Union policy against corruption

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The Committee unanimously adopted the report by Rinaldo BONTEMPI (PES, I) on the Commission paper on an EU policy against corruption, as amended. The aim of the report is to set out the main points needed for a comprehensive policy to combat corruption. The need to fight corruption at EU level has already been recognised and a number of initiatives taken. However, it is felt that they do not meet all the concerns and do not form part of an integrated approach. It is therefore in the EU's interests to devise a consistent anti-corruption strategy inside and beyond its frontiers while fully complying with international rules on powers of jurisdiction. This strategy should also cover the fields of international trade and competition, external expenditure, the EU·s own resources, development policy and pre-accession strategy. In the view of the rapporteur, Rinaldo Bontempi, the Commission's paper contains few practical proposals for the prevention of, and effective action against, corruption. The Civil Liberties Committee therefore calls on the Commission to devise a comprehensive anti-corruption plan, based on a review of national and international experience, that will: -prevent, detect and punish corruption; -cover all areas at risk from corruption, from the provision of funds of any kind up to the decision on financially significant approvals; -provide for the establishment of a central anti-corruption agency. The report also calls on certain Member States to abolish forthwith from their legal systems and fiscal practices any opportunities to make the funding of bribery tax-deductible, without requiring the abolition of such practices to be combined with conviction of the bribing and bribed parties in a court of law. As regards the punishment of corruption in all its guises (active and passive corruption, in the public and private sector, at home and abroad, committed by natural and legal persons, the laundering of money from bribes), care should be taken to ensure that the opportunities for administrative, civil and disciplinary sanctions are brought into play, alongside penalties under criminal law, in particular by providing for compensation of the damage done to the public budget.