The undersigned organisations are deeply concerned about the growing influence of corporate lobby groups on European Union decision-making. Over 15,000 professional lobbyists now operate in Brussels, a large majority representing business interests. Yet, ethics and transparency rules around lobbying are virtually non-existent. Beyond the problem of business spending ever-increasing amounts to influence the political process, the European Commission has developed a tradition of awarding privileged access to corporate interests. The enormous influence of corporate lobbyists undermines democracy and all too frequently results in postponing, weakening or blocking urgently needed progress in EU social, environmental and consumer protections. As the first steps in addressing these problems, the Commission should take determined action to improve transparency around lobbying and ensure that no business groups are given privileged access and influence on EU policy-making.

We welcome the ‘European Transparency Initiative’ (ETI), launched in March 2005 by European Commissioner Siim Kallas, in particular, the objective to address the current lack of mandatory regulation and reporting of lobbying activities. A mandatory system for lobbying disclosure is urgently needed and must be shaped in a way that optimally enables democratic scrutiny of inputs into EU policy-making.

The undersigned organisations demand the following:

1. **EU lobbying disclosure legislation**, which must include:
   - A mandatory system of electronic registration and reporting for all lobbyists with a significant annual lobbying budget. The reports must be made available in a fully searchable, sortable and downloadable online database;
   - Enforceable ethics rules for lobbyists (for instance prohibiting employment of officials or their relatives for lobbying purposes).

2. **An improved code of conduct for European Commission officials**, including:
   - Recording of formal and informal meetings between Commission officials and lobbyists and logging of correspondence (to be made available in a fully searchable online database);
   - An extended ‘cooling off’ period before Commissioners and senior officials can start working for lobby groups or lobbying advisory firms;
   - The European Commission should encourage the other EU institutions, particularly the European Parliament and the European Council, to develop similar rules.

3. **The Commission must terminate cases of privileged access and undue influence granted to corporate lobbyists**, for instance:
   - Joint taskforces in which corporate interests are represented while public interest NGOs are not (such as Cars 21 which consists of Commission officials, CEOs and lobbyists from the automobile industry, but no environmental NGOs);
The privileged status accorded to business lobby groups like the European Services Forum and the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue. These are minimum requirements if the ‘European Transparency Initiative’ is to achieve meaningful democratic progress. Vested interests are defending secrecy and privileged access by advocating “self-regulation”, voluntary codes of conduct and other pseudo-solutions that do nothing to increase democratic scrutiny of the role of lobbyists in EU policy-making. If the EU institutions would endorse such proposals instead of introducing mandatory disclosure and ethics rules, it would fundamentally undermine the ‘European Transparency Initiative’. We have formed the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU) to prevent the failure of this important initiative.

List of signatories

1. 11.11.11 - Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement, Belgium
2. Action Consommation, France
3. Aktive Forbrugere, Denmark
4. Action Aid International
5. Adéquations, France
6. AerztlInnen und Aertze fuer eine gesunde Umwelt, Austria
7. Alliance for Social and Ecological Consumer Organizations (ASECO), EU-wide network
8. Amazonia Assemblea de Solidaritat, Spain
9. Afrika Europa Netwerk, The Netherlands
10. ARTICLE 19 (Global Campaign for Free Expression)
11. A SEED Europe, EU-wide network
12. Asociación Pola Defensa da Ría (APDR), Galicia (SPAIN)
13. Association of Farmers, Malta
14. Associazione Consumatori Utenti (ACU), Italy
15. atomstopp_atomkraftfrei leben!, Austria
16. ATTAC Austria
17. ATTAC Denmark
18. ATTAC France
19. ATTAC Germany
20. ATTAC Hungary
21. ATTAC-KonsumNetz, Germany
22. ATTAC Netherlands
23. ATTAC Spain
24. ATTAC Poland
25. ATTAC Sweden
26. ATTAC Vlaanderen, Belgium
27. Both Ends, The Netherlands
28. Breastfeeding Promotion and Protection Association of Latvia
29. BUDS (Foundation for Human and Nature Protection), Hungary
30. BUKO Pharma-Kampagne, Germany
31. CNCD, Belgium
32. Campagna per la Riforma della Banca mondiale (CRBM), Italy
33. Campagne tegen Wapenhandel, The Netherlands
34. Campaign Against Arms Trade, United Kingdom
35. Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, United Kingdom
36. CEE Bankwatch Network [with member organisations from ten countries in Central and Eastern Europe]
37. Center for Encounter and active Non-Violence, Austria
38. Centre de Recerca i Informacio en Consum (CRIC), Spain
39. CLAT, The Netherlands
40. Clean Air Action Group, Hungary
41. Coalition against BAYER-dangers, Germany
42. Comite pour les droits humains "Daniel Gillard", Belgium
43. Consumer Institute for Medicines and Health (KILEN), Sweden
44. CRIIRAD, France
45. The Corner House, United Kingdom
46. Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)
47. Corporate Watch, United Kingdom
48. Digicare Foundation; Art for Social Change, The Netherlands
49. Dubnica Environmental Group, Slovakia
50. Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
51. Ecologistas en Acción de Jaén, España
52. Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), United Kingdom
53. EKPIZO - Consumers’ Association "The Quality of Life", Greece
54. Environmental Law Service, Czech Republic
55. EQUIVITA, Spain
56. EU-AG ATTAC Germany
57. Euro Info Centre Network, European-wide network
58. European Centre of the International Council of Women (ECICW-CECIF)
59. European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
60. European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ)
61. European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
62. European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
63. EPHA Environment Network (EEN)
64. European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU)
65. European Forum for Freedom in Education (effe), European-wide network
66. European Network on Debt and Development [Eurodad]
67. FAIR, Italy
68. FairFood, The Netherlands
69. FERN - the EU forest campaign
70. Fondation France Liberté, France
71. Food and Water Watch Europe
72. Food Ethics Council, United Kingdom
73. Forum Voor Vredesactie, Belgium
74. Freedom of Information Project, Privacy International
75. Friends of the Earth Europe
76. Friends of the Earth, Czech Republic
77. Friends of the Earth, Slovakia
78. Friends of the Earth, Flanders (Belgium)
79. German League for the Protection of Nature and Environment, Germany
80. Germanwatch, Germany
81. Global Policy Institute - Glopolis, Czech Republic
82. GMwatch, UK
83. Greenpeace (European Unit)
84. Grup de Defensa del Garraf-Ordal, de la Vall Baixa i Delta del Llobregat (DEFGOL), Catalunya, Spain
85. Health Action International Europe
86. Humane Earth Foundation, France
87. Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, Hungary
88. Hungarian Young Greens, Hungary
89. IBFAN Europe
90. IBFAN Italia, Italy
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146. Transnational Institute (TNI)
147. Transparency International Deutschland e.V., Germany
148. urgewald, Germany
149. Védegylet, Hungary
150. Velt vzw, Belgium
151. Vrede vzw, Belgium
152. War on Want, United Kingdom
153. WEMOS, The Netherlands
154. Wissenschaftsladen Wien, Austria
155. Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Sweden
156. Women in Development Europe (WIDE)
157. Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights
158. Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)
159. Women Working Worldwide (WWW), United Kingdom
160. World Development Movement, United Kingdom
161. World Economy, Ecology & Development (WEED), Germany
162. XminusY Solidarity Fund, The Netherlands
163. Young Researchers of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
164. Za Matku Zem (For Mother Earth), Slovakia

Consultancies:

CODECO, European Affairs and Progressive Communication, Brussels
EurAFair Consult, Germany
ID’s - Information Diffusion Europe Associations, Brussels
Michael Hindley and Associates, United Kingdom
mAster Institute, Netherlands
MortenCH Holdings Aps, Denmark
Nils Roseman, Human Rights and Development Consultant
Pleiades Associates
Total Quality Change, Netherlands
Westander Publicitet & Paaverkan, Sweden

Law firms:

Papandrea Mauro, law firm, Padova, Italy

Academic supporters:

Dr. Wolfgang Blaas, Associate Professor of Economics, Vienna University of Technology, Austria
Centre for Social and Environmental Accounting Research, University of St Andrews, Scotland
Dr David Cromwell, University of Southampton, United Kingdom
Prof. James Curran, Goldsmiths College, University of London, United Kingdom
William Dinan, Department of Geography, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
Tilak Ginige, Lecturer in Law, UWIC Business School, Wales, United Kingdom
Peter Grottian, Professor for Political Science, Free University Berlin, Germany
Otto Holman, Reader in International Relations, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Dr Justin Kenrick, Dept of Sociology, Anthropology and Applied Social Sciences, University of Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
Les Levidow, Centre for Technology Strategy, Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom
Maximiliano Lorenzi, Lecturer in Politics of the European Union, Faculty of Engineering, University of Firenze, Italy
Eveline Lubbers, PhD student, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
Stephen Marriott, lecturer, Central College of Commerce, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
Niall Meehan, Journalism & Media Faculty Head, Griffith College, Dublin, Ireland
Prof. Dr. Peter H. Mettler, University of Applied Sciences, Wiesbaden, Germany
David Miller, Professor of Sociology, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
Arthur Mitzman, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Geert Reuten, associate professor of political economy, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Prof. Armando Fernández Steinko, Departamento de Sociología, Facultad de CC. Políticas y Sociología, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain
Granville Williams, Senior Lecturer in Media and Journalism, University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom
Prof. Niels I. Meyer, Technical University of Denmark. Lyngby, Denmark
Matthieu Lietaert, PhD researcher at European University Institute, Italy

Signatories from outside of the EU:

Asociatia pentru Initiative Civice, Romania
Centre for Corporate Policy, United States
Center for Investigative Reporting, United States
Center for Media and Democracy, United States
Centro de Ecología y Desarrollo, Mexico
Consumer Action, United States
Edmonds Institute, United States
Friends of the Earth US
Frontiers, Lebanon
Groundwork, South Africa
Humanitarian Group For Social Development (HGSD), Lebanon
Information for Action, Australia
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, United States
IATP Trade Information Project, Geneva
LARS (Latin America Orientação em Responsabilidade Social), Brazil
Public Citizen, United States