



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Commission proposal boosts European political parties' ability to represent EU citizens, strengthens democracy

The Commission today adopted a proposal to strengthen the ability of European political parties to form a truly European public sphere and express the will of EU citizens, by increasing their visibility, recognition, effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

The proposal provides European-level legal status for European political parties and their affiliated foundations, tackling the most important obstacle they face when operating in and across Member States. Most are currently registered as Belgian non-profit making associations, or 'asbl'.

Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič said: *"Truly transnational European political parties and foundations are key to articulating the voices of citizens at European level, and generating Europe-wide public debates. They have a central role to play in shaping the debate on European issues, which in view of the 2014 European elections, promises to be lively in the years to come. This ambitious proposal is an important step towards consolidating European democracy"*.

To be recognised as a European political party or a European political foundation, such organisations will have to meet high standards on internal democracy, governance, accountability, transparency, and respect for the values on which the Union is founded. All aspects of party funding will be subject to a comprehensive set of rules, including strict reporting and control requirements. A regime of administrative sanctions will be introduced in case of infringements.

There will be no impact on the overall amounts made available under the EU budget for funding of political parties and foundations. But the rules governing such funding will be streamlined and adapted to their specific situation and needs. European political parties would have to publish the names of donors contributing more than €1,000/year, while the annual limit on individual donations would rise from €12,000 to €25,000.

Background

The existing legislation (Reg (EC) 2004/2003 of 4/11/03) governing political parties at European level and their funding was adopted in 2003. It was amended in 2007 to allow, among other things, funding from the EU budget to European political foundations. The European Parliament set out a series of requests to improve this legislation, through the Giannakou Report. Today's proposal incorporates most of these requests.

In 2012, a total of 13 political parties at European level received funding via the Regulation, which is administered by the European Parliament. The budget for the purposes of the political parties and foundations at European level amounted to just over €31 million in 2012.

Regulation 2004/2003:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2003R2004:20071227:EN:PDF>

Proposal on the statute and funding of European political parties and foundations:

COM(2012)499:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/sefcovic/documents/com_2012_499_en.pdf

COM(2012)500:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/sefcovic/documents/swd_com_2012_500_en.pdf

See also [MEMO/12/660](#)

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