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European Parliament negotiators admit failure to improve the EU Lobby Register

Yesterday evening, the negotiations to improve the EU's lobby Transparency Register were declared dead by the European Parliament's negotiators, Danuta Hübner and Sylvie Guillaume. Via an email sent to the Presidents of all political groups, they admitted that "that the negotiations have reached an impasse that seems insurmountable" and blamed First Vice-President Timmermans for the failed outcome.

The blame for the breakdown for negotiations does not only lie on Timmermans and his premature decision to end them, however. The centre left Socialist group and the centre right European People's Party Group also lacked ambition throughout the reform by proposing only a series of voluntary transparency measures, and equally stalled the negotiations, which dragged on for over two years before they were finally called off last night.

The Council was of no help either, proposing to cover only a handful of civil servants with lobby transparency measures - namely, a refusal to meet unregistered lobbyists and an obligation to publish lobby meetings. Governments taking over the Presidency of the Council were to be covered by lobby transparency obligation only once every fourteen years.

Clearly ambition to deliver real lobbying transparency for citizens has been lacking from many sides. Therefore, the next Parliamentary term will need to be used to finally deliver the transparency and accountability that citizens deserve.

The one clear breakthrough on the Parliament's side was the newly adopted rule - proposed by the Greens/EFA Group - that obliges Members of the European Parliament that are drafting reports or chairing committees to publish a list of lobbyists they meet with. But this rule now needs to be properly implemented, and any attempts to water down its implementation will need to be monitored and countered. In addition, the voluntary measures proposed by Guillaume and Hübner will need to be fully put into action.

The Council will also need to take much more responsibility towards citizens. All Member States should follow the example of the Finnish Presidency to proactively publish their meetings with lobbyists. We hope that the upcoming Finnish Presidency of the Council will heed the calls of almost 100 MEPs, including myself, to enhance transparency of lobbying and decision-making in the EU.

For more information:

- https://sven-giegold.de/groundbreaking-success-lobby-transparency/
- https://sven-giegold.de/finnish-embassy-to-the-eu-publishes-lobby-meetings/
- https://sven-giegold.de/lobby-transparency-in-ep-chrisdems-take-register-hostage/

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