

*Council of Europe*  
*The Secretary General*

Strasbourg, 26 January 2017

Dear Mr de Swardt,

Thank you for your letter of 19 January drawing my attention to serious allegations of corruption in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

First of all, let me firmly state that in the Council of Europe we have zero tolerance for all forms of corruption, wherever or whenever it occurs.

Secondly, we already have solid relevant mechanisms in place – such as the good offices of the Internal Auditor and the External Auditor – and recently we also succeeded in securing the appropriate funding for a new post in the Secretariat of Investigator, who will undertake and co-ordinate investigations of potential fraud and corruption within the Organisation.

Thirdly, the Council of Europe is comprised of a number of important institutions, of which some have an independent role. It is clear that these institutions also must have zero tolerance to corruption and this must also be the case for the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) and its individual members. I understand that the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly is currently preparing a report on "*Follow-up to Resolution 1903 (2012): promoting and strengthening transparency, accountability and integrity of Parliamentary Assembly members*". One of the aims of this report is to consider how to further strengthen the current integrity framework of the Assembly.

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Mr Cobus de Swardt  
Managing Director  
Transparency International  
Alt-Moabit 96  
10559 Berlin  
Germany

*F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex*  
*France*

*Tel. + 33 (0)3 88 41 20 51*  
*+ 33 (0)3 88 41 20 00*

*Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 99*  
*+ 33 (0)3 88 41 27 40*

Fourthly, in preparing this report, the Committee will be able to draw on the unique expertise of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) which, as you know, is the Organisation's anti-corruption body, and has gained significant knowledge and experience in the area of the prevention of corruption of members of parliament, which was one focus of its Fourth Evaluation Round. Such an expertise has already been requested by the Committee.

Finally, I consider the issue of crucial importance for the credibility of the Organisation. I shall therefore continue to follow developments closely.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'T' followed by a long horizontal line and a final flourish.

Thorbjørn Jagland