

European rights body urges Greece to do more to fight corruption



Brussels, March 2 (RHC)-- The Council of Europe, a 47-nation human rights body based in Strasbourg, France, has called on Greece to do more in terms of fighting corruption among politicians and state officials. A report by the Council's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) said that Greece was still lagging behind to lift the controversial immunity of lawmakers, an issue which has helped many politicians dodge prosecution when they face corruption allegations.

The report also said the number of denials to lift immunity still "significantly outweighed" approved requests. However, the Council, which has no legislative powers, praised Athens for introducing regulations that force lawmakers to act based on certain codes and to declare their assets. It also said there was a need for more standardized laws of professional conduct and that judges and prosecutors needed to act with more integrity.

The Council of Europe issued a separate report, criticizing Greek officials for allowing a certain level of anonymity in donations, saying it was a step back for the country as it had introduced bans on such donations two years ago. "The approach followed in Greece, with multiple, often divergent legal changes within short periods of time, creates an unpredictable legal framework which may result in ineffective

implementation and a substantial lack of transparency,” said the report.

Greece has been grappling with an economic crisis for the past years, with many blaming it on tax evasion, corrupt officials and their lavish way of spending state funds. The economic woes have forced the government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to enforce some harsh spending cuts as demanded by Greece's international lenders despite his pledges during elections in 2015 to put an end to austerity in the country from.

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