OPINION

of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

for the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

on transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions
(2015/2041(INI))

Rapporteur: Sylvie Guillaume
PA_NonLeg
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs calls on the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission’s announcement of its intention to present, in 2016, a proposal for an inter-institutional agreement revising the Transparency Register for representatives of interest groups; insists that the consultations preceding the proposal take account, in a balanced way, of the different points of view expressed; believes that the level of transparency must be raised by establishing a mandatory EU register;

2. Calls for the use of a legislative footprint for EU lobbying on a voluntary basis; points in this regard to the possibility of introducing annexes to Commission proposals and Parliament reports, clearly indicating which lobbyists had a substantial effect on the text of these proposals and reports; encourages MEPs and Council representatives to voluntarily publish information about their meetings with stakeholders, as is the practice of the Commission;

3. Calls upon those European institutions that have introduced codes of conduct, including Parliament, to step up their monitoring and implementation measures, such as checks on declarations of financial interests; notes that monitoring and sanctioning bodies must be politically independent;

4. Welcomes the Commission’s intention of publishing a report every two years on the state of play with regard to corruption in the EU; calls on the Commission to submit without any further delay an addendum to its first anti-corruption report describing in detail the situation within the EU institutions from this point of view;

5. Calls on the Commission, in order to ensure that the institutions uphold the anti-corruption standards of the Council of Europe, to continue with discussions on the EU’s accession to the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) with a view to establishing a provisional timeline for this accession;

6. Regrets the limited progress made in ensuring the protection of whistleblowers and journalists, who can play a significant role in the fight against corruption; also regrets, therefore, that the Commission has not responded to Parliament’s request to examine the possibility of establishing a European whistleblower protection programme; calls on the Commission to present a communication on this subject by the end of 2016 based on an assessment of the situation regarding whistleblower rules at national level, and to consider a possible plan for setting up minimum rules on whistleblowers;

7. Regrets also the lack of progress in addressing abuse of defamation laws in order to intimidate journalists and others investigating corruption; calls in particular on the Commission to initiate a discussion on legislation supporting the repeal of criminal penalties for defamation in the Member States;

8. Feels that a strong and independent European Public Prosecutor’s Office, with clearly defined competences and responsibilities, will help to combat offences against the
Union’s financial interests and to investigate, prosecute and bring to justice the perpetrators of offences against the Union’s financial interests; considers that any weaker solution would be detrimental to the Union budget; encourages the Council to give a new impetus to the negotiations on the PIF Directive in order to strengthen the existing legal framework and to enhance the efficiency of the protection of EU financial interests;

9. Deplores the deadlock in the Council on the revision of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 on public access to documents; urges the Council to adopt a constructive position, taking into account the Position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading on 15 December 2011 and the requirements of the Treaty of Lisbon; notes that few of Parliament’s recommendations regarding transparency and access to documents have been implemented; recalls that transparency enhances public trust in the EU institutions by allowing citizens to be informed about the EU decision-making process; citizens should be informed accurately and in good time; reiterates, therefore, that transparency of the EU’s administration and law-making process is essential to the legitimacy of EU legislation and policies; emphasises that transparency is a cornerstone of ‘better regulation’;

10. Reiterates its recommendation that each EU institution or body appoint from within its existing management structures a Transparency Officer to be responsible for compliance with the rules;

11. Recalls the need to improve the transparency of legislative negotiations, including trialogues; notes, therefore, that their transparency should be increased by reporting in the competent parliamentary committee on the state of play of the trilogue negotiations; notes in particular that, under Rule 73(4) of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure, after each trilogue the negotiating team must report to the committee responsible and make available to it documents reflecting the outcome of the trilogue; calls, therefore, for both the oral report and the documents to contain detailed information on the state of the trilogue negotiations; calls furthermore for a list of the dates of trilogue meetings and the names of the direct participants to be made publicly accessible;

12. Stresses the importance of allowing adequate time between the achievement of a final agreement in any given trilogue and the vote of confirmation in the competent committee, so that members of the competent committee are able to read the text and discuss it in their political groups before the final vote in committee;

13. Calls for increased transparency on the EU Agencies and their relations with other EU bodies; stresses the importance of transparent processes of nomination, election and appointment of Agency representatives, especially in cases where Parliament is included;

14. Considers that the Commission’s first biennial anti-corruption report was a promising attempt to oversee corruption in the Member States; calls on the Commission to include an analysis of corruption risks in the EU institutions in the forthcoming 2016 report, along with an overview of the greatest corruption problems in the Member States, policy recommendations to tackle them and follow-up measures to be taken by the Commission, taking specific account of the detrimental impact of corrupt activities on the functioning of the Internal Market.
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>16.2.2016</th>
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| **Result of final vote** | +: 49  
|--: 1  
|0: 6 |
| **Members present for the final vote** | Jan Philipp Albrecht, Michał Boni, Caterina Chinnici, Ignazio Corrao, Rachida Dati, Agustín Diaz de Mera García Consuegra, Frank Engel, Cornelia Ernst, Tanja Fajon, Laura Ferrara, Monika Flašíková Beňová, Lorenzo Fontana, Kinga Gál, Nathalie Griesbeck, Sylvie Guillaume, Jussi Halla-aho, Monika Hohlmeier, Brice Hortefeux, Sophia in ’t Veld, Eva Joly, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann, Timothy Kirkhope, Barbara Kudrycka, Kashetu Kyenge, Marju Lauristin, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Monica Macovei, Roberta Metsola, Claude Moraes, József Nagy, Péter Niedermüller, Soraya Post, Judith Sargentini, Birgit Sippel, Branislav Škripek, Helga Stevens, Traian Ungureanu, Bodil Valero, Udo Voigt, Josef Weidenholzer, Cecilia Wikström, Kristina Winberg, Tomáš Zdechovský |
| **Substitutes present for the final vote** | Marina Albiol Guzmán, Carlos Coelho, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Pál Csáky, Daniel Dalton, Dennis de Jong, Gérard Deprez, Anna Hedh, Petr Ježek, Emil Radev, Christine Revault D’Allonnes Bonnefoy, Barbara Spinelli, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi |