
Anti-corruption: MEPs to push for stricter EU-wide measures and penalties

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- More categories of officials covered, stricter penalties
 - Obligations for specialised bodies and strategies at national, EU level
 - Rules necessary to protect core EU values, while 70% of Europeans consider corruption to be widespread
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On Wednesday, the Committee on Civil Liberties endorsed the draft negotiating mandate for stronger rules against corrupt decision-makers across all levels in the EU.

The report, adopted with 63 votes for, two against and two abstentions, builds on the [European Commission's draft](#) for an anti-corruption directive that would strengthen the existing legislative framework.

A broader scope and a stricter approach

MEPs amended the draft anti-corruption provisions to cover more persons of interest, including “any person entrusted with tasks of public interest or in charge of a public service”. MEPs want top EU decision-makers, i.e. MEPs, Commissioners, and the President of the European Council, to be added to the category of “high-level officials” and be subject to more severe rules. Provisions were also included for military officials, senior executives of state-owned corporations, and managing officials of political parties represented in a parliament.

MEPs also made the proposed penalties stricter, particularly in relation to an offender's ability to hold public office and exclusions from access to public funding. They included anti-corruption measures to tackle conflicts of interest (e.g. ad-hoc disclosure of new conflicts, sanctions for failure to report substantial assets), lobbying (like minimum requirements to disclose information and mandatory registration of interest representatives), revolving doors (regulating and restricting post-term employment for public officials), and to criminalise offences such as

concealment, misconduct in public office, and illicit political financing. Special provisions are added for public procurement and for political financing to enable public scrutiny through better access to information.

Strengthening independent bodies and tackling specific issues

The member states would have to come up with anti-corruption strategies, while EU institutions and agencies should also take appropriate preventive measures, according to the text, including setting up specialised independent bodies in line with standards set out under EU law. MEPs also demand that the Commission establish the role of EU Anti-Corruption Coordinator, and produce an annual EU Anti-Corruption report.

Specific issues included in the draft mandate:

- a ban on citizenship and residency by investment schemes;
- the prohibition of pardoning or giving amnesty to people for corruption-related crimes;
- stricter rules for legal persons' liability;
- the proportion of damages to be paid in line with the size of the offence;
- limiting privileges and immunities only to acts carried out in performance of official duties and while in office;
- the rights and compensation of victims, as well as rights for the public to participate in proceedings;
- the suspension or reassignment of officials; and
- the appropriate exercise of discretionary powers with regards to prosecutions.

Quote

Rapporteur [Ramona Strugariu](#) (Renew, RO) commented: "Corruption is one of the greatest threats to our communities, to our national and European Union institutions. It erodes democracy, undermines trust in public institutions, and deprives our citizens of the opportunities and services they deserve. We want a corruption-free Europe that tackles the phenomenon at all levels. Finally, we will have harmonised rules in place, enabling us to fight corruption efficiently."

Next steps

The negotiating mandate is set to be approved in the plenary session of 26 - 29 February, after which Parliament will be ready to start negotiations with the member states on the final form of the legislation.

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[European Commission, Proposal for a directive on combating corruption, 3 May 2023](#)

[Anti-corruption: Stronger rules to fight corruption in the EU and worldwide](#)

[Legislative train](#)

[Eurobarometer: Citizens' attitudes towards corruption in the EU in 2023](#)


[Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#)

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