



**ALTER
EU**

**Alliance for
Lobbying
Transparency &
Ethics
Regulation**

**Committee on
Constitutional Affairs
European Parliament
October 8 2007**



ALTER EU was Established in 2005

- coalition of more than 140 civil society groups that signed on to a joint platform
- members include EPSU (Federation of Public Service Unions), Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Universities and lobby firms, European Federation of Journalists
- managed by a Steering Committee with representatives from Greenpeace, EFJ, CEO, Strathclyde University, LobbyControl and Friends of the Earth
- all proposals for transparency and lobbying also apply to ourselves



ALTER EU activities in the ETI Debate

- awareness raising on lobbying in Brussels
- develop concrete proposals to increase lobbying transparency
- lobby the Commission and MEPs to support our proposals
- take part in numerous public debates
- mobilize the public/NGOs to participate in ETI consultations
- research on problems related to lobbying



- ALTER-EU is main voice for civil society in the ETI debate and key interlocutor for media, Commission, EP, NGOs and the lobby sector
- Constructive role in the ETI debate, unlike EPACA and SEAP who first lobbied against a mandatory registration system and now argue that the proposed voluntary system won't work because not all lobbyists will take part



Need for Stronger Lobby Rules

- A recent article in PublicAffairsNews quotes rapporteur Alexander Stubb as saying that there are no problems related to lobbying in Brussels: ‘If it aint broke, don’t fix it’
- But several concrete examples of problematic lobbying have been reported in the media over the last years



Need for Stronger Lobby Rules

- Most compelling reason

The European public has very little trust in EU decision making. Brussels lobbying happens completely untransparent and in a black box. No one knows 'who is lobbying on behalf of whom and on what issue'. That is why a lobby database including disclosure of financial info is crucial.



Need for Stronger Lobby Rules

- Revolving door phenomena: EU officials moving directly into the lobby sector and giving industry enormous influence over EU decision making
 - A high level EU official working for 20 years in the Commission moved in 2004 to work for UNICE, the biggest industry association and lobbying the Commission on various issues
 - An EU official working for 6 years in DG Enterprise' Chemical Unit moved over to head the REACH Unit of CEFIC, the lobby group of the chemical industry, heavily campaigning on REACH



Need for Stronger Lobby Rules

- Lack of Transparency in Lobbying
 - ExxonMobil continues to fund think tanks and lobby groups in Europe who campaign against the Kyoto Treaty. When FoEE asked them to reveal whom they fund, ExxonMobil didn't even bother to answer
 - Mr. Earnshaw was hired by the ENVI Committee as an independent health expert. He also works for BM advising pharmaceutical companies. When BM was asked to tell whom Mr. Earnshaw worked for, they refused



Need for Stronger Lobby Rules

- Front groups set up by industry to create an image of public support: Ever more happening
 - Cancer United was launched last year claiming to represent doctors and patients pushing for better health care. Media unmasked it as a front group set up by PR firm Weber Shandwick for Roche, a major pharmaceutical company. After that, several MEPs withdrew from the initiative
 - At a meeting with Mr. Stubb ALTER EU mentioned these examples. Mr. Stubb confirmed that they are problematic so we expect his proposals to address this issue



Need for Stronger Lobby Rules

- Industry lobbyists get preferential treatment in EU Advisory and Expert groups
 - Industry lobbyists dominate many High Level Working Groups
 - Commission gets advise from over 1.000 expert groups, a large number of them dominated by industry lobbyists
 - CARS 21: HLG with representatives of governments and the car industry, no environmental NGO, 1 trade union rep. The advise of the group was to give more subsidies to the car industry and establish less environmental regulation



ALTER EU Proposes

- We believe that as a Member of the European Parliament, you can make a significant contribution to improving transparency in EU policy-making, by calling on the Commission to set meaningful criteria for its proposed voluntary lobbying register, and by improving the Parliament's own lobbying rules.



ALTER EU Proposes

- Mandatory registration of lobbyists
 - a voluntary system will not cover those lobbyists that don't want to disclose who they work for
 - critique of PA firms that the Commission didn't listen to them is completely false, as Mr. Kallas proposed a voluntary database
 - EP agreed March 2007 in CSR report unanimously on call for mandatory database for lobbyists



ALTER EU Proposes

- Financial disclosure
 - crucial that lobbyists and the public know ‘who is lobbying for whom and how much money is involved’
 - no information on individual contracts and fees, as falsely suggested by the PA groups
 - Kallas’ proposal very light if compared to the US
 - it is no problem for lobby firms to deliver this information because all of them do so in Washington
 - German Industry agreed with financial disclosure
 - NGOs have signaled they are ready to sign up and most already provide financial information



ALTER EU Proposes

- Clear rules to avoid revolving doors
 - a cooling off period of 3 years where officials can not work as lobbyists in the same sector as they were active while working for the Commission
- Balanced representation of all stakeholders in advisory bodies to Commission and EP



ALTER EU Proposes

- Improve the Parliament's existing Access Register
 - in its current form fails to meet the benchmarks for lobby transparency set in the ETI
 - Parliament's register only contains names of lobbyists and the firm or organisation that employs them
 - it does not tell on whose behalf lobbyists act, on which issues they lobby and how much money is involved