

Joint Transparency Register to be reinforced and ultimately made mandatory

Administrative and Institutional

After a full review of the Joint Transparency Register, which lists interest groups wishing to have access to the European Parliament and the European Commission, a working group of the EP Bureau and the Commission has come up with some 30 immediate improvements. The EP members of the working group have also made recommendations which should lead to a mandatory register, while in the meantime certain incentives should be put in place to push organisations to register voluntarily.

EP Vice-President Rainer Wieland, who led the working group, said: "I am very satisfied with the result that the joint working group has reached today, and which has found consensus among all members of the working group. The transparency register has already been very successful in its first two years, and our conclusions include both further improvements to its functioning and quality and draw up a clear roadmap for the future."

The current Register was set up jointly by the European Parliament and the European Commission in 2011. While it has always been the Parliament's wish that the register should become compulsory, it has proved difficult to find an adequate legal base in the EU Treaty. For this reason, the working group called for a proposal by the Commission to adapt the EU Treaty. Failing this, the Commission should formulate a proposal by 2016 on the basis of article 352 of the EU Treaty, which, however, requires unanimity among the EU member states. In all events, a further review of the "Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament and the European Commission on the transparency register" is set for 2017.

Until the transparency register can be made mandatory, incentives should be put in place to make interest groups register voluntarily, by limiting certain facilities to those listed only. These incentives include facilitating access to the EP premises, the possibility to be consulted by the Commission as experts or be heard at EP committee hearings.

The working group also recommended some 30 changes to strengthen and clarify the Interinstitutional Agreement, and made an attempt to find a pragmatic solution for the difficulty lawyers and other professions subject to confidentiality rules with regards to their clients face for inclusion in the register.

Currently, an estimated 75% of all relevant business-related entities and around 60% of NGOs operating in Brussels have registered.

Next steps

The conclusions and recommendations of the working group, which were approved by unanimity with one abstention, will be presented, for the EP, to the Bureau, after which the Committee on Constitutional Affairs will need to examine them. A final proposal will be voted by the full House, if possible before the end of the current legislature.

On the Commission side, Commissioner Šefčovič will present the results of the working group to the College of Commissioners.

The working group was chaired by EP Vice-President Wieland and included Commissioner Šefčovič and EP Vice-Presidents Anni Podimata (S&D, EL), Isabelle Durant (Greens/EFA, BE), Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE, UK), Oldrich Vlasak (ECR, CZ), and EP Quaestors Jiri Mastalka (GUE/NGL, CZ), Francesco Speroni (EFD), Martin Ehrenhauser (NI, AT), as well as Committee on Constitutional Affairs Chair Carlo Cassini (EPP, IT) and additional MEPs Rafal Trzaskowski (EPP, PL) and Roberto Gualtieri (S&D, IT), who are coordinators in the Constitutional Affairs Committee.

Note to editors

The list of recommendations for changes to the Interinstitutional Agreement will be available [here](#) from Friday, 13 December.

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