

EU transparency register riddled with errors

20.06.13 @ 09:37

BY NIKOLAJ NIELSEN

BRUSSELS - Incomplete listings and false information by lobbyists in the EU's joint transparency register are among some of the latest findings in a report by transparency group Alter-EU.

Published on Thursday (20 June), the report says the voluntary register, which compiles companies and groups that lobby the European Parliament and the European Commission, "is unconvincing at best, and dismal at worst."

Over 100 major companies known to be lobbying EU officials are missing.

They include Adidas, Apple, General Motors Europe, Heineken, Porsche, Rio Tinto, Disney, Shanks Group, SAP, Time Warner, Nissan, and Northrop Grumman.

Top banks are also missing, such as Banco Santander, BBVA Group, Belfius (formerly Dexia), la Caixa, Erste Group Bank, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Nomura, Nordea, Rabobank, Royal Bank of Scotland, Swedbank and UBS.

Goldman Sachs, for its part, met with economic affairs commissioner Olli Rehn three times between January 2011 and February 2012.

In the same period, over 60 percent of Rehn's meetings were with unregistered lobby companies.

Alter-EU says some of the details in the register are not credible and that listed budgets are under-reported.

According to the register, the medium-sized French insurance company IRCHEM tops the lobbying budget list with some €55 million spent in 2011.

IRCHEM has no office in Brussels.

But its declared spending exceeds the combined lobby expenditures of BNP Paribas, Google, GlaxoSmithKline, Ford, Unilever, Coca-Cola, ExxonMobil, Shell, GDF Suez, British Airways, Microsoft, Bayer, IBM, STATOIL, Syngenta, Ericsson and Nokia.

Other smaller companies with no Brussels-based offices - in the kitchen appliance industry, for instance - also express unusually high lobby budgets.

"It is clearly not credible that small printing or fridge companies are spending more on EU lobbying than far larger and more politically active companies such as Shell, Google or BNP Paribas," Alter-EU said.

Around 55 smaller to medium-sized lobby consultancies based in Brussels are also not listed.

One is led by a former German centre-right MEP Ingo Friedrich.

Friedrich works for the unregistered consultancy group European Communications with offices in Brussels and Munich.

The former MEP drafted the 2008 report on the European Transparency Initiative.

Launched in June 2011, the joint-transparency register is set for an official review by the parliament and the commission.

MEPs want the register to be mandatory but the commission favours a voluntary-based system.

Alter-EU's Paul de Clerk says a mandatory register would solve a lot of the errors and omissions.

He points out that a legal basis under the Lisbon Treaty exists to create a mandatory register.

"The commission should use the review process to begin making the necessary legislative proposal," he said in a statement.

0 comments



Best

Community

Share

ALSO ON EUOBSERVER

What's this?

EUobserver.com / Justice & Home Affairs / Germany ...

39 comments • 14 days ago



EUbrainwashing2013 — Here is a question: Why would the US NSA be ...

US data deal

13 comments • 17 days ago



zeebras — The sooner people realise the US is a fascist state in the ...

dumping tariffs

28 comments • 20 days ago



CitizenEU — Yes, but that is where you are misunderstanding. The ...

EUobserver.com / Economic Affairs / ...

24 comments • 24 days ago



CitizenEU — "Perhaps this will demonstrate how the EU commission operates on ...

Comment feed Subscribe via email