

EU institutions can be 'pioneers' for lobbying transparency, says campaigning MEP

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News

German Greens/EFA group MEP, Sven Giegold says new transparency rules will spell an end to 'too much closeness' between politics and big business.



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Sven Giegold's report, adopted last week in Strasbourg, calls for a more robust and mandatory transparency register of interest groups and representatives.

The report recommends that financing, support and the clients of these organisations should be declared on a yearly basis.

It also proposes that MEPs are asked to only meet with interest group representatives once they are

officially registered, or to ask them to register.

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And it recommends that European Parliament rapporteurs, shadow rapporteurs and committee chairs should also declare their meetings with interest group representatives for the dossiers which they are in charge of.

On Friday, Giegold told this website that the Parliament was on “the front foot on countering the feeling that there is too much closeness between politics and big business.”

Giegold said, “The long struggle for more transparency and strong ethics rules has paid off. By implementing those demands, the EU institutions can now be the pioneers for lobbying transparency.”

“The legislative footprint, requested by the European Parliament, will allow citizens to see at a glance who has been able to influence the drafting of EU legislation. The transparency register for lobbyists – which until now has been voluntary – will become more binding as lobbyists will have to register in order to gain access to legislators.”

“The long struggle for more transparency and strong ethics rules has paid off. By implementing those demands, the EU institutions can now be the pioneers for lobbying transparency” Sven Giegold MEP

Further reaction came from James Wilson, who has worked as a lobbyist in Brussels for many years and is registered under the Transparency Register.

The Briton told the Parliament Magazine that he supports the initiative to require full disclosure.

“It is necessary for professional lobbyists to maintain the highest standards of conduct, and to be transparent in providing information about the interests they represent,” he said.

The report adopted by parliament in Strasbourg and seen by this website also states that MEPs should “adopt the systematic practise” of meeting only with registered lobbyists. It calls on MEPs and their staff to ask for registration before meetings and states that staff in all institutions “to refrain from giving/accepting unregistered lobbyists for patronage, hosting, speaker roles and advisory bodies.”

The ban on meeting with unregistered lobbyists should be extended to all relevant Commission staff, says the report.

It calls on National member states in the Council to introduce a 'no registration, no meeting'-rule for lobbyists which should also apply to permanent representations of member states in Brussels.

Giegold's report also calls for more transparency on donations to NGOs exceeding €3,000 and advocates a 'one-stop shop' combining the Transparency Register with "all other relevant data on transparency and integrity" of EU-institutions on a "citizen-friendly" webpage.

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter for the Parliament Magazine

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