

How Conservatives want to block better lobby transparency and integrity rules

In March 2016 all groups had stated their wishes for amendments on the initial draft by Sven Giegold. Since then the rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs negotiated on compromises. The text in boxes shows the most important compromises which were backed by a majority of Greens, Social Democrats, Left, EFDD and ECR. Conservatives were more hesitant than all other groups to take positions on core issues. Few days before the scheduled vote they asked now for separate votes on parts of compromises clearly revealing their intention to vote against more lobby transparency and tougher integrity rules.

A) Deleting any legislative footprint

A 'legislative footprint' is a list of lobbyists that MEPs or Commission have consulted with while writing on EU laws. The compromise suggests to add such legislative footprints to all new EU laws or reports triggering laws:

COMP II - Paragraph 1a

Believes that the level of transparency should be raised through the publication of a 'legislative footprint' for legislative parliamentary reports and legislative initiative reports, which sets out which organisations rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs have consulted;

This is the EPP's request for a separate vote contained in the latest voting list:

Separate vote requested by EPP

- text without "through the publication of a legislative footprint" and "which set out... have consulted"
- "through the publication of a legislative footprint" and "which set out... have consulted"

In effect, what the EPP would leave is only meaningless rhetoric:

Believes that the level of transparency should be raised ~~through the publication of a 'legislative footprint'~~ for legislative parliamentary reports and legislative initiative reports, ~~which sets out which organisations rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs have consulted;~~

B) No ban on lobby side jobs

The present [code of conduct for Members](#) of the European Parliament already asks MEPs: "not solicit, accept or receive any direct or indirect financial benefit or other reward in exchange for influencing, or voting on, legislation, and shall consciously seek to avoid any situation which might imply bribery or corruption." This still allows MEPs to work for firms that at the same time lobby the EU institutions. To avoid such likely conflicts of interest, we want to ban such lobby side jobs. EPP asks for a separate vote exactly on the ban. Their deletion would leave only the call for a rephrasing that might even lead to a weakening of rules.

COMP XXXV - Paragraph 19

Believes that Article 3 of the Code of Conduct for Members should be rephrased **to include a clear ban** on Members holding side jobs *as or having remunerated arrangements with a representative of special interests within the scope of the Transparency Register*

C) No empowerment of Parliament's Ethics committee

If MEPs violate the Code of Conduct for Members the President of the European Parliament can refer this case to an Advisory Committee. They investigate and recommend if necessary sanctions. Yet only the president decides if they should be applied and so far he always rejected this. Misbehaving MEPs effectively don't have to fear any sanctions. Therefore, we ask to change incentives for the president by publishing the recommended sanctions if they are not applied. EPP wants to delete this publication and therefore protect further such MEPs who violated the rules.

COMP XXXIII - Paragraph 17

Believes that the Code of Conduct should be amended to empower the Advisory Committee to **check the compliance of MEPs with the Code of Conduct, to initiate the procedure for investigating a possible breach of the code of conduct for Members and to ensure that in case the President does not follow the advice given by the Advisory Committee for a sanction the advice of the Advisory Committee and the reasoning of the President are made public;**

D) MEPs not to clarify side incomes beyond 10 000 EUR

Present regulation asks MEPs to declare their side incomes in public declarations of interest but obscures data by brackets instead of exact amounts. Beyond 10 000 EUR per month MEPs do not need to say if they earn 10 0001 or several millions. Following the best practice in France and other member states we want to oblige MEPs to declare exact amounts. EPP requested instead to delete exactly this call for precise amounts and instead reconfirm an upper ceiling:

COMP XXXVIII - Paragraph 20

Believes that Members should **declare any remunerations** earned as employees or self-employed persons, from outside activity in parallel to their office as Members of the European Parliament **and therefore should be obliged to report in their declaration of financial interests their incomes with precise amounts without any upper ceiling;**

E) No lobby transparency of trade negotiators on TTIP and beyond

Commission obliged their highest ranks to only meet registered lobbyists and declare publicly these meetings. Yet even the most important negotiators on TTIP are not covered by these rules. We therefore asked to publish meeting agendas and record of meetings held with lobbyists. EPP asks to delete this more on lobby transparency:

COMP LXI - Paragraph 38

Stresses that, as pointed out by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), imperatives for transparency derive from the democratic nature of governance within the EU, ...; ~~calls on Commission to implement the recommendations of the European Ombudsman of July 2014 with particular regard to access to documents for all negotiations and on publishing meeting agendas and record of meetings hold with individuals and organisations falling within the remit of the Transparency Register; calls on Commission to inform Parliament and public about draft agendas of negotiation round prior to the negotiations, final agendas and reports after negotiations;~~

F) No call on MEPs to publish lobby meetings

While most attacks on core issues come from the Conservatives, Social Democrats also ask for one separate vote that indicates they abandon one earlier compromise. S&D asks to delete a general call to MEPs to document their lobby meetings as some Social Democrats, Liberals, British Conservatives and most Greens already practise:

COMP VII - Paragraph 1f

Requests its Bureau to invite its General Secretary to create necessary facilities on Parliament's online profiles of Members to enable them to publish their meetings with interest representatives; ~~encourages Members to voluntarily publish information about their meetings with stakeholders, as is the practice of the Commission;~~