Press release | 15.04.2014

Lobbying transparency rules

Steps forward but full transparency still elusive

The European Parliament today voted to confirm an interinstitutional agreement updating rules on the transparency and the register of lobbyists to the EU institutions. Despite some progress, the Greens expressed regret that the review failed to go further, with transparency spokesperson **Gerald Häfner** stating:

"European citizens have the right to know who influences the legislative process in the EU. The introduction of the transparency register for the European Parliament and Commission in 2011 was an important step, but several loopholes remain. So far 75% of lobbyists have registered but some of the most important players (like the finance industry) are still not registered, as illustrated by the recent study by CEO and Alter-EU. While the Greens were able to ensure the revised rules adopted today included some improvements, the overall mechanism still remains unsatisfactory. This is particularly the case for law firms, whose lobbyists and lobbying activities will still remain hidden behind the dubious claim of lawyer client confidentiality.

"The Greens have pushed for a mandatory lobbyist register without any loopholes right from the outset - a register that must also include the Council. The revised rules adopted today include a request for the Commission to present a legislative proposal creating a mandatory register before 2016. This is long overdue and the Greens will ensure it is delivered without delay.

"However, as long as the Council continues to rule out its own involvement in the register, much of the obscurity of Brussels lobbying will remain. National governments must stop protecting financial and business lobbies, preventing full lobbying transparency at the expense of the interest of all European citizens."

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