



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
CABINET OF FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT FRANS TIMMERMANS

Head of Cabinet

Brussels, 10.05.2017  
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Dear Mr Dolan,

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans has asked me to thank Transparency International and the other civil society organisations who co-signed your letter of 22 March 2017. He has taken very good note of, and fully shares, the importance you attach to the need for the EU and the European Commission to promote good governance, the rule of law, and anti-corruption reform.

As expressed in the First Vice-President's letter to the Chair of the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee to which you refer, the Commission continues to be fully committed to the fight against corruption, be it via monitoring anti-corruption measures in Member States in the framework of the European Semester or by legislative or policy action in targeted areas.

One example is the recently-launched assessment on the need for further steps on whistle-blower protection at EU level. European legislation in other areas such as anti-money laundering and public procurement also makes an important contribution to the fight against corruption. Further measures have been taken or are under discussion to increase transparency, for example, concerning beneficial ownership and corporate tax transparency, or the contacts between EU decision-makers and interest representatives. Work to fight fraud and corruption risks in the implementation of EU funds is also a cornerstone of our anti-corruption policy framework, as the legislative work to establish a European Public Prosecutor's Office and the recently agreed directive on the protection of the financial interests of the EU testify.

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As regards measures taken by individual Member States, the Commission agrees that it is in the common interest to ensure that effective anti-corruption policies are in place across the EU. The 2014 EU anti-corruption report provided a useful analytical overview of the situation at that time, and proved helpful both as a basis for dialogues with individual Member States and for further work on these issues. In the meantime, corruption issues have been increasingly addressed in the European Semester of economic governance, which has over the past years bedded down as the main economic policy dialogue between the Member States and EU institutions. Further pursuing our work with Member States on corruption issues through this dialogue appears to be an equally efficient way to address the matter and is in line with the general approach of this Commission to streamline processes and focus on key issues in the relevant fora.

This dialogue is further complemented by a range of proactive measures to support to Member States at technical level through the anti-corruption experience sharing programme as well as financial support for a wide range of projects in the field of anti-corruption. National contact points are in place in all Member States and the Commission will facilitate a further series of workshops this year.

By mainstreaming anti-corruption in the European Semester rather than adopting a further anti-corruption report, the Commission intends to deliver a more efficient and versatile approach to fighting corruption at EU level. Within this framework, the Commission will continue to maintain a horizontal view on key anti-corruption measures and challenges across the EU as well as build on the expertise, networks and processes that we have put in place.

The First Vice-President is grateful for the role which civil society organisations including Transparency International and your co-signatories play in keeping the attention of policy-makers at national and European level on anti-corruption. As you may know, the Commission will be taking part in a dedicated discussion on anti-corruption policy in the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee on 4 May.

For a more detailed update on the ongoing practical and operational work of the Commission in this field may I kindly suggest you get in touch with the office of Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos who oversees the implementation of policy in this very important area.

Yours sincerely,



Ben Smulders