

Shaking up old Europe



Police stand in front of the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, Dec. 13, 2022. Photo: EFE - Stephanie Lecocq

By Roberto Morejón

The most notorious corruption scandal within the European Parliament calls into question its alleged moral capacity to judge others, with a marked bias towards Southern nations.

The seizure of fortunes, searches of offices at the Strasbourg headquarters, presentations of accused before judges, raids on the homes of legislators and their relatives and the remand in custody of a vice-president, marked the commotion.

According to Belgian police and press reports, suspicions about illegal payments to legislators point to Morocco and Qatar, although the latter country officially rejected the accusations.

However, the investigations point to third parties for trying to gain influence in decision-making in the European Parliament.

It was striking that among the main players involved in the storm was Pier Antonio Panzeri, deputy until 2019 and founder of none other than the non-governmental organization Combat Impunity.

In addition to his and his family's enjoyment of luxuries, Panzeri had as his assistant Francesco Giorgi, partner of the until recently vice-president of the European Parliament, Eva Kaili, dismissed for being the main suspect in the acceptance of bribes and money laundering.

The investigation shook the Community hemicycle, caused deep concern in the Old Continent and accelerated the demands for transparency and integrity of the governing bodies of the European Union.

In areas of the impoverished South, frequently the target of accusations and attacks coming from the European Chamber, they pointed out how the hubbub about corruption undermines the position of alleged integrity of that Assembly.

They added that the Assembly often hears fiery rhetoric because it considers itself a bastion of the fight against corruption and the monitoring of the observance of human rights in other latitudes, preferably outside the First World.

The sharp accusations are reminiscent of the actions of conservative groups within the aforementioned perimeter, for moving away from objectivity and impartiality to adhere to double standards and selectivity.

In a controversy with the Mexican government, the latter pointed out in a communiqué what it considered to be the double standards of the European Parliament in promoting security and providing arms to Ukraine.

Everything seems to indicate that the current storm in the aforementioned legislative contour will mark a before and after in its trajectory.

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