



Strengthening EU action to fight corruption



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"I would like to focus on corruption with all its faces. The face of foreign agents trying to influence our political system. The face of shady companies or foundations abusing public money. We must also eradicate corruption at home. That is why we will present measures to update our legislative framework for fighting corruption. It erodes trust in our institutions. So, we must fight back with the full force of the law."

President Ursula von der Leyen, 2022 State of the Union address

Today, the Commission is taking **decisive action to fight corruption in the EU and worldwide.**

Corruption is **highly damaging to society**, to our **democracies**, to the **economy** and to **individuals**. It **undermines the institutions** on which we depend. It acts as an **enabler for organised crime** and hostile foreign interference.



69% of EU citizens believe that **high-level corruption is NOT pursued sufficiently by national authorities**¹.

47% of businesses think it's **UNLIKELY** that **police or prosecutors will catch** those engaged in **corruption activities**².



At least €120 billion per year: estimated cost of corruption to the EU economy³.

¹Special Eurobarometer 523 - European citizens and corruption in 2022. Link: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2658>
²Flash Eurobarometer 507 - Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU. Link: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2657>
³Corruption is by its nature difficult to quantify, but even conservative estimates suggest that it costs the EU economy at least €120 billion per year.



A MILESTONE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

The Commission will step up its action, with:

- Strengthened rules **criminalising corruption offences** and harmonising penalties across the EU
- Focus on **prevention and helping support a culture of integrity**: Setting up an **EU network against corruption** and work on developing a **first EU anti-corruption strategy**
- A dedicated **Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) sanctions regime** to target serious acts of corruption worldwide, when such acts affect or risk affecting the EU's values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity, and the other objectives of the CFSP

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED NEW RULES IN THE EU?

The updated rules will include:



Rules on corruption **prevention**: Ensuring key preventive tools on conflict of interest and asset declarations are in place



Extended **definitions** of all criminal offences prosecuted as corruption, applying both to the public and private sphere



New and strengthened rules **criminalising corruption offences** and harmonising penalties across the EU



Possibility to apply **alternative measures** such as fines, exclusion from access to public funding, holding public office or standing for elections



Ensuring **effective investigation** and **prosecution of corruption**



Extended **time limitation periods** to investigate, prosecute, trial, and decide on corruption in courts and to enforce convictions






Better **cross-border cooperation** between competent authorities



Data collection to monitor **enforcement**

HOW WILL THE EU TACKLE CORRUPTION WORLDWIDE?

With the new CFSP sanctions regime proposal **from the High Representative, supported by the Commission**, the EU would be able to:

-  Target serious acts of bribery and embezzlement
-  Ban perpetrators, their associates and those facilitating such acts from entering the EU territory
-  Freeze their assets