

ALTER-EU pledge campaign summary



ALTER-EU (the Alliance for lobbying transparency and ethics regulation) is a coalition of about 200 civil society groups, trade unions, academics and public affairs firms concerned with the increasing influence exerted by corporate lobbyists on the political agenda in Europe.

Background to European parliamentary elections

The European Parliament elections (22-25 May) will be a crucial event with major repercussions for the future of the EU. More than 50 per cent of new laws originate in Brussels, but too often, new laws are dominated by the interests of big business, and not citizens, because of secretive and excessive corporate lobbying. In addition, the prolonged economic crisis might further worsen problems that emerged at previous European Parliament elections, such as low voter turnout and protest votes strengthening far-right xenophobic parties.

Our elections campaign

ALTER-EU's pan-European pledge campaign aims to get a large number of elected MEPs to commit to work towards robust rules for lobby transparency and to limit undue influence by lobbyists. We also think that MEPs who are committed to tackling corporate lobbying are far more likely to vote for progressive policies on climate change, trade, the economy, the arms trade, banking reform, data privacy, the environment and human rights too.

We will ask MEPs and candidates to pledge the following:

"I will stand-up [defend] for citizens and democracy against excessive lobbying influence of banks and big business"

Our campaign's objectives

1. Voters, particularly young people, will be enthused and motivated to take action in the run up to the European elections
2. Demands for greater democracy, transparency and accountability at the EU level will become an election debate topic in a large number of EU member states
3. 700 candidates in the European parliamentary elections will sign our pledge
4. 200 of these candidates will be elected as MEPs and they will take action in the new parliament to secure strong progress on our issues in 2014-2019

Our campaign's key activities

An **interactive website** (backed-up with a database of MEP candidates across EU), that makes it possible for interested citizens to see which candidates have already signed, contact MEP candidates and invite them to sign the pledge

Website integrated with **social media**: twitter, facebook to provide alternative ways of contacting candidates and promoting the campaign

Use website's pledge statistics (candidates signed, political parties pledging...) to promote to **national-level media** and create a dynamic in which candidates challenge those from other parties who failed to sign up

Short, captivating videos aimed at informing and engaging young people across Europe on the issues and what they can do

Election debates and hustings organised by ALTER-EU groups and partners in different EU member states to discuss the issues of the pledge plus other election topics. We also

plan to hold events in Brussels and Strasbourg to get current MEPs to directly sign pledge.

Specific **outreach to young people** by Young Friends of the Earth Europe and People & Planet on what is at stake at the European parliament elections via events and information materials

Research: Friends of the Earth Europe will analyse the voting records of MEPs seeking re-election on key issues of public interest and ALTER-EU will publish reports assessing the lack of progress in lobbying transparency in EU decision-making during last 5 years

Resources available

- Website: to include a page for each country participating (groups to provide content in national language) that you can update and refresh with new information. Website will allow you to easily contact MEP candidates to ask them to sign up to the ALTER-EU pledge. Common twitter hashtags # etc.
- Action packs with suggested letters, emails, press releases and other materials.
- Funding to support national level activities: events, publications...

What we will need you help with

- Ensuring as many MEP candidates sign the pledge. They are more likely to sign if contacted by an activist in their own country or region
- Mobilising your individual members / supporters to contact candidates and get involved
- Updating website to ensure it reflects national-level activities
- Translating core materials from English for your activists and supporters
- Holding election debates and hustings
- Outreach to national-level media
- Coordination with other groups working on this and other pledges in your country
- Outreach to elected MEPs after elections to ensure they implement the pledge
- Telling us about all your work and activities so we can keep track of our progress and make detailed reports back to our funders

Who else is involved?

Groups already involved include: Arbeiterkammer (AU), Frank Bold (CZ/PL), Regards Citoyens (FR), AITEC (FR), Sciences Citoyennes (FR), LobbyControl (DE), Attac Hungary, Transnational Institute, Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), Campagne tegen Wapenhandel (NL), AccessInfo (ESP), Friends of the Earth Europe, Young Friends of the Earth, People & Planet (UK), Corporate Europe Observatory, World Development Movement (WDM), BankWatch, Alternative Trade Mandate, European Federation of Financial Services Users, FinanceWatch, Women in Europe for a Common Future.

We are working with other Brussels' NGOs to build a joint database of MEP candidates across EU. We will work closely with the Alternative Trade Mandate: our pledges will be consistent and we plan joint EU and national level activities. We will also promote other, progressive EU election campaign pledges.

Other information

Campaign is funded by: Open Society, Isvara Foundation, Arbeiterkammer, contributions from ALTER-EU steering committee members

22 January 2014