

COURTESY TRANSLATION

Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President of the European Commission
Wetsstraat 200
BE-149 Brussels, Belgium

The Hague, 25 May 2016

Reply to the public consultation on the Transparency Register

2016Z09657/2016D21244

Dear Mr. Timmermans,

In view of the public consultation on the Transparency Register, the Standing Committee on European Affairs of the Netherlands House of Representatives has decided to send you a letter in the context of a political dialogue with the European Commission. Below you will find the comments and questions of number of political groups of the House.

Questions and comments of the political groups of the House of Representatives of the States-General

The members of the political groups of the Social Democratic Party (PvdA), the Socialist Party (SP) and the Cristian Democrats (CDA) find that ethical and transparent lobby activities contribute to policy development. These groups are of the opinion that the following principles, besides transparency are important with regard to lobbying: integrity and equal access. The members of the CDA group are of the opinion that lobbying should be subject to disciplinary laws.

The members of the aforementioned three groups are of the opinion that the European institutions are reasonably transparent. They consider the register a reasonably useful instrument for the regulation of lobby activities. They agree with the current scope: it encompasses all activities carried out to influence - directly or indirectly - policymaking, policy implementation and decision-making in the European Parliament and the European Commission, no matter where they are carried out or which channel or method of communication is used.

The members of the PvdA and SP groups find that the types of entities which can enrol, must be expanded. The members of the CDA group find that the current scope should be maintained.

The members of the above groups are positive with regard to the design and accessibility of the website of the transparency register.

The members of the CDA and SP group are of the opinion that enrolling entities are required the right kind of information. The members of the CDA group find that the required information can be simplified, the members of the SP group do not believe so. However, the members of the SP group are of the opinion that the quality of this information and the

scrutiny of the information provided by the enrolling entities can be simplified and are positive about the quality of the registry information.

The members of the PvdA, CDA and SP groups are positive about the principles and rules underlying the Code of Conduct and find the present procedure for alerts and complaints sufficient. They find that the names of suspended organisations should be made publicly available. The groups are positive about incentives to enrol. The members of the SP group find that more types of contacts should be made conditional upon enrolling in the register. The members of the SP group do not deem this to be necessary.

The members of both groups find that the Council should join the agreement on a mandatory register. The members of the SP group note that this should especially be the case for the secretariat of the Council and the cabinet of the President of the European Council. The members of the groups find that the EU-register is better than the national registers.

The committee on European Affairs looks forward to your reaction and appreciates receiving your reply at the earliest opportunity, at the latest three months after the date of this letter.

Kind regards,

The chairman of the standing committee on European Affairs

M. Azmani