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EU finalises anti-corruption Directive: Transparency International reaction

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Tuesday, April 21st, 2026

Today the EU has taken an important step by adopting the first-ever Anti-Corruption Directive, a long-awaited framework to harmonise anti-corruption rules across the Union.

While the final text reflects significant compromises, it nonetheless sets a *minimum* baseline for criminalisation and enforcement across all Member States. Crucially, the clock now starts ticking: EU countries have two years to transpose the Directive into national law and three years to adopt comprehensive national anti-corruption strategies.

European countries lose an estimate of €990 billion to corruption every year. Europe and its leaders must act now to show ambitious and enforceable reform.

TI welcomes this milestone but stresses that today must mark a starting point, not a ceiling. The Directive falls short in key areas, including victims' rights, preventive measures, and strong corporate liability. But its provisions can and should serve as a platform for genuine reform.

As transposition begins, Member States have the opportunity, and responsibility, to go further:

- Build robust corporate liability frameworks
- Strengthen victims' rights and avenues for NGO standing
- Improve transparency on political financing, conflicts of interest, and lobbying
- Ensure meaningful participation of civil society
- Move beyond minimum standards to real, enforceable anti-corruption safeguards

Ambition during transposition will determine whether the Directive delivers real change.

We will continue working with our chapters and partners across Europe to seize this moment and push for strong, future-proof reforms in every Member State.

Let's make this a turning point, not a missed opportunity.

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