



**Friends of
the Earth
Europe**



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Participation, Ethics and Transparency: What citizens want from Brussels

16 November 2012, Brussels

'ALTER-Citizens project' central event

As part of the EU-funded project '*Accountability, Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation: Citizens have a right to know (ALTER-Citizens)*', Friends of the Earth Europe, Access Info Europe, Health Action International, Spinwatch, Environmental Law Service and Aitec (Association Internationale des Techniciens, Experts et Chercheurs) invite you to a half-day conference on lobbying transparency, ethics regulation, accountability and citizen participation in the European Union (EU) on Friday 16 November 2012.

The conference is the central event of the ALTER-Citizens project, which strives to create a two-way dialogue and greater trust between European public officials and European citizens, and foster enhanced citizen participation in EU decision-making. In this context, groups of citizens from each of the countries involved in the project (Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK) will come to Brussels NGO workshops and networking spaces, meetings with EU officials, and lobby tours around the Brussels EU quarter.

Please find the agenda for the public conference on 16 November 2012 below. For more information about two-day citizens' trip, please see separate programme.

Location: International Press Center, Residence Palace, Rue de la Loi 155, Brussels





Provisional programme

8.45 - 9.15: Registration

9.15 - 9.30: Welcome by ALTER Citizens' Project partner

SESSION 1: 9.30 – 11.00

The link between ethics regulation and citizens' trust: what can be learnt from the European Parliament experience and how can it be used for enhanced citizens' participation in Brussels and Member States?

Objective: Concrete cases of lack of transparency or pro-ethics/transparency initiatives in the European Parliament and Member States are presented to trigger a broader discussion about ethics issues (revolving door, conflicts of interest) in Brussels and Member States. Care will be taken to provide both civil society and institutional perspectives on the matter in anticipation of a debate with the audience.

9.30 – 10.30: Panel discussion moderated by EU journalist

EU Citizens project partner

- Expose one or several concrete case(s) of lack of transparency and issue of conflicts of interest and second jobs among EU officials that have resulted in loss of public confidence
- Highlight specific concerns to feed in questions and proposals for later debate with EU officials

Tim King (Editor, European Voice)

- Provide the perspective of an investigative journalist writing about transparency in the EU
- Media perspective highlights the link between ethics, transparency and trust, understood as prerequisites for meaningful public participation

Rainer Wieland (European Parliament, Vice-President, responsible for Transparency)

- An institutional point of view on transparency issues, responding to the citizens concerns raised earlier
- What is the Parliament assessment one year after the 'cash for law' scandal? What can we learn in terms of transparency policies and citizens' participation in the EU?
- What is the EP committed to do to answer concerns that have been raised regarding ethics practices, conflicts of interest with second jobs that remain since the new code of conduct was introduced

Isabelle Durant (European Parliament, Vice-President, representative of the Working Group on the code of conduct, European Parliament)

- What is a conflict of interest from the perspective of a member of the Parliament working group on the code of conduct/ the advisory committee?
- From the view of local MEPs' constituencies: why and how citizens are negatively impacted by the lack of ethics rules/ethics malpractices? Why do we need greater access and tighter regulation?

10.30-11.00: Questions and Answers, Panel Extension and Debate

11.00 - 11.15: Coffee break



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SESSION 2: 11.15 – 13.00

Transparency and citizen participation: openness towards trust and better dialogue

Objective: Transition from previous session. Frame the discussion around the need for transparency in EU Decision-making as well as opened communication to promote better citizen participation and stimulate interest for EU issues. Highlight that the lack of transparency and openness is linked to erosion of citizens' trust in the EU.

11.15 – 12.30: Presentations and panel discussion moderated by Raj Chari (Department of Political Science, Trinity College, Dublin)

Citizens' Questions

→ A team of citizens (max. 3) will ask the representatives of the European Commission, Parliament and Ombudsman concrete questions in relation to ethics, transparency and openness.

European Commission, office of Transparency Commissioner, Maros Sefcovic

→ Responding to citizens' concerns

→ How is the Commission working to increase trust and citizen participation in the EU? What is the Commission reaction to concerns raised by citizens and more generally about the democratic deficit? Will the European Commission commit to work to improve that and to take on board citizens' concerns?

Bernhard Achitz (Secretary General, Austrian Trade Union Federation ÖGB)

→ The perspective of a national representative of employees and consumers' interests in Brussels on transparency issues

Jose Luis Rufas (Transparency Register Secretariat, European Parliament)

→ Responding to citizens' and civil society questions on transparency and the Register in particular

→ A parliamentary perspective

Gundi Gadesmann (Office of the European Ombudsman)

→ The role of good communication in the effort towards transparency and good administrative behaviour

→ The European Ombudsman perspective on the link between transparency, openness and participation

Peter Facey (Unlock Democracy, Member of the UK Alliance for Lobbying Transparency)

→ Experience sharing on national campaign for lobbying transparency

→ Reflections on concerns and issues raised earlier both by civil society and institutions representatives on the need for and the link between openness, communications and citizens' participation





12.30 – 12.55: Questions and Answers with audience

12.55 – 13.00: Closing – Project Partner



The project partners gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the European Commission Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). This conference is part of the ALTER-Citizens project. The contents of this event and the event materials are the sole responsibility of the project partners and cannot be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Commission. The European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information provided at this event or in the event materials.