



Resolution 1214 (2000)¹

Role of parliaments in fighting corruption

Parliamentary Assembly

1. A parliament is a country's central institution, in its capacity as the primary expression of the people's will, and therefore has a paramount responsibility for combating corruption in all its forms, especially in public life but increasingly also in the economy at large. Parliaments must undertake this task for the general morality of society, but also for its lasting economic progress which vitally depends on honesty and trust. As Europe - and the world - come together, this struggle becomes both more complex and urgent. The Council of Europe, its Parliamentary Assembly and national parliaments must be in the forefront of promoting good governance in Europe and worldwide and of raising awareness of the dangers of corruption.
2. The fight against corruption is rendered all the more difficult as economic competition between companies, countries and groups of countries intensifies, including in the field of industrial espionage; as sums involved increase along with the size of deals; and as public morals may loosen. If parliaments, as the last bastions against corruption, are themselves affected by it, the battle may well be lost.
3. The Assembly, recalling inter alia its [Resolution 1147 \(1998\)](#) on the threat to Europe of economic crime and the joint Council of Europe-World Bank Conference on the Role of Parliaments in Fighting Corruption it organised in Riga in March 1999, welcomes the Council of Europe's intensifying efforts to fight corruption. In particular, it welcomes the Council's 1999 Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, its new Civil Law Convention on Corruption and the Guiding Principles for the Fight Against Corruption drawn up in 1998 by the Council's Multidisciplinary Group on Corruption. It calls for the rapid ratification, by all Council of Europe states and others, of these conventions and for their early entry into force.
4. The Assembly also encourages the Council of Europe to step up co-operation with, in particular, the OECD on its Convention on Bribery of Foreign and Public Officials in International Business Transactions and with the European Union on its Convention on Corruption Involving Officials of Communities or Officials of Member States of the European Union, as well as within the joint Council of Europe-EU Octopus Programme.
5. The Assembly also asks its Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) to assess at least every two years the progress made in the fight against corruption, considering corruption's negative impact on the upholding by countries of Council of Europe standards.
6. In order successfully to fight corruption, parliaments - in their capacity as a country's supreme political authority and instance of control - should, where applicable:
 - a. ensure that state institutions - including parliaments themselves - are so transparent and accountable as to be able to withstand corruption or permit its rapid exposure;
 - b. instil in their own ranks the notion that parliamentarians have a duty not only to obey the letter of the law, but to set an example of incorruptibility to society as a whole by implementing and enforcing their own codes of conduct;
 - c. introduce an annual system for the establishment of a declaration of financial interests by parliamentarians and their direct family;

1. Assembly debate on 5 April 2000 (13th Sitting) (see [Doc. 8652](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteurs: MM. Leers and Tallo). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 April 2000 (13th Sitting).



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- d.* create clear and fair legislation, including efficient public supervision, as regards the funding of political parties and election campaigns. The proper declaration of sources of income and of potential conflicts of interest is particularly important;
- e.* safeguard the strength of civil liberties, in particular press freedom and the ability of citizens to form associations for informing the public, including through freedom of information acts;
- f.* protect the independence of the judiciary and the media;
- g.* have all public expenditure, revenue collection and public procurement checked either by an independent auditing body or, where necessary for state security or other reasons, by a competent parliamentary instance. It is also important to check the system for vetting the activities and credibility of NGOs receiving government grants;
- h.* take special measures to protect the position and career prospects of “whistleblowers”, that is to say, officials who unmask and report cases of corruption; and establish, where this has not yet been done, a code of conduct for civil servants and public officials;
- i.* enact legislation providing for adequate and precise sanctions against those who engage in corruption;
- j.* as far as possible, simplify regulations, permits, administrative procedures and the like, since these open up possibilities to exact or receive bribes;
- k.* resolutely fight organised crime, given its role as a primary vehicle for corruption;
- l.* enhance competition in economic life through clear and fair legislation, by taking a firm stand against monopolies and oligopolies, by reducing subsidies to companies and economic sectors, and by enhancing public scrutiny over the launching and implementation of public projects;
- m.* in view of the growing international dimension of corruption, support international co-operation instruments such as those outlined in paragraph 3 above;
- n.* engage civil society in an ongoing debate on corruption from school onwards and involve it in the progress made in the fight against corruption.