Transparency register: who is lobbying the EU? (infographic)

EU institutions have agreed to upgrade their transparency register, which lists lobbyists contacting them. Find out why the register matters.

In April 2021, the European Parliament approved an agreement reached with the Commission and Council on updated joint rules bringing more transparency to the activities of interest representatives at the EU level. The agreement was signed by the three institutions on 20 May.
Since 2011, the Parliament and the Commission have jointly operated a public register called the transparency register. This one has replaced previous separate registers, the Parliament’s one having dated back to 1995. The Council had acted as an observer to the scheme since 2014, but has now joined as a full participant following the conclusion of the negotiations on the updated agreement at the end of 2020.

Who is talking to the EU?
The aim of the transparency register is to ensure that those seeking to interact with EU institutions declare their interest publicly and provide information about themselves if they wish to carry out certain activities in order to influence EU policies. For example, if you want to speak at a public hearing organised by a Parliament committee, you need to register.

The breakdown of the registered organisations on the Transparency Register is as follows:

- **12,489 ORGANISATIONS REGISTERED**
- **49,059 people are lobbying the EU**
- **of which 1,594 people have access to the Parliament**
- **The equivalent of 24,703 people working full time**

### Head Office Country

- **82.5%** of organisations have a head office in the EU

#### Non-EU registered organisations (%)
- Europe*: 11.8%
- North America*: 4.0%
- Asia and Middle East*: 0.8%
- Africa*: 0.4%
- Latin America and Caribbean*: 0.4%
- Oceania*: 0.2%

#### Top 5 EU countries (%)
- Belgium: 18.2%
- Germany: 13.3%
- France: 9.8%
- Italy: 6.5%
- Spain: 6.5%

*Non-EU countries

Source: European Transparency Register (April 2021)
The number of registered organisations has been growing over the years. There are now about 12,500 organisations with about 50,000 staff, including non-governmental organisations, business associations, companies, trade unions and think tanks.

Organisations vary substantially by size and topics of interest. The topics that most organisations are interested in are the environment, research and innovation, and climate action. Nearly a fifth of all organisations have their head office in Belgium.
What are the rules on lobbying in EU countries?

EU countries have different approaches towards regulating lobbying. Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia as well as the Spanish region of Catalonia have...
imposed registration requirements, while Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Romania offer incentives for lobbyists to sign up voluntarily.

In other EU countries the authorities have not introduced rules, but interest representatives have set up self-regulation mechanisms.

### How lobbying is regulated in EU countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory registration</th>
<th>Voluntary registration</th>
<th>Self-regulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries that require registration of lobbyists by law</td>
<td>Countries offering various incentives for lobbyists to register</td>
<td>Countries with no lobbying rules, but with self-regulation mechanisms set up by the sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia</td>
<td>Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania</td>
<td>Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Spain, Sweden</td>
</tr>
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*The region of Catalonia in Spain also requires mandatory registration

Source: European Parliament

### Parliament’s push for transparency

In the negotiations with the Commission and Council on the new agreement, the Parliament has sought to reinforce and improve the accountability of EU institutions and ensure a transparent and open decision-making process at the EU level.

A Parliament resolution adopted in April 2021 welcomed the fact that indirect lobbying activities are also subject to the rules for registration under the new agreement, as the pandemic has reduced the number of in-person meetings and led to new forms of interaction between interest representatives and decision-makers.

MEPs also welcome that the Council is becoming a formal party to the agreement. “By setting a positive example, we can become a role model also for the member states and shift the paradigm across the board. With the new rules, citizens can more easily understand how..."
decisions that affect their daily lives are made,” said Parliament's vice president Katarina Barley (S&D, Germany), one of Parliament's negotiators of the agreement.

Parliament's co-negotiator Danuta Hübner (EPP, Poland) said: “Parliament’s goals are fully reflected in the new framework: we have expanded the remit and strengthened the Transparency Register, while ensuring that free mandate given to MEPs by European citizens will remain intact.”

**Transparency Register**
Text adopted by Parliament (27 April 2021)
Information on lobby groups and transparency in Parliament
Information on the negotiations for the Transparency Register