

Brussels, February 12, 2024

Subject: Trade unions and civil society organisations support call to withdraw Amazon's lobbying badges

Dear President of the European Parliament Metsola.
Dear College of Quaestors,

As trade unions and civil society organisations working on democracy and transparency we are deeply concerned with Amazon's refusal to attend a hearing in the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on working conditions in Amazon warehouses. The European Parliament must use its full powers to ensure Amazon, and other big companies, cannot continue avoiding democratic scrutiny. This means triggering rule Rule 123 (Access to Parliament) and withdrawing Amazon's EP lobby badges as [proposed](#) by members of your committee.

On 23 January, the EMPL Committee organised a [hearing](#) about working conditions in Amazon warehouses. The hearing invited representatives from several trade unions as well as a representative from Amazon. The company refused to accept the invitation, reportedly saying it "was not a good day for [Amazon]."

This is not the first time Amazon rejects Parliament scrutiny. In December 2023, Amazon at the last moment cancelled a scheduled visit by an MEP delegation to its warehouses in Germany and Poland. In 2021, Amazon had already [refused](#) to testify at a previous hearing.

Considering the size of Amazon in Europe and the resources and presence it has, this is a willful obstruction of the democratic scrutiny of the company's activities.

Amazon has also been [criticised for its shadow lobbying](#). In the EU Transparency Register, the company failed to report on its affiliations to several think tanks and declared a lobbying budget seemingly too low. These issues are currently being investigated by the Register's Secretariat.

This is all the more important as some of these activities have come under increased public criticism and regulatory scrutiny:

- Amazon has [undermined](#) the right to strike and is [notorious for its poor labour conditions and low pay](#).
- Amazon's marketplace has been [investigated, fined](#), and sued in multiple jurisdictions due to abuses of market power and illegally maintaining monopoly power; in fact, there is [sufficient proof](#) to break up the company;
- Amazon's data collection and processing practices have come under fire for [breaching](#) EU data protection laws. On the exact same day as the EMPL hearing, Amazon was [fined €32 million for "overly intrusive" surveillance of workers](#) in its warehouses in France;
- The company has come under scrutiny from local communities and workers for the [environmental impact](#) of its logistics centres and its [carbon footprint](#).

But while Amazon obstructs democratic scrutiny of its working conditions, the company at the same time [heavily invests](#) in lobbying the European institutions and EU member states including through lobby firms and public relations campaigns. Since 2013 the company [has spent](#) at least €18.8 million lobbying the European institutions. Amazon also employs fourteen lobbyists with an EP accreditation.

Amazon's disregard for the EU's democratic institutions, should not allow the company to get off the hook. We ask you to implement Rule 123 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament and call for an immediate withdrawal of all lobbying badges of the company.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signed,

ARTICLE 19

Balanced Economy Project

Berlin vs Amazon

Bits of Freedom

Civil Liberties Union for Europe

Clean Clothes Campaign International

Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)

Cyber Rights Organization (CRO)

Defend Democracy

European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)

European Federation of Food, Agriculture, and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

European Public Service Union (EPSU)

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

EuroCOP

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)

Electronic Frontier Norway

Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice

Friends of the Earth France

Foxglove

Goliathwatch

industriAll Europe

Naturfreunde Berlin

Politiscope

LobbyControl

Observatoire des Multinationales

Rebalance Now

Schone Kleren Campagne

SOMO

Open Markets Institute

Transnational Institute (TNI)

UNI Europa

World Economy, Ecology & Development (WEED)

X-Net