

Brussels, 1 April 2019

Subject: Open letter on the creation of a mandatory EU lobby register

Dear Vice-President Timmermans,

Dear MEPs Ms. Hübner and Guillaume,

Dear Minister Delegate George Ciamba,

We are writing this letter to you to express our utmost concern over the current state of the negotiations for a mandatory lobby register.

As registrants to the current voluntary EU Transparency Register, Transparency International EU, the European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA) and the Society of European Affairs Professionals (SEAP), consider that transparency and accountability of public institutions at all levels is a crucial element of any democracy. Yet, scandals of corruption and undue influence have degraded the trust of citizens in their politicians, their political institutions and the EU itself. Ahead of the European elections, rebuilding this trust is of paramount importance.

The most recent institutional communications on the ongoing negotiations for a mandatory Transparency Register detail the decision taken by the three EU institutions to continue the discussions at a technical level. We are happy that the negotiations are proceeding. We also take the opportunity to congratulate the institutions for the steps taken to achieve a de facto mandatory Transparency Register, such as the recent vote in Parliament on the publishing of meetings with lobbyists.

Despite these developments, the fact that the negotiations have stalled at a political level is of serious concern to us. Just weeks ahead of the European elections, it is imperative to send a signal that the European institutions are serious about responding to the calls of citizens, national parliaments, the European Ombudsman, and the EU public affairs sector for more meaningful progress on legislative transparency. Failing to achieve this would signal to citizens that the EU institutions are not willing to tackle undue influence by unregistered lobbyists.

We therefore call on the three EU institutions to fulfil the political promise of making the EU Transparency Register mandatory and bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion before the end of the mandate.

Transparency International EU

The European Public Affairs
Consultancies Association

Society of European Affairs
Professionals