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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations **(first reading)**
- Adoption of the legislative act **(LA + S)**
= Statements

Statement by the Netherlands

- regarding the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations, and
- the proposal for an amendment to the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 as regards the financing of European political parties.

The Netherlands considers the current proposal as a significant improvement compared to the original proposal of September 2012.

Despite this, the Netherlands has strong fundamental objections against the assessment of the EU's values in the process of registration and verification of the European political parties.

The Netherlands attaches great value to the independent position of political parties.

The Netherlands is of the opinion that it is primarily up to the voters and secondarily to the judiciary to assess the programme and activities of political parties. Such an assessment should not be part of the registration and verification process.

Therefore, the Netherlands will vote against the proposals concerned.

Statement by Belgium

While in favour of developing a European political area and strengthening European political parties, Belgium cannot support the draft Regulation submitted for adoption to the Council by the Presidency.

Belgium deplores the uncertainty which is still present, under Articles 17 and 18, in relation to the possible repercussions of European political parties' campaigns in the context of European elections on the application of national legislation on election expenses. We would point out that under the terms of the Act of 20 September 1976 concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, national provisions continue to govern the electoral procedure in each Member State.

Furthermore, Belgium cannot agree with raising the ceiling for donations to EUR 18 000.

Statement by Italy, Portugal and Slovakia

While acknowledging the importance of adopting the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European Political Parties and European Political Foundations within the current legislature, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia would like to express their concerns over the composition of the “Authority” foreseen in Article 6 which as it stands is placed in the hands of one single person.

Italy, Portugal and Slovakia believe that such a composition is not consistent with the highly sensitive decisions the Authority is going to be entrusted with, which include: a) registration/de-registration of European political parties and European Political Foundations as foreseen by Articles 6, 7, 9, 10, 27(1); b) imposing financial sanctions on European political parties and European Political Foundations in the cases foreseen by Article 27 (2). Italy, Portugal and Slovakia observe that such a solution represents a major shift with respect to the current discipline of Regulation 2004/2003 where such responsibilities, far from being conferred upon a single person, are entrusted to the European Parliament.

In particular, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia would like to express their deep concern over the lack of adequate checks and balances for the hypothesis that the “Authority” - contrary to the opinion of the Committee of independent eminent Persons foreseen in article 11 - decides not to de-register a EPP/EPF which would have been found in breach of the values on which the European Union is founded as referred in articles 3(1)(c) and 3(2)(c).

Statement by the United Kingdom

While this regulation brings some improvements in terms of the capacity for European Political Parties to be funded through voluntary contributions rather than public money, and introduces some safeguards for political plurality, it does not go far enough. The introduction of a completely unnecessary so-called “European legal personality” for European Political Parties will do nothing to address the EU’s democratic deficit. Enhancing the role of national parliaments in a European context will remain the most effective way to address this issue.
