

Oral Questions for designated Commissioner Šefčovič for AFCO members:

Transparency Register

- Please elaborate a bit on how you want to strengthen the weak Transparency Register IIA, which is due to a review next summer:
 - For example regarding the fact that it is far too easy for repressive regime lobbyists to bypass the EU Transparency Register;
 - For example regarding the fact that there are economic consultancies missing from the register, though heavily involved in lobbying in Brussels¹;
 - For example regarding the fact that unregistered lobbyists can meet all Commission officials below the degree of a director general – a massive loophole!
- In your mission letter, Commission President von der Leyen has stated that she wants you to strengthen the transparency system by extending the requirements of the transparency register to all managers. Are you promising to implement the new requirements to all managers in the first hundred days of your work?

Ethics Rules

- The last years have shown by many examples how existing ethics rules are not enforced in the EU institutions. How will you take care that Ethics Rules in the EU are finally enforced?

Examples for not enforced Ethics Rules:

- European Commission vice-president Dubravka Šuica has had one third of her lobby meetings not published since 2020. Moreover she has had lobby meetings with unregistered lobby groups like the conservative Heritage Foundation. Although she posted about the meetings on Social Media, nobody realised this.
- Ex-Commissioner Avramopoulos already applied in 2020 to lobby for the Fake NGO „Fight Impunity“ during his cooling-off-phase. And although the organisation was not registered in the Transparency Register, the Commission gave green light and relied on his statement that the NGOs will soon register. Only two years later the organisation was caught to be the main character in the biggest corruption scandal EU Parliament has ever seen. Nobody had ever checked if the organisation finally registered (they did not). Only after the scandal broke Avramopoulos left the organisation.

In the eye of these examples, how will you make sure ethics rules are finally enforced? Do you think the existing system of self control works?

¹ They are for example organising events on policy processes and policy fields (see for instance Charles River Associates' „Annual CRA Brussels Conference 2023“: <https://events.crai.com/crabrusselsconference/agenda>) or submit studies on behalf of powerful clients to DG Competition. For the presentation of the submitted studies, they also meet with DG Competition officials.

General:

- Transparency and Interinstitutional relations seem de-prioritised as there used to be a Commissioner solely responsible for transparency and values. How will you make sure that besides the important and time consuming issue of trade and economic security, transparency and ethics issues do not fall short?