

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

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RESOLUTION (97) 24

## **ON THE TWENTY GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 November 1997  
at the 101st session of the Committee of Ministers)*

The Committee of Ministers,

Considering the Declaration adopted at the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government, which took place in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997 and in pursuance of the Action Plan, in particular section III, paragraph 2 "Fighting corruption and organised crime";

Aware that corruption represents a serious threat to the basic principles and values of the Council of Europe, undermines the confidence of citizens in democracy, erodes the rule of law, constitutes a denial of human rights and hinders social and economic development;

Convinced that the fight against corruption needs to be multi-disciplinary and, in this respect having regard to Programme of Action against Corruption as well as to the resolutions adopted by the European Ministers of Justice at their 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Conferences held in Valletta and Prague respectively;

Having received the draft 20 guiding principles for the fight against corruption, elaborated by the Multidisciplinary Group on Corruption (GMC);

Firmly resolved to fight corruption by joining the efforts of our countries,

**AGREES TO ADOPT THE 20 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION,  
SET OUT BELOW:**

1. to take effective measures for the prevention of corruption and, in this connection, to raise public awareness and promoting ethical behaviour;
2. to ensure co-ordinated criminalisation of national and international corruption;
3. to ensure that those in charge of the prevention, investigation, prosecution and adjudication of corruption offences enjoy the independence and autonomy appropriate to their functions, are free from improper influence and have effective means for gathering evidence, protecting the persons who help the authorities in combating corruption and preserving the confidentiality of investigations;
4. to provide appropriate measures for the seizure and deprivation of the proceeds of corruption offences;
5. to provide appropriate measures to prevent legal persons being used to shield corruption offences;
6. to limit immunity from investigation, prosecution or adjudication of corruption offences to the degree necessary in a democratic society;
7. to promote the specialisation of persons or bodies in charge of fighting corruption and to provide them with appropriate means and training to perform their tasks;
8. to ensure that the fiscal legislation and the authorities in charge of implementing it contribute to combating corruption in an effective and co-ordinated manner, in particular by denying tax deductibility, under the law or in practice, for bribes or other expenses linked to corruption offences;

9. to ensure that the organisation, functioning and decision-making processes of public administrations take into account the need to combat corruption, in particular by ensuring as much transparency as is consistent with the need to achieve effectiveness;
10. to ensure that the rules relating to the rights and duties of public officials take into account the requirements of the fight against corruption and provide for appropriate and effective disciplinary measures; promote further specification of the behaviour expected from public officials by appropriate means, such as codes of conduct;
11. to ensure that appropriate auditing procedures apply to the activities of public administration and the public sector;
12. to endorse the role that audit procedures can play in preventing and detecting corruption outside public administrations;
13. to ensure that the system of public liability or accountability takes account of the consequences of corrupt behaviour of public officials;
14. to adopt appropriately transparent procedures for public procurement that promote fair competition and deter corruptors;
15. to encourage the adoption, by elected representatives, of codes of conduct and promote rules for the financing of political parties and election campaigns which deter corruption;
16. to ensure that the media have freedom to receive and impart information on corruption matters, subject only to limitations or restrictions which are necessary in a democratic society;
17. to ensure that civil law takes into account the need to fight corruption and in particular provides for effective remedies for those whose rights and interests are affected by corruption;
18. to encourage research on corruption;
19. to ensure that in every aspect of the fight against corruption, the possible connections with organised crime and money laundering are taken into account;
20. to develop to the widest extent possible international co-operation in all areas of the fight against corruption.

AND, IN ORDER TO PROMOTE A DYNAMIC PROCESS FOR EFFECTIVELY PREVENTING  
AND COMBATING CORRUPTION,

THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

1. invites national authorities to apply these Principles in their domestic legislation and practice;
2. instructs the Multidisciplinary Group on Corruption (GMC) rapidly to complete the elaboration of international legal instruments pursuant to the Programme of Action against Corruption;
3. instructs the Multidisciplinary Group on Corruption (GMC) to submit without delay a draft text proposing the establishment of an appropriate and efficient mechanism, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, for monitoring observance of these Principles and the implementation of the international legal instruments to be adopted.