

**Question for written answer E-002967/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Auke Zijlstra (ENF)

Subject: Corruption at the Council of Europe

A corruption enquiry is brewing at the Council of Europe (CoE) following a statement from Luca Volonte (PPE) that he received money from the Azerbaijani member Suleymanov in return for support for Azerbaijan.

The reaction from the CoE's parliamentary assembly rapporteur, Pedro Agramunt (PPE), is not reassuring. He describes the accusations as a disgrace and wants to deal with the Amnesty International and Transparency International messengers instead of the CoE itself.

The corruption enquiry and the possible existence of a corruption network in the CoE¹ is particularly alarming because it is the CoE itself that appoints judges at the European Court of Human Rights (Court). It is important to note in this respect that all EU Member States are bound to the rulings of the Court as the highest judicial authority.

1. Does the Commission, in view of the shadowy appointment procedures for judges, consider that Member States are still obliged to be unconditionally bound to the Court's rulings?
2. Does the Commission take the view that additional requirements should be laid down regarding the integrity of the CoE, which appoints the judges of the Court?
3. Given that the appointment procedure for judges is carried out by an institution that is being accused of corruption, is the Commission reconsidering its position of binding the EU as an institution to the rulings of the Court?

¹ <https://www.transparency.nl/nieuws/2017/02/kaviaardiplomatie-corruptienetwerk-raad-van-europa/>
<http://www.elsevier.nl/buitenland/achtergrond/2017/01/paniek-bij-raad-van-europa-vanwege-mogelijk-corruptieonderzoek-442636/>