



Open letter to Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs

Subject: Potential conflict of interest of Mr. Rolf Linkohr
Sender: Corporate Europe Observatory, Amsterdam
Date: 16 January 2007

Dear Commissioner Piebalgs,

Recently it was brought to the attention of Corporate Europe Observatory [1] that Mr Rolf Linkohr, who presents himself as your special adviser on energy issues, is at the same time directing C.E.R.E.S. , a Brussels-based consultancy that is specialised in lobbying for large energy companies. If indeed Mr Linkohr advises you on energy issues – a policy area where the clients of C.E.R.E.S. have a clear and direct interest – this would constitute a serious conflict of interests. We find it very troubling that Mr. Linkohr at the same time directs a commercial lobbying consultancy like C.E.R.E.S. and acts as a special adviser to the Energy Commissioner. This also seems to be in conflict with Articles 11 and 11a of the Commission Staff Regulations, which apply “by analogy” to special advisers. [2] We urge you to clarify this situation.

When contacted by Corporate Europe Observatory, the C.E.R.E.S. secretariat confirmed that Mr. Linkohr is your special adviser. Asked about C.E.R.E.S.’s sources of funding, they told us that C.E.R.E.S. is a consultancy specialised in energy issues that works on the basis of contracts with companies that deal with energy. The C.E.R.E.S. secretariat refused to specify the names of those companies, saying they are “not obliged to do so”.

We will copy this letter to Commission President Barroso and Commission Vice-President Kallas in the context of a more general demand for improved transparency and clearer rules to prevent (the appearance of) conflicts of interests with regards to special advisers of EU Commissioners.

With kind regards,

Yiorgos Vassalos,
Corporate Europe Observatory

1. Corporate Europe Observatory is an independent, non-profit research and campaign group based in Amsterdam. Founded in 1997, Corporate Europe Observatory aims to ensure that the political activities of corporations and their lobby groups do not harm democratic processes, social justice and the environment. See also: <http://www.corporateeurope.org/about.html>
2. Articles 123 and 124 in Title VI of the Conditions of employment of other servants of the European Communities (1.05.2004) state that Articles 11 and 11a of the Staff Regulations apply “by analogy”.

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