

Three Members of European Parliament Launch Pan-European Anti-Corruption Organisation

Brussels, 25th of May, 2005 - MEPs Edith Mastenbroek (NL-PES), Bill Newton Dunn (UK-ALDE) and Carl Schlyter (Sweden-Greens) launch *GOPAC-Europe*, the European chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

GOPAC gathers together members of parliament from around the world to fight corruption and promote transparency, in their respective countries and beyond.

GOPAC's three goals are:

- Educating members of parliaments on the technical aspects of the oversight role that they play for their governments;
- Encouraging and supporting peers in their fight against corruption; and
- Choosing measurable goals to tackle within individual GOPAC chapters.

A broad spectrum of MEPs and MPs debated the main goals of GOPAC-Europe today, and Transparency International will be lending their expertise in fighting corruption to their discussion.

A new whistle-blowing web portal was created as a first activity of GOPAC-Europe, www.meddelarfrihet.nu (meaning "right to inform" in Swedish). Carl Schlyter, the initiator of the website, said: "This portal will give Europeans an anonymous method of reporting the corruption they witness, while at the same time alerting parliamentarians to the types of corruption going on in Europe today - this can then translate into solid action on the part of GOPAC-Europe."

Diana Rodriguez, of Transparency International, said, "GOPAC-Europe will be an important partner for Transparency International, due to our common interests and the organisation's capacity to mobilise MEPs. There is a gap that needs to be bridged between anti-corruption standards and the practice in many EU Member States, for instance on conflict of interests and enforcement of political finance regulations. We hope this new initiative will encourage EU Member States to take concrete measures against corruption and in favour of more transparency in Europe."

MEP Edith Mastenbroek said, on the subject of the EU anti-corruption policies, "I find it worrying that the EU's reluctance to fully support Council of Europe anti-corruption monitoring could be an excuse for some non-EU members of the Council of Europe to reconsider their fulfilment of the corruption monitoring commitments. I hope this presentation will be the starting point of a good discussion on how to promote a more institutionally coherent fight against corruption in Europe."

"Corruption is a key ingredient of organised crime activities," said MEP Bill Newton Dunn, "and it will be one of the main issues examined in the Intergroup on Law Enforcement and Organised Crime. We will be looking very closely at how the EU and Member States can better prevent corruption before it contributes to the profits of organised crime groups."

MEP Bill Newton Dunn will be discussing how the Intergroup on Law Enforcement and Organised Crime is investigating EU and national anti-corruption policy in relation to its effectiveness in preventing and fighting organised crime.

The Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) was created in Ottawa, Canada in 2002 by over 170 parliamentarians from around the world. GOPAC now has national and regional chapters in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Newly Independent States, North and South America. Until now, GOPAC has lacked regional representation in Europe.

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