



European Commission
Mr Siim Kallas - Vice-President of the Commission

Brussels, 13th March 2007

Dear Mr Kallas,

We would like to thank you again for taking the time last Friday to meet with representatives of ALTER-EU.

As you are aware ALTER-EU is convinced that mandatory registering and reporting of lobbying activities is an important aspect of ensuring transparency of the EU policy-making process. We are very concerned that, as you told us, the Commission is considering only voluntary measures to improve lobbying transparency in the EU. The voluntary approach has brought no visible improvements in the past 15 years, since the Commission first opted for such measures. We fear that further voluntary measures now are unlikely to significantly improve the status quo. The European Parliament supports this view, as shown by its call today for 'mandatory disclosure for corporate and other lobbyists'¹.

We share your view that a credible lobbying transparency system should include detailed financial disclosure requirements such as information on the total amount received from a client, or spent in-house, on a specific EU policy issue.

Please see also attached our 'benchmarks for financial transparency'.

You told us that the ETI Communication will propose a voluntary database. Given this fact, we would like to stress that the credibility of your initiative will, in our view, depend on whether the Commission includes in its Communication specific criteria such as:

- 1) A timeline for evaluating the success of the voluntary database: such an evaluation should be concluded within one year.
- 2) Specific criteria for the evaluation of the register, including a high rate (at least 90%) of compliance.

¹ European Parliament Resolution on CSR: a new partnership, paragraph 18, March 13th 2007.

3) Well-defined transparency requirements, including:

- the names of individual lobbyists
- the names of clients
- the names of the EU institutions including Commission units lobbied
- the specific topics and/or policy issues lobbied on
- the amount of money that is spent on lobbying activities on a specific topic (for example if a company or an NGO hires a public affairs firm to provide lobby services on a specific topic, the public affairs firm needs to disclose the budget connected to this service)

We hope that your initiative will lead to a real improvement in transparency and accountability of the EU policy process, and wish you good luck!

Yours sincerely,

Paul de Clerck, Friends of the Earth Europe
Susannah Ling, Greenpeace EU Unit
Erik Wesselius, Corporate Europe Observatory