



**OPEN LETTER ON THE ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS TO
ESTABLISH A MANDATORY TRANSPARENCY REGISTER IN
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

© Society of European Affairs Professionals (November 2020)

Dear Vice-President Jourová,
Dear MEPs Ms. Barley and Hübner,
Dear Minister Roth (German Presidency of the Council),

We are writing this letter to you to express our concern over the current state of the negotiations for a mandatory lobby register. As registrants to the current voluntary EU Transparency Register, the Society of European Affairs Professionals ([SEAP](#)) and the members it represents, consider that transparency and accountability of public institutions at all levels is a crucial element of any democracy.

Recent institutional communications on the ongoing negotiations for a mandatory Transparency Register detail the decision taken by the three EU institutions to resume their discussions. We are of course delighted to see these negotiations proceeding. We also take the opportunity to congratulate the institutions for the steps taken to progress towards a de facto mandatory Transparency Register, such as the Parliament's decision to the publishing of some meetings with lobbyists and the publishing of meetings between lobbyists and Permanent and Deputy Ambassadors since the Finnish Presidency in 2019.

Despite these developments, some meetings between unregistered lobbyists and EU decision-makers are still possible. In addition, the absence of a long-term commitment from future Presidencies of the Council in adopting the voluntary mechanism of publication of meetings and limitation of said meetings with only registered lobbyists questions the willingness of the Member States and the Council of the EU to take concrete and meaningful steps towards a fully and comprehensive Mandatory Transparency Register. The same situation exists with the European Parliament, where over 250 members have voluntarily committed to meeting only with registered organisations, but for which there is no uniform policy of conditionality.

After four years of negotiations and a dramatic increase of online meetings due to the COVID-19 epidemics, it is imperative to send a signal that the European institutions are serious about responding to the calls of citizens, national parliaments, organised civil society, and the EU public affairs sector for more meaningful progress on legislative transparency. The EU institutions should not be limiting the interinstitutional agreement to a text codifying the status quo and ongoing voluntary practices.

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

Support Transparency - [Transparency Pledge](#) | [Lobby Europe](#)

The SEAP Team