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Transparency and openness in European institutions

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2094 (2016)
Committee of Ministers

The Committee of Ministers has taken good note of Recommendation 2094 (2016) of the Parliamentary Assembly on "Transparency and openness in European institutions" and has forwarded it to the various bodies concerned for information and possible comments.[2]

The Committee of Ministers considers that transparency, openness and participation are fundamental aspects of democracy. It welcomes the work being done by the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) to prepare a draft recommendation on the regulation of lobbying activities in the context of public decision making. It notes that the draft text, which contains principles relating to transparency, takes account of the comments received following a broad consultation of the relevant stakeholders. This work is on the point of being finalised and the Committee of Ministers will give close attention to its outcome.

Reference should also be made to the work being carried out by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in the context of its Fourth Evaluation Round concerning the prevention of corruption and in particular relations between members of parliaments and third parties, including lobbyists.

With regard to the Assembly's recommendation as it appears in paragraph 1.3, the Committee of Ministers considers that it would be more appropriate to launch such a comparative study after the adoption of the draft recommendation on lobbying and after a period of observation of its implementation by member States.

Access to public documents, at the level of both European and national institutions, plays an important role in facilitating civil society's participation in the decision-making process. The Committee of Ministers therefore encourages member States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No. 205) to ensure its rapid entry into force. It recognises the importance of co-operation with the European Union in this field and supports its accession to this Convention.

The Committee of Ministers also supports the strengthening of co-operation with the European Union in fighting corruption, particularly with a view to its accession to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (ETS No. 173) and endorses the Assembly's recommendation that the European Union participate in the Group of States against Corruption.

1. Adopted at the 1270th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (9 November 2016).
2. Group of States against Corruption (GRECO); Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH); European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ); Conference of INGOs.