

**ING2 report on**  
**Recommendations for reform of European Parliament's rules on transparency,**  
**integrity, accountability and anti-corruption**

**Proposal for compromise amendments - final version (30/05/2023)**

**Introduction**

**CA 1** EPP (123, 146, 147, 392, 418), S&D (122, 124, 139, 145, 366), Greens (125, 144), Left (143), NI (126, 140)

- 1** *Denounces in the strongest terms the alleged attempts by Qatar and Morocco to influence Members, former Members and staff of the European Parliament through acts of corruption, which constitute serious foreign interference in the EU's democratic processes; reiterates its deep shock and condemnation of the allegations of corruption, money laundering and participation in a criminal organisation by three MEPs, one former MEP and one APA in exchange for influence over Parliament's decisions; states its zero tolerance for corruption in any shape and form; underlines that the suspected criminal behaviour and intentions demonstrated by the MEPs and APA under investigation are not representative of Parliament as a whole, since a very large majority of MEPs comply with existing rules and their enforcement, and are fully committed to serving on behalf of EU citizens;*
  - 2.** *Insists that the magnitude of the ongoing investigations require the European Parliament and the EU institutions to react with strong and immediate measures to fight in defence of democracy, transparency, integrity, accountability and against corruption; recalls that the current efforts to further strengthen the existing rules to ensure prevention and preparedness to reinforce the transparency and accountability of Parliament and all EU institutions and to fight against corruption are of the utmost importance to promote trust of citizens and ensure the proper functioning of democratic institutions and are testament to the seriousness of MEPs' commitment to protecting and defending European democracy;*
  - 3.** *Is committed to work at all levels to strengthen the rules and culture on integrity, transparency and accountability in the European Parliament and calls for stronger measures in addressing all potential conflicts of interest, including a thorough assessment of the implementation of such measures; notes that it is essential that the institutions operate in transparency and avoid any conflicts of interest in order to maintain the trust of citizens in the work of the institutions themselves and in the Union in general; considers it of the utmost importance to ensure the transparency and accountability rules are fully implemented and further enhanced, including the Members' Code of Conduct;*
  - 4.** *Affirms the need for solidarity between the Member States and the European institutions in order to be able to fight effectively against this type of act; calls for Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to be amended to address the problem of malign foreign interference; calls on the Member States to revise their legislation, where necessary, in order to more effectively address foreign interference, including in the democratic processes within the EU institutions;*
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CA 2 EPP (148), S&D (124, 127, 310, 322,), RE (321), Greens (372, 374), Left (129, 364), NI (126, 201, 285)

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1. ***Believes that rules addressing*** MEPs, former MEPs, political group staff, APAs, and officials of Parliament and other European institutions ***should be inspired by the highest level of transparency, integrity and accountability***; insists that potential loopholes in the institutions' rules and procedures that facilitate unlawful behaviour need to be systematically detected and thoroughly closed ***by effective reforms and control capacities***; highlights that some existing mechanisms need to be reviewed with the aim of preventing ***conflicts of interest, enhancing transparency, and preventing, deterring and detecting foreign interference and corruption***;
- 1 a. ***Calls for a rapid conclusion of the revision of the Members' Code of Conduct to introduce rules on whistleblowers that are in step with the European standards set in the Whistleblower Directive; considers it essential to change art. 3 of the Code, to clarify the rules on conflicts of interests and Members' obligations to solve them; requests amending Article 4 of the Code of Conduct for Members, in order to introduce additional requirements for information on Members' declaration of financial interests; reiterates its opinion that a declaration of assets by MEPs before and after their mandate would offer additional safeguards to the fight against corruption, following the good practices of many Member States; believes that asset declarations should be accessible only to relevant authorities without prejudice to national regulations***;

CA 3 S&D (36, 136), Greens (133), NI (134)

2. Welcomes and fully supports the 14 points endorsed by Parliament's Conference of Presidents following a proposal by President Metsola to reform Parliament's rules and procedures; ***calls for these points to be translated into concrete actions as soon as possible***; notes that these proposals are ***an important first step*** of Parliament's internal reform process; ***is committed to ensure that ambitious internal reforms addressing MEPs will take into account*** the freedom of mandate set out in Article 2 of the Decision of the European Parliament of 28 September 2005 adopting the Statute for Members of the European Parliament<sup>7</sup>; ***considers that this freedom of the mandate must be balanced with the Union's obligations to 'observe the principle of the equality of its citizens, who shall receive equal attention from its institutions', that 'every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union', that 'decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen' and that 'the Union's institutions, bodies, offices and agencies shall conduct their work as openly as possible' (Article 9 and 10 (3) of the TEU and Article 15(1) of the TFEU)***;

CA 6 EPP (400, 419, 420)

- 4 a. ***Calls on the EEAS and EU Delegations in third countries to strengthen further their respective capacities in fighting and countering disinformation and propaganda linked to influencing EU's CFSP as well as the European Parliament's role in CFSP; recalls that a pro-active strategic communication is key in countering and eliminating undue foreign influence in the EU; in this regard, underlines the importance of strengthening interinstitutional relations and cooperation; points out that the EEAS and its Delegations have a large potential to also gather information regarding EU's geopolitical objectives; welcomes in this light the regular briefings by the EEAS for Members of the EP and believes that there is still a lot of potential***

*for improvement and urges for these briefings to occur in higher frequency and more in-depth;*

**Reinforcing the security and integrity culture within Parliament in order to combat foreign interference more effectively**

**CA 7** EPP/RE (153, 154), EPP (158, 160, 161), S&D (152, 156, 366), Greens (157, 383)

5. Highlights the need to reinforce the security culture within Parliament; recalls that Parliament, *like all other European institutions*, is a regular target of interference attempts, as a result of the impact that its positions have on the wider world *and the conduct of the EU's external relations*; calls therefore for a *mandatory*, proper and regular training on security, interference, *ethical standards, compliance and integrity* for all MEPs, *their offices* and staff, *making them aware that they are potential targets of foreign state and non-state actors*; notes that this training should include a digital security component;

**CA 8** EPP/RE (163, 173), EPP (165)

6. Recommends an appropriate security clearance for Parliament officials, political groups' staff, *and to evaluate when the security clearance is needed for APAs*, when dealing with foreign affairs, security and defence or trade issues, *such as in the case of the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU*; calls, therefore, for appropriate cooperation with national security services to ensure that such security clearance are processed swiftly; *calls on national authorities to work towards procedures and a common timeframe whenever they are requested to give security clearance to EP Members and staff, as well as any security screening related to the EU institutions*;

**CA 9** EPP (170, 171, 174), RE (169), Greens (168)

7. Calls *on* Parliament's services, political groups and Members' offices *to explore options on how to perform an open-source screening of* trainees, APAs, political group staff, Parliament staff, *external contractors* for possible vulnerability to non-European influence, *and on the basis of clearly defined criteria*, before they take up their duties, as well as, if necessary, during their employment; *reminds that such verification should be standardised to check applicant's claims on their resume*;

**CA 10** EPP/RE (175, 177, 216), S&D (178), Greens (176)

8. Recalls that, to ensure the proper and safe functioning of Parliament, private contractors are hired to perform maintenance on its buildings, IT systems and cameras; calls on Parliament's administration to exclude any non-EU private *or public-owned* companies, *as well as any providers that have been flagged by any EU institution or Member State as a potential security risk*, from such contracts, *if there is a reason to believe it may expose Parliament to security risks or lack of protection of personal data*; calls, in this regard, for particular attention to be paid to companies owned by non-EU companies or states, such as Russia and China;
- 8 a. *Calls for Parliament's services to put in place effective monitoring and surveillance systems to detect foreign interference while ensuring the respect of the free mandate, and to offer to both MEPs and staff the opportunity to have electronic devices scanned for malicious surveillance tools*;

CA 11 EPP/RE (175, 177), S&D (181), Greens (176)

9. Considers that access to Parliament buildings by visitors, including representatives of *non EU countries*, lobbyists and *NGOs*, should be controlled more strictly; requests its Secretary-General to swiftly submit new proposals in this regard; calls for restrictions against any representatives and lobbyists from non-EU countries and NGOs that abuse their privileged access;

CA 12 EPP/RE (190), EPP (187), S&D (191), RE (186), Greens (188), ECR (189)

10. Recalls that any visitors must be accompanied while on Parliament's premises *other than dedicated visitors' areas*; calls for the strict enforcement of appropriate restrictive measures in the event of non-compliance, such as preventing the relevant staff member or MEP's office *responsible for previous violations in this respect* from granting access to visitors for a limited period of time; *commits to implement* the Bureau Decision to create an entry log, *compliant with the EU data protection framework*, for all persons aged 18 years old and above who visit Parliament, indicating information such as the date, time, purpose of the visit *including identification of the Members, Members' staff, groups' staff or administrative units they meet*, their contact details and the person responsible for them during the visit *including possible shared responsibility between different MEP's offices*; *considers that this entry conditions should not apply to staff of other EU institutions, bodies and agencies, as well as journalists, who have a specific regime to access Parliament*; *calls for a thorough evaluation of the issuance of family access cards*; *calls for a review of the criteria for issuance on the basis of relevant documents*; *calls for family access card holders over the age of 18 to be subject to the Entry Log process*;

CA 13 EPP (194), S&D (192), RE (193), Greens (195)

11. Welcomes the reform of the access rules for former MEPs and former staff, in particular the announcement of a new daily access badge to replace the current badges, *and invites the Parliament to consider removing the previous access badge granted to former staff*; *expects an immediate review of Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure, followed by a change of Article 6 of its Code of Conduct*; *considers* that former MEPs should not have the right to grant entry to anyone else; *considers* that the same provision should also apply to former staff;

CA 14 RE (200), Greens (199)

12. *Notes that foreign interference and other illegitimate influence has taken at times the form of offering well paid positions to former Members*; notes that the EU institutions should treat potential cases of 'revolving doors' more stringently in order to prevent conflicts of interest and avoid reputational damage; *calls to bolster safeguards against serious malign interference from high risk third countries through the process of 'revolving doors'*; *calls for the issue of elite capture to be addressed in the Commission's annual Rule of Law reports*;

CA 15A EPP (216, 225), S&D (228), Renew (218, 221), Greens (223, 224), ECR (179), NI (215)

14. Recommends that *EU institutions and agencies and other EU bodies* proactively monitor the professional activities of their staff members in order to strengthen their internal procedures and controls concerning potential revolving-door situations, in the spirit of the European Court of Auditors' 2021 recommendations;

15. States that continued investment is required in order to ensure a robust security structure within Parliament; calls, in this regard, for a full and in-depth audit of Parliament's security measures by an independent body; ***highlights the need to increase investment in the IT infrastructure of Parliament; considers such efforts to be necessary to ensure the resilience against foreign interference of Parliament;***
- 15 a. ***Underlines a need for a comprehensive check of all technology used in the institutions in order to exclude providers from autocratic states, especially Russia and China;***
16. Urges more action to ensure that Parliament's name is not misused by external actors to create a false image of legitimacy, ***as it already happened in the past with the fake EU magazine « EP Today »; calls for the reform of the rules that obliges MEPs to use the European Parliament's logo when they organize an event inside the EP premises as the EP exercises no control on the content of such events and may unintentionally give some legitimacy to dubious statements or guests;***
17. Calls for the Commission and the Council to work with Parliament, as a co-legislator, to enhance the toolbox of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (APPF) and enable the effective tracing of donations to the ultimate payer, thus preventing the rules on donations from being circumvented through the use of intermediaries; calls, in particular, for the APPF to be mandated to obtain information directly from donors and their banking institutions, and for the establishment of a system of push notifications, to be sent from the Financial Intelligence Units in the Member States to the APPF when suspicious transactions are identified;
18. Notes that the APPF should be strengthened in terms of staff and resources with the aim of enhancing its scrutiny capacity and promoting cooperation with the Member States for flagging potential cases of illicit funding; ***recommends that the APPF should make use of the data provided by Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) in advertisement libraries and soon a European registry for political advertisements to detect illicit funding and influence campaigns;***
19. Highlights the importance of promoting full transparency concerning the revenues and expenditures for European Parliament election campaigns by national parties; ***in this context, calls for the adoption of rules on political campaigning and political party financing, also from third countries; believes that adequate public funding of political parties, a limitation of private funding and a ban on donations from third countries is needed, to limit the risks of foreign interference through political parties;***
20. Stresses that missions to non-EU countries can be used as an opportunity to exert undue influence on MEPs; recalls that mandatory, dedicated security briefings focused on foreign interference risks, tailored to the destination country, should be given to MEPs before any missions; ***believes that such any preparatory documents and meetings for missions should also entail reminders about integrity requirements;*** underlines the need to better protect MEPs and Parliament staff against cyberattacks and hacking when they travel on missions to non-EU countries;

**Relations with non-EU countries and entities: official missions (including election observation missions), trips and friendship groups**

CA 16 EPP (233, 238, 239, 243, 245), S&D (249), RE (237, 244), NI (246),

20 a. *Welcomes the adoption on 13 April 2023 by the Conference of Presidents of Guidelines on relations with representatives of certain third countries, which in some cases restrict official contacts; considers in this regard that it is of utmost importance to ensure the implementation of the transparency measures laid down in these guidelines, notably by keeping records of any contacts with third country representatives; calls however for more general declarations in cases where the naming of individuals or organisations could put their life or safety at risk;*

21. *Underlines that the primary responsibility for nominating MEPs to functions and missions lies with political groups in the European Parliament; proposes strengthening the rules regarding official missions carried out on behalf of Parliament, in particular:*

(a) the chair of the official mission should *primarily have the privilege* to speak publicly on behalf of *the whole of Parliament in defending the positions adopted by it, while continually ensuring MEPs right to speak on their personal behalf;*

(b) during the mission, and particularly during *official* meetings with foreign representatives *and during possible interviews*, other MEPs *shall consistently and routinely ensure that it is clearly stated and appears publicly that they are not speaking on behalf of the Parliament if they* espouse different positions to those adopted by Parliament during the most recent votes; MEPs not adhering to this rule should be *called to order by the chair of the mission; in the event of a serious violation of this rule or repeated violations, they may be barred* from participating in missions;

22. Recalls the importance of election observation missions in providing relevant information and issuing specific recommendations to make the electoral system more resilient and help counter foreign interference in electoral processes; believes that *the European* Parliament should bar unauthorised, unofficial election observation by individual MEPs; stresses that MEPs should only participate in *election observation* missions (*EOMs*) decided and authorised by the Conference of Presidents; recalls the establishment of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group procedure for ‘cases of individual unofficial election observation by Members of the European Parliament’ (adopted on 13 December 2018), which allows for the exclusion of MEPs from *the European* Parliament’s official election observation delegations for the duration of the parliamentary term; urges Parliament’s administration to adopt stricter sanctions, including substantial fines and other restrictive measures, against MEPs who participate in unofficial electoral missions, as well as those who, while participating in *the European* Parliament’s authorised observation missions, do not strictly respect the applicable rules; *believes that election observation missions should put additional focus on actual or attempted interference before the election day, in particular online/on social media;*

CA 16a S&D (252, 282, 313), Greens (250, 370)

23. Insists that individual trips undertaken by MEPs are an integral part of their freedom of mandate; reiterates its call for mandatory transparency rules for trips by MEPs that are paid by foreign countries and entities, with the details to be provided including, but not

being limited to, the name of the paying agent, a list of expenditure and the justification; recalls that such organised trips must not be considered official Parliament delegations and calls for the MEPs involved in such trips to avoid any confusion in that respect, and for strict sanctions for the failure to do so; ***considers that missions undertaken by a member in his/her capacity of rapporteur can always be considered as official; calls for measures to ensure that costs for travel to third countries related to the mandate are covered by the Parliament;***

- 23 a.** ***Reiterates its call for stricter rules for trips by officials that are paid by foreign countries and entities;*** believes that similar rules should be established for trips made by APAs or political group staff;
- 23 b.** ***Suggests limiting the threshold for gifts to MEPs to 100 Euros; encourages–a reinforced control on all MEPs’ and staff’s received invitations, gifts and trips related to third countries;***

**CA 18** EPP (259), S&D (264), RE (261), Greens (258), NI (255)

- 25.** Considers that Parliament must give absolute priority to the work of its official delegations in relation to non-EU countries; ***recalls that any activity or meeting of any unofficial groupings of Members that could result in confusion with official European Parliament activities will be banned; calls for a ban on friendship groups with non-EU countries for which official Parliament delegations already exist, while recognising that friendship groups should continue to exist, on a case-by-case basis, for activities related to certain non-sovereign territories, persecuted minorities or partners for which an official delegation does not exist; emphasises that third countries should interact with the Parliament through the Committee of Foreign Affairs, existing official Parliament delegations, other Committees and the DEG as required;*** underlines that some exceptions should be contingent on, among others, official declarations being filed in ***the*** transparency register ***for intergroups and other informal groups maintained by the Quaestors,*** to feature the name of all the MEPs and stakeholders involved, as well as all the meetings held; ***considers that friendship groups shall publically declare any financial or substantive support, including exact amounts and assistance provided by third parties; considers on this regard that a change to Rule 35 of its Rules of Procedures to be essential; asks for a change also to its Rule 176 to allow breaches to be effectively sanctioned; calls in parallel Parliament and its Members to ensure that the delegations function in a satisfactory way, in particular in respecting the European Parliament’s position as adopted in plenary sessions; calls, in this regard, for the urgent streamlining of the parliamentary delegations, their role and the scope of their action, and for them to always act in absolute coherence with the other parliamentary bodies responsible for determining the European Union’s external action;***

**CA 19** EPP (271), S&D (274, 314), Greens (273)

- 26.** Urges MEPs to be vigilant about certain entities that, under the pretence of dealing with ***general policy issues*** are vectors of influence and undeclared interference by foreign countries;
- 27.** Recalls the importance of urgency resolutions as part of Parliament’s action to protect

human rights around the globe; denounces any attempts at interfering with them; acknowledges that they must retain their urgency, but proposes that a suitable amount of time be allowed for their drafting in order to ensure due protection against external influence; reiterates that their scope should be strictly observed; ***underlines that the strength and impact of the EP's human rights urgency resolutions should not be undermined;***

- 27 a. ***Believes that foreign interference or the attempt thereof must not remain without consequences for the country concerned; intends to suspend any legislative or non-legislative proposal on cooperation with state authorities of such a country for a period commensurate to the severity of the interference; intends in the framework of the annual budgetary procedure to suspend all funding from Union programmes to state authorities in such a country while preserving funding for civil society organisations and independent media as well as humanitarian assistance; believes that the Committee on Foreign Affairs should request the Ambassador to the EU of such a country to appear in the Committee on Foreign Affairs for an exchange of views;***

### **Integrity of parliamentary work**

CA 20 S&D (315), RE (291, 292), Greens (294), Left (293)

28. Recommends that reports voted on by Parliament be accompanied by an annex containing a list of persons or institutions met by the rapporteur ***and the shadow rapporteurs***, with the exception of individuals whose security would be put at risk if they were mentioned, ***whose identity shall be communicated to and duly guarded by the body designated for that purpose***; recommends, therefore, making it mandatory for MEPs who draft reports or opinions to attach a list to demonstrate the range of outside expertise and opinions that the rapporteur has received;

CA 21 S&D (296, 361), RE (297)

29. ***Considers that publishing all scheduled meetings with third parties (interest representatives) should be made compulsory for all MEPs; emphasizes the need for making the disclosure process as easy and quick as possible, while maintaining the integrity of the procedure; requests changing Rule 11 of its rules of procedure by including a definition of "scheduled meeting" and "active role" and by extending the obligation to all MEPs;*** points out, however, that the system for declaring such meetings should be updated, in particular as it still does not take into account subcommittees; calls for Parliament delegations also to be included; believes that similar rules should be established for meetings attended by Parliament officials, APAs and political group staff; ***regrets that required MEPs do not declare their meetings with interest representatives;***

CA 22 S&D (276, 308, 318), RE (307, 309, 317), Greens (305, 319), Left (306)

30. ***Urges to implement, enforce and supervise adherence to the current provisions of the Transparency Register IIA within the European Parliament in a much stricter way;*** calls for MEPs and their offices to be required to declare meetings with ***diplomatic representatives of non-EU countries as well as with representatives of interests covered by the scope of the Transparency Register; exceptions can be allowed in cases where the naming of individuals or organisations would put their life or safety at risk; the***



*declarations should be as clear and accessible to the public as possible; believes that sanctions for the failure to declare should be applied;*

31. Insists on the obligation to declare participation in any conference or event organised or funded by foreign entities, including foreign states, private companies, NGO, think tanks;

CA 24 S&D (326), RE (327), Left (325)

33. Reiterates that MEPs, their staff and political group staff should critically evaluate and refrain from systematically tabling prewritten amendments proposals;

CA 25 EPP (359), S&D (279, 283, 333), RE (90, 335), Greens (336), Left (331), NI (332)

- 33 a. *Calls for opening inter-institutional talks in order to review the IIA on Transparency Register long before the foreseen deadline of July 2025; calls for a review of the IIA on Better Law-Making to assess how to introduce the principle of transparency and integrity among the common commitments and objectives of the legislative process;*

34. Strongly insists on the need for transparency, *by means of registration in the EU Transparency Register*, on the funding received by *interest representatives, such as* NGOs, think tanks *and consulting services* that wish to be involved with the Parliament, in particular when they request support or sponsorship from MEPs to organise meetings on Parliament's premises, when they are invited to a hearing, *exchange of views or any other scheduled appearance*, or when they participate in a study or research on behalf of Parliament; welcomes, in this regard, the proposal for stronger checks on interest representatives, such as the prerequisite of being listed in the Transparency Register in order to be able to appear at committee meetings; encourages the adoption of specific provisions for interest representatives whose activities do not fall within the scope of the Transparency Register, *such as third country representatives with diplomatic status; calls for particular regard to proportionality criteria and to avoid cumbersome procedures;*

CA 26 RE (337, 360, 413), NI (281)

- 34 a. *Calls for an assessment of the current registrants in the EU Transparency Register regarding foreign influence and the effective observance of the code of conduct; calls for the annual report on the functioning of the register to include a chapter on incidents related to the risk of foreign interference;*

CA 27 EPP (349), S&D (280), RE (338, 339, 340, 350, 411), Greens (342), Left (404), NI (332)

- 34 b. *Insists on strengthening the EU Transparency Register by increasing its budget and the number of staff, so that it is able to verify the information provided by applicants and registrants more thoroughly; calls on considering an extension of its scope, laying down additional obligations for registrants and more restrictive measures in case of violations of the code of conduct;*

- 34 c. *Consider it relevant for the Parliament to discuss its options to improve transparency and anti-corruptions measures related to interest representatives seeking to influence legislative proposals or resolutions, including by arranging meetings with MEPs, their offices or staff of political groups; this could, among other initiatives, include stronger measures for interest representatives relating to their registering in the Transparency Register;*

CA 28 EPP (184, 344, 345), S&D (343), RE (345, 346, 347), NI (348)

35. Calls for the comprehensive financial screening of *all interest groups*, NGOs and *consultancies* before they are listed in the Transparency Register *and for a review of all interested representatives currently registered*; *requests that these organisations also demonstrate transparency in the composition of their governing bodies and that they declare compliance with the relevant legal obligations, particularly in terms of financing and accounting obligations*; *requests transparency of the client structure of consulting agencies, if they wish to register* requests that a clear legal definition of “*interest representatives*” and ‘NGO status’ be drawn up, which would apply to all organisations wishing to be listed in the Transparency Register and become eligible to receive EU funding; underlines that those NGOs that receive money from third parties that are not required to be listed in the Transparency Register must disclose the sources of their funding by providing the same information as for all regular registrants;
- 35 a. *Notes that in the recent corruption scandal the work of two NGOs was misused to finance illegal activities and influence Parliament’s decision-making on behalf of third parties*;

CA 29 EPP (352), S&D (354), RE (353, 355, 357, 425), Greens (356)

36. Calls for enhanced controls on and scrutiny of, *interest representatives and other relevant stakeholders*, working closely with the Parliament *or other EU institutions* to be put in place in order to identify irregularities, fraud or breaches of obligations, including the violation of EU values, *as defined in Article 2 TEU, or obligations related to their registration in the Transparency Register*, and for contracts to be suspended or terminated, or for their duration to be reduced, and for funds to be recovered in the event that any such infringements occur;
- 36 a. *Recalls that existing EU measures against Russian TV channels should be fully implemented to counter Russian propaganda more effectively*;
- 36 b. Is worried by the interference of Islamist organisations inspired by foreign states;

CA 29a S&D (38, 149, 151)

- 36 c. *Therefore, calls for the urgent implementation of the INGE I report, which already recommended the EU institutions to reform the Transparency Register, including by introducing more stringent transparency rules, such as for trips offered by foreign countries and entities to officials of the EU institutions, enhancing transparency and accountability of friendship groups, mapping of foreign funding for EU-related lobbying, and ensuring an entry which allows for the identification of funding from foreign governments*; *also calls on Member States to harmonise laws on foreign interference and to ban foreign donations to political parties and foundations*;

CA 29b EPP/RE (208)

- 36 d. Restates its commitment to implement ~~intention to establish~~ a six-month cooling-off period for MEPs; stresses that this period should start immediately following the end of their mandate; *considers that compliance to this cooling-off period should be monitored by the upcoming EU ethics body once it is established*;

CA 29c RE (203)

**36 e.** *Calls on Parliament's services to establish a monitoring system and rules for revoking access for former MEPs to lobby the Parliament on behalf of high-risk countries beyond the cooling-off period or when using the knowledge acquired during their time as public officials against the interests of the Union and the public interest, and even operating concomitantly in global operations of influence or interference;*

**CA 29d** S&D (210, 323), Greens (371, 372), Left (226, 312)

**36 f.** *Believes that MEPs need to be more transparent, on the basis of revised and more precise rules for disclosing the amount of side income earned, the position description and the clients on whose behalf Members work for payment; reiterates its call for stricter rules for Members performing paid side jobs with a special focus on restrictions for activities on behalf of organisations or individuals covered by the scope of the Transparency Register; commits to introduce a prohibition for Members to perform paid side jobs for high-risk third states or dependent entities during their mandate; considers that the Statute of Members of the European Parliament, should be subject to legislative revision, with particular regard to the issues of side-jobs; believes that Parliament needs to be more transparent; calls for Members' declarations on side-jobs to be subject to institutional checks and supported by relevant documents as it is done in some Member States;*

**CA 29e** EPP/RE (256), EPP (254)

**36 g.** *Calls for the enforcement of rules that disallow any activities that undermine official Parliament activities - particularly when it comes to interaction with third countries; notes that MEPs are free to take positions in organisations based outside the EU and outside the scope of the Transparency Register, or work in connection with third countries, with exceptions mentioned elsewhere in this report, while insisting that MEPs must disclose the amount of side income earned, the position description and the clients on whose behalf Members work for payment, in line with appropriate changes to the Code of Conduct;*

**CA 30** S&D (296), Greens (292, 362, 379, 380, 381), Left (363)

**37.** *Supports the overhaul of Parliament's website with the aim of making the information thereon more easily accessible to the public; calls for a user-friendly system on the Parliament's website whereby, for each roll-call vote, the text voted on and the voting results can be filtered by group and by MEP; calls for disclosing the legislative footprint of proposed texts and amendments; reiterates Parliament's record of transparency and efforts to ensure that documents are easily accessible, irrespective of their medium, to all citizens, and that they should be made available in an open, user-friendly, and machine-readable format;*

**37 a.** *Insists that all EU institutions participating in trilogues should, according to Article 12(2) of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001, make legislative documents directly accessible, unless their disclosure would seriously undermine the decision-making process; highlights that in the recent judgement in Case T-163/21 the CJEU concludes that access to legislative documents must be as wide as possible; calls on the Council to fully comply with this judgment; calls for all EU institutions to fully comply with the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Case T-540/15 on access to trilogue documents;*

37 b. *Is of the opinion that the categories of documents which are to be directly accessible through Parliament's public register shall include preparatory legislative documents, such as political and technical trilogue documents, including all versions of the joint multi-column document referred to in the Code of Conduct for negotiating in the context of the ordinary legislative procedure;*

CA 31 EPP (302), S&D (301), Greens (365, 384), Left (369), NI (27, 126, 159)

37 c. *Welcomes the decision to establish compulsory training for EP staff managers and APAs on whistleblowers; calls on stronger action to enhance whistleblower protection for staff members and APAs, by amending Article 22c of Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC) ('EU Staff Regulations'), in order to align it with the standards of the Directive 2019/1937 ('Whistleblower Directive'), and by revising Parliament's Internal Rules Implementing Article 22c of the Staff Regulations accordingly;*

37 d. *Stresses that codifying the rules of good administration setting out the key aspects of the administrative procedure such as notifications, the right to be heard, and the right for every person to have access to his or her file, would positively contribute to and strengthen the transparency, integrity and accountability of the EU institutions and make them less susceptible to corruption;*

### **Cooperation with other EU and national institutions**

CA 32 S&D (389), RE (386), Greens (385), NI (388)

38. Welcomes the Commission's *announced* package on the defence of democracy, including a directive, aimed at introducing common transparency and accountability standards for interest representation services directed or paid for from outside the EU, contributing to the proper functioning of the internal market and protecting the EU democratic sphere from covert outside interference; *in this regard, calls on the Commission to carry out a proper impact assessment, in line with the obligations pursuant to the Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Regulation, before presenting new recommendations and legislative proposals;*

39. Welcomes the Commission's announced proposal for a Directive on transparency of interest representatives on behalf of third countries within the framework of the initiative on the defence of democracy, which would establish harmonised transparency requirements for the provision of services from outside the EU; *further welcomes the complementing recommendation on secure and resilient elections and the recommendation on increasing support and engagement for civil society organisations; expects the proposal to consider a level playing field and to respect international and human rights law, and in particular the exercise of civic freedoms, for interest representation in the EU;*

40. Welcomes the Commission's planned anti-corruption package, including the proposal to update the EU rules on fighting corruption through criminal law;

41. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to establish a new sanctions regime to target serious acts of corruption worldwide;

CA 32a EPP (205), RE (203), Greens (207)

**41 a.** Reiterates its call for the swift establishment of an independent EU ethics body, and commits to conclude inter-institutional negotiations by the end of 2023; *recalls that any such body must respect the separation of power between the institutions*; considers that the body's mandate should include scrutiny, on a case-by-case basis, *and be recommendatory in nature*, of MEPs', *and former MEPs'*, intentions to work for any non-EU government or entity controlled by a non-EU government during their mandate and after the end of their term; calls on MEPs to uphold Parliament's values and standards and not to accept employment by authoritarian, non-democratic governments or related state-owned entities after the end of their term;

**CA 33** EPP (213), S&D (212, 214, 398, 402, 403, 405, 406), RE (399), Greens (368, 375, 378, 396), Left (397, 401), NI (286)

**42.** Regrets the Commission's delay in presenting a proposal on the establishment of an independent, interinstitutional EU ethics body; calls for the institutions to promptly agree on the terms of its establishment in order to ensure more consistency with regard to ethical obligations between the different rules of procedures and codes of conduct of institutions and recalls the need to clarify and clearly communicate the rules for former Members engaging in lobbying activities falling under the Transparency Register; recalls the need to ensure *the proper implementation of standards of public office laid down in the Code of Conduct for Members and other rules adopted by Parliament and its bodies by investigating and proposing sanctions*; *insists that the Ethics Body shall be established on a clear legal basis and should enter into force as soon as possible, that it should be given appropriate investigative powers, including the ability to act on its own initiative, and the power to request administrative documents, while respecting the immunity of Members, their freedom of mandate and safeguarding the applicable procedural guarantees*; *is of the opinion that while Parliament stands open to a broad participation, Commission and Parliament shall ensure the negotiations are not delayed by other institutions*;

**42 a.** *Welcomes* Parliament's intention to unilaterally ensure that MEPs have swift, easy and systematic access to advice on possible conflicts of interest from the Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members; *commits to reforming the Advisory Committee*; *calls hence to strengthen the Code of Conduct for Members to ensure a more effective and transparent system for Members, as well as former Members working for outside interests, if MEPs were found not complying with rules and obligations*; *suggests that the Advisory Committee could also have a proactive role, including the ability to act on its own initiative*; *believes the Advisory Committee should be able to directly deal with complaints*;

**42 b.** *Points to the relevant work of the Ombudsman in this regard and believes that additional cooperation with the Parliament could be useful in the future*;

**42 c.** *Calls on Member States and all EU institutions, especially Parliament, to increase cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), and the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) should be extended to the whole Union, which would facilitate its cooperation with other institutions and ensure better prosecution of cases in currently non-member countries*;

**42 d.** *Commits to introduce a mandatory declaration of absence of conflict of interest for rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs*;

42 e. *Reaffirms that the political decision on conflicts of interest of designated Commissioners prior to hearings remains a democratic and institutional competence of Parliament's Committee on Legal Affairs;*

CA 34 EPP (148, 185), S&D (409), RE (410), Greens (408)

43. Calls on the Secretariat of the Transparency Register to ban any entities with direct or indirect relations with the Government of the Russian Federation, pursuant to the Council Decision of 3 June 2022 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine and the conduct of Russia's illegal war of **aggression** against Ukraine; calls for further deliberations on an approach to be applied when it comes to entities linked with *the People's Republic of China, and other countries that conduct or seemingly aim to conduct malign foreign interference in European affairs*; notes that the Conference of Presidents has taken the decision that *diplomats and government representatives from China shall not be invited to Parliament*; calls for amending the EU Transparency Register in order to provide for sanctions whenever the registrant represents, directly or as an intermediary, interests of governments, dependent entities or companies in strategic sectors of countries with a reported record of interference in democratic processes in the EU;

43 a. *Notes that the current guidelines for NGOs and other stakeholders not covered by the register have proved to be insufficient; stresses the need for a thorough pre-check within the registration in the transparency register to disclose all funding sources; notes that funding from EU funds must be traceable from the direct recipient to the final beneficiary when funds are passed on in a chain; calls to revise the guidelines for the registration in the transparency register to disclose all incoming and outgoing funds, including the transfer of funds from one NGO and stakeholder to another;*

CA 35 EPP (416, 417), S&D (415)

45. Resolves to strengthen its dialogue and cooperation with the intelligence, judicial and law enforcement authorities of the three Member States in which it is located, in order to ensure Parliament's security *and integrity* and protect it against attempted interference from non-EU countries; *to that effect, calls on the security services of Member State to systematically notify the competent European authorities and the security services of the Member States in which the European Parliament is located of any information they may obtain relating to foreign interference in the democratic processes in the Union;*

CA 36 S&D (423), Greens (421)

46. Calls for the EU institutions to work towards tighter internal regulations among the Member States regarding the *use, servicing and* procurement of spyware and surveillance tools *and to assess the spyware and surveillance tools currently in use*; notes that the EU should use existing regulatory measures to hold malign international operators in the commercial spyware and surveillance technologies industries legally accountable;

CA 37 S&D (303), RE (424), Greens (376, 382), NI (285)

46 a. *Calls on Parliament to revise the list of sanctionable activities for Members on the basis of this report; calls for appropriate warnings and reminders to be put in place for Members who do not comply and, after a reasonable timeframe, the imposition of appropriate penalties; notes in particular the need to revise Rule 176 of the Rules of*

*Procedure of the Parliament in order to allow for a broader possibility to impose penalties beyond the cases of disruption of the plenary session; takes the view that where a MEP is found guilty of intentionally committing a criminal offence in the performance of their duties, additional sanctions should be applied;*

- 46 b.** *Calls for a revision of Article 42c of the Staff Regulations on the leave in the interests of the service, which allows for non-transparent early retirement of some staff of the EU institutions;*

## **Recitals**

**CA 38** EPP (11, 12), S&D (14), Greens (10), Left (13)

- A. *whereas ongoing investigations led by the Belgian authorities have uncovered suspicions of an extremely worrying scheme of corruption, money laundering and participation in a criminal organisation involving, to date, three sitting Members of the European Parliament and one former Member as well as one accredited parliamentary assistant (APA); whereas these suspicions relate to influence from Qatar and Morocco; whereas there are allegations that other states, like Mauritania, are involved as well;*

**CA 39** EPP (19, 30, 34), Greens (80, 81, 84), ECR (42, 66), Left (32), NI (16)

- A a. *whereas citizens' trust in the integrity and independence of European institutions is the foundation of the European political system, which is particularly vulnerable in the run-up to elections; whereas foreign actors undermining citizens' trust in EU institutions can affect the democratic functioning of the EU; whereas corruption has significant financial consequences and constitutes a serious threat to democracy, the rule of law and public investment;*
- A b. *whereas interference attempts are a widespread phenomenon that must be countered as vigorously as possible; whereas, in view of bolstering the resilience of EU democracy the EU institutions must strive for transparency, accountability and integrity;*
- A c. *whereas the right to good administration covers the right of every person to have his or her affairs handled impartially, fairly and within a reasonable time by the EU institutions; whereas in carrying out their missions, the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union shall have the support of an open, efficient and independent European administration;*

**CA 40** EPP/RE (17), S&D (28), NI (21)

- A d. *whereas MEPs must act solely in the public interest and conduct their work with integrity, openness, diligence, honesty, accountability, respect for Parliament's reputation, and without any undue influence from interest representatives; whereas MEPs must be independent and exercise their voting rights freely;*

**CA 41** S&D (23), Greens (22)

- B. *whereas Parliament reacted swiftly to the suspicions of corruption affecting several MEPs and its staff, among others by fully cooperating with the Belgian authorities; whereas the magnitude of the scandal has shown numerous loopholes in Parliament's integrity and transparency rules and their enforcement; whereas much ambition is required to swiftly introduce significant reforms of Parliament's internal*

*procedures and working methods, as well as to push the EU institutions to implement a much more stringent regulatory framework;*

CA 42 S&D (33), Greens (83)

*B a. whereas the Code of Conduct for MEPs with respect to financial interests and conflicts of interest is monitored by an Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members, composed of five MEPs; whereas the working methods and mandate of the Advisory Committee have proved to be insufficient; whereas no financial penalty has ever been imposed for a breach of the Code of Conduct of Members despite at least 26 breaches having been documented in the annual reports of the Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members;*

CA 43 S&D (39, 43), Greens (48), Left (40)

C. whereas the suspicions of corruption linked to Qatar *and Morocco* go beyond Parliament and also affect *other EU institutions*, as well as national politicians and influential voices in some Member States, such as researchers;

D. *whereas countries such as* Qatar, Morocco, but also China, Russia, *the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Serbia* and Turkey *have invested heavily in lobbying efforts in Brussels;* whereas certain extremist organisations from Qatar and Turkey have requested European funds;

E. whereas the UAE has been suspected of seeking to influence European decision-makers; whereas money originating in the UAE has been lent to a *national* political party on at least one occasion;

CA 44 RE (50, 51)

*F a. whereas elite capture by foreign interests is facilitated by the unrestricted 'revolving doors' from European institutions to autocratic countries, with a high risk of harmful interference against the interests and values of the EU; whereas measures to reduce elite capture are insufficient and do not prevent former MEPs or former senior civil servants from working for high-risk countries' governments or entities;*

CA 45 EPP/RE (54, 57, 59), S&D (55), RE (58), ECR (73)

G. whereas interference with EU and national institutions has existed for many years but the number, *intensity and potential danger* of such interference *have* increased *vastly in the months before and* during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; *whereas according to the EEAS, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine dominates observed foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) activities;*

*G a. whereas Russia's and China's diplomatic channels regularly serve as enablers and multipliers of FIMI operations deployed across wide range of topics; whereas Russia systematically works on undermining and dividing international support for Ukraine and on sowing doubt who the aggressor is by spreading lies about its war of aggression;*

CA 46 EPP/RE (60), Greens (61)

H. whereas, in its resolution of 9 March 2022, Parliament identified Russia and China as the primary sources of foreign interference in Europe; whereas Russia seeks out contact with political parties, figures and movements in order to use them as players within the EU institutions *and in the national discourse* with a view to legitimising its positions



and proxy governments, lobbying for sanctions relief and mitigating the consequences of its international isolation **and eroding the idea of truth and objective reality**; whereas Kremlin-backed groups launched a cyber-attack on Parliament's website following the adoption of a resolution recognising Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism<sup>1</sup>;

**CA 47 EPP/RE (64)**

- I. whereas several political parties represented in Parliament have sought financial support from entities outside Europe, including from Russia; **whereas according to the U.S. intelligence review Russia has secretly funnelled hundreds of millions euros to foreign political parties and candidates in more than two dozen countries since 2014 in an attempt to shape political events beyond its borders; whereas Kremlin-linked forces have also used shell companies, think tanks and other means to influence political events; whereas Russian political financing was sometimes overseen by Russian government officials and legislators, and was executed by government bodies; whereas Russia has used cryptocurrency, cash and gifts to shape political events in other countries;**

**CA 47a S&D (63)**

- I a. **whereas far right parties from Austria, France and Italy have signed cooperation agreements with the United Russia party of President Putin, and face media allegations of being willing to accept political funding from Russia; whereas other European far right parties such as in Germany, Hungary, as well as the in the UK also reportedly have close contact with the Kremlin, and have also worked as so-called 'election observers' in Kremlin-controlled elections, for example in Russian occupied Donetsk and Lugansk in eastern Ukraine, to monitor and legitimise Russian-sponsored elections;**

**CA 47b S&D (63)**

- I b. **whereas findings about the close and regular contacts between Russian officials and representatives of a group of Catalan secessionists in Spain, as well as between Russian officials and the largest private donor for the Brexit Vote Leave campaign, require an in-depth investigation, and are part of Russia's wider strategy to use each and every opportunity to manipulate discourse in order to promote destabilisation;**

**CA 48 Greens (70), ECR (67)**

- J. whereas there are still cases of staff members at Parliament with **known** links to the Russian authorities; whereas such a situation creates a blatant risk of malign foreign interference; **whereas the daughter of a member of Putin's closest circle served in the EP as an intern to an MEP;**

**CA 49 EPP/RE (89), EPP (71, 92), S&D (75), RE (76), Greens (77)**

- K. **whereas the ability of interest group representatives to share their views with decision-makers in the Parliament by way of arguments is a vital part of European democracy; whereas on the other hand, inappropriate means of influencing, bribery and other criminal offences are unacceptable;** whereas some organisations focusing on general policy issues and lobbying within Parliament receive funding from outside

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2022 on recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism. Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2022)0405.

the EU, *including from Russia and US-based far-right groups*, and intend to influence the European way of life and *democratic processes; whereas corruption of public representatives undermines democratic principles and should be met with zero tolerance;*

*K a. whereas all EU institutions maintaining relations with third countries and conducting EU's foreign policy need to allocate further resources and strengthen their efforts to fight against foreign interference in democratic processes in EU partner countries, including through strengthening strategic communication;*

*K b. whereas it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation in the fight against interference, including corruption, between the European institutions and the Member States where they are located; whereas these Member States must adopt appropriate legislation to tackle these phenomena; whereas, in this context, cooperation between the intelligence services, the police services and the judicial institutions is essential and must be strengthened;*

CA 50 Greens (78, 79), Left (35)

*K c. whereas ethics standards already exist within the EU institutions, but are very fragmented and rely solely on a self-regulatory approach; whereas the creation of an independent ethics body could contribute to strengthening trust in the EU institutions and their democratic legitimacy; whereas the internal monitoring and alert mechanisms of the EU institutions have not detected the corruption and foreign interference;*

CA 51 EPP (91), S&D (85), Greens (88), Left (100, 105), NI (87)

L. whereas the EU Transparency Register was strengthened following the Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021<sup>2</sup>, which set high standards of transparent and ethical interest representation in the EU, *while still not formally mandatory, allows for many meetings to remain without transparency and was still found containing numerous inaccurate entries*; whereas the register serves to increase the transparency of foreign influence but cannot deter foreign interference; whereas not all paid outside activities lead to conflicts of interest; *whereas the measures recently introduced by the inter-institutional agreement on the Transparency Register require stronger ambition by the Parliament in ensuring proper implementation, enforcement and oversight of all transparency standards; whereas the register's scope does not include former MEPs, nor representatives of non-EU states; whereas the register shall be only subject to a review no later than July 2025;*

*L a. whereas mandatory disclosure of conflicts of interest could be a potential tool to strengthen the integrity of the Parliament;*

CA 52 S&D (96), Greens (95)

M. whereas the use of targeted surveillance technology, in particular by repressive governments worldwide to track political opponents or monitor regime critics is on the rise; whereas typically vulnerable groups, such as human rights defenders, civil society activists, *journalists* and political opponents, are among the main targets, including within the EU; whereas the EU toolkit needs to be strengthened and better tailored to

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<sup>2</sup> Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register. OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1.

the challenges that global spyware and surveillance tools pose to EU institutions *and individuals*;

- N. *whereas INGE 1 and INGE 2 have brought to light strategies and actors, who try to interfere in European affairs; whereas both special committees made significant and comprehensive proposals on how to deal with malign interference; whereas more clarity is needed regarding foreign interference, be it through foreign officials or through interest representatives at EU level;*

CA 53 S&D (101), RE (104), Greens (102), Left (103)

- O. *whereas strengthening the transparency requirements for interest representatives and entities, such as lobby- and consultancy agencies, foundations, NGOs or think tanks could serve the purpose of tracing foreign interference; whereas the requirements should not stigmatise legitimate foreign funding;*

CA 54 EPP (107), S&D (106), RE (109, 111), Greens (110), Left (105), NI (108)

- P. *whereas interest representatives, such as lobby and consultancy agencies, foundations, NGOs and think-tanks must be subject to scrutiny, due diligence and transparency rules, in particular with regard to financing, with proportional criteria and by avoiding cumbersome procedures, especially for small and non-profit NGOs;*

CA 55 S&D (119, 121), Greens (120)

- Q. *whereas resolutions related to third countries, including urgency resolutions under Rule 132, and own-initiative country or region specific reports, must be adopted in line with Parliament's guidelines and scope and should never be misused by anyone other than the urgent need to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of those facing an imminent threat in non-EU countries; whereas urgency resolutions must remain an essential tool of Parliament's human rights policy;*

- Q a. *whereas sensitive votes on trade and cooperation agreements have to be under special scrutiny, as they have the potential to attract special attention from the respective counterparts in the negotiations;*

## Citations

CA 56 EPP/RE (8), S&D (6), Greens (1, 2, 5), Left (3)

- *having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2016 for an open, efficient and independent European Union administration<sup>3</sup> and resolution of 15 January 2013 with recommendations to the Commission on a Law of Administrative Procedure of the European Union,<sup>4</sup> (1)*

- a *having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2017 on transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institution, (2)*

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<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0279

<sup>4</sup> (2012/2024(INL)), OJ C 440, 30.12.2015, p. 17–23

- *having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2023 on the establishment of an independent EU ethics body, (3, 6)*
- *having regard to Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC) laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, (5)*
- *having regard to the Decision of the European Parliament of 28 September 2005 adopting the Statute for Members of the European Parliament (2005/684/EC, Euratom), (8)*