

Press Release

Council of Europe Press Division

Ref: 596a06

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 60

Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 11

pressunit@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



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The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) publishes report on the USA.

Strasbourg, 17.10.2006 – The Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) has published today its Second Round Evaluation Report on the United States of America. The United States, as the Group's only non-European member, joined GRECO in 2000, shortly after its inception. The report focuses on the deprivation of the financial and other benefits drawn from corrupt acts, measures introduced to counter corruption in public administration and the prevention of legal persons - such as commercial companies- from being used as shields for corruption. The report was drawn up by a team of GRECO expert-evaluators following a one-week on-site visit to the United States in December 2005, during which the team held thorough discussions with more than 60 US officials and civil society representatives.

There is clear recognition in the United States that corruption poses a constant threat to the proper functioning of public administration at all levels of government and considerable resources are devoted to its prevention. In this connection a number of specific programmes and institutions have been established, such as the Office of Governmental Ethics (OGE) which plays a crucial role in fostering ethical values and preventing corruption at federal level.

The report contains several recommendations and observations which aim at further strengthening anti-corruption policies in the United States. It is stressed among others that the US authorities should be careful to maintain a high degree of transparency of public administration and ensure protection of those who report suspicions of corruption in public administration ("whistle blowers") from adverse consequences. Furthermore, consideration should be given to enhancing assistance at federal level to the public when exercising its right to access public information. GRECO also stresses the need for laying down standards of conduct expected of private sector contractors who contribute to the carrying out of public functions. Finally, the existing system for registration of legal persons at State level is found to be a weak instrument to prevent companies from illegal activities; consequently, GRECO calls for greater uniformity of registration requirements.

GRECO's report is available at: <http://www.coe.int/greco>

* GRECO is an enlarged partial agreement which currently comprises 42 members (Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Republic of Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Republic of Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States of America). It monitors its members' compliance with Council of Europe anti-corruption standards.

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