



## Ending corporate privileges and secrecy around lobbying in the European Union

The undersigned organisations are deeply concerned about the growing influence of corporate lobby groups on European Union decision-making. Over 15,000 professional lobbyists now operate in Brussels, a large majority representing business interests. Yet, ethics and transparency rules around lobbying are virtually non-existent. Beyond the problem of business spending ever-increasing amounts to influence the political process, the European Commission has developed a tradition of awarding privileged access to corporate interests. The enormous influence of corporate lobbyists undermines democracy and all too frequently results in postponing, weakening or blocking urgently needed progress in EU social, environmental and consumer protections. As the first steps in addressing these problems, the Commission should take determined action to improve transparency around lobbying and ensure that no business groups are given privileged access and influence on EU policy-making.

We welcome the 'European Transparency Initiative' (ETI), launched in March 2005 by European Commissioner Siim Kallas, in particular, the objective to address the current lack of mandatory regulation and reporting of lobbying activities. A mandatory system for lobbying disclosure is urgently needed and must be shaped in a way that optimally enables democratic scrutiny of inputs into EU policy-making.

The undersigned organisations demand the following:

### 1. EU lobbying disclosure legislation which must include:

- A mandatory system of electronic registration and reporting for all lobbyists with a significant annual lobbying budget. The reports must be made available in a fully searchable, sortable and downloadable online database.
- Enforceable ethics rules for lobbyists (for instance prohibiting employment of officials or their relatives for lobbying purposes).

### 2. An improved code of conduct for European Commission officials, including:

- Recording of formal and informal meetings between Commission officials and lobbyists and logging of correspondence (to be made available in a fully searchable online database).
- An extended 'cooling off' period before Commissioners and senior officials can start working for lobby groups or lobbying advisory firms.

The European Commission should encourage the other EU institutions, particularly the European Parliament and the European Council, to develop similar rules.

### 3. The Commission must terminate cases of privileged access and undue influence granted to corporate lobbyists, for instance:

- joint taskforces in which corporate interests are represented while public interest NGOs are not (such as Cars 21 which consists of Commission officials, CEOs and lobbyists from the automobile industry, but no environmental NGOs).
- the privileged status accorded to business lobby groups like the European Services Forum and the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue.

These are minimum requirements if the 'European Transparency Initiative' is to achieve meaningful democratic progress. Vested interests are defending secrecy and privileged access by advocating "self-regulation", voluntary codes of conduct and other pseudo-solutions that do nothing to increase democratic scrutiny of the role of lobbyists in EU policy-making. If the EU institutions would endorse such proposals instead of introducing mandatory disclosure and ethics rules, it would fundamentally undermine the 'European Transparency Initiative'. We have formed the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU) to prevent the failure of this important initiative.

**Signatories (over 140 civil society groups - as of 19 July 2005)<sup>1</sup>:**

- Action Consommation, France
- A SEED Europe
- Association of Farmers, Malta
- Associazione Consumatori Utenti (ACU), Italy
- atomstopp\_atomkraftfrei leben!, Austria
- ATTAC Austria
- ATTAC Denmark
- ATTAC France
- ATTAC Germany
- ATTAC Hungary
- ATTAC-KonsumNetz, Germany
- ATTAC Spain
- ATTAC Sweden
- Both Ends, The Netherlands
- Breastfeeding Promotion and Protection Association of Latvia
- BUDS (Foundation for Human and Nature Protection), Hungary
- BUKO Pharma-Kampagne, Germany
- Campagna per la Riforma della Banca mondiale (CRBM), Italy
- Campagne tegen Wapenhandel, The Netherlands
- Campaign Against Arms Trade, United Kingdom
- Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, United Kingdom
- CEE Bankwatch Network [with member organisations from ten countries in Central and Eastern Europe]
- Center for Encounter and active Non-Violence, Austria
- Centre de Recerca i Informacio en Consum (CRIC), Spain
- CLAT, The Netherlands
- Clean Air Action Group, Hungary
- Coalition against BAYER-dangers, Germany
- Comité pour les droits humains "Daniel Gillard", Belgium
- Consumer Institute for Medicines and Health (KILEN), Sweden
- The Corner House, United Kingdom
- Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)
- Corporate Watch, United Kingdom
- Dubnica Environmental Group, Slovakia
- Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
- EKPIZO – Consumers' Association "The Quality of Life", Greece
- EQUIVITA, Spain
- European Centre of the International Council of Women ( ECICW-CECIF)
- European Federation of Journalists
- European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU)

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<sup>1</sup> For latest update, see <http://www.alter-eu.org/signatories.html>

- European Network on Debt and Development [Eurodad]
- FairFood, The Netherlands
- FERN – the EU forest campaign
- Food Ethics Council, United Kingdom
- Forum Voor Vredesactie, Belgium
- Freedom of Information Project, Privacy International
- Friends of the Earth Europe (more than 30 national organisations with thousands of local groups)
- German League for the Protection of Nature and Environment
- Germanwatch, Germany
- Greenpeace (European Unit)
- Health Action International Europe
- Humane Earth Foundation, France
- Hungarian Young Greens
- IBFAN Europe
- IBFAN Italia, Italy
- IGLA (Informationsgruppe Lateinamerika), Austria
- India Committee of the Netherlands
- Initiativ Liewensufank asbl, Luxemburg
- ISDE Austria (AerztInnen fuer eine gesunde Umwelt)
- Kairos Europa
- KEPKA – Consumers Protection Centre, Greece
- KWIA vzw Support Group for Indigenous People, Belgium
- La revue Prescrire, France
- LobbyControl, Germany
- Mani Tese, Italy
- Mehr Demokratie, Germany
- National Platform EU Research and Information Centre, Ireland
- Nonviolent Peaceforce
- Observatorio de la Deuda en la Globalizacion (ODG), Spain
- Oesterreichische Bergbauern und Bergbaeuerinnen Vereinigung / CPE Austria
- Pesticides Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)
- Pesticide Action Network, Germany
- Pesticide Action Network UK
- Plataforma por la Defensa de los Servicios Publicos-Madrid, Spain
- Platform, United Kingdom
- Platform for Consumers interests (BeVaCo), The Netherlands
- Privacy International
- Proj'art asbl, Belgium
- Public Services International (PSI)
- Quaker Council for European Affairs
- Quercus (Associacao Nacional de Conservacao da Natureza), Portugal
- Rete Lilliput, Italy
- ROBA dell Altro Mondo, Italy
- Scottish Education and Action for Development (SEAD)
- Servas Belgium
- Servas International
- Sisyfos, Sweden
- Social Audit Ltd, United Kingdom
- SOMO, The Netherlands
- SOSNA civic association, Slovakia
- SpinWatch
- Sveriges Konsumenter i Samverkan, Sweden

- Transnational Information Exchange, The Netherlands
- Transnational Institute (TNI)
- Transparency International Deutschland e.V., Germany
- urgewald, Germany
- Voor Moeder Aarde – Friends of the Earth Flanders
- Vrede vzw, Belgium
- War on Want, United Kingdom
- WEMOS, The Netherlands
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Sweden
- Women in Development Europe (WIDE)
- Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)
- Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights
- World Development Movement, United Kingdom
- World Economy, Ecology & Development (WEED), Germany
- Young Researchers of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Za Matku Zem (For Mother Earth), Slovakia

**Consultancies:**

- ID's - Information Diffusion Europe Associations, Brussels
- Westander Publicitet & Paaverkan, Sweden

**Academic supporters:**

- William Dinan, Department of Geography, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
- Otto Holman, Reader in International Relations, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- David Miller, Professor of Sociology, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
- Granville Williams, Senior Lecturer in Media and Journalism, University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom

**Signatories from outside of Europe:**

- ARTICLE 19 (Global Campaign for Free Expression)
- Center for Investigative Reporting, United States
- Center for Media and Democracy, United States
- Centro de Ecologia y Desarrollo, Mexico
- Consumer Action, United States
- Edmonds Institute, United States
- Friends of the Earth US
- Frontiers, Lebanon
- Groundwork, South Africa
- Humanitarian Group For Social Development (HGSD), Lebanon
- Information for Action, Australia
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, United States
- LARS (Latin America Orientacao em Responsabilidade Social), Brazil
- Public Citizen, United States