Corruption and human rights in third countries

2017/2028(INI) - 29/06/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report drawn up by Petras AUŠTREVIIUS (ALDE, LT) on corruption and human rights in third countries.

The Committee on Development, exercising its prerogative as an associated committee in accordance with Article 54 of the Rules of Procedure, also gave its opinion on the report.

The need for action: the report called for **collective action at national and international level** to prevent and combat corruption, given that corruption spreads across borders. It invited Member States to participate in international fora to reach joint decisions on best practices and policies tailored to the particular situation of each region.

Members believe that the fight against corruption should be part of a partnership-based approach between the public and private sectors, while calling for further efforts to implement and enforce existing national and international anti-corruption instruments. They also pointed out that the development of an **EU anti-corruption strategy** is essential to combat corruption and financial crime.

The report called for the establishment of **effective policy and legal frameworks for the management of natural resource management**. In the context of the prevention of illicit financial flows, it recommended that particular attention be paid to the flow of capital resulting from the extraction of ores and minerals from mines in conflict zones.

Corruption and human rights in EU bilateral relations: Members proposed the permanent monitoring of EU-funded projects and that recipient country authorities should be held accountable if EU funds are not used appropriately. The EU is invited in particular to:

- conduct **audits** of grants, loans and assistance packages, and carry out rigorous audits by governments and beneficiary organisations;
- incorporate an **anti-corruption clause**, in addition to human rights clauses into agreements with third countries;
- develop **principles** covering both human rights and the fight against corruption, in particular principles to improve transparency, combat impunity and strengthen anti-corruption agencies;
- **provide funds** to support the implementation of programmes for civil society actors, including anti-corruption and human rights organisations, journalists, bloggers and whistle-blowers;
- consider legislation to establish clear criteria for **blacklisting** third-country nationals and members of their families who are guilty of serious human rights violations.

The Commission is invited to: (i) support developing countries fighting tax evasion and avoidance; (ii) introduce anti-corruption and anti-money laundering provisions that are enforceable in all future trade agreements; and (iii) consider suspending the benefits of an agreement when the partner in question fails to comply with its anticorruption commitments.

The report also recommended:

- paving the way for the formation of task forces between Member States' embassies and EU Delegations in third countries, to **collect information from the European Union on corruption networks** and intermediaries which should be conveyed to EU institutions through diplomatic and safe channels;
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- tackling the problems of organised crime, corruption and **money laundering within its own borders** by conducting self-assessments and regular reporting in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and its review mechanism;
- **launching discussions at the UN level** on strengthening standards on the independence and mandates of anti-corruption agencies. Members supported the establishment of a UN Special Rapporteur on financial crime, corruption and human rights with a comprehensive mandate;
- adopting measures and improve coordination of strategies to combat **trafficking in human beings**;
- fully implementing the United Nations Guidelines on Business and Human Rights. Members recommended that the Union should support measures to introduce standards and codes for monitoring compliance and combating corruption in companies and that candidates for public procurement should be subject to a strict anti-corruption code and to principles of good tax governance;
- requiring companies to publish information on the **acquisition of land** in third countries and to upgrade their support to developing countries to ensure effective implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) as a means to address corruption in land deals;
- ending serious abuses, including **electoral fraud** and corruption linked to electoral processes that threaten democracy, and to promote an independent, impartial and effective judiciary;
- ensuring that the **sporting governing bodies** and international anti-corruption agencies and NGOs cooperate in order to establish transparent and verifiable human rights commitments to be made by the organisers of major sporting events;
- applying a **'zero tolerance' policy to tax havens** and money laundering, in particular through the implementation of country-by-country reporting standards in Europe and third countries; multinationals would be required to submit reports in order to prevent corruption and tax evasion.

Lastly, Members believe that Parliament stated that it resolved to prepare a **regular updating report** on corruption and human rights during every legislative term.