



## **Ethics in politics**

### **For strong moral conduct through a strong moral code**

#### **Declaration adopted by the PES Presidency on 14 April 2011**

A healthy system of representative democracy requires openness, transparency and public control. To be legitimate and gain the citizens' trust, and to deter any illegal or unethical activity, political representatives need to adhere to clear and binding standards of ethics and transparency.

In order to maintain good governance and high moral standards, there is a need for strict legislation for all elected representatives in society. Such legislation should entail clear and transparent rules and obligations regarding disclosure of undertakings, financial interests and dealings with lobbyists. This information should be regularly updated in a public register. It should also give clear guidance on what could constitute a conflict of interest, regardless of whether it is actual or anticipated, and mechanisms for prevention and resolution.

As a result of the recent revelation of certain Members of the European Parliament accepting payment from alleged lobbyists to table amendments, the PES calls for strengthened ethics and increased transparency in politics. There is a need for tough and clear rules to halt corruption, fraud and conflict of interest. Unlawful practices must be swiftly dealt with. It's a question of democratic legitimacy for the EU institutions, in particular the directly-elected European Parliament.

The PES congratulates the S&D Group in the European Parliament for its quick decisions concerning Members involved, for already having implemented tougher rules for their Members and for being in the forefront of reforming European Parliament rules.

The PES therefore supports more stringent rules for the Members of the European Parliament and lobbyists, improvement of transparency in the work of the EU institutions and the adoption of a strong Code of Conduct for Members.

Members of the European Parliament should be required to be more transparent regarding meetings with lobbyists. And lobbyists need to make their interests known.

In exercising their duties, the Members of the European Parliament are representing one entity, and one entity only: EU citizens. One salary should be enough. Members should not be entitled to receive private remuneration linked to their mandate. An adequate recompense for the Members is guaranteed by the single statute.

Our proposals are intended to act as a "baseline". They should be regarded as the minimum expected from an elected representative. The intention of course is that this strong moral code allows us to foster a political culture that is fundamentally based on strong moral conduct.

