

## Press Release: TIB calls for stronger anti-corruption measures in wake of EP probe

### **Transparency International Belgium calls for stronger anti-corruption measures in wake of European Parliament probe**

**Brussels, 24 March 2025**

Transparency International Belgium (TI Belgium) expresses **deep concern** over the latest developments in the **European Parliament corruption probe**, which has now resulted in **charges against five individuals** linked to suspected bribery by foreign entities, including Huawei.

**Nicholas Aiossa, Director at TI EU**, said *“These new allegations are as sweeping and serious as Qatargate and make a mockery of democracy at the European Parliament. For too long, MEPs have taken a carefree approach to ethics and continue to exist in a culture of impunity. If MEPs want to protect the integrity of the Parliament, they need to bring about swift, wide-ranging, and substantial ethics reform.”*

TI Belgium fully supports TI EU's advocacy in this regard.

While this case highlights corruption risks within the European institutions, TIB believes that **similar gaps exist at the national level in Belgium**, necessitating **urgent reforms**. We note as a positive signal, **the action of the Belgian police demonstrates that Belgium takes its responsibilities** in fighting corruption seriously, even within the EU framework. However, it is crucial that the case is handled procedurally correctly so that prosecution can be successful, and justice is served.

**Wouter Wolfs, Lecturer at the KU Leuven and expert on political finance and corruption**, highlights that although the EU institutions fall short regarding monitoring and enforcement, they do have a number of rules in place regarding political transparency and ethics that could serve as a source of inspiration for the political institutions in Belgium.

**Belgium should attempt to close gaps in its own governance** by strengthening its own anti-corruption framework, particularly in key areas: **transparency in lobbying, better monitoring of possible conflicts of interest and public procurement**.

- **Transparency in Lobbying:** The Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) has highlighted deficiencies in Belgium’s lobbying transparency framework. **More rigorous registration and disclosure requirements are necessary** to prevent undue influence on policymaking. Compulsory registration of meetings between representatives and politicians and declared interests, as well as transparency about the participation of Members in events organized by third parties could further improve transparency.
- **Better monitoring of conflicts of interests:** Belgian parliaments have developed Codes of Conduct with provisions on conflicts of interests, but this remains largely limited to a definition of principles. **More measures should be taken** to make these principles operational, such as an **obligatory declaration of assets** and (remunerated) side activities, and **enforceable sanctions for non-compliance**.
- **Public Procurement Risks:** According to the Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) 2024 report, public procurement remains a significant corruption risk in Belgium, with political influence and favoritism continuing to distort contract awards.

### **About Transparency International Belgium**

Transparency International Belgium is the national chapter of **Transparency International**, the global movement dedicated to fighting corruption and promoting integrity, transparency, and accountability. For more information, visit: [www.transparencybelgium.be](https://www.transparencybelgium.be).

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