

# Negotiations begin on a mandatory Transparency Register for the three EU Institutions

At their first interinstitutional negotiation, European Parliament negotiators Sylvie Guillaume and Danuta Hübner, together with Monika Panayotova, Deputy Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency, and Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** held an in-depth exchange of views on making certain types of interactions with their respective institutions conditional on registration by the interest representatives concerned in the Transparency Register.

Application of meaningful conditionality would make it mandatory for interest representatives to sign up to the Register and abide by its Code of Conduct if they wish to seek to influence the EU institutions. This principle would ensure for example that meetings and access to EU institutions' premises are subject to interest representatives fulfilling that condition.

Achieving a mandatory Register would represent the most significant improvement to the Transparency Register since its launch in 2011. Applying the principles of the Register to all three institutions would send a strong message to European citizens about the high levels of accountability of shared institutions ahead of the elections to the European Parliament in spring 2019.

The three institutions agreed on the next steps for the negotiations, including a commitment to ensure that the process is highly transparent. Notably, they agreed to host information sessions for stakeholders on the state of play, with a first session to possibly be held before the summer. Details of the information session will be published on the Joint Transparency Register Website in due course.

First Vice-President **Timmermans** said: *"Citizens expect to know who is influencing decision-makers in Brussels. We need a major step forward towards more transparency on who lobbies the EU institutions. Tonight we had a useful exchange of views, but there is still quite some way to go. We agreed to continue our work."*

## **Background**

The European Commission presented its proposal for a new interinstitutional agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register for lobbyists covering the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission 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. Since 2011, the Parliament and the Commission have jointly operated a public register for interest representatives aiming to increase the transparency and

accountability of the EU decision-making process. The Council has been an observer to the current scheme since 2014.

On 15 June 2017, the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament, bringing together the Parliament's President and political group leaders, approved the Parliament's negotiating mandate and made it public.

The Council adopted its negotiating mandate on 6 December 2017 and also decided to make it public.