Press release | 28.09.2016

Transparency register

Progress on lobby transparency but many loopholes remain

Today, Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission, presented the proposal for a new Inter-Institutional Agreement between the European Commission, European Parliament and the European Council, relating to the transparency register for lobbyists. Rapporteur for the Transparency Report of the European Parliament (1) and Greens/EFA finance and economic spokesman **Sven Giegold** commented:

"The European Commission's proposals are an important step towards greater lobby transparency in the European Union. It is right that the European Parliament and the Council presidencies should make their contact with lobbyists transparent. Lobby transparency would make a crucial contribution to strengthening the confidence of citizens in the European Institutions. The conservatives of EPP and liberals of ALDE must drop their resistance in the European Parliament and allow the measures to proceed.

“However, the Commission's proposals stop halfway. Only Commissioners and Director Generals are currently included, while lobbying of other senior staff and heads of units in the EU agencies would remain in the dark. Lobby transparency will remain empty words for the permanent representations of the member states in Brussels, not to speak of the governments in their capitals. Unfortunately, the proposal also lacks a legislative footprint, which would make transparent for any new EU legislation which lobbyists have lobbied which MEPs, Member States and Commission. We need the rules to be extended and a legislative footprint to make the transparency register as comprehensive as possible."

Green transparency spokesperson **Benedek Javor** added:

"The Greens/EFA group has already taken important measures towards greater transparency through our Lobbycal project, free software that makes meetings with lobbyists transparent, including information about the subjects discussed. Many Members of our group use it already and I would encourage others to follow this example. By taking steps towards greater transparency in our work, we can help foster greater trust in politicians at a time when it is at a low. The European Council is of particular concern as it is currently the least transparent of the three institutions: we hope the Member States will step up to the challenge and deliver the transparency and accountability that citizens expect, and deserve."

(1) The report sets out proposals for greater lobbying transparency and stricter rules on the integrity of Members of the European Parliament. Under pressure from the conservatives in the European Parliament, the vote has been postponed.

Additional information:

- The proposal of the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-627-EN-F1-1.PDF
- And the corresponding annex: http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-627-EN-F1-1-ANNEX-1.PDF
- Memo by Commission explaining their proposal: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3181_en.htm
- Sven Giegold's draft report on transparency, accountability and integrity: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-567.666+01+DOC+WORD+V0//EN&language=EN
- Blockade by Conservatives against the voting of the transparency report in Parliament: http://www.sven-giegold.de/2016/conservatives-blocking-lobby-transparency-and-moves-to-sanction-conflicts-of-interest-in-the-european-parliament/

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Sven Giegold

Member

Benedek Jávor

Former Member

Contact person

David Weir

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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