



European Parliamentarians Against Corruption Hold Conference on Anti-corruption Policy

Paris, 13th of January, 2006 - GOPAC-Europe, the European chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), is holding a conference today at the French National Assembly to elect its board and to debate ways of confronting the problem of corruption in Europe. Michel Hunault, deputy in the French National Assembly, is co-hosting the conference with Edith Mastebroek, member of the European Parliament from the Netherlands. GOPAC gathers together members of parliament from around the world to fight corruption and promote transparency, in their respective countries and beyond.

A focused group of MEPs and MPs gather in Paris today to choose a board for the organisation, as well as to debate the problems of corruption in Europe and ways of counteracting them.

The participating parliamentarians will hear from experts in the field of anti-corruption policy. Yves-Marie Doublet, president of Transparency International France will speak about money-laundering and its use as a way to hide acts of corruption. Stuart Gilman, Chief of the Anti-corruption Unit at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, will give a presentation on how parliamentarians can contribute to more effective implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption, which was signed in 2003 and came into force only this past December.

The topics of the conference will be:

- Money Laundering and Corruption
- The UN Convention Against Corruption: Next Steps for Parliamentarians
- Ethics Standards for Parliamentarians, moderated by Edith Mastebroek

Michel Hunault, one of the co-hosts of the event, hopes "that this meeting will strengthen the network of parliamentarians in Europe interested in fighting corruption, who will hopefully go back to their respective countries to initiate new country chapters of GOPAC."

Edith Mastebroek, the other co-host, hoped "that the GOPAC network's activities and the expert presentations will provide the parliamentarians with vital information they will need to improve the quality of anti-corruption legislation in their own countries and in the EU institutions, where these issues are unfortunately not getting the political attention that they so desperately deserve in Europe."

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 2005, GOPAC had lacked regional representation in Europe.

GOPAC Chair, Canadian M.P. John Williams, views the creation of a European chapter as an important addition to the organization: "it is essential that parliamentarians from the developed world also recognize their responsibility to ensure effective parliamentary oversight and hold their governments accountable. Corruption, unfortunately, exists in all parts of the world."

GOPAC's main activities are focused on:

- 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.

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