

First tripartite political meeting ahead of Transparency Register negotiations

Political representatives from the European Commission, Parliament and Council met today to exchange views on the state of play regarding the proposal for an inter-institutional agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register. The three EU institutions agreed on the political importance of this issue and underlined their commitment to increase the transparency of interest representation, and thus of the EU decision-making process, through a clear and comprehensive framework for representation activities within their respective institutional autonomy.

The meeting was organised on the initiative of the Estonian Presidency of the Council. The Commission and Parliament welcomed the initiative as a positive step and indicated their readiness to start negotiations as soon as possible.

Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"In the Commission we provide full transparency with regard to lobbyists who talk to us. The public has the right to know who tries to influence the EU decision-making process. Now it is time for the Parliament, Council and Commission to jointly agree to set up a mandatory Transparency Register, as proposed by the Commission. We can achieve this if all of us apply the simple principle that the Commission is already implementing: if a lobbyist is not on the Register, then he or she won't get a meeting with a Commissioner, an MEP or the Council Presidency. We look forward to starting the negotiations as soon as possible."*

Background

The Commission submitted its proposal for an Inter-institutional Agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register on 28 September 2016. The proposal aims to strengthen the framework for a transparent and ethical interaction between interest representatives and the three institutions participating in the new scheme; the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union. Since 2011, the Commission and Parliament jointly operate a public register for interest representatives aimed at increasing the transparency and accountability of the EU decision-making process. The Council is an observer to the current scheme since 2014.

On 15 June 2017, the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament, bringing together the EP President and political group leaders, approved the Parliament's negotiating mandate, following endorsement by an EP contact group made up of representatives of all the political groups. The EP mandate underlines the need for a strong transparency message from the three Institutions and a meaningful outcome of the negotiations.