

Resolution adopted at the EPP Congress, St. Julian's (Malta), 29 – 30 March 2017

Fighting corruption: Our duty to preserve Freedom and Democracy

Corruption remains one of the biggest challenges for our societies today. It should be clear that corruption must not be profitable.

The fight against corruption, therefore, has always been a key value for the European Union, including especially during the process of EU accession negotiations. Much has already been achieved in this field, but much more work remains to be done.

The economic costs incurred by corruption in the EU amount to about 120 billion euros per year. Corruption and money laundering are of high priority within the EU: they undermine the rule of law, fundamental rights and good governance, and they harm the private sector as well as distort the EU's internal market.

These realities highlight the need for restoring trust in the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies and call for firm political commitment.

Therefore, it is important that Member States cooperate in the fight against hidden and organised corruption and discourage criminal proceeds by identifying them.

The European People's Party:

1. Considers corruption as a grave social injustice which wrongly diverts public funds and resources towards wrongful or irregular ends, at the expense of taxpayers and those most vulnerable in society;
2. Considers corruption as a serious obstacle to trade and investment, including both investment in public infrastructure as well as investment in essential public services, including health, education, social housing, social inclusion and the fight against poverty;
3. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the continued prevalence of corruption among EU Member States and calls for stronger action to stamp out corruption, especially in public office and in public administration;
4. Stresses the fact that the most effective way to prevent corruption is to reduce the sphere of state intervention, to reduce bureaucratic intermediation and to make this intermediation transparent through better and simpler regulations;
5. Reiterates that corruption among people serving in political and public office is an aberration which undermines public trust in politics, in politicians and in public institutions;
6. Stresses that we will not accept or tolerate any kind of corruption in our own ranks;
7. Emphasises that persons in public office as well as in public administrations ought to be subject to the highest standards in public life, in a manner that effectively safeguards against corruption and that promotes efficiency, transparency, accountability and meritocracy;

8. Notes with grave concern the leaked emails in the Panama Papers cache, among others, which exposed links between persons in high public office across the world, including European politicians, and corruption, tax evasion, fraud and money-laundering;
9. Considers that the fight against corruption can be further strengthened, in particular, via tougher legislation: including stricter penalties and punishments for perpetrators; the strengthening of independent public institutions responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of corruption, fraud and money-laundering; the allocation of greater resources in order to combat corruption effectively; and closer cooperation among national agencies in EU Member States engaged in the fight against corruption;
10. Underscores the role of an independent media in uncovering corruption as well as in ensuring greater public scrutiny, accountability and transparency; considers this an even more compelling reason for publicly funded media to preserve their independence: namely, to serve in the anti-corruption cause;
11. Commits to keeping the fight against corruption high on the agenda of European Union institutions as well as among member parties of the EPP political family.