



June 2016
AK Position Paper

Vote on the own-initiative report on
transparency, accountability and integrity in
the EU institutions, 2015/2041 (INI)

About us

The Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour is by law representing the interests of about 3.4 million employees and consumers in Austria. It acts for the interests of its members in fields of social-, educational-, economical-, and consumer issues both on the national and on the EU-level in Brussels. Furthermore the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour is a part of the Austrian social partnership. The Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour is registered at the EU Transparency Register under the number 23869471911-54.

The AK EUROPA office in Brussels was established in 1991 to bring forward the interests of all its members directly vis-à-vis the European Institutions.

Organisation and Tasks of the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour

The Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour is the umbrella organisation of the nine regional Chambers of Labour in Austria, which have together the statutory mandate to represent the interests of their members.

The Chambers of Labour provide their members a broad range of services, including for instance advice on matters of labour law, consumer rights, social insurance and educational matters.

Rudi Kaske
President

More than three quarters of the 2 million member-consultations carried out each year concern labour-, social insurance- and insolvency law. Furthermore the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour makes use of its vested right to state its opinion in the legislation process of the European Union and in Austria in order to shape the interests of the employees and consumers towards the legislator.

All Austrian employees are subject to compulsory membership. The member fee is determined by law and is amounting to 0.5% of the members' gross wages or salaries (up to the social security payroll tax cap maximum). 560.000 - amongst others unemployed, persons on maternity (paternity) leave, community and military service - of the 3.4 million members are exempt from subscription payment, but are entitled to all services provided by the Austrian Federal Chambers of Labour.

Werner Muhm
Director

The AK's position in detail

In the coming weeks landmark decisions will be made by the EU on the topic of supervising lobbying activities and improving transparency. The **consultations** held by the European Commission on a **mandatory Transparency Register** have recently been concluded, and the proposal for a revised Transparency Register is expected by the end of the year. The **Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)** of the European Parliament is expected to vote on **12 July 2016** on the report on transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions, 2015/2041 (INI), compiled by rapporteur Sven Giegold. The report will enable the European Parliament to send **the important message that it supports greater transparency and improvement of the lobbying supervision system.**

For European citizens it is crucial that decision-making in the EU is transparent and that it is possible to track which lobbyists and interest groups have influenced the decision-making process. We ask you therefore to support the call for the following measures:

- Introduction of a **mandatory Transparency Register in 2017** (*cf. draft report, item 7 inter alia*)
- Systematic and **regular supervision of entries in the Transparency Register**, prompt **processing of complaints** (including increasing the staff of the Register Secretariat) and consistent **sanctions** in the event of violations of the Code of Conduct and grossly incorrect entries). The entries of law firms in the Transparency Register must also disclose the clients on whose behalf lobbying was performed (*cf. draft report, items 11, 13 and 14*)
- **Introduction of the legislative footprint** to reveal which lobbyists rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs in the EP have met with and what written input has been received concerning *legislative proposals* (*cf. draft report, item 1*)
- Requirement that **European decision-makers only have meetings** with lobbyists who are registered in the Transparency Register. Disclosure requirement for:
 - All staff of the European Commission and the EU agencies
 - Staff of the European Council and the Council (including Permanent Representations)
 - MEPs, their staff and staff of the European Parliament. (*cf. draft report, items 2–5, 8 and 12*)
- **Ban on MEPs holding second jobs** that represent a **conflict of interest**, in particular a ban on performing lobbying activities as a secondary job, and the introduction of a **cooling-off period** to prevent MEPs moving directly from the European Parliament to a lobbying job (*cf. draft report, items 19–22*)

- **Accurate disclosure of the additional earnings of MEPs**, including, but not limited to, irregular additional earnings and accurate disclosure of regular earnings **over EUR 10,000 as well as verification of compliance with the Code of Conduct** and whether any conflicts of interest exist (*cf. draft report, item 18*)
- **Uniform rules for balanced appointments to expert groups** by the Commission, as also called for by the European Ombudsman, to ensure that representatives of workers, environmental interests and civil society are equally represented (*cf. draft report, items 23–24, and the position of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) on the own-initiative report, items 27–37*)
- Systematic and prompt publication of **trilogue documents** (*cf. draft report, items 34–35*)
- Full **access** to all negotiation documents and guidelines, requests and offers from **current trade negotiations** (*cf. in particular draft report, item 40*)

Should you have any further questions
please do not hesitate to contact

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