

## Lead candidates plans to fight corporate capture

Questions	European Left Party	European Free Alliance	European Greens	Progressive Alliance of Socialist and Democrats
<p><b>1. How will you ensure that citizens' interests are prioritised over corporate interests?</b></p>	<p>The citizens must be in charge in any democracy. The public interest must come first before any other concerns. A key way to ensure this is by opening up institutions to the public, guaranteeing transparency, and tackling corporate capture in decision-making. The European Ombudsman as well as several NGOs have made strong and practical recommendations that will do a lot to ensure we deal with these problems. Conflicts of interest must be swiftly tackled and policy-making protected from the influence of those acting under a profit, rather than public interest motive.</p>	<p>If I were to become Commission President, one of the key issues for me would be to ensure the independence of EU decision-making in a way that more adequately reflects the interests of citizens. To do so, the powers of the European Parliament should be strengthened in different ways, such as improved control over the Commission or better functioning of the Petitions committee.</p> <p>The strengthening of the European Citizens' Initiative, a long-standing fight of the Greens-EFA group, and putting more resources into EC consultations to make sure that they reach a far greater percentage of EU citizens and, thus, they are more representative, are</p>	<p>Our raison d'être as MEPs is to represent the interests of the citizens and so, if I were to become Commission President, one of the key issues would be to strengthen - inter alia – the powers of the European Parliament to initiate inquiries (cf the EMIS and PEST committees), and to improve the functioning of the Petitions committee as well. The Parliament's powers of control over the Commission should also be improved (for example the way the EC responds to Parliamentary Questions leaves much to be desired). A long-standing fight of the GreensEFA group is the strengthening of the European Citizens' Initiative and so far we have managed to achieve progress in the way the Parliament would ensure proper follow up of ECIs,</p>	<p>It is absolutely essential to make sure the concerns and desires of Europeans are heard and represented in policy making, and this is something I have prioritised for the past five years, including by opening up all stages of the Commission's decision making process to public consultation.</p> <p>As Commission President I would go even further, and I would improve our involvement of trade unions, NGOs and civil society representatives. I will make a personal commitment to meet regularly with civil society, in Brussels and around Europe, for open discussions about our policy plans and ongoing legislative procedures.</p>

		<p>also interesting steps to be taken.</p> <p>Finally, avoiding conflicts of interest should be a priority. This is why, during the hearings of the candidate commissioner, we will use thoroughly scan for conflicts of interest. Candidates with conflicts of interest should be prevented from advancing to the next stage of the committee hearing procedures. In the next term, we will push once again to eradicate conflicts of interest amongst MEPs and Commissioners, including via stricter revolving door provisions and clearer bans on side jobs that create a risk of a conflict of interest.</p>	<p>but much more ambition is required on the side of the European Commission. This would be one of the first steps we would take. These structural reforms are key to ensuring the independence of EU decision-making in a way that more adequately reflects the interests of citizens.</p> <p>A reform of the Commission's expert groups would also be required to ensure they are not dominated by certain interests. More resources should also be put into EC consultations to make sure that they reach a far greater percentage of EU citizens to ensure they are more representative. In any case, during the Commissioner-candidate hearings we will use the new powers of the European Parliament to scan for conflicts of interest (COIs) and to prevent candidates with COIs from advancing to the next stage of the committee</p>	
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<p><b>2. Will you enforce the guideline for commissioners to balance the numbers of their Stakeholder meetings with corporate interest representatives and non-profit entities (incl NGOs, trade unions, academic</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>An independent ethics body would examine my team of Commissioners' meetings at the end of each year and where imbalances are found; those Commissioners would be required to demonstrate a plan by which imbalances would be corrected. The following year those Commissioners would need to report a balanced outcome</p>	<p>We will push for a reform of the European Commission decision on meetings with stakeholders to ensure a better balance in the inputs received from them.</p>	<p>We will question candidate commissioners during their appointment process and will push for a reform of the Commission decision on meetings with interest groups as well as the rules on expert groups to ensure a better balance in the inputs received from different stakeholders.</p>	<p>I think it's essential that a range of interests are represented across stakeholder meetings in the commission. This starts with commissioners making an effort to balance the meetings they take with interest representatives, but it is also wider than that, and includes holding regular citizens' dialogues, at home and around</p>

<p>institutions, etc)?</p>	<p>for their stakeholder meetings. If not, I would begin the necessary procedures to ensure that those prioritising one set of stakeholders interests over another would be removed from office. The corporate capture of institutions is a major threat to democracy and public trust. Public representatives cannot afford to be apathetic about tackling it.</p>			<p>Europe, to engage with members of the public.</p> <p>Well-informed decision-making must be based on inputs from a range of representatives. This is crucial to ensure we are acting in the interests of Europeans and it should be at the heart of our approach to legislation in the next mandate.</p>
<p><b>3. Will you a) prioritise the establishment of a strong and actually mandatory Transparency Register that covers all three institutions, b) ensure sufficient financial and staff resources for its maintenance, and c) support a sanctions regime for noncompliance with the register's rules?</b></p>	<p>Yes to all 3</p>	<p>This has been a Greens-EFA group priority for a number of years. Having failed to update the inter-institutional agreement on the Transparency Register presents a clear opportunity to push our demands for a legally binding register, including appropriate sanctions.</p> <p>It is worth pointing out that, during the revision of the transparency register, we pushed for specific improvements, such as the creation of a specific website for stakeholder</p>	<p>This has been a GreensEFA group priority for a number of years and, in our opinion, the failure of the updated inter-institutional agreement on the Transparency Register presents a clear opportunity to push our demands for a legally binding register, including appropriate sanctions.</p> <p>It is worth pointing out that we engaged constructively in the revision of the transparency register IIA despite its inherent weaknesses and that we were instrumental in pushing for the establishment of a contact group so that all EU</p>	<p>I have been fighting for a mandatory transparency register for all institutions for the past few years. And for the most senior levels of the Commission this is already <i>de facto in place</i>. However the Council and Parliament have not yet been willing to match our levels of ambition, and negotiations have become stuck. The absolute priority for me is to go from a voluntary to a compulsory system across all institutions. I will ensure that we pursue this in the next Commission.</p> <p>In the Commission we have held to a very simple</p>

		meetings.	political groups could be involved in some way in the decision-making process. Our insistence on transparency in the process also led to the creation of a specific website and stakeholder meetings, which while limited and certainly improvable, were unprecedented when compared to previous discussions on lobby register reform.	<p>but strict rule for over four years now: lobbyists cannot meet high-level decision-makers without having first joined the EU Transparency Register. When we implemented this, the number of registrations increased significantly.</p> <p>Of course, there will be a need to guarantee sufficient funding and staff for such a programme, as well as further initiatives that outline consequences for non-compliance with the register, and these elements should be part of any discussion about a mandatory transparency register. A sanctions regime is already in place, but we can always discuss ways to improve it.</p>
<b>4. Will you extend the ban on meetings with unregistered lobbyists to all levels of the European Commission?</b>	Yes	Yes. This has been a key demand of the Greens-EFA group.	Yes. This has been a key demand of the GreensEFA during the lobby register negotiations, down to Head of Unit level.	First, our priority should be ensuring lobby transparency has the same rules across the institutions, including when it comes to unregistered lobbyists. We need to restore Europeans' trust in their politicians by showing

				them we are committed to working in an open and transparent manner. When other institutions match the level of ambition of the Commission we can discuss next steps.
<b>5. Will you implement the recommendation by European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly that all dealings with tobacco lobbyists should be fully transparent, in an effort to ensure the EU's full compliance with Article 5.3 of the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its accompanying guidelines?</b>	Yes	Yes, this is part of the aforementioned Greens-EFA Standards on transparency and ethics. If I were to become President of the EC, I would not only ensure that contacts with the tobacco industry should be fully transparent, but I would recommend that those working on tobacco policy limit these contacts, in accordance with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control's implementation guidelines.	Yes, this is part of the aforementioned GreensEFA Standards on transparency and ethics. If I were to lead the European Commission, I would not only ensure transparency but I would recommend that those working on tobacco policy limit their contacts with the tobacco industry, in accordance with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control's implementation guidelines.	<p>The Commission's view is that the current framework is fully consistent with the FCTC and ensures that the FCTC, including its Article 5(3), is respected. As Commission President I would ensure regular reviews of our transparency policies and adapt them where necessary.</p> <p>The mandatory transparency register we have been pushing for, to apply to all three EU institutions, will be another contribution to increasing transparency across the board.</p>
<b>6. Will you replace the current self-policing system for the prevention of ex-</b>	Yes	The current EU ethics system is too weak and fragmented and, more important, not uniform for all the institutions. This is why	The establishment of an independent ethics authority to proactively monitor declarations of interest, scan for COIs,	The introduction by President Juncker of a new code of conduct in February last year already extended the cooling-off

<p><b>Comissioners' conflicts of interests in new roles (including but not limited to revolving door moves) with a fully independent ethics body which consists of members external to the European Commission, has the power to initiate its own investigations, implement its decisions and has sufficient financial resources to effectively do its work?</b></p>		<p>establishing an independent ethics authority - not just for the EC but also for the Parliament and other EU agencies- to monitor declarations of interest, scan for conflicts of interest, give advice on 'grey zones' and propose sanctions where necessary is one of our key demands for the next Parliamentary term.</p>	<p>give advice on 'grey zones' and propose sanctions where necessary is one of our key demands for the next legislative term. This is important not just for the EC but also for the Parliament and other EU agencies. Currently the EU ethics system is weak, fragmented and dealt with very differently across different institutions, which is unsatisfactory.</p>	<p>period for former Commissioners from 18 months to two years. Former Commission Presidents have a further cooling off period of three years. Moreover, the code of conduct proposed an independent ethical committee with a reinforced status to strengthen scrutiny around conflicts of interest and provide advice on this. I will naturally monitor how this new code of conduct works in practice.</p>
<p><b>7. Do you have any other comments you would like to make in the context of this Spitzenkandidaten survey?</b></p>	<p>Transparency in public institutions is crucial to ensuring that those institutions work in the public interest, not in the interest of the powerful or the wealthy. My Commission will, from its first day in office, be 100% clear that we are there to serve the citizens, not corporations. This will require a massive culture shift within the Berlaymont building and</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>No, but we are happy to discuss further should you wish to contact the GreensEFA Group Transparency and Democracy Campaigner working on these issues.</p>	<p>We need to rebuild people's trust in Europe. Transparency is a vital part of this, demonstrating to people that we are committed to working in their interests. We have come a long way over the last five years but there is still more we can do to increase transparency.</p>

	<p>beyond, but it must happen. There are simply too many urgent issues to tackle - social inequality, climate change, gender discrimination and many more - that delaying over half-measures cannot be tolerated. The citizens expect, deserve and demand radical change.</p>			
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