

Anti-corruption and containing corporate lobbyism

The influence of money on politics is one of the key corruption risks in the EU and a threat to its democratic foundation. Political decisions will not be made in the best interests of all citizens when corporate interests are allowed to dominate

Disclosure and containment of external influence on political decisions

To protect the democratic process and to make the basis of decisions transparent, Pirates call for the disclosure of the influence of interest groups and lobbyists on political decisions. Lobbying activities shall be as transparent as possible. That can be helped by making an existing lobby register mandatory, connected with a transparent calendar on the Internet. Every EU citizen should have a chance to find with whom the elected representative met, what was the purpose of the meeting and what happened there. The whole process brings demanded multi-level controlling system needed for a reliable democracy. In addition, a legislative footprint shall be published: everyone involved in policy-making shall publish their meetings with lobbyists and written input they receive. All draft bills and amendments shall be traceable to their original author.

Enforceable ethics rules and an oversight mechanism for lobbyists shall be introduced. They should prevent lobbyists from exercising undue influence.

Preventing conflicts of interest

Public officials (including Commission Special Advisers) and elected representatives (including Rapporteurs) shall not be unduly influenced by private interests in the performance of their public duties. Conflicts of interest can occur with outside activities and previous jobs, but also through revolving door cases of members of parliament, Commissioners or civil servants taking up new jobs in the private sector.

Proper rules must be put in place to ensure that relevant office holders do not have any conflicts of interest, that interests are being declared and that misbehaviour is sanctioned. The European Parliament, as well as the European Commission Codes of Conduct, need to be reformed. Effective transparency and ethics rules are needed for Intergroups and other cross-party groups involving MEPs and lobbyists. An independent body should oversee compliance and impose sanctions where necessary. Comprehensive rules limiting the revolving-door phenomenon shall be adopted.

Stopping political cronyism

All positions in public bodies and publicly (co-)owned companies shall be filled in open competition.

Re-democratising the input process

Business interests shall no longer dominate policy expertise. The Commission shall introduce effective safeguards against corporate capture of expert and advisory groups, technology

platforms and EU agencies. Because a vastly disproportionate number of meetings with EU officials is dedicated to big business, these meetings should be reduced and more time should be devoted to actively seeking input from citizens, SMEs and other currently under-represented interest groups.

Political campaign financing

All European political parties shall provide public insight into their bank accounts for campaign funds. The Authority overseeing European political parties shall be given effective auditing and sanctioning tools.