



Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation

Brussels, 4th September 2015

Dear President Juncker and First Vice-President Timmermans,

We are writing to you as the Alliance for Lobby Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU) to bring your attention to our new research about the lobby meetings held by the European Commission. In the attached briefing we analyse the meetings with lobbyists which high-level officials in the Commission held between 1 December 2014 and 23 June 2015.

We would like to highlight three findings in particular:

1) Lobbyists representing businesses and trade associations make up 75 per cent of all high-level meetings and more than 80 per cent in certain areas such as financial regulation or the internal market. As you set out in the Communication from the President to the Commission – *The Working Methods of the European Commission 2014-2019*: “Members of the Commission should seek to ensure an appropriate balance and representativeness in the stakeholders they meet.” The statistics show that the new Commission, with few exceptions, has not adhered to this guideline. We therefore **ask you to inform us what concrete steps you intend to take to deliver the balance in stakeholder representation that you have committed to**. Our report concludes that the only effective way to achieve this is by limiting the number of meetings with big business lobbyists and increasing access by other stakeholders, including civil society organisations.

2) The new rules prohibiting meetings with unregistered lobbyists appear to be mostly effective. After the largely successful introduction of the meeting ban at the highest Commission levels, **we call on you to extend the ban on meeting unregistered lobbyists to all levels of the Commission as a significant proportion of lobbying happens with Commission officials below the highest level**. This is a simple measure that could be taken swiftly and which will have no substantial cost implications.

3) For almost all commissioners, there is a discrepancy between their published agendas and the lobby meetings registered on the Commission websites, suggesting many meetings listed in the agenda were not reported afterwards. Our data also show that the commitment of some commissioners to publish their meetings is decreasing (fewer meetings are published now than at the beginning of the year) and there are strong reasons to suspect under-reporting of lobby meetings. In the Commission decision establishing online transparency around these meetings it is clearly stated that all relevant meetings are to be published “within a period of two weeks following the meeting.” **We ask you to inform us what concrete steps you intend to take to ensure that all commissioners publish a complete list of their lobby meetings in a timely manner.**

We welcome the first steps you have undertaken to increase the transparency of lobbying activities and your commitment to improve the balance in stakeholder meetings of the European Commission, but we urge you to ensure a strict implementation of the current rules as well as broadening the scope of the new provisions.

We look forward to your response on these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

ALTER-EU steering committee:

Helen Darbshire	(Access Info Europe)
Paul de Clerck	(Friends of the Earth Europe)
William Dinan	(SpinWatch)
Olivier Hoedeman	(Corporate Europe Observatory)
Nina Katzemich	(LobbyControl)
Jorgo Riss	(Greenpeace European Unit)
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