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The financing of the Council of Europe by Open Society and Microsoft

Reply to Written question¹: Written question No. 756 (Doc. 15186)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers would like to inform the Honourable Parliamentarian that, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Council of Europe, the Secretary General may accept voluntary contributions, donations and legacies to the Organisation, and also conclude contracts with third parties for the joint financing of activities.
2. In line with the Organisations' Resource Mobilisation Strategy, voluntary contributions, irrespective of their source, are only accepted within the framework of the Organisation's Programme and Budget or by specific decisions of the Committee of Ministers in order to ensure that activities and related expenditure are focused on agreed priorities. Such contributions may be either non-earmarked or earmarked for projects approved by the Committee of Ministers.
3. The aforementioned Strategy also sets out that the Secretary General shall exercise due diligence to ensure that certain criteria are respected with regard to the contributions that are received, notably that the purpose for which contributions are made are in line with the priorities of the Organisation, that donors are not involved in activities which are incompatible with the values of the Council of Europe and that voluntary contributions are provided in a manner that upholds the integrity, impartiality and independence of the Organisation.
4. Extra-budgetary resources provide the main source of funding for the Council of Europe's co-operation programmes. With increased emphasis on co-operation, a key element of the reform launched by the Secretary General in 2011, extra-budgetary resources have become crucial to the overall work of the Organisation. Extra-budgetary resources include voluntary contributions from member States, the European Union and from other sources, including observer States, non-member States, non-governmental or non-sovereign sources. The Committee of Ministers is informed on a quarterly basis of all voluntary contributions received and they are accounted for in the Organisation's annual Financial Statements that are in the public domain.
5. In the specific cases mentioned by the Honourable Parliamentarian in his question, all of the voluntary contributions received were subject to contracts supporting specific projects approved by the Committee of Ministers.² Furthermore, in accordance with Article 13 of the Financial Regulations, at its 974th meeting (27

1. Adopted at the 1397th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (3 March 2021).

2. Projects supported by Open Society (2004-2013): Consolidation of the network of Associations of local authorities of South-Eastern Europe (ref. 752); Internship scheme for young Roma (ref. 826); Leadership Programme for municipalities in Albania (ref. 1238); Support to Roma civil society (ref. 1442); Promoting local government reforms in South-East Europe (ref. 1369); Promoting local government reforms and coming with the impact of the economic downturn on local governments (ref. 2376); Intercultural cities (ref. 2702); Seminar on the role of national parliaments in ensuring the independence of public broadcasting (ref. 2760); Conference on the role of national parliaments in media regulation in Europe (ref. 2931). Projects supported by Microsoft (2006-2014): Project against cybercrime (ref. 567); Project on cybercrime, Phase 2 (ref. 2079); Cybercrime@Octopus (ref. 3021).



September 2006), the Committee of Ministers agreed explicitly that the Secretary General could receive voluntary contributions from Microsoft for technical assistance activities aimed at supporting the implementation of the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185) and its Additional Protocol (ETS No. 189).³

6. The Committee of Ministers notes that in 2020, extrabudgetary receipts from non-State actors amounted to €322 359, representing 0.44% of all extra-budgetary receipts. To date, the vast majority of voluntary contributions either originate from member and observer States or in the framework of Joint Programmes with the European Union.

7. The Committee of Ministers takes this opportunity to encourage members of the Parliamentary Assembly to actively encourage voluntary contributions from their respective governments to the Council of Europe.

3. Cf. Committee of Ministers' decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2006\)974/10.8](#).