Request for the waiver of parliamentary immunity of Adrian Severin

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The Legal Affairs Committee unanimously adopted the report by Francesco Enrico SPERONI (EFD, IT), and called upon Parliament to waive the immunity of Adrian **SEVERIN** (NI, RO).

The request for the waiver of the immunity of Adrian SEVERIN comes from Romania's National Anti-Corruption Department in order to enable the Romanian Prosecutor's Office to conduct the necessary investigations into alleged corruption offences covered by Article 6 of Romanian Law No 78/2000 in conjunction with Article 254 (corruption) and Article 257 (influence peddling) of the Criminal Code and with Article 81(b) of Law No 78/2000.

It is alleged that Mr SEVERIN, exploiting his position as Member of the European Parliament, allegedly accepted an offer of payment of EUR 100 000 from representatives of a self-styled lobbying company which presented itself under the name of 'Taylor Jones Public Affairs', in exchange for his support in the European Parliament for a draft amendment to Directive 94/19/EC on deposit-guarantee schemes concerning the time limit for the reimbursement of depositors in the case of a bank failure.

However, it appears that Taylor Jones Public Affairs was a fake society created by the British newspaper 'Sunday Times'. Mr Severin maintains that he had had relations with a fake company and had been deceived. He also maintains that this does not have any legal consequences and that, in any case, he has never carried out his parliamentary duties in exchange for money. In short, according to Mr Severin, the company and contract were fake. He did not do any lobbying, no damage was done and no money exchanged, and no amendments to legislation were made.

For its part, the committee considers that however much such action may be regarded as reprehensible from an ethical point of view and raise doubts as to the propriety of relations between the press and MEPs, there are no indications that it might be, on the part of the Romanian judicial authority, a case of fumus persecutionis. That is to say, there are no sufficiently serious and specific grounds for suspecting that the proceedings have been initiated with the precise intention of damaging the Member politically.

Accordingly, the Legal Affairs Committee recommends that the European Parliament raise the immunity of Adrian SEVERIN, while considering that, until a final sentence is passed, the Member should be immune from any form of detention or remand or any other measure which prevents that Member from performing the duties proper to the mandate.