

Brussels, 11 May 2015



Over 100 NGOs urge EU Commission to make the lobby register legally binding

Brussels, 11 May 2015 - The Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU) [1] has urged European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans to take **strong and urgent action to create a high-quality and legally-binding EU lobby transparency register** [in a letter](#) sent to him today, signed by over one hundred non-governmental organisations and trade unions, and supported by the European Parliament Intergroup on Integrity [2].

The letter calls on the Commission to adopt measures to reduce opportunities for unethical lobbying, and to ensure a better balance between corporate and public interest groups in the access to, and influence they have on, EU decision-making processes.

Pam Bartlett Quintanilla of Access Info Europe, a member of the Steering Committee of ALTER-EU, explained that *"Vice President Timmermans promised a mandatory lobby register but his proposals are not mandatory for lobby groups. We need immediate steps that will ban lobby meetings with all Commission officials for un-registered lobby groups and we also need a legislative proposal that will ensure that the information provided in the register is relevant and complete and that there are strong sanctions in case of non-compliance"*.

Natalia Alonso, Oxfam's Deputy Director of Advocacy & Campaigns, and a signatory to the letter, said: *"A mandatory lobby register would help balance the influence that wealthy elites have over rule-making compared to public interest groups. The EU must put people first and powerful interests of a few, second"*.

Jan Willem Goudriaan, General Secretary of the European Federation of Public Service Unions and also a signatory to the letter, added that: *"A well-resourced system to register lobby firms is needed to ensure transparency, to counter the dominant influence of corporate Europe and to restore democracy in the EU"*.

ALTER-EU, and the 113 signatory organisations to the letter, have specifically called on the Commission to:

- » Immediately extend its ban on meeting unregistered lobbyists so that it applies to all staff, to further boost registrations.
- » Make detailed proposals on the disclosure of additional and more precise information, including further details about the dossiers lobbied on.
- » Commit to an open and transparent process with other EU institutions to improve the lobby register, which would include substantial opportunities for input by citizens and civil society.
- » Commit to increasing the resources devoted to this area so that monitoring and enforcement of the rules can become far more effective.
- » Commit to including the objective of a lobby register that is legally-binding on lobbyists and thus truly mandatory (requiring legislation) in its proposed Inter-Institutional Agreement as a medium-term option to ensure that all EU lobbyists sign up.

Civil society groups have previously welcomed the steps the Juncker Commission has taken to increase lobby transparency at the European level, including the ban on senior Commission representatives holding meetings with unregistered lobbyists. However, since the ban on meetings with lobbyists only covers around 300 people out of a Commission staff of 33,000, the current measures still do not go far enough to ensure that the register is “mandatory” in practice.

To see the full list of signatories to the letter, please click [here](#).

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Notes for editors:

[1] ALTER-EU is a coalition of about 200 civil society groups, trade unions, academics and public affairs firms campaigning against the increasing influence exerted by corporate lobbyists on the political agenda in Europe. Find out more at: www.alter-eu.org

[2] A copy of the letter to Vice President Timmermans, including a full list of supporting organisations, can be found [here](http://alter-eu.org/documents/2015/05/timmermans-ngo-letter-on-eu-lobby-register): <http://alter-eu.org/documents/2015/05/timmermans-ngo-letter-on-eu-lobby-register>