



## Highlights 2006

### EU: Democracy vs Lobbyocracy

Throughout 2006, CEO has continued its campaigning work to challenge the excessive political influence of corporate lobby groups within the European Union. A key focus has been efforts to influence the European Transparency Initiative (ETI), where we have argued for rules to secure increased transparency, ethics and accountability around lobbying in the EU. A large part of this campaign has happened in the context of the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU); a coalition of over 140 civil society groups, co-founded by CEO in early 2005. Throughout 2006, CEO played a central role in the coordination of ALTER-EU, including taking on key secretariat functions.

As part of ALTER-EU (see also [www.alter-eu.org](http://www.alter-eu.org)), CEO has been instrumental in co-organising a wide range of campaign activities, which have proved successful in raising our side of the debate. The below is an example of activities:

- 10-page detailed recommendations on lobbying transparency (January).
- Public debate “Transparency in EU Decision Making” (Brussels, January).
- ALTER-EU response to the Green Paper on the ETI (July).
- Hearing in the European Parliament, with three groups of MEPs (October).
- ALTER-EU’s annual assembly (Brussels, October).
- Press releases in January, February, May, July, September and October.
- Press conferences in Brussels (May and October).
- Speaking at public events across Europe, for example in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Sweden and the UK.
- Attending numerous meetings with Commission officials and MEPs.

In addition to these and other collaborative ALTER-EU activities, CEO wrote an 8 page reaction to the ETI Green Paper, making recommendations that emerge from our ten year history of research in this field. Furthermore, our analysis has been widely published, for example in numerous articles, essays and book chapters where we propose measures for achieving genuine transparency around the activities of the estimated 15,000 lobbyists operating in EU capital Brussels.

In order to develop more innovative forms of outreach, we launched a new website which features a virtual tour of the EU quarter: [www.eulobbytours.org](http://www.eulobbytours.org) (March 2006). The website, with 3-D animated images and short texts, builds on our regular walking tours in Brussels, which involved several hundred participants in 2006. This web resource and the tours, feature the headquarters of powerful industry lobby groups, think tanks, and other key players in EU corporate politics. Updated versions of our 'LobbyPlanet' guidebook were published in Danish, German and French.

The final quarter of the year involved preparations for the *Worst EU Lobby Awards 2006* (co-organised with three other lobby watchdog groups). Over 30 proposals for nominations came in through the Lobby Awards website; 10 nominations were selected for the two categories 'Worst EU Lobbying' and 'Worst Privileged Access'. With almost 10,000 votes cast, Exxon-Mobil was the 'Worst Lobbying' category award winner, and the European Commission Internal Market department picked up the prize for 'Worst Privileged Access.'

Research-based publications remain central to CEO's work. Publications in 2006 included:

- Three reports on pro-privatisation lobbying by water multinationals (one jointly published with the European Federation of Public Service Unions).
- "Water almost out of GATS?"; about WTO services negotiations (March).
- A critique of the EU-Latin America Business Summit (May).
- "Privileged access for business lobbyists at Asia-Europe Summit" (September).
- "Transparency Boost Needed for EP Cross-Party Groups" (October).
- "Whatever happened to... the Campaign for Creativity (C4C)" (November).
- "Brussels think tanks persist in funding secrecy" (November).
- "Nuclear Power Grab" (December).

With each of these publications, we developed a dissemination and follow-up strategy that seeks to inform civil society groups, parliamentarians, the media and other target audiences of the issues raised in the research reports. For example, in November, CEO wrote to EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson and the Finnish EU Presidency, urging them to cancel the participation of EU trade officials and Member State trade experts, in a closed meeting / cocktail party' organised by the European Services Forum. The ESF holds regular closed-door meetings with the powerful Committee 133 (a trade-negotiation decision making body) and offers a disturbing example of the privileged access to decision makers that business groups have within the EU.

We believe that our campaigning and publications have had significant political impact as they have attracted high-profile political attention and received substantial media coverage. For example, the Commission's Green Paper on the ETI (May 2006) acknowledged concerns about deceptive lobbying, unequal access to decision-makers and the ability of big business lobby groups to outspend public interest NGOs. Despite heavy industry lobbying for a toothless voluntary register, the European Commission has, throughout the year continued to present mandatory lobbying disclosure, including financial transparency, as a workable and effective option. A final decision is expected in March 2007.

Media coverage of our research and campaign work included The Independent (UK), Financial Times (UK), European Voice (Brussels), Der Spiegel (Germany), Die Zeit (Germany), Libération (France), Le Monde (France), Knack (Belgium), De Morgen (Belgium), NRC Handelsblad (The Netherlands), GöteborgPosten (Sweden), and other major printed media across Europe. Representatives of CEO featured in French, German, Danish, Swedish and Belgian radio and TV programmes. For a more extensive overview, see: <http://www.corporateeurope.org/mediacoverage.html>

### **Water Justice**

Throughout 2006, the Water Justice project (joint work with the Transnational Institute - TNI) has continued to develop successfully. This is in part due to the acclaim received by the book "Reclaiming Public Water". This book was referenced in several chapters of the UNDP's 2006 Human Development Report. In 2006, updated editions of the book have been published in Italian, Chinese, Korean and Finnish. Work has started on new editions in Portuguese (Brazil), Japanese, French and several Indian languages. Other highlights include a well-attended international symposium and other activities during the World Water Forum (Mexico City, March) and a 20-page report "Public Water for All" on Public-Public Partnerships. Later in the year, CEO co-hosted an international seminar on public water models in rural areas, which brought together over 35 people from across the world (Barcelona, Catalunya, November). CEO and TNI provide the 'hub' (or secretariat) for the 'Reclaiming Public Water' network (launched November 2005). See also the online resource centre [www.waterjustice.org](http://www.waterjustice.org) (hosted jointly with Transnational Institute). Examples of media coverage for the activities of the Water Justice project: <http://www.corporateeurope.org/water/mediacoverage.html>

### **Agrofuels project**

In the second half of 2006, CEO started a new project that aims to challenge the EU's aggressive promotion of biofuels (or agrofuels as they can be more accurately termed). These are crops primarily produced in the Global South, whose production has serious negative social and environmental impacts. The project challenges European policies promote harmful pseudo-solutions and advocates an approach linked to a drastic reduction of energy use and support for genuinely sustainable renewables. One of the first activities was to help initiate a new European coalition of civil society groups opposing the EU's proposal for a mandatory target for agrofuels use in transport. A main priority for the project is to ensure visibility for grassroots groups in the South that oppose the EU's agrofuels push. Work with Grupo de Reflexion Rural and Carbon Trade Watch has developed research exposing the 'greenwash' around the certification of agrofuels.