the parliaments of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe and of non-member states, experts and other stakeholders to share information, spread good practices and debate how to deal with new forms of corruption.

One of the most effective activities planned is the organisation of one-day national or regional seminars on very specific topics, such as code of conduct for parliamentarians, ethics of political parties, and transparency in the decision-making. Besides being informative, these events provide an opportunity to develop ties between institutions dealing with similar issues and to establish a better exchange of information.

In order to respond effectively to today's and tomorrow's challenges, this strategy is performed in close collaboration with the Committee of Ministers, NGOs, and other parliamentary assemblies and international organisations working on anti-corruption. Increased synergies and enhanced dialogue with these bodies play a key role.

The success of this new PACE initiative relies on the involvement and commitment of parliamentarians, as guardians of democratic values, both at national and European level.

To know more about the work of the Assembly:

Website: <http://www.assembly.coe.int>

Twitter account: @PACE_News

To know more about the PACE anti-corruption platform:

Website: <http://website-pace.net/web/apce/anti-corruption-platform>

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/PACEanticorruption>

Preface by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

*“Corruption is poisoning our societies
and our values”*



When I took up my mandate as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), I delivered a clear message to all my colleagues: one of my highest priorities is to engage in the eradication of all forms of corruption, within and outside national parliaments, and to promote transparency and integrity in public life. As members of the Parliamentary Assembly, we have a responsibility to commit to the elimination of this gangrene in our societies and to promote good governance and social justice across Europe.

I recognise the significant efforts taken by many parliaments to reduce levels of corruption during the last years, however, these crimes remain a serious threat in many Council of Europe member States and further action is urgently needed.

The driving force of the Parliamentary Assembly and its committees has always been instrumental in the endeavours of the Council of Europe’s overall strategy on anti-corruption through, for example, the adoption of Recommendation 1896 (2010) on judicial corruption and Recommendation 2019 (2013) on corruption as a threat to the rule of law, as well as the Code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly. However, a

comprehensive parliamentary strategy aimed at both strengthening the rule of law and reducing corruption has never been implemented so far.

Creating a PACE anti-corruption platform will finally fill this gap and complement the Council of Europe's commitment to anti-corruption by introducing an important and indispensable parliamentary dimension. This is the reason why I warmly welcome this remarkable initiative.

The fight against corruption will continue to be one of my top priorities, and I am looking forward to further strengthening our efforts to guarantee the independence of the judiciary, to ensure that corrupt behaviour is punished, and to support the implementation of effective prevention measures and all necessary anti-corruption policies in compliance with Council of Europe standards. Corruption is a major threat to both Europe's economic development and political stability, and we have to exert all possible efforts to root it out.

I want finally to express my best wishes and to thank all the parliamentarians who will engage in this new forum for co-operation.

Ms. Anne Brasseur

President of the Parliamentary Assembly
of the Council of Europe

Preface by the President of GRECO

*“GRECO and the Assembly
must enhance collaboration”*



In a large number of Council of Europe member States corruption is still significantly high and is among the issues citizens are most concerned about. The current financial crisis is likewise doing nothing to relieve this problem: economic insecurity and political volatility create in fact new spaces for misuse of public and private resources, power and influence, and lead to more sophisticated methods for engaging in corrupt activities. The fight against corruption thus needs to stay high on the political agenda. The aim of GRECO is to strengthen the capacity of its members to fight corruption by monitoring their compliance with Council of Europe anti-corruption standards, assessing the action taken by each member in response to the monitoring findings and recommendations, and actively pushing for reform. We are now almost half-way through our Fourth Evaluation Round which focuses on corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors (launched in January 2012) and are also looking into compliance with the recommendations issued during the Third Evaluation Round on the financing of political parties and election campaigns.

The criticality of the current situation has made synergies more urgent than ever. The Parliamentary Assembly is a natural partner for GRECO. We follow its work with close interest and look forward to intensifying our efforts through joint measures to both prevent and combat corruption. These could revolve around such major topics as ethical principles

and code of conduct, conflicts of interest and enforcement mechanisms, the misuse of information and public resources, as well as niche topics such as gender dimensions of corruption. Guided by our recently appointed Gender Equality Rapporteur, Ms. Helena Lišuschová, GRECO is seeking to explore new approaches and acquiring expertise on this issue.

All this shows that change is driven by external and internal pressure as well as strong political resolve to bring about real reform. Closer cooperation between the European Union and the Council of Europe/GRECO, which has gained new momentum as a result of the publication of the first EU Anti-Corruption Report, will greatly contribute to spreading the message. This will also help drive reform, notably by raising the awareness of governments, national parliaments, civil society and the media to the issues at stake.

It is worthy of recalling in this context that membership of GRECO is also open to non-member States of the Council of Europe and so we do count on the Assembly to support the involvement in any joint efforts of countries that have shown interest in our work, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico and Morocco. We would all benefit from these countries being closely associated with the work of GRECO and the Assembly. I am confident that through co-operation and well-structured joint efforts within the Assembly's new anti-corruption cooperation platform, a clear added value will be provided to the overall strategy of the Council of Europe for preventing and fighting corruption.

Mr. Marin Mrčela

President of the Council of Europe's
Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)

Appeals by Parliamentarians engaged in the PACE anti-corruption platform

NATAŠA VUČKOVIĆ

“Corruption is a barrier to efficient policy development”



Corruption has been growing at an alarming rate. We are all aware of the repercussions of corruption and its harmful effect on the economy and the society. It has a destructive effect on human rights. It is a serious threat to the rule of law, stability and security of the European society. Now more than ever the Parliamentary Assembly and our member States should be in the forefront of the fight against this scourge. Parliaments play a prominent role in global efforts to prevent corruption, and citizens from all over Europe are expecting parliamentarians to take the leading role in that fight. Parliaments shall be committed in the adoption of strong anti-corruption legislation, the efficient implementation of existing legislation, the effective oversight over the government. Integrity, accountability and transparency of politicians represent a basic prerequisite for trust and authority of our democratic institutions.

In order to revitalize the role of the Assembly in combating corruption, I have strongly supported the creation of this parliamentary platform, under which parliamentarians will have the opportunity, and the moral obligation, to join in the efforts to curb corruption.

Political will to fight corruption is of the utmost importance, but it should be underpinned by a legal framework that encourages institutions to work. We will not achieve results if we do not nurture an anti-corruption culture in our societies. That brings me to the role of the

media and civil society, which is crucial in both spreading a culture of integrity and in reporting cases of corruption. In this regard, I absolutely welcome the decision to focus the first meeting of the PACE anti-corruption platform on investigative journalism. The efforts to fight against corruption can indeed bring real results only if widely supported by the civil society.

Our work on clamping down corruption in all its forms will be a great example of the added value of a parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe overall strategy on anti-corruption. We can do more by giving the Council of Europe's GRECO political support and by promoting its recommendations within our national parliaments.

I am proud to say that the Serbian National Assembly had the privilege, in December 2013, to host the first seminar organised by the Parliamentary Assembly on the mechanisms available to national parliaments to counter corruption. I see it as an acknowledgment of Serbia's commitment and genuine will to fight against corruption, at all levels and in all fields.

I hope that many colleagues will engage in the PACE anti-corruption platform and work closely for a common cause. I have faith in this new project.

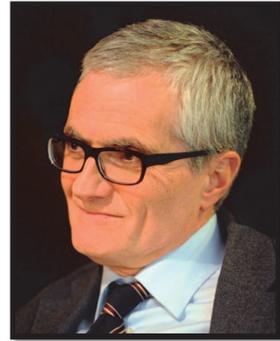
Ms. Nataša Vučković

Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure,
Immunities and Institutional Affairs
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Appeals by Parliamentarians engaged in the PACE anti-corruption platform

MICHELE NICOLETTI

*“We need to drive a change
in behaviour and practices”*



According to the *Corruption Perceptions Index 2013* (Transparency International), Italy is among the most corrupted countries, ranked 69th out of 177. However, internal data differ a lot from this figure. As shown by the *2013 European Quality of Government Index*, there are Italian regions that reflect the same standards of the most virtuous Nordic countries, but the overall situation is negative and a dramatic change is needed in order to reverse it.

This urgency has also been raised by the citizens themselves: as testified by many surveys (see, for example, Special *Europe barometer* n. 397 of 2013), the majority believe in fact that corruption pervades all public institutions. More recently, the European Commission as well has recommended a revision of the legislative and administrative instruments in place to combat the widespread phenomenon of corruption.

In order to face this serious situation, the new Italian Parliament has decided to take the path of change. Many newly elected representatives at the time of their election took a solemn commitment to the fight against corruption for at least three reasons. 1) Respect for the citizens we serve. The bad reputation of a Country does not only constitute a handicap for the ruling class, but also for the citizens, and for young people in particular. The fact that

something that “you are” (being Italian) instead of something that “you do” (corrupt behaviour) can be automatically linked to a negative model of mafia and corruption weakens the sense of self-confidence and the chance of being respected for what you do. 2) Economic development. Corruption is detrimental to the economic well-being not only for the additional cost that it entails (it is in fact estimated that the cost of corruption in Italy can amount up to 60billion euro per year), but also in terms of interests rates on the public debt, which are much higher in countries with a bad reputation. 3) Vitality of the democratic institutions. The idea of political corruption has a negative effect on citizens’ trust in public institutions. The concept of democracy is based on legitimation by the citizens, and if this confidence is missing, the system becomes weaker and other forms of politics, such as populism and authoritarianism, become more attractive.

These commitments go hand in hand with the new Italian anti-corruption strategy, which is focused on three major goals: a more adequate legislation able to ensure transparency and accountability; a stronger action and control by political parties and political actors; and the promotion of strong civil ethics.

I am looking forward to collaborating on these and other topics within the new PACE anti-corruption platform and I invite all PACE members to actively participate in this forum.

Mr. Michele Nicoletti

Member of the Italian delegation and Vice-President of
the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Appeals by Parliamentarians engaged in the PACE anti-corruption platform

CHIORA TAKTAKISHVILI

*“Together we must engage
for a Europe free from corruption”*



In the early 2000s, when I was a student, corruption was number 1 problem in my country, Georgia, a young democracy devastated by the soviet past, the civil war and Russian pressure.

A visiting tourist could perhaps even understand why an insignificant bureaucrat was asking 20 USD of bribe for granting a visa at the airport once he/she knew that the bureaucrat had paid 10.000 USD to get this job, and his monthly salary was 40USD per month and his boss required his 100 USD daily share of the bribe each evening.

Corruption had reached each and every sphere of public life. One could not even enrol in a university without paying a bribe. The other side of the problem was that one could also buy a university diploma without even attending the courses. The same went for getting a job.

Such a situation is not bearable. The choices for young people are extremely limited: to take part in the systemic corruption, to emigrate far from home in search of a better life, or to believe that it is possible to fight against it and to win. Feelings such humiliation, deception, injustice, defencelessness, anger, resistance, are mixed with the strong believe that you deserve a normal life in your own country.

I believed that it was possible, but most important Georgian people believed that we should and we could defeat corruption. It was not easy. Radical reforms cost a lot to the young leadership of the Georgian government issued from the Rose Revolution of 2003.

Georgia now has free of corruption and merit based system of the Unified National Examinations. Hundreds of thousands of students may now enrol in the best Georgian universities and get public funding according to their knowledge and skills. Following radical and sometimes painful reforms, Georgian police and army, the most corrupted and discredited institutions in the past, are now perceived as the cleanest public institutions.

The fight against corruption later evolved in a concept of high performing public services with minimal corruption risks. Anti-corruption transparency and accountability measures were introduced. Georgian anti-corruption reforms were assessed in 2012 as one of the most ambitious and effective by the World Bank.

Unfortunately, the fight against corruption is never an ended task. Georgian anti-corruption reforms have to prove their irreversibility taking into account the power transition in 2012.

I think it is my duty today to support all those in the Council of Europe and its neighbourhood engaged in a difficult fight against corruption in their own countries. This anti-corruption platform provides a perfect venue for such exchange and for the promotion of a Europe free from corruption.

Ms. Chiora Taktakishvili

Member of the Georgian delegation to
the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Appeals by Parliamentarians engaged in the PACE anti-corruption platform

ERNESTO GÁNDARA CAMOU

“Corruption is among the greatest obstacles to development”



Corruption is one of the most serious and harmful problems affecting the citizens that we represent, and it is still a pending task in many countries around the world. Throughout the history, corruption has undermined efforts to efficaciously combat poverty and inequality and to foster economic growth.

In addition to causing moral harm and transgressing the law, corruption is, in just a few words, a serious obstacle to development.

In the last 20 years, Mexico has deployed various efforts in terms of scrutiny, transparency and accountability with the purpose of combating corruption in the public sphere. The creation of the Supreme Audit Office of the federation, the approval of the Federal law on Transparency and Access to Public Information, and, more recently, the emergence of the Special Unit for Matters of Crime Related to Acts of Corruption are clear examples of the actions that Mexico has undertaken throughout this period. Nonetheless, the results are insufficient; at the level of local government there are still major tasks pending.

Based on the foregoing, I firmly believe that the work executed through the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will enable us to exchange and share experiences and best practices in terms of anticorruption efforts to combat this social scourge. Our joint efforts will enable us to identify innovative experiences, operational systems, and performance standards that have worked in other countries and that could contribute to mutual collaboration to strengthen this noble cause.

I trust that within this framework of inter-parliamentary work we may contribute to the prevention, containment and mitigation of the damages caused by this endemic evil, one that knows no culture or borders.

Mr. Ernesto Gándara Camou

President of the Mexican delegation
to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Appeals by Parliamentarians engaged in the PACE anti-corruption platform

GÜLSÜN BILGEHAN

“Promoting and increasing joint anti-corruption efforts is essential”



The impact of corruption in our societies is devastating: it undermines democracy and the rule of law; it generates frustration and widespread public distrust and leads to huge inequalities. Despite the energies and efforts employed in the fight against corruption over the past decades, corruption remains one of the most important challenges that we, as legislators, have the responsibility to take up.

In order to effectively combat corruption in all its forms, greater synergies between decision makers, professionals and the civil society are required and a comprehensive strategy should be implemented with no further delay. The PACE’s new anti-corruption platform should take a leading role in this regard and drive a new process of co-operation, which could be based on three different inter-related elements: condemnation of the corrupt behaviour, assessment of the situation in member and non-member States, and collaboration with civil society representatives.

We have to make sure that corrupted actions are punished. This does not only include effective legislation at national level, but, most important, fostering a culture of integrity. As legislators we have the duty to set a good example for our citizens to follow and to provide them a positive environment.

In order to bring about an effective change, a clear picture of internal challenges, good practices and existing legislation is needed. We need to set some benchmarks permitting to monitor and evaluate the situation throughout the years. The PACE anti-corruption platform, through a strengthened co-operation with the Council of Europe monitoring bodies, is an invaluable tool to promote recommendations and good practices. This would enable the Assembly, in the most tangible way, to support national anti-corruption efforts through very concrete actions.

There will be no success in the fight against corruption without the mobilisation of the civil society. As an elected representative, but also a journalist and a writer, as Vice-Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Media and Information Society, I will strongly support the active involvement of our citizens in this new project. Our success, in fact, does not only depend on the political will, but relies also on the responsiveness of the citizens.

I am more than convinced that through this new parliamentary platform we will be able to achieve many important goals. I am looking forward to collaborating with my colleagues at the PACE in future events.

Ms. Gülsün Bilgehan

Vice-Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Media and Information Society
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Appeals by Parliamentarians engaged in the PACE anti-corruption platform

LILIANA PALIHOVICI

“Corruption is the antithesis of genuine opportunities and potentials”



I entered politics because I strongly believed that I could make a difference: to share my knowledge and experience and to bring real changes to my country. The Republic of Moldova is a country abundant with human potential and business opportunities, but for too long it has been held back by many social and economic issues – and corruption fuels many of these problems.

I have lived in a system where all the wrong things were possible with money and cronyism and I know I never want to go back to those times. I know that is not something I want the next generation to inherit. Back in those days, I was living in a country isolated from the world with rampant poverty, corruption, and a repressive government. As a parliamentarian, I have always sought solutions to existing problems, starting at the local level where people experience corruption in all spheres: in the hospitals, in the schools and kindergartens, or even with the police.

In the past five years our governments have made some strides. We are fighting to reduce corruption with aggressive police reforms. Cameras are being installed throughout the city and police increasingly have cameras recording on their lapels and in their squad cars to help end bribing. We also took measures towards more transparency in the judiciary by

ensuring regular re-evaluation of professional integrity and disciplinary responsibility of judges as part of the anti-corruption law package. Recently, ten judges have been dismissed and one jailed for corruption reasons.

We have fought corruption further with e-governance programs to create more transparency and to save citizens time and money. These are just some of the ways we have been making progress on fighting corruption, but there is still much to do.

I strongly support the initiative launched by the PACE to create a new anti-corruption platform to highlight the major corruption related challenges, both globally and in Europe. We need to focus more on this discussion, to educate our citizens, and to work together to end corruption at all levels. Social and political consequences of corruption are dramatic for children, women, and for the entire nation.

I am excited to team up with the PACE. I look forward to continuing to work with the PACE and our partners against corruption. Our children deserve to live in a Moldova full of opportunities and potential. Corruption is the antithesis of this brighter future and we must stand together to stop it. Let's make Europe and Moldova a place of opportunity and prosperity for all families and children.

Ms. Liliana Palihovici

President of the Moldovan delegation
to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Strengthening the inter-parliamentary dimension of the fight against corruption

An effective strategy on the fight against corruption presupposes political commitment and support at the highest level. Parliaments have indeed the huge responsibility to combat corruption in all its forms and must be at the forefront of promoting good governance at a national level, including by uncovering corrupt circuits at their own ranks.

Creating an inter-parliamentary co-operation platform and further developing parliamentary assistance projects under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly are important measures when it comes to including a parliamentary dimension in the Council of Europe's general machinery for combating corruption. These ground-breaking initiatives help to enhance the effectiveness of the Assembly and to achieve concrete results in the fight against corruption.

The platform offers in fact MPs the opportunity to coordinate their actions and strategies, both at European and national levels, to facilitate an effective exchange of views, and to organise tailored events on specific issues, according to their needs.

The role of parliamentarians is an essential and inalienable part of the Council of Europe's strategy on anti-corruption, given the fact that they can act at the heart of the national decision-making process, and that they can serve as integrity watchdogs within their own institution by reporting about any relevant cases of fraud or good practice.

In particular, parliaments and parliamentarians can:

- collaborate with the executive and any other relevant national institutions in implementing and reinforcing anti-corruption policies and standards;
- play an active role in promoting and designing anti-corruption laws and strategies;
- monitor existing national anti-corruption bodies;
- promote Council of Europe and other international bodies' legislative documents and standards;
- encourage the collaboration with civil society representatives, the media, and any other relevant stakeholders;
- develop ties with other institutions within and outside national borders.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Sharing information, experiences and good practices

This co-operation platform, designed to serve as a regular forum, enables Assembly members to access, through specialist speakers, to comprehensive information of a general nature or about specific corruption issues in a given country or in connection with a specific topic. Being constantly updated about new trends and latest data will permit to respond more quickly and more effectively to today's and tomorrow's challenges.

Within the activities of the platform parliamentarians gain an accurate image of the criminal situation of corruption and priorities in Europe, while the effective exchange of information also permits to set a number of indicators and trends on anti-corruption, to review periodically the situation, and to monitor both the efficiency of policies implemented, as well as the level and forms of corruption in each country. These activities, on one hand, facilitate the promotion of compatible efforts against corruption and, on the other, provide an opportunity for comparative analysis.

In order to come up with appropriate and up-to-date information, specific studies on the phenomenon of corruption and on anti-corruption prevention measures and their efficacy are conducted in collaboration with experts and other organisations. Textbooks for parliamentarians as follow-up to meetings and conferences organised may also be published. For instance, a manual on "reporting on corruption: parliamentarians and journalists investigating together" would enable journalists and parliamentarians to explore together mechanisms, good practices and already existing institutions that allow these two actors to collaborate in cases of corruption and to take the necessary concrete actions. The general purpose of the platform is to always find a way to encourage very concrete actions following each activity promoted.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Supporting national efforts

The platform supports national anti-corruption efforts, not least by making a more active contribution to raising the profile of and promoting Council of Europe conventions and standards, to disseminating the recommendations made by the convention monitoring bodies, and to the exchange of good practices.

The Parliamentary Projects Support Division was set up within the Parliamentary Assembly secretariat in 2012 to help implementing, in association with general committees, specific co-operation involving members and staff of national parliaments with a view to enhance the visibility and impact of the Assembly's work. The aim is to ensure that national parliaments in the member States and parliaments in the observer countries and partners for democracy become better acquainted with the Assembly's key recommendations.

Under an initial project launched by the division in co-operation with the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities, and Institutional Affairs, under the umbrella of the anti-corruption platform, it is planned to hold a series of one-day regional or national seminars for members and secretariats of the parliamentary committees responsible for ethics and the internal functioning of parliaments. Besides being informative, these regular gatherings provide an opportunity to develop ties between committees dealing with similar issues and to establish a better exchange of information. Members of parliamentary assemblies and of other institutions active in the fight against corruption are also invited to take part, thus forging stronger inter-agency ties and improving co-ordination. The idea is to eventually have regular theme-based workshops, in order to provide targeted support in the fight against corruption in connection with specific topics identified in consultation with national parliaments.

The first seminar in this regard was held in Belgrade in December 2013. It addressed the issue of mechanisms available to national parliaments to counter corruption, more precisely how parliaments may prevent and address corruption within their own ranks. The event was a major success, thanks to the support of the Serbian National Assembly and the contributions given by experts and parliamentarians. A second seminar, co-organised with the Italian Chamber of Deputies, is to be held in Rome on 1 July 2014, and will address the issue of "code of conduct for parliamentarians and the prevention of corruption".

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Promoting Council of Europe instruments and standards

The Council of Europe has numerous international anti-corruption instruments which are now seen as global benchmarks. The Group of States against corruption (GRECO), an intergovernmental body which ensures that the measures recommended in these instruments are incorporated into domestic legislation and practice, is a key partner of the Assembly.

Within the platform, consideration might be given to the promotion of the ratification of the two main Council of Europe conventions on anti-corruption: the Civil Law Convention on Corruption and the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption. To date, 34 member States acceded to the Civil Law Convention, and seven signed but have not yet ratified it. The number of ratification of the Criminal Law Convention is quite higher – 45 accessions and 5 signatures –, but the figures fall down when looking at the convention's additional protocol: only 35 member States did ratify it.

Legislators belonging to the countries who have not already ratified these important instruments may take a leading role in promoting the ratification within their national parliaments under the umbrella of the PACE anti-corruption platform. The platform could be actively involved in this process by organising tailored workshops and other events on the promotion and application of these instruments.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Closer cooperation with the GRECO

In order to play an effective role in promoting and entrenching Council of Europe values and standards in the fight against corruption in the member States, parliamentarians can also consider a number of measures to be introduced jointly with the GRECO.

The implementation of recommendations arising from the evaluation missions organised by GRECO in the context of its Third and Fourth Evaluation Rounds fall outside the scope of immediate government action because it concerns the internal functioning of political parties and parliaments. Discussion, even if they were only informal, between GRECO and the national parliamentary delegations about possible implementation measures would contribute to the success of the compliance procedure conducted by GRECO with respect to the states concerned.

At the same time, those parliaments which have not yet undergone a Fourth Round Evaluation procedure could be informed about the good practices and issues identified in the initial evaluations. These issues concern, for example, the increasing transparency of the parliamentary process and the greater use of new technologies to ensure greater public access to draft laws and to parliamentary business, and the participation of interest groups in parliaments' work and parliamentarians' accountability.

Concrete actions may include:

- instituting regular discussions between GRECO evaluators and national parliamentary delegations in preparation for GRECO's evaluation missions;
- preparing summaries of good practices identified by the GRECO during all the evaluation rounds, which could serve as a source of inspiration for legislative activities;
- setting up, in consultation with the GRECO, an interactive database of good practices for political parties and national parliaments;
- enhancing visibility of GRECO's work among national parliaments by, for example, translating detailed recommendations or other working documents for a given country.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Enhancing collaboration with non-member States and other international bodies

The Assembly recognizes that tackling corruption requires a multifaceted approach and a comprehensive network of partnership and alliances. Members of institutions active in the fight against corruption are invited to take part in the platform's activities, thus forging stronger inter-agency ties and fostering cooperation.

Preference will not only be given to international and regional organisations working on anti-corruption, but also to other parliamentary assemblies and groups of parliamentarians, in order to get a wider picture of how the issue is dealt worldwide and to achieve results at a larger scale.

Concerning organisations implicated in the fight against corruption, ties will be developed in particular with the United Nations, thanks to its great expertise acquired over its different bodies, including the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), and the activities prompted under the UN convention on corruption. UNESCO could also provide a privilege forum for discussion on the issue of forging a culture of integrity.

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) - and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) - and Interpol also are important partners, as each of them could contribute to enhance the dialogue on very specific issues. The OAS (Organization of American States) has likewise a unique expertise in the field of preventing and eradicating corruption. Cooperation should thus be promoted also beyond Council of Europe borders.

The European Union is a privileged ally on the issue. EU institutions – in particular the European Parliament and OLAF, the European anti-fraud office – will be invited to participate in our activities. EU full membership in the GRECO would foster co-operation within the anti-corruption platform.

Non-member states as Morocco and other Mediterranean countries, Mexico, and Central Asian Republics, will be strongly encouraged to actively participate in our events, as they are important sources for mutual enrichment and understanding.

Media and NGOs should also be involved, as they are the fundamental *trait d'union* between legislators and civil society.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Promoting greater dialogue with the Committee of Ministers

The last chairmanships of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe have given special attention to the Council of Europe's efforts to combat corruption. When assuming the chairmanship, Austria again stressed the need to continue the efforts in building a stable democratic Europe, underlying that the fight against corruption will continue to figure on the agenda of the Committee of Ministers. Austria, in particular, has worked to ensure effective implementation of Council of Europe instruments and policies capable of helping the various states to address this modern-day challenge.

Among the topical issues that figure on the agenda of the current Azerbaijani Chairmanship, the fight against corruption is the top priority. The Government of Azerbaijan has already planned to organise a high-level conference in Baku on combating corruption, and we expect and encourage the Chairmanship to further expand their initiatives in this field.

On January 2014, the Committee of Ministers replied to the Assembly Recommendation 2019 (2013) on corruption as a threat to the rule of law. The Committee of Ministers concurred with the Assembly on the relevance of the need to provide for appropriate incriminations of corruption offences, to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and to ensure a high level of transparency in political, administrative and economic life. While underlining the leading role of GRECO in this field, the Committee of Ministers considered that there is also room for activities on corruption at the intergovernmental level, as well as for assistance and training activities.

The Parliamentary Assembly platform will engage in a process of actively seeking to persuade the Committee of Ministers to reassess and consolidate the Council of Europe strategy in the field of anti-corruption. There is in fact a strong need to take stock of the successes and failures of the policies undertaken and to assess the effectiveness of the measures implemented, with a view to strengthening the inter-agency mechanisms and given greater prominence to the Council of Europe's evaluation procedures. The platform is looking forward to enhancing dialogue with the Committee of Ministers on the above mentioned issues.

APPENDIX I – List of Council of Europe instruments on the fight against corruption

Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 27 January 1999, ETS No. 173

Civil Law Convention on Corruption, 4 November 1999, ETS No. 174

Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 15 May 2003, ETS No. 191

Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime, 8 November 1990, CETS No. 141

Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism, 16 May 2005, CETS No. 198

Resolution of the Committee of Ministers on the twenty guiding principles for the fight against corruption, 6 November 1997

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on codes of conduct for public officials, 11 May 2000

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns, 8 April 2003

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures against the transfer and the safekeeping of funds of criminal origins, 27 June 1980

<http://conventions.coe.int/>

http://www.coe.int/T/CM/adoptedTexts_en.asp

APPENDIX II – List of Parliamentary Assembly texts of reference on anti-corruption

Resolution 1943 (2013), *Corruption as a threat to the rule of law*

Recommendation 2019 (2013), *Corruption as a threat to the rule of law*, and Committee of Ministers' reply to the recommendation

Resolution 1903 (2012), *Code of conduct of members of the parliamentary Assembly: good practice or a core duty?*

Recommendation 1896 (2010), *Judicial corruption*

Resolution 1703 (2010), *Judicial corruption*

Resolution 1492 (2006), *Poverty and the fight against corruption in the Council of Europe member states*

Recommendation 1516 (2001), *Financing of Political parties*

Resolution 1214 (2000), *Role of parliaments in fighting corruption*

APPENDIX III – List of other relevant international and regional instruments

African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, 2006

UN Convention against Corruption, 2005

SADC Protocol against Corruption, 2005

EU Convention against Corruption involving Officials, 2005

UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2003

OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transaction, 1999

OAS Inter-American Convention against Corruption, 1997

Why a parliamentary platform on anti-corruption?

- ▶ to give a strong political message to the international and local communities;
- ▶ to act at the heart of the national decision-making process;
- ▶ to change attitudes and to promote a culture of integrity;
- ▶ to translate the Assembly's initiatives into practical action on the ground;
- ▶ to give the Council of Europe's overall strategy on anti-corruption a strong parliamentary dimension;
- ▶ to raise the profile of the Parliamentary Assembly and to strengthen its role as human rights watchdog;
- ▶ to take concrete steps to eradicate all forms of corruption in Europe and beyond.

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