

GRECO: Fifth Round Evaluation Report on Belgium



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News

On 23 January 2020, GRECO published its [fifth round evaluation report on Belgium](#). The lack of an integrity policy or ethical framework for ministers and staff members of their private offices emerged as the most striking problem. There are few regulations on incompatibilities and on issues such as relations to third parties or the phenomenon of “revolving doors.” Therefore, with regard to members of private offices, GRECO recommends regulating their recruitment and employment and establishing an appropriate ethical code and implementation mechanisms. In general, documents produced by ministers and their strategic units should be preserved in a way that makes them available to their successors, and *ad hoc* reporting should be introduced for persons in top executive functions when conflicts arise between their private interests and their official duties.

With regard to the Federal Police, the report calls for an increase in staff, as the lack of resources has a particular impact on the services for preventing and fighting corruption. In addition, the code of conduct must be updated, and the integrity of candidates must be verified when they change posts, also at regular intervals throughout their careers. As the most conspicuous gap, the report highlights that a recent change in the law on the right to pursue outside activities has resulted in an almost automatic authorisation. However, this right is to be regulated by objective and transparent criteria in conjunction with effective supervisory arrangements.

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