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Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

2007/2115(INI)

8.1.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

for the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

on Development of the framework for the activities of interest representatives
(lobbyists) in the European institutions
(2007/2115(INI))

Draftsman: Søren Bo Søndergaard

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs calls on the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Recognises the significant importance and influence of lobbying and of the expertise provided by lobbies and NGOs on EU decision making and therefore the need for regulation;
2. Believes that only a common mandatory register for all EU institutions with forms of financial disclosure for all lobbies and lobbyists, respectful of transparency and privacy principles, will be an efficient tool in helping to identify and assess the strength of the most important driving forces behind a given lobbying activity. The register must be linked to a code of ethical behaviour common to all the EU institutions;
3. Believes that a first step towards having one common register for all the EU institutions could be taken if the European Parliament made it mandatory for lobbyists to be registered with both the European Parliament and the Commission in order to be able to access the premises of the European Parliament; likewise calls on the Commission to require registration with both institutions in order to access the premises of the Commission;
4. Regards the income approach chosen by the Commission as mandatory, minimum rules. Believes that in addition lobbyists should be obliged to disclose lobbying expenditure among other things by giving the same information on lobbying expenditure spent on MEPs as MEPs are obliged to disclose in their financial declarations;
5. Calls for Parliament's Bureau or the Quaestors to look into ways of restricting unauthorised access to the levels where Members' offices are situated in Parliament's buildings, whereas access to committee rooms by the public can only be limited in exceptional circumstances;
6. Calls for a public, searchable and downloadable online database containing all relevant information with cross-references to other possible databases of the EU institutions until a common database is in place;
7. Calls for a monitoring mechanism (e.g. a committee of MEPs not holding any other significant positions in Parliament) to scrutinise and ensure the accuracy of the information in the register, and considers it important that sufficient resources (staff and money) are granted for that purpose;
8. Believes that sanctions should apply to lobbyists who have intentionally given unsatisfactory or false information; considers that, under a mandatory registration system, suspension of registration and, in the most serious cases, removal from the register are proportionate sanctions and represent a sufficient deterrent;
9. Calls on the Conference of Presidents to publish a list of all existing intergroups (including members, meeting agendas and documents) on its website, as well as of the lobbies and NGOs supporting them and a specification of the type of support provided to

them, notably in terms of human, material or financial resources;

10. Calls on its Bureau to review the rules covering the activities of lobbyists three years at the latest after they enter into force to evaluate if the changed system is achieving the necessary transparency on lobbyists' activities; calls on the Commission to base any future initiative on lobbying activities in the EU on the legal basis provided by the Treaties concerning transparency and openness.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	18.12.2008
Result of final vote	+: 52 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Alexander Alvaro, Roberta Angelilli, Alfredo Antoniozzi, Mihael Brejc, Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg, Michael Cashman, Giuseppe Castiglione, Giusto Catania, Carlos Coelho, Panayiotis Demetriou, Gérard Deprez, Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra, Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop, Claudio Fava, Armando França, Urszula Gacek, Kinga Gál, Patrick Gaubert, Roland Gewalt, Lilli Gruber, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Livia Járóka, Ewa Klamt, Stavros Lambrinidis, Esther De Lange, Henrik Lax, Sarah Ludford, Claude Moraes, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Rares-Lucian Niculescu, Bogusław Rogalski, Martine Roure, Luciana Sbarbati, Inger Segelström, Csaba Sógor, Søren Bo Søndergaard, Vladimir Urutchev, Ioannis Varvitsiotis, Manfred Weber, Renate Weber, Tatjana Ždanoka
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Simon Busuttil, Genowefa Grabowska, Ignasi Guardans Cambó, Sophia in 't Veld, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann, Jean Lambert, Jörg Leichtfried, Antonio Masip Hidalgo, Bill Newton Dunn, Rainer Wieland
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Manuel Medina Ortega