Press release | 11.05.2011

Lobbying transparency

Joint lobbyist register a step in the right direction but still a work in progress

The European Parliament today adopted a report (Casini) on a joint lobbyist register between the European Commission and Parliament, partially strengthening the existing registers. The Greens welcomed the improvements as a first step but called for further steps to strengthen the register as soon as possible. Commenting on the vote, Green MEP **Gerald Häfner** said:

"This vote is certainly a welcome step in the right direction to ensuring better regulation of lobbying activities towards the European institutions, however this lobbyist register is clearly still a work in progress. The recent MEP corruption scandal has once again highlighted the need for tougher rules on lobbying in the EU.

"We regret that the opportunity was again not taken to make the register mandatory. Clearly, such a register will only be an effective and fair tool to ensure greater transparency of lobbying if it is mandatory and therefore applies to all those seeking to lobby the institutions. A Green amendment calling for the register to be made mandatory as part of any future review was adopted and we will work to ensure this is implemented as soon as possible.

"While the joint register will include greater information on the clients of lobbyists and finances, it still falls short of providing the necessary transparency on the financial background of lobbying on the register. Clearly, full financial transparency - detailing the amounts and sources of lobbying funding - is central to the effectiveness of any register. There is also an important link in the chain missing, as the Council regrettably still fails to implement a lobbyist register.

"The Greens will now continue to work to strengthen the register as an important tool to improve the regulation and transparency of lobbying activities, notably in the current EP working group on transparency and ethics that was set up in response to the MEP corruption scandals."

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