Transparency International EU

The global coalition against corruption

Transparency International calls on Council of Europe to investigate vote buying allegations

Alex Johnson · Friday, January 20th, 2017

Transparency International and six of its European chapters today called on the three top officials of the Council of Europe to investigate serious allegations of corruption in that organisation, and expressed dismay at the apparent lack of effective internal anti-corruption mechanisms at Europe's most important human rights institution.

Transparency International, the world's largest anti-corruption group, demanded a strong response from Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland to allegations recently reported by the European Stability Initiative (ESI) on corruption at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

In that research, ESI alleged that Azerbaijan, among others have unduly influenced, over many years, Council of Europe activities and votes on human rights issues, including by allegedly transferring huge sums of money and other favours to key parliamentarians.

"Any investigation into breaches of the Code of Conduct and follow-up are left completely to the discretion of the President of the Assembly, and under full control of the parliamentarians," states the letter, which was co-signed by six Transparency International national chapters in TI Czech Republic, France, Italy, Latvia, Spain and United Kingdom. An effective ethics corruption investigation mechanism must be independent and non-partisan.

Transparency International urged Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers Ioannis Kasoulides and President of the Parliamentary Assembly Pedro Agramunt Font de Mora to take the following concrete steps:

- Release a strong public statement affirming that there can be no place for corruption in the Council of Europe
- Support the establishment of a special integrity framework in line with best international standards in PACE to ensure adherence to high ethical standards by its members. A special integrity framework, including an independent office of Council of Europe ethics with investigators answering to an independent board would be a useful solution to this governance vacuum.
- Organise an independent investigation, led by an expert in such matters, into the circumstances surrounding the PACE vote on political prisoners in January 2013, and

into the behaviour of members of the Azerbaijani delegation.

“It is crucial to develop a robust response of integrity on the issue of political prisoners,” according to the letter sent today.

To see the three letters please the Links below.

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