

Transparency International EU

The global coalition against corruption

Commission quietly shelves anti-corruption commitments while 100,000s protest corruption in Romania

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The European Commission has abandoned plans to publish a ‘naming and shaming’ report on corruption in the EU, according to a letter sent by Vice-President Frans Timmermans to the European Parliament and seen by Transparency International EU. The announcement comes at a time when hundreds of thousands are protesting the weakening of anti-corruption standards in Romania, and there is evidence of backsliding on anti-corruption efforts in Hungary and Croatia.

The “EU Anti-Corruption Report” was first published by the European Commission in 2014 and provides an assessment of anti-corruption efforts in each EU Member State, along with recommendations for each country. The Commission had committed to publishing the report every two years, and work for the second report was near completion.

Mr Timmermans has promised that this work will continue as part of the Commission’s annual dialogue with Member States on economic reforms (the “European Semester”), however this process only addressed corruption in eight Member States in 2016.

“The message coming from the European Commission is clear: fighting corruption is no longer a political priority and graft is only a serious problem in a minority of Member States”, said Carl Dolan, Director of Transparency International EU. *“The gap between the rhetoric from President Juncker and Vice-President Timmermans and the reality on the ground is striking. Now, more than ever, we need a strong and visible commitment to tackling corruption. Rising populism and the weakening of the rule of law across Europe requires concrete action from the EU on fighting corruption,”* added Dolan.

In response to events in Romania, President Juncker stated yesterday that *“The fight against corruption needs to be advanced, not undone”*.

“If the European Commission is serious about advancing the fight against corruption then it needs to develop a clear and comprehensive anti-corruption strategy and translate words into coherent action,” concluded Dolan.

NOTES

- The full letter from Timmermans can be found [here](#)
- The 2014 EU Anti-Corruption Report can be found [here](#)

- As recently as October 2016 the Commission made verbal, public commitments to Transparency International EU that it would publish the report in the coming months
- EU Member States called on the European Commission to develop a comprehensive anti-corruption policy as part of the Stockholm programme agreed in 2009
- The European Semester is a term used to describe the structured dialogue between the Commission and the Member States in the Council, in efforts to coordinate national budgets and economic policies. Each year there are series of documents published, but most adopted recommendations are not legally binding
- 2016 European Semester country-specific recommendations (CSRs) can be found [here](#).
- 8 out of 27 CSRs mention corruption
- Specific anti-corruption CSRs: 6 (RO, SK, HU, LV, IT, CZ)
- (Note that Greece is not in the European Semester process)

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