



**To: Mrs Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Energy**  
**Re: Open Letter to Commissioner Piebalgs concerning the Expert Groups on Energy Formed by DG Energy and Transport**

Brussels, 8 August 2008

Dear Mr Piebalgs,

In May this year, representatives from the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation in the EU (ALTER-EU) met with Vice President Kallas to raise our concerns about the composition of some of the Commission's Expert Groups. Mr. Kallas told the meeting that responsibility for ensuring that Expert Groups are balanced lies with the Commissioner in whose field of responsibility the group works.

As the Commissioner responsible for providing political guidance to the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport on energy issues this would make you responsible for the 36 Expert Groups operating dealing with Energy and Nuclear Safety under this DG according to the on-line register.<sup>1</sup>

President Barroso and Vice President Kallas had announced that the names of individuals and organisations participating in all Expert Groups would be published by summer 2008.<sup>2</sup> ALTER EU has today also written to them concerning progress on this. Up to now, almost no progress has been made regarding the transparency of the Expert Groups working on Energy and Nuclear Safety. Membership; only three of the 36 groups listed include membership details. The membership of 33 groups (92%) remains unknown to the public.

ALTER EU is concerned that a number of these groups are dominated by particular sectors. Two examples were revealed by the Report 'Secrecy and Corporate Dominance – a study on the composition of European Commission Expert Groups': the Expert Group 'Alternative Fuels' which has 29 industry representatives, ten non-profit research institutes and just two NGOs and the Euratom Supply Agency Advisory Committee which is currently carrying out a consultation on behalf of governments and the Commission but is consulting 27 companies and only 7 research organizations.<sup>3</sup> The European Energy and Transport Forum includes 17 industry representatives – alongside just 17 other representatives from all the other categories (public authorities, public services, trade unions and individuals).<sup>4</sup>

Without full details of the membership of the other 31 groups, it is impossible to say whether or not they are also dominated by corporate advisors or whether they can provide a broad assessment of the issues.

Both the lack of transparency and the privileged access of business groups in advisory bodies are at odds with the Commission's White Paper on Good Governance (latest version: 25.07.2001) which emphasises the intention to "reduce the risk of the policy-makers just listening to one side of the argument or of particular groups getting privileged

access.” The dominance of business representatives among other non-governmental actors in certain groups is also at odds with the Commission’s codes of conduct on consultation and use of expertise.

We would therefore like to ask

- What measures you intend to take to ensure that Expert Groups include all relevant interests in society in a balanced proportion?
- How do you intend to address the above mentioned (and other) examples of clearly imbalanced Expert Groups in order to bring them in line with the Commission’s codes of conduct on consultation and use of expertise?

We would like to know specifically what you intend to do to tackle the one-sided composition of the Expert Group ‘Alternative Fuels’. ALTER-EU urges you to dissolve this group and make the advice received from this group public.

ALTER-EU is contacting other Commissioners on the lack of transparency and privileged access of business groups to advisory bodies that fall under their direct competence. Moreover, we are calling on the College of the Commissioners to develop a common, coordinated approach on transparency and balanced composition of the Commission’s expert advisory bodies.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Steering Committee of ALTER-EU



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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Accessed on 6 August 2008 – <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/search.cfm>.
- <sup>2</sup> ‘The process of collecting and publishing the names of members of the different groups shall be completed by the summer’, said Mrs Rampi to FT Europe (25/3). On the same date Associated Press and the International Herald Tribune wrote: ‘EU Commission spokeswoman Valerie Rampi told reporters the EU’s executive office was going to make public online the names of expert group members and who they represent by the summer’.
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.alter-eu.org/en/system/files/publications/expertgroupsreport.pdf>, p. 24 – 25.
- <sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy\\_transport/forum/composition/doc/2005\\_08\\_05\\_members.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/forum/composition/doc/2005_08_05_members.pdf).