



**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL**
the global coalition against corruption

EU OFFICE

7,000 and counting

Lobby meetings of the European Commission

Brussels 1 December 2015

Transparency International EU has published new analysis of lobbying in Brussels on 1 December 2015. It reveals that the overwhelming majority of lobby meetings held by European Commissioners and their closest advisors are with representatives of corporate interests. This is just one of the findings from our lobby monitoring tool available at:

www.integritywatch.eu

The tool provides a 'one-stop shop' for information published by the European Commission on meetings with lobbyists since December 2014. For the first time this information has been linked to data from the EU lobbying register to provide the most comprehensive overview of Brussels lobbying to date.

Author:

Daniel Freund, Policy Officer EU Integrity

Funding:

EU Integrity Watch was first launched in October 2014 by Transparency International EU (TI EU). The project is co-funded by the Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE), with a contribution by the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF). Insert the attached logos.

This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the funders cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

www.transparencyinternational.eu
<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org>
<http://www.kbs-frb.be>

Disclaimers:

- This document was produced on 27 November 2015 with all information and data being up-to-date at that time. Please always check the original data on the European Commission websites before publication, as new meetings or registrations can be updated at any time.
- All information and data used by EU Integrity Watch and contained in this press pack derives from the websites of the European Commission for the lobby meetings and from the EU Transparency Register (the register of Brussels lobbyists) for the information on lobby organisations. Data in the EU register is self-reported on a voluntary basis by lobbyists. Transparency International and EU Integrity Watch bear no responsibility for the accuracy of the data as we only reproduce information that is publicly available on the mentioned websites.

Brussels lobbying in numbers

Since 1 December 2014, the European Commissioners and their closest advisors publish their meetings with lobbyists. This report provides a detailed analysis of these meetings and EU lobbying in general.

7,084

European Commission meetings with lobbyists

75%

of lobby meetings are with companies and industry representatives

€1.5 billion

conservative estimate of the amount spent on EU lobbying each year

1 per week

average number of high-level meetings Google has with the Commission

25,000

conservative estimate of the number of EU lobbyists (full time)

8,695

lobby organisations on the EU register

More than half

of all entries on the EU lobby register contain factual errors or are outdated

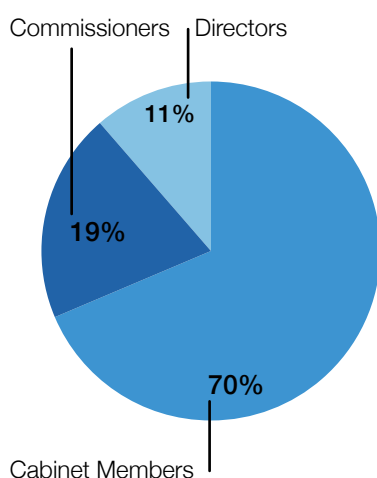
Brussels lobbying in numbers

7,084

European Commission meetings with lobbyists

The transparency rules introduced on 1 December 2014 apply to the 28 European Commissioners, the members of their Cabinets and the Directors-General (most senior civil servants of the EU administration). In total, just over 240 people have to publish their lobby meetings online – out of more than 33,000 officials.

Policy level



The Commissioners held 1,348 meetings with lobbyists, on average about 48 meetings per Commissioner over the last year. The members of Cabinet held 4,965 and the Directors-General 771 meetings. Numbers vary greatly between individuals and portfolios.

Top 5: European Commissioners with most lobby contacts

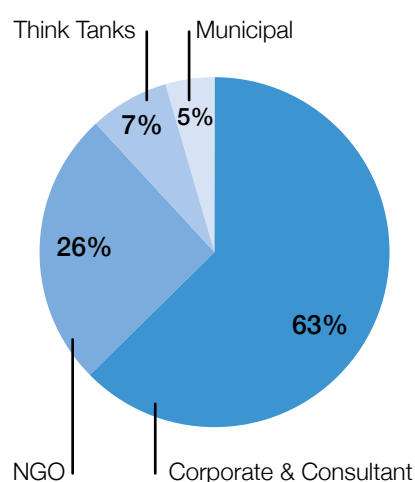
Commissioner	Portfolio	Country	Lobby contacts
Miguel Arias Cañete	Climate & Energy	Spain	212
Günther Oettinger	Digital Economy	Germany	180
Jonathan Hill	Financial Markets	UK	120
Violeta Bulc	Transport	Slovenia	104
Frans Timmermans	Better Regulation	Netherlands	97

75%

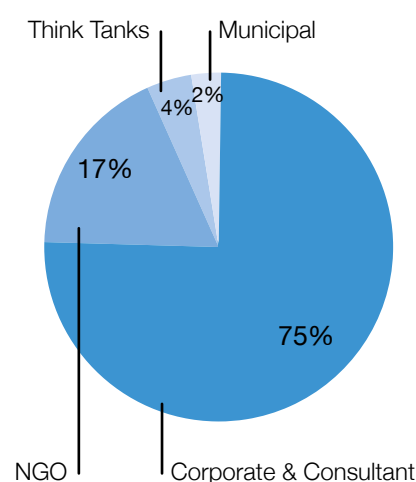
of all lobby meetings are with companies and industry representatives

Analysis of the 7,084 lobby meetings declared by the European Commission between December 2014 and December 2015 shows that 75% were with corporate lobbyists. This compares to 17% with NGOs, 4% with think tanks and 2% with local authorities. Google, Airbus and General Electric are some of the most active lobbyists at this level, with 35 to 54 meetings each. Google and General Electric are also some of the biggest spenders in Brussels, each declaring EU lobby budgets of around €3.5 million per year. Of the 8,695 organisations currently registered in the EU Transparency Register — the register of Brussels lobbyists — 5,428 seek to influence political decisions of the European Union for corporate interests. Exxon Mobil, Shell and Microsoft (all €4.5-5m) are the top three spenders according to their declarations made to the EU Transparency Register.

Share of registered lobbyists by type



Share of lobby meetings by type



€1.5 billion

conservative estimate of the amount spent on EU lobbying each year

Taken together the 8,695 organisations currently on the EU Transparency Register spend at least 1.5 billion euros on their EU lobbying activities. The top 20 companies alone spend over 60 million euros per year. Given that many organisations still do not sign up to the voluntary register and others vastly under-report on their lobbying budgets, this estimate is at the low end of the scale.

“The evidence of the last year suggests there is a strong link between the amount of money you spend and the number of meetings you get”,

says Daniel Freund from Transparency International EU.

“Those organisations with the biggest lobby budgets get a lot of access, particularly on the financial, digital and energy portfolios”.

Indeed, all companies that have had more than 20 high-level meetings with the European Commission in the last year declare at least €800,000 per year in lobbying expenditure, with the sole exception of Airbus declaring only €400,000.

Companies with the highest EU lobbying budgets

Rank	TOP 20 spenders	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	ExxonMobil	4,750,000	9	8	5
02	Microsoft	4,500,000	30	7	4
03	Shell	4,500,000	20	7	7
04	Deutsche Bank	3,969,000	20	9	3
05	Dow	3,750,000	6	7	3
06	Google	3,500,000	54	9	8
07	Volkswagen	3,300,000	15	18	4
08	General Electric (GE)	3,250,000	35	10	4
09	Siemens	3,230,169	6	15	10
10	Huawei	3,000,000	9	6	6
11	British Petroleum (BP)	2,750,000	23	4	4
12	Electricité de France (EDF)	2,500,000	15	14	7
13	Daimler	2,500,000	13	8	5
14	TOTAL	2,500,000	5	6	5
15	Bayer	2,460,000	7	15	6
16	BASF	2,300,000	3	13	10
17	ENGIE	2,250,000	29	3	3
18	Telefonica	2,000,000	24	6	6
19	ENEL	2,000,000	20	9	8
20	E.ON	2,000,000	20	11	4

Banks, Energy and Silicon Valley giants dominate EU lobbying

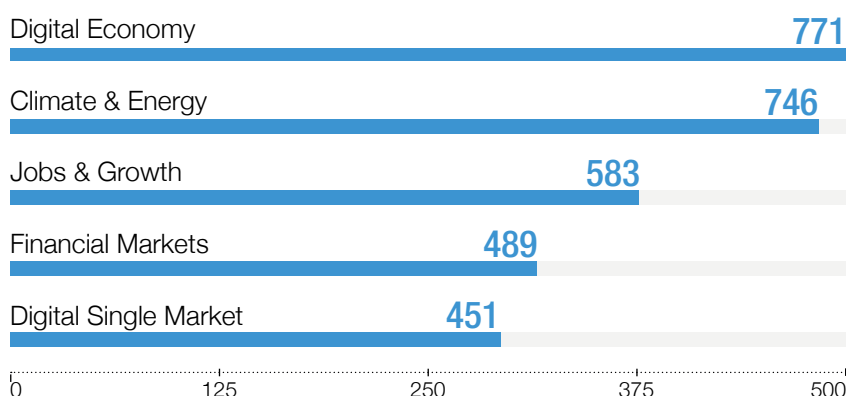
The portfolios for Digital Economy (771 meetings), Climate & Energy (746), Jobs & Growth (583) and Financial Markets (489) currently receive most attention from lobbyists. The Commissioner in charge of the portfolio with most lobby meetings – Germany’s Günther Oettinger – also has a particularly high share of corporate lobby meetings of over 93%. During his first year in office he has only met six NGOs. Deutsche Telekom alone (5 meetings) had almost the same amount of meetings as all of civil society combined (7 meetings).

“Looking at Oettinger’s lobby contacts it becomes clear that Telecom operators and Tech giants such as Google, Apple or Microsoft have the best access to the Commissioner in charge of regulating Europe’s digital economy. Companies and their representatives make up 93% of his meetings, which begs the questions of what goes on in all those meetings that are not being reported”,

says Daniel Freund from Transparency International EU.

All this despite the instruction in November 2014 by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to his new college to “ensure an appropriate balance and representativeness in the stakeholders they meet.”¹ While four NGOs – European Consumer Protection Office, WWF, Greenpeace and Transport & Environment – make it into the Top 10 of organisations with most meetings, it is notable that meetings with civil society are often held as large roundtable events with multiple participants.

Top 5 Commission portfolios with most lobby meetings



1 per week

average number of high-level meetings Google has with the Commission

Top 5: Most influential companies

Company	Meetings	Lobbyists	Lobby budget in €
Google	56	9	3,500,000
Airbus	41	10	400,000
General Electric (GE)	35	10	3,250,000
Microsoft	30	7	4,250,000
IBM	29	5	1,500,000

Four of the five most influential companies in Brussels are American. Google has had on average more than one high-level meeting every week. The topics discussed during these meetings range from their competition case over copyright to the Youtube kids app. They have met senior officials from 19 out of the 28 portfolios, including Agriculture, Home Affairs and Regional Policy.

The most influential European company is Airbus with 41 meetings. 10 of these were with officials from the Transport portfolio, but Airbus also had meetings on neighbourhood policy, digital economy and with the Cabinet of the Budget Commissioner. Airbus also stands out by the astonishingly small lobby budget it declares. The annual amount of just 400,000 euros is by far the lowest of any company in the Top 20. On average these companies declare budgets of 2.1 million, more than 5 times the amount declared by Airbus. Overall, companies have directly met with Commissioners 484 times during the last year, but three Commissioners alone hold 47% of those meetings: the German Günther Oettinger responsible for the Digital Economy, the Spanish Commissioner for Climate & Energy Miguel Arias Canete and the British Financial Markets Commissioner Jonathan Hill.

¹Communication from the President to the Commission: The Working Methods of the European Commission 2014 – 2019, page 9, 11 November 2014: “While contact with stakeholders is a natural and important part of the work of a Member of the Commission, all such contacts should be conducted with transparency and **Members of the Commission should seek to ensure an appropriate balance and representativeness in the stakeholders they meet.**” <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2014/EN/3-2014-9004-EN-F1-1.Pdf>

Top 5: Most influential companies

Rank	Company	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	Google	3,500,000	54	9	8
02	Airbus	400,000	41	10	11
03	General Electric (GE)	3,250,000	35	10	4
04	Microsoft Corporation	4,500,000	30	7	4
05	ENGIE (former Gaz de France)	2,250,000	29	3	3
06	IBM	1,500,000	28	5	3
07	Orange	1,000,000	27	5	5
08	Telefonica	2,000,000	24	6	6
09	British Petroleum (BP)	2,750,000	23	4	4
10	Deutsche Telekom	1,130,000	21	9	3
11	Vodafone	1,000,000	21	4	4
12	Shell	4,500,000	20	7	7
13	Deutsche Bank	3,969,000	20	9	3
14	ENEL	2,000,000	20	9	8
15	E.ON	2,000,000	20	11	4

19 out of the Top 30 companies belong to just three sectors: energy, finance and Silicon Valley companies. Taken together these 30 companies represent 28% of all meetings the European Commission had with business organisations. For further details check the annexes.

“Among the 75% of lobby meetings the European Commission has with companies and industry associations there is a strong bias towards large multinationals from just three industries: banks, big oil and Silicon Valley”,

says Daniel Freund from Transparency International EU.

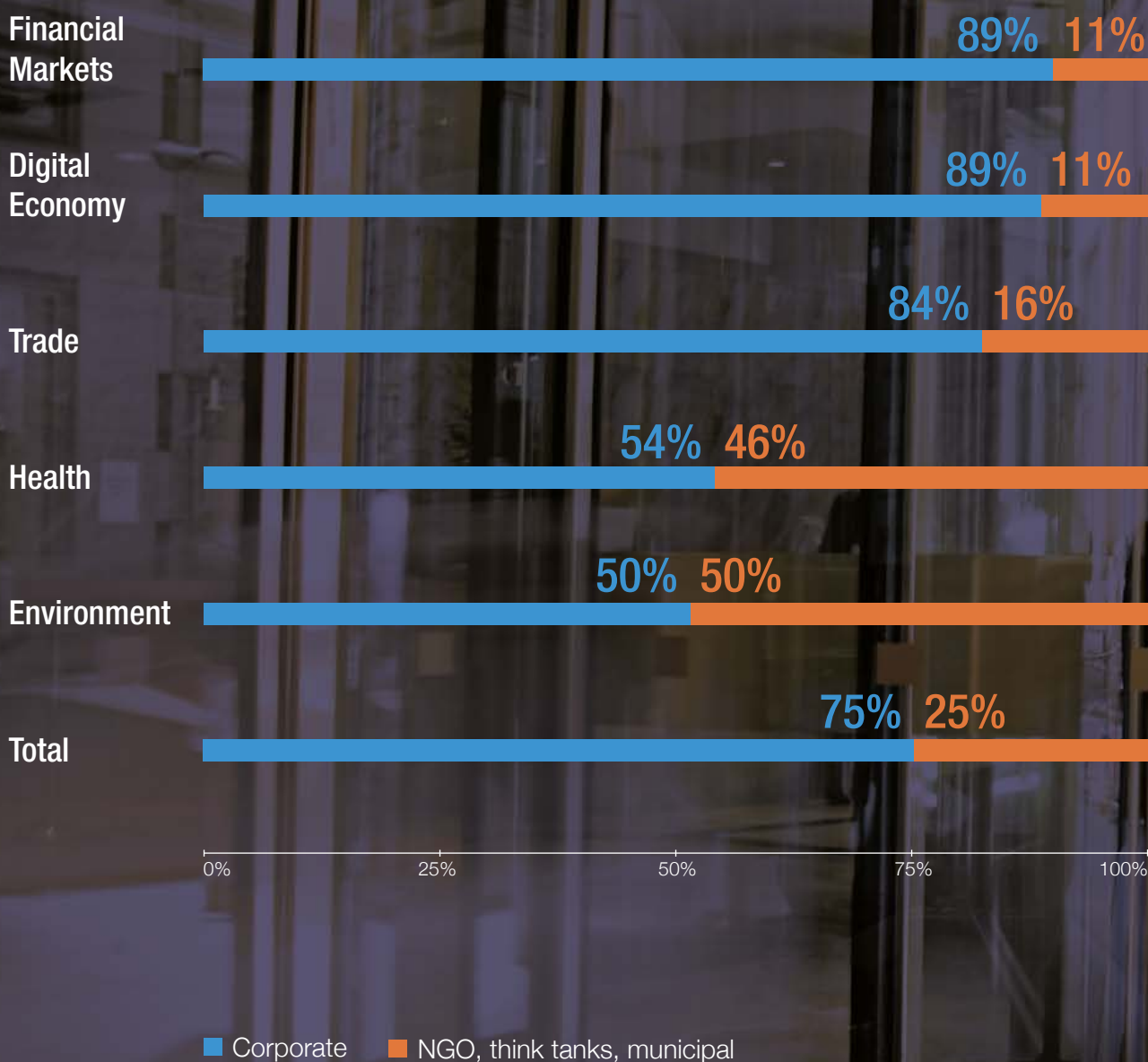
Rank	TOP 20 spenders	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
16	Statoil	800,000	20	3	4
17	HSBC	1,250,000	18	5	5
18	Apple	700,000	18	2	3
19	BlackRock	1,250,000	16	3	5
20	Commerzbank	800,000	16	6	4
21	Goldman Sachs	700,000	16	2	
22	Nokia	700,000	16	4	2
23	Unilever	500,000	16	3	3
24	Eni	500,000	16	3	6
25	Gas Natural Fenosa	25,000	16	5	4
26	Volkswagen	3,300,000	15	18	4
27	Electricité de France	2,500,000	15	14	7
28	Amazon	600,000	15	3	7
29	IBERDROLA	500,000	15	3	4
30	Trans Adriatic Pipeline	200,000	15	1	3
TOTAL TOP 30		50,074,000.00	656	183	138

● Silicon Valley

● Energy

● Finance

Percentage of corporate or civil society lobbying in different portfolios



The share of lobby meetings held with corporate lobbyists varies significantly between portfolios. Some - such as Health and Environment - have almost equal representation between corporate representatives and other organisations such as NGOs and think tanks. But overall, the 28 portfolios are heavily dominated by corporate interests, particularly in the areas of Financial Markets and the Digital Economy.

Most common subjects discussed in lobby meetings

CONSUMER PROTECTION

ENERGY AND CLIMATE POLICY

COPYRIGHT

DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

ENERGY UNION

TSM

BETTER REGULATION

CMU

DSM

TTIP

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

DATA PROTECTION

DMS AND AVMS

ETS

Investment Plan

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

DIGITAL ECONOMY

Capital Markets Union

BROADBAND

EFSD

BANKING UNION

Energy Efficiency

On the hotly contested EU policy issues - the Free-Trade Agreement with the US (TTIP), the Digital Single Market and Financial Sector Regulation as part of the Capital Markets Union (CMU) - representatives of a total of 28 think tanks and 44 NGOs have tried to get across their arguments in high-level meetings with the Commission while 617 lobby organisations advocated the interests of companies and industry associations.

The Commission's new transparency measures only cover 1% of officials and 25% of lobbyists

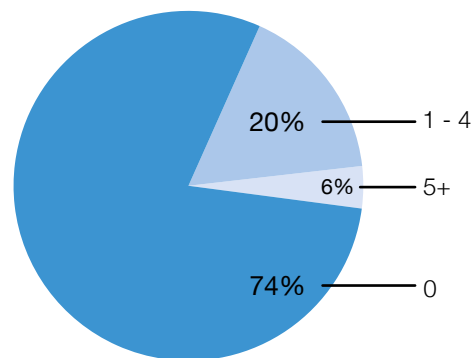
25,000

estimate number
of EU lobbyists

8,695

lobby organisations
on the EU register

Nr. of meetings per lobby organisation



The data also reveals that 74% of the 8,695 organisations currently registered did not have a single meeting reported with a Commissioner or their teams, demonstrating the limitations of the European Commission's new transparency provisions that only cover the top 1% of highest ranking EU officials and only 26% of the registered lobby organisations. Of the more than 33,000 officials working at the European Commission, not even 300 are covered by the new regime. Lower-level officials - such as the team negotiating the Free-Trade Agreement TTIP with the US - are not covered.

Research from different policy areas, such as healthcare, tobacco and car emissions, indicates that lobby meetings below the level of Director-General are far more frequent than high-level meetings. Access to documents requests indicate that the factors can range from 6 to 10, meaning that lower level meetings are between 6 to 10 times more frequent than meetings with Commissioners and their closest advisors.

Transparency International has repeatedly recommended to the European Commission to extend the new measures to all those involved in the decision-making process. At the least, lower level officials should be instructed to no longer meet with unregistered lobbyists.

“It should be made crystal clear that unregistered lobbyists are not welcome anywhere in the European institutions”.

suggests Daniel Freund from Transparency International EU.

“The European Commission should be congratulated on providing this insight into lobbying of high-level officials, but this is just part of the picture”.

says Carl Dolan, Director of Transparency International EU.

“All EU institutions should publish a “legislative footprint” – a public record of all lobby meetings and other input that has influenced policies and legislation”.

Despite some progress, the EU lobby register remains unreliable

Transparency International EU also found that many organisations are still absent from the register. This includes 14 of the 20 biggest law firms in the world that all have Brussels offices, such as Clifford Chance, White & Case or Sidley Austin. 11 out of these 14 law firms have registered as lobby organisations in Washington DC where registration is mandatory. This shows the inadequacies of the current voluntary approach to lobby registration in the EU.

“Much of the information that lobbyists voluntarily file with the lobby register is inaccurate, incomplete or outright meaningless”, says Freund.

More than half

of all entries on the EU lobby register contain factual errors or are outdated

Following a simple plausability check, Transparency International EU has filed 4,253 complaints with the EU Transparency Register Secretariat in September 2015. These complaints involve more than half of the organisations on the register. The complaints are directed at organisations that have not declared any activities, report less than a minimum wage per registered lobbyist or have similar blatant mistakes in their declarations.

Almost three months after the submission of the complaints, about 10% of the cases have been resolved. Either new and correct declarations have been filed or the organisations have been removed from the register.

At this stage there are still hundreds of completely meaningless declarations on the register, with obscure organisations claiming to spend more than €10,000,000 on EU lobbying or having thousands of lobbyists at their disposal.

Recommendations to improve EU lobbying transparency and equality of access

The European Commission under Jean-Claude Juncker has taken good steps in the right direction when it comes to lobbying transparency. Allowing only registered lobbyists to meet the highest level of decision-makers and publishing those meetings have greatly improved transparency and are indeed the reason this present analysis was possible at all.

Nevertheless, the findings of this work also illustrate that more is needed to ensure transparency, integrity and equality of access in EU lobbying.

The main recommendations of Transparency International EU are:

1 Make the EU Transparency Register mandatory

Only if registration is mandatory for lobbyists can we be sure to capture all those seeking to directly or indirectly influence EU decision-making. A mandatory register would also allow sanctioning of organisations that do not comply with the rules. The Transparency Register Secretariat needs to be provided with the necessary resources to better check the declarations for possible errors, particularly on those organisations that have frequent meetings at the highest level. Smart online tools like Integrity Watch can help in that regard.

2 Introduce a legislative footprint for EU decision-making and legislation

A legislative footprint is a comprehensive public record of lobbyists' influence on a piece of legislation or public decision. This can be established through the registration of meetings and by capturing written input from lobbyists. The Commission has started both but the measures need to be extended to everyone involved in the decision-making process. This means extending current provision to the lower levels of the Commission but more importantly to the European Parliament and the Council. Standardisation of subject matters and the mention of concrete legislative files as well as the use of open data would greatly increase the usability of the data by a wider audience.

Background information

EU Integrity Watch:

Launched in October 2014, EU Integrity Watch (www.integritywatch.eu) is Transparency International EU's central hub for online tools aimed at making the EU institutions more transparent. A previously launched tool displays the outside activities and incomes of Members of the European Parliament showing that more than 50% of MEPs have side jobs collectively paying up to 18m EUR per year. Starting today, the page also hosts two tools providing information on EU lobbying. Graphic filters and a powerful search function allow citizens, journalists and civil society to hold EU decision-makers to account and to monitor lobbying activities for potential conflicts of interest and false/inaccurate declarations.

Lobbying in Europe:

Today's assessment of the situation of lobbying in Brussels follows the publication of Transparency International's report on "Lobbying in Europe: Hidden Influence, Privileged Access" that was published on 15 April 2015. The report analysed lobbying in 19 European countries and in the three EU institutions and shows undue influence on politics across the region and in Brussels. The full report can be found [here](#) and the press release with main findings and the country ranking [here](#).

Transparency Initiative of the European Commission:

The European Commission under President Jean-Claude Juncker has made strong commitments to increased transparency. Since 1 December 2015 Commissioners, their Cabinets and Director-Generals publish their meetings and only meet with lobbyists registered in the EU Transparency Register. VP Frans Timmermans has been tasked to put forward a proposal for a mandatory register by the end of 2015. The Commission also pledged to "ensure an appropriate balance and representativeness in the stakeholders they meet".

EU Transparency Register:

Created in 2011 as a joint register for lobbyists by the European Commission and Parliament, the voluntary register of Brussels lobbyists has undergone multiple revisions. Following the launch of an updated website on 27 January 2015, all registered organisations had to undergo a first annual update of their information. Despite the suspension of several hundred organisations and updated declarations from more than 8,500 currently registered organisations, that are currently registered, the quality of the data remains relatively poor, although improving compared to previous years. Transparency International has been campaigning for a mandatory register with meaningful sanctions for lobbyists that break the rules.

EU Legislative Footprint:

A legislative footprint is a comprehensive public record of lobbyists' influence on a piece of legislation or public decision. This influence cannot be directly measured but records of meetings with lobbyists or text analysis of written input by lobbyists can provide useful insights. Transparency International has published a policy paper with detailed recommendations on how an EU Legislative Footprint can be introduced. The paper, including a set of frequently asked questions on administrative burden or privacy protection, can be found [here](#).

10 most influential NGOs

Rank	Company name	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	Office of European Consumer Unions (BEUC)	1,500,000	45	17	24
02	WWF	1.000,000	39	13	10
03	Greenpeace	1.000,000	37	7	13
04	Transport & Environment	2,750,000	34	16	12
05	Climate Action Network	800,000	30	12	10
06	Oxfam	300,000	29	13	12
07	European Environmental Bureau	2,250,000	26	17	12
08	BirdLife	1.500,000	24	15	7
09	Friends of the Earth	833,267	23	5	9
10	Amnesty International	800,000	22	8	16
	Total	12,733,267	309	4	125

10 most influential consultancies & law firms

Rank	Company name	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	Kreab	3,250,000	15	30	33
02	FIPRA	1.500,000	13	29	23
03	Global Counsel	300,000	11	3	0
04	G Plus	3,000,000	10	22	29
05	Avisa Partners	1,750,000	8	11	4
06	Business Bridge Europe	100,000	7	4	3
07	Salesas	600,000	7	2	4
08	FTI Consulting	1.750,000	7	33	30
09	PricewaterhouseCoopers	600,000	6	3	6
10	McKinsey	0	6	0	0
	Total	11,960,000	90	4	122

10 most influential industry associations

Rank	Company name	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	BUSINESSEUROPE	4,000,000	79	29	23
02	European Steel	600,000	33	3	2
03	Finish Industries EK	400,000	33	3	4
04	AmCham	900,000	33	7	9
05	DIGITALEUROPE	2,850,000	32	10	11
06	European Paper Industries	400,000	31	3	4
07	European Chemical Industry	10,100,000	31	45	24
08	EuroCommerce	400,000	31	3	13
09	EUROCHAMBERS	7,600,000	29	19	10
10	European Car Makers	2,000,000	29	9	10
	Total	29,250,000	361	131	110

10 most influential Silicon Valley and Internet companies

Rank	Company name	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	Google	3,500,000	54	9	8
02	Microsoft	4,500,000	30	7	4
03	IBM	1,500,000	28	5	3
04	Apple	700,000	18	2	3
05	Amazon	600,000	15	3	7
06	Facebook	400,000	14	4	1
07	Uber	50,000	12	2	
08	eBay	400,000	8	2	3
09	Spotify	10,000	8	0	
10	HP	300,000	7	2	
	Total	11,960,000	194	36	29

Most influential think tanks

Rank	Company name	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	E3G	900,000	18	25	4
02	Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)	0	17	50	3
03	Bruegel	0	12	19	2
04	Bertelsmann Stiftung	0	12	1	1
05	Centre for European Reform	0	9	13	0
06	Open Europe	25,000	9	8	0
07	European Policy Centre (EPC)	2,250,000	8	23	0
	Total	3,175,000	90	4	122

Most influential energy companies

Rank	Company name	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	ENGIE	2,250,000	29	3	3
02	BP	2,750,000	23	4	4
03	Shell	4,500,000	20	7	7
04	ENEL	2,000,000	20	9	8
05	E.ON	2,000,000	20	11	4
06	Statoil	800,000	20	3	4
07	Eni	500,000	16	3	6
08	Gas Natural Fenosa	25,000	16	5	4
09	Electricité de France (EDF)	2,500,000	15	14	7
10	RWE	2,000,000	13	6	3
11	SUEZ	800,000	13	6	4
12	ExxonMobil	4,750,000	9	8	5
13	Vattenfall	900,000	8	3	5
	Total	25,775,000	222	82	64

Most influential banks and financial institutions

Rank	Company name	Lobby Budget in €	Meetings	Lobbyists (FTE)	EP Badges
01	Deutsche Bank	3,969,000	20	9	3
02	HSBC	1,250,000	18	5	5
03	BlackRock	1,250,000	16	3	5
04	Commerzbank	800,000	16	6	1
05	Goldman Sachs	700,000	16	2	
06	Banco Santander	600,000	14	7	7
07	Citigroup	1,000,000	11	1	8
08	BNP PARIBAS	900,000	10	6	2
09	Neste	200,000	10	3	1
10	Bank of America Merrill Lynch	1,250,000	9	3	
11	BBVA	500,000	9	4	3
12	Société Générale	400,000	8	3	1
13	London Stock Exchange	400,000	8	2	1
14	UniCredit	500,000	7	4	4
	Total	13,719,000	172	52	42

