



Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The President

Strasbourg, 27 January 2017

Dear Mr de Swardt,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 January 2017 in which you raise a number of issues linked to allegations of corruption within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

From the outset I would like to assure you that the Parliamentary Assembly will not tolerate any form of corruption, inside or outside of the Assembly. As an elective body with a mandate to represent the citizens of 47 European member states, it is important that there is public trust in the Assembly's work and its parliamentarians. This is essential if it is to uphold the significant mandate it has been given.

As you know the Assembly has a "Code of Conduct" for its members, which is a compendium of texts and provisions adopted between 2007 and 2013. As you yourself have recognised, this Code of Conduct "prescribes integrity and honesty in carrying out the duties of the members of PACE and prohibits use of their public office for their, or anyone else's, private gain." The Assembly has already recognised that the provisions of this Code of Conduct are insufficient to deal with many of today's issues, and the recent allegations put forward highlight how important it is to reform this Code of Conduct promptly.

You will be aware that a report, highly relevant to the issues you outline in your letter, is already underway in the Assembly. It is on *Follow-up to Resolution 1903 (2012): promoting and strengthening transparency, accountability and integrity of Parliamentary Assembly members* and is being prepared by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, with Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger (United Kingdom, EC) acting as its Rapporteur.

In the light of concerns raised, not only by Transparency International, but also by Parliamentarians, political group leaders and Chairpersons of national delegations, the Bureau of the Assembly last Monday referred the matter to the Committee on Rules to take into account in the report under preparation by Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger. In this context it is important to highlight that the Bureau also asked the Rules Committee to work in co-operation with the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), an independent expert body.

Since Monday the Rules Committee has met twice to consider how to respond to the different allegations made, and I am enclosing the robust declaration of the Committee, outlining how it intends to follow up on the matter. This declaration has been fully supported by the Bureau of the Assembly earlier today, confirming a three-fold approach to dealing with the issue. The press statement following the Bureau is enclosed.

As President of the Parliamentary Assembly, I will take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the integrity of the Assembly and to protect it against corruption and undue influence. I will however also protect the Assembly and its members from unsubstantiated allegations of a defamatory nature, whenever appropriate.

I invite you to make contact with the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly for further follow-up on this issue. I will of course continue to follow all developments and concerns raised.

Yours sincerely,

Pedro Agramunt

Mr Cobus de Swardt
Managing Director
Transparency International
Alt-Moabit 96
D – 10559 Berlin

Enclosed: Declaration of the Committee on Rules of Procedure ; Press statement following the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly
Copy: Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
H.E. Ioannis Kasoulides, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers
Ms Maury Pasquier, Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

Postal address:
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France

Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 41 20 94
Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 27 96
pedro.agramunt@coe.int