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Political groups block lobby transparency

Lobbying Transparency Register

The European Parliament's Conference of Presidents has today adopted the Parliament's mandate to begin negotiations on the new lobbying Transparency Register with the European Commission and the European Council. The mandate, which was only made public through a leak, was negotiated in a "Contact Group" composed of all political groups, which met behind closed doors. While some NGOs were invited to a meeting, upon the insistence of the Greens/EFA group, they did not receive a copy of the mandate.

The European Parliament has to commit to transparency if it wants others to follow suit, says Greens/EFA co-president **Ska Keller**:

"The other groups in the European Parliament have double standards when it comes to transparency. They call for stricter rules for the European Commission, but are not willing to commit themselves to convincing transparency rules. They are missing a great opportunity to counteract the impression of the people of Europe that politics in Brussels is conducted behind closed doors. Representation of interests is legitimate and necessary, but must be made transparent. The bare minimum should be that MEPs, as with EU Commissioners, only meet with lobbyists who have entered the lobby register."

Sven Giegold, rapporteur on transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions, adds:

"Citizens have a right to know which lobbyists politicians have met in the process of creating a law. Regrettably, such a binding legislative footprint was not included in today's mandate. The objectors to mandatory lobby transparency will use the protection of their free mandate as a fig leaf. But lobby transparency does not jeopardize the free mandate of MEPs. On the contrary, it protects their ability to act in the public interest. It is particularly frustrating that lawyers will continue to be able to abuse rules that were introduced for court proceedings to lobby in secret."

"If the European Parliament demands a lot from others in the negotiations, but offers nothing in return, the negotiations will not work. The ambitionless mandate is a burden for those who will negotiate with the Commission and the Member States."

Background

In September Parliament will vote on Sven Giegold's report on "Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the EU Institutions". The Greens/EFA Group will then try again to enforce binding rules for dealing with lobbyists. For more information, see: <https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/news/lobbying-transparency-versus-freedom-of-the-mandate/>

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Responsible MEPs



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