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*****I**

DRAFT REPORT

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political
foundations
(COM(2012)0499 – C7-0288/2012 – 2012/0237(COD))

Committee on Constitutional Affairs

Rapporteur: Marietta Giannakou

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

Amendments to a draft act

In amendments by Parliament, amendments to draft acts are highlighted in ***bold italics***. Highlighting in *normal italics* is an indication for the relevant departments showing parts of the draft act which may require correction when the final text is prepared – for instance, obvious errors or omissions in a language version. Suggested corrections of this kind are subject to the agreement of the departments concerned.

The heading for any amendment to an existing act that the draft act seeks to amend includes a third line identifying the existing act and a fourth line identifying the provision in that act that Parliament wishes to amend. Passages in an existing act that Parliament wishes to amend, but that the draft act has left unchanged, are highlighted in **bold**. Any deletions that Parliament wishes to make in such passages are indicated thus: [...].

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations (COM(2012)0499 – C7-0288/2012 – 2012/0237(COD))

(Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to Parliament and the Council (COM(2012)0499),
 - having regard to Articles 294(2) and 224 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, pursuant to which the Commission submitted the proposal to Parliament (C7-0288/2012),
 - having regard to Article 294(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee of ...¹,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of ...²,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to its resolution of 6 April 2011 on the application of Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 on the regulations governing political parties at European level and the rules regarding their funding³,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on Budgets (A7-0000/2012),
1. Adopts its position at first reading hereinafter set out;
 2. Calls on the Commission to refer the matter to Parliament again if it intends to amend its proposal substantially or replace it with another text;
 3. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.

¹

²

³ OJ C 296 E, 2.10.2012, p. 46.

Amendment 1

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 1 a new

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(1a) The European Union is required to function on the basis of the principle of representative democracy, as stated in Article 10(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

Or. en

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(9) The European political parties and the European political foundations should be governed by the substantive rules set out in this Regulation, and by national law in the Member States, in particular that of the Member State where they have their respective seat ***and for the purposes of which they should identify the appropriate legal form, which must correspond to a form of legal entity recognised in the legal order of that Member State.***

(9) The European political parties and the European political foundations should be governed by the substantive rules set out in this Regulation, and, ***in matters not, or only partly, regulated by this Regulation or their respective statutes,*** by national law in the Member States, in particular that of the Member State where they have their respective seat.

Or. en

Justification

See amendment on Article 4 (1) (c).

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation Recital 26

Text proposed by the Commission

(26) The European Parliament should verify regularly that the conditions and requirements related to the registration and funding of European political parties or European political foundations continue to be met. This verification should be carried out annually, or following a motivated request by any natural or legal person. Decisions related to respect for *the* values *on which the Union is founded* should only be taken in accordance with a procedure specifically designed to this effect, *and in consultation with a committee of independent eminent persons.*

Amendment

(26) The European Parliament should verify regularly that the conditions and requirements related to the registration and funding of European political parties or European political foundations continue to be met. This verification should be carried out annually, or following a motivated and duly justified request by any natural or legal person. *Where such a request alleges failure to respect the values on which the Union is founded, the European Parliament should ask its committee for constitutional affairs to give an opinion on that allegation within two months from receipt thereof, and to carry out all appropriate investigations.* Decisions related to respect for *those* values should only be taken in accordance with a procedure specifically designed to this effect.

Or. en

Justification

The committee responsible to deal with the verification of the registration requirements should be the one responsible for constitutional matters within the European Parliament. The amendment proposed introduces the most effective way of verification and evaluation.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 – point 1

Text proposed by the Commission

(1) 'political party' means an association of citizens which pursues political objectives,

Amendment

(1) 'political party' means an association of citizens which pursues political objectives *and which is either recognised by, or established in accordance with, the legal order of at least one Member State,*

Justification

To make sure that only parties which are legally correct, also with regard to their internal democratic order, can be taken into account for the registration conditions. This wording is identical with the Regulation which is in force (Article 2 (1)).

Amendment 5**Proposal for a regulation****Article 2 – point 4 – introductory wording***Text proposed by the Commission*

(4) ‘European political foundation’ means an entity which is formally affiliated with a European political party, has its statutes registered with the European Parliament in accordance with the conditions and procedures laid down in this Regulation, and which through its activities, within the aims and fundamental values pursued by the European Union, underpins and complements the objectives of the European political party by performing one or several of the following tasks:

Amendment

(4) ‘European political foundation’ means an entity which is formally **and directly** affiliated with a European political party, has its statutes registered with the European Parliament in accordance with the conditions and procedures laid down in this Regulation, and which through its activities, within the aims and fundamental values pursued by the European Union, underpins and complements the objectives of the European political party by performing one or several of the following tasks:

Or. en

Amendment 6**Proposal for a regulation****Article 2 – point 5***Text proposed by the Commission*

(5) ‘regional Parliament’ or ‘regional assembly’ means a body **whose members either hold a regional electoral mandate or are politically accountable to an elected assembly**,

Amendment

(5) 'regional' Parliament or 'regional assembly' means a body **with legislative powers under the national law applicable to it and notified to the European Parliament**,

Or. en

Justification

Having in mind the multitude of regional political bodies and entities with strongly diverging functions and powers, this amendment reiterates a request made by the European Parliament in its resolution of 6 April 2011 (paragraph 14). The purpose is to make sure that a European political party is a factor of the political life in the Member States at a certain level before it can be registered. The appreciation of whether parliaments or assemblies belong to this category can be left to the Member States.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Within two months of the entry into force of this Regulation and within two months of any subsequent change in their national legal order, Member States shall notify the European Parliament of their regional parliaments and their regional assemblies within the meaning of point (5) of paragraph 1.

Or. en

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 1 – point b – subparagraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(b) it must be represented, in at least one quarter of the Member States, by Members of the European Parliament or ***in the*** national Parliaments, regional Parliaments or ***regional*** assemblies, or

(b) it ***or its member parties*** must be represented, in at least one quarter of the Member States, by Members of the European Parliament, or ***by members of*** national Parliaments ***or by members of*** regional Parliaments or assemblies, or

Or. en

Justification

The words "or its member-parties" have been added as most of times the European political party is not directly represented in parliaments but indirectly through national parties belonging to it, as defined in Article 2 (2) of the Regulation. See also amendment on Article 2 (5).

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 1 – point e a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(ea) it must ensure gender representation in its internal bodies and promote gender parity in the composition of electoral lists.

Or. en

Justification

It is important for European political parties and foundations, among other values and criteria, to promote the representativity and the gender equality in their internal bodies.

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(a) it must be affiliated with a European political party recognised in accordance with the conditions and procedures laid down in this Regulation, as certified by the registered statutes of that party,

(a) it must be ***formally and directly*** affiliated with a European political party recognised in accordance with the conditions and procedures laid down in this Regulation, as certified by the registered statutes of that party,

Or. en

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(c) the legal form of the party, as recognised in the legal order of the Member State in which it has its seat,

deleted

Or. en

Justification

The legal construction as proposed by the Commission means that, before a "political alliance" can apply for being registered in order to obtain legal personality under Union-law, it must already have and maintain a legal personality under the law of one Member State. It must also have and maintain its seat in the same Member State (see Article 3 (1) (a), Article 4 (1) (c), Article 10 (2) and Article 11 (4). The legal personality under Union law has to be seen therefore as merely complementing and "over-arching" a pre-existing legal personality based on the law of one Member State. This was not the intention of the promoters of a statute for the European political parties as formulated by Parliament in its resolution of 6 April 2011: "... is convinced that authentic legal status for the European political parties and a legal personality of their own, based directly on the law of the European Union, will enable the European political parties and their foundations to act as representative agents of the European public interest." (paragraph 8). Besides being politically inopportune such a "double legal personality" is not necessary either.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation

Article 4 – paragraph 2 – point e a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(e a) respect for, and the promotion of, gender equality in the party's internal bodies and the promotion of gender parity in the composition of electoral lists,

Or. en

Justification

See amendment on Article 3 (1) (e) (new).

Amendment 13

**Proposal for a regulation
Article 6 – paragraph 4**

Text proposed by the Commission

4. A political foundation may register its statutes with the Registry only through the European political party with which it is affiliated.

Amendment

4. A political foundation may register its statutes with the Registry only through the European political party with which it is ***formally and directly*** affiliated.

Or. en

Amendment 14

**Proposal for a regulation
Article 7 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 1**

Text proposed by the Commission

1. The European Parliament shall verify annually that the conditions and requirements set out in Articles 3, 4 and 5 continue to be met by the European political parties and the European political foundations.

Amendment

1. The European Parliament shall verify annually that the conditions and requirements set out in Articles 3, 4 and 5 continue to be met by the European political parties and the European political foundations. ***A failure by a European political party, including its members, or by a European political foundation to respect the values on which the Union is founded may only be established in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article.***

Or. en

Justification

As it stands, the routine annual verification by Parliament covers also the respect for the basic values of the Union (Article 3 (1) (c)). Thus Parliament would decide on this occasion, as the case may be on ending the registration because of non-respect of these values. It should

be made clear that this most sensible sanction may only be decided by way of the procedure laid down in Article 7 (2) which offers the adequate safeguards.

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation

Article 7 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Before reaching its decision, the European Parliament shall hear the representatives of the European political party or European political foundation concerned and ask **a committee of independent eminent persons** to give an opinion **on the subject** within **a reasonable time period**.

Amendment

Before reaching its decision, the European Parliament shall hear the representatives of the European political party or European political foundation concerned and ask **its committee responsible for constitutional affairs** to give an opinion within **two months from the request**.

Or. en

Justification

See amendment on Recital 26.

Amendment 16

Proposal for a regulation

Article 7 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

This committee shall consist of three members, with the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission each appointing one member within six months after the end of the first session of the European Parliament following elections to the European Parliament. The secretariat and funding of the committee shall be provided by the European Parliament.

Amendment

deleted

Or. en

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation Article 7 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

3. Any natural or legal person may, at any moment, introduce a motivated request to the European Parliament to verify that one or more of the conditions and requirements referred to in paragraph 1 continue to be met. A breach of the values on which the Union is founded by a European political party, including its members, or a European political foundation can only be established in accordance with paragraph 2.

Amendment

3. Any natural or legal person may, at any moment, introduce a motivated ***and duly justified*** request to the European Parliament to verify that one or more of the conditions and requirements referred to in paragraph 1 continue to be met. A breach of the values on which the Union is founded by a European political party, including its members, or a European political foundation can only be established in accordance with paragraph 2 ***of this article***.

Or. en

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation Article 8

Text proposed by the Commission

The European political party and the European political foundation shall ***have*** legal personality, ***which it shall acquire on the date on which it is entered in the Registry in accordance with Article 6.***

Amendment

The European political party and the European political foundation shall ***acquire*** legal personality ***under the law of the European Union upon the date of publication in the Official Journal of the European Union of the decision adopted by the European Parliament pursuant to Article 6(5).***

Or. en

Justification

Clarification

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation Article 9 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

The European political party and the European political foundation shall have full legal **recognition and** capacity in all Member States.

Amendment

1. The European political party and the European political foundation shall have full legal capacity in all Member States.

Or. en

Justification

Full legal capacity implies "legal recognition".

Amendment 20

Proposal for a regulation Article 9 – paragraph 1 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

1a. Unless restricted by its statutes, the European political party and the European political foundation shall have all rights necessary to pursue their activities, including the right to own movable and immovable property. Where necessary for the pursuance of their activities, they shall have the right of establishment in any Member State and may, unless restricted by their statutes, carry out activities in third countries.

Or. en

Amendment 21

Proposal for a regulation Article 9 – paragraph 1 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

1b. If acts have been performed in the name of the European political party or the European political foundation before registration in accordance with Articles 3 and 6, and the European political party or European political foundation in question does not assume the obligations arising out of such acts, the natural persons, parties or legal entities which performed those acts shall be jointly and severally liable therefor.

Or. en

Justification

Clarifies the situation with regard to liability under national legislation before the registration of a European political party or its affiliated foundation.

Amendment 22

Proposal for a regulation Article 9 – paragraph 1 c (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

1c. The designations "European political party" and "European political foundation" may be used only by political alliances or foundations registered in conformity with this Regulation.

Or. en

Justification

Necessary to enhance the standing of genuine European parties and foundations and to prevent abuses.

Amendment 23

Proposal for a regulation Article 10 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

2. For matters *not* regulated by this Regulation *or, where matters are partly regulated by it, for those aspects not covered by it*, the European political party and the European political foundation shall be governed *in the Member State in which it has its seat by those national laws applicable to the legal form referred to in the party or foundation statutes*. Activities carried out by the European political party and the European political foundation in other Member States shall be governed by the relevant national laws of those Member States.

Amendment

2. *In matters that are not, or that are only partly, regulated by this Regulation or by the respective statutes*, the European political party and the European political foundation shall be governed *by the laws of the Member State in which it has its seat*. Activities carried out by the European political party and the European political foundation in other Member States shall be governed by the relevant national laws of those Member States.

Or. en

Justification

The Commission proposal refers to the provisions which, in the Member State where the party or foundation has its seats, are applicable to the legal form which the party or foundation has chosen. This is another expression of the concept of a "parallel-party" existing under the law of a Member State and the law of the Union, which is not necessary and inadequate (see also amendments on Articles 4(1c) and 11 (4)).

Amendment 24

Proposal for a regulation Article 11 – paragraph 4

Text proposed by the Commission

4. Winding up, insolvency, cessation of payments and similar procedures shall be governed by the legal provisions which apply to *the legal form referred to in the statutes of the European political party or the European political foundation* in the Member State *in which it has its seat*.

Amendment

4. Winding up, insolvency, cessation of payments and similar procedures shall be governed by the legal provisions which apply to political *parties* or political *foundations* in the Member State *where the European political party or the European political foundation in question*

has its seat.

Or. en

Justification

Complements Article 10 as modified with regard to procedures which have to take place in a predetermined locality.

Amendment 25

Proposal for a regulation
Article 12 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

1. A European political party registered in accordance with ***the conditions and procedures laid down in*** this Regulation, ***which is represented*** in the European Parliament by at least one of its members, ***and which is not in one of the situations of exclusion referred to in Article [93] of the Financial Regulation*** may apply for funding from the general budget of the European Union, in ***accordance*** with the terms and conditions published by the European Parliament ***in a call for [contributions]***.

Amendment

1. A European political party ***which is*** registered in accordance with this Regulation ***while being represented in at least one quarter of the Member States by political parties within the meaning of point (1) of Article 2, and*** in the European Parliament by at least one of its members, may apply for funding from the general budget of the European Union. ***Applications for funding must be made in conformity*** with the terms and conditions published by the European Parliament. ***The European political party may not be in a situation of exclusion as defined in the Financial Regulation.***

Or. en

Justification

Registration of, and by this, recognition as, a political party on the level of the Union on the one hand and eligibility for funding on the other have to be distinguished and treated in a different manner. While registration as a party is possible for a political alliance which consists of natural persons sitting in national, regional Parliaments or regional assemblies of at least one quarter of the Member States (Articles 3 1. (b), funding should require a higher degree of representativity.

Amendment 26

Proposal for a regulation Article 12 – paragraph 4

Text proposed by the Commission

4. Financial contributions or grants from the general budget of the European Union may not exceed 90% of the annual reimbursable expenditure of a European political party and 95% of the annual eligible costs indicated in the budget of a European political foundation. European political parties may use any unused part of the EU contribution awarded to cover reimbursable expenditure within the following two financial years after its award. Amounts unused following those two financial years shall be recovered in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

Amendment

4. Financial contributions or grants from the general budget of the European Union may not exceed 90% of the annual reimbursable expenditure of a European political party and 95% of the annual eligible costs indicated in the budget of a European political foundation. European political parties ***and their affiliated European political foundations*** may use any unused part of the EU contribution ***or grant*** awarded to cover reimbursable expenditure within the following two financial years after its award. Amounts unused following those two financial years shall be recovered in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

Or. en

Amendment 27

Proposal for a regulation Article 13 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

3. A European political foundation shall include in its application its annual work programme.

Amendment

3. A European political foundation shall include in its application its annual work programme ***and may apply for funding from the general budget of the European Union only through the European political party with which it is formally and directly affiliated.***

Or. en

Amendment 28

Proposal for a regulation

Article 14 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 1 – indent 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

– 15 % shall be distributed in equal shares,

– 10 % shall be distributed in equal shares,

Or. en

Justification

Parties represented in the European Parliament have a higher degree of representativity compared to others (see also amendment on article 12 (1) and should therefore benefit more from funding.

Amendment 29

Proposal for a regulation

Article 14 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 1 – indent 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

– 85 % shall be distributed in proportion to their share of elected members of the European Parliament among the beneficiary European political parties.

– 90 % shall be distributed in proportion to their share of elected members of the European Parliament among the beneficiary European political parties.

Or. en

Justification

Parties represented in the European Parliament have a higher degree of representativity compared to others (see also amendment on article 12 (1) and should therefore benefit more from funding.

Amendment 30

Proposal for a regulation

Article 17 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

1. The funding of European political

1. The funding of European political

parties from the general budget of the European Union or from any other source may be used to finance campaigns conducted by the European political parties in the context of the elections to the European Parliament, in which they participate as required in Article 3(1)(d).

parties from the general budget of the European Union or from any other source may be used to finance campaigns conducted by the European political parties in the context of the elections to the European Parliament, in which they participate as required in Article 3(1)(d).

Subject to the limitations laid down in Article 18(1), the European political parties may support individual members or member parties and may contribute to the dissemination of information to the public in order to raise awareness of significant European policy matters. In so doing, they must observe the rules governing the conduct of election campaigns in the respective Member States, notably the rules applicable to parties and candidates on funding and on the limitation of election expenses.

In accordance with Article 8 of the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, the funding and limitation of election expenses for all parties and candidates at elections to the European Parliament is governed in each Member State by national provisions.

Or. en

Justification

The European political parties suffer from legal certainty as to what they are allowed to do in European election-campaigns. This hampers them in fulfilling the function which Article 10(4) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 12(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union confer on them, namely "to contribute ...to expressing the will of the citizens of the Union".

Amendment 31

Proposal for a regulation Article 18 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

3. The funding of European political parties and European political foundations from the general budget of the European Union or from any other source shall not be used to finance national, regional or local referenda campaigns.

Amendment

3. The funding of European political parties and European political foundations from the general budget of the European Union or from any other source shall not be used to finance national, regional or local referenda campaigns, ***except where the referenda in question deal with questions relating to the European Union.***

Or. en

Justification

This amendment reiterates a demand Parliament made in its resolution of 6 April 2011 (paragraph 11). Referenda are more and more elements of participatory democracy in the Member States. There is indeed no reason why European political parties and foundations should be excluded from this kind of democratic process as long as the questions at stake are related to the European Union.

Amendment 32

Proposal for a regulation Article 20 – paragraph 3 – subparagraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

3. The ***competent national authorities in the Member State in which the*** European political parties and European political foundations ***have their respective seat shall, in accordance with Article 10(2), exercise control over the funding received*** from sources other than the budget of the European Union, and all expenditure. ***Such control shall be exercised in cooperation with the European Parliament and the competent national authorities in other Member States.***

Amendment

3. The ***European Parliament shall exercise control over the funding received by*** European political parties and European political foundations from sources other than the budget of the European Union, and all expenditure ***thereby.***

Justification

The European Parliament should be, besides the Court of Auditors, an external auditor and OLAF, the principal control authority.

Amendment 33

Proposal for a regulation

Article 20 – paragraph 3 – subparagraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

The national authorities and the European Parliament ***shall*** agree practical arrangements in order to share information ***on the European political parties and the European political foundations.***

Amendment

To that end, the European Parliament ***may*** agree ***with national authorities*** practical arrangements in order to share information.

Justification

The European Parliament should be, besides the Court of Auditors, an external auditor and OLAF, the principal control authority.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

European political party development is critical for the activation of public interest in EU affairs. Designing a reform package for European political parties as a means of mobilizing the democratic energies of individual and organized citizens is not an easy task, not least due to the EU's systemic complexity. But this may be turned into an advantage, should one clarify the 'constitutive mission' of European political parties and how an informed and principled dialogue on their political development can facilitate the emergence of a plural demos.

The rapporteur strongly welcomes the establishment of a special and uniform European legal status under the Union law for the European political parties and their political foundations for the reasons especially of organisational convergence European political parties. The reforms proposed by the Secretary General report of 2010, the Bureau decisions of the 13th December 2011, the Giannakou report of 6th April 2011 on the evaluation of the application of the previous Regulation 2004/2003 as amended in 2007, and the new proposal for a Regulation both for the European political parties and their political foundations are the result of thorough analysis of the present situation, providing an overall positive answer to the questions, preoccupations and remarks of the European political parties. In the draft report the proposals are oriented towards an organisational uniformity of the European political parties.

With regard to the recognition criteria, the rapporteur proposes that only national or regional parties should be entitled to set up a European party. For the formation of European Parties, the Statute for European Parties takes equal account of European, national and regional elected representatives. The possibility of recognition of regional elected representatives should therefore be retained for the purpose of forming parties but only in the case of regions with legislative powers notified as such to the European Parliament. To be funded by the European Parliament, a European political party must be represented in the European Parliament by at least one MEP. Furthermore, it should be taken into consideration the criteria of fully respected internal democracy and gender equality in the composition and in the formation of the European political parties and within their affiliated European political foundations. A party that does not fulfil the internal democracy condition does not count for the requirement of being represented in at least seven Member States.

The European Parliament shall verify annually the conditions and registration criteria of the European Political Parties and their European political foundations. The rapporteur believes that this verification should be carried out annually or following a motivated and duly justified request by any natural or legal person and that the most effective procedure will be that of the responsible committee for the constitutional affairs of the European Parliament. This committee shall organize any hearing to this end and shall give its opinion to the European Parliament within two months from the request.