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Transparency and regulation of donations to political parties and electoral campaigns from foreign donors

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2208 (2021)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined [Recommendation 2208 \(2021\)](#) “Transparency and regulation of donations to political parties and electoral campaigns from foreign donors”, which it forwarded to the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) for information and possible comments.
2. The Committee points out that, in a democratic society, citizens must have confidence in the integrity of decision-making processes. From this point of view, the Committee shares the Parliamentary Assembly’s concerns regarding the risks which donations from foreign donors pose for the integrity of these processes in Council of Europe member States.
3. The Committee notes, first of all, that the Council of Europe already plays a leading role in developing international standards and guidelines on political party funding. In particular, it refers to Recommendation [Rec\(2003\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns.
4. It also refers to GRECO’s work, in particular in the context of its Third Evaluation Round (2007-2012), part of which was devoted to the transparency of the financing of political parties and election campaigns in its member States. More specifically, GRECO monitored the implementation of Articles 8, 11, 12, 13b, 14 and 16 of Recommendation [Rec\(2003\)4](#). While Article 7 of Recommendation [Rec\(2003\)4](#), calling upon member States to “specifically limit, prohibit or otherwise regulate donations from foreign donors”, did not form part of that Evaluation Round, full implementation of GRECO’s country-specific recommendations will also make foreign funding to political parties and election campaigns more transparent, limit opportunities for circumvention of possible rules on foreign funding and ensure that violations of the rules are addressed.
5. The Committee also draws attention to the most recent work of the Venice Commission on the issue, in particular the Joint Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on the Regulation of Political Parties ([CDL-AD\(2020\)032](#), paras. 229-231), as well as the documents referred to in that text: [CDL-AD\(2009\)021](#), Code of good practice in the field of political parties and explanatory report, para. 160; [CDL-AD\(2006\)014](#), Opinion on the prohibition of contributions to political parties from foreign sources.
6. The Committee encourages the carrying out of further work to restrict foreign financing of political parties and electoral campaigns, building on relevant existing standards such as Recommendation [Rec\(2003\)4](#). On this point, it informs the Assembly that it recently instructed the European Committee on Democratic Governance (CDDG) to prepare, by the end of 2023, a draft recommendation on the Principles of Good Democratic Governance to be applied generally at all levels of government, building on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance at Local Level. It points out that the fair conduct of elections –

1. Adopted at the 1432nd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (20 April 2022).



which is closely linked to the issue of political party funding – is part of the first of the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance. The CDDG will bear in mind the spirit of Assembly [Recommendation 2208 \(2021\)](#) and [Resolution 2390 \(2021\)](#) in the context of this work.

7. Moreover, with regard to GRECO, the Committee informs the Assembly that the group will give due consideration to the request to consider focusing on the specific area of foreign financing of political parties and electoral campaigns when it launches discussion of the topics to be selected for a future evaluation round.