

To: José Manuel Barroso,
President of the European Commission

Amsterdam, November 16 2004

Dear Mr. Barroso,

Herewith we re-send you the open letter calling the European Commission to act to curb excessive corporate lobbying power. The letter was first transmitted to you on October 25 2004. Please find attached the updated list of signatories (including more than 110 civil society groups from over 20 EU countries).

Please allow us to briefly comment on a note sent to you by the Society of European Affairs Professionals ("SEAP rejects NGOs request for registration and reporting requirements", Brussels 26 October 2004). With all respect, SEAP fails to provide any convincing counter-arguments. We urge you to seriously consider the ethics and transparency proposals outlined in the open letter.

The SEAP letter claims that registration and reporting requirements would "introduce the American model in Europe". Such anti-American rhetoric obscures the reality that the EU is far behind the US (or Canada) when it comes to ethics and transparency regulations around lobbying. The problem with "the American model" is obviously not the lobbying disclosure legislation, but the distorting role of campaign finance donations in politics, an issue which is the subject of continuous and intense debate in the US. In Europe, fortunately, corporate campaign donations play virtually no role. This is one of many reasons to expect that lobbying disclosure rules would significantly improve the possibilities for democratic scrutiny and thus boost the quality of EU decision-making process.

We look forward to your response to the proposals made in the open letter.

Yours sincerely,

Erik Wesselius
Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)