



Ombudsman asks President Tusk to publish meetings with lobbyists

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The European Ombudsman, **Emily O'Reilly**, is asking European Council President Donald Tusk to consider publishing information about meetings he and his cabinet hold with interest representatives.

While such meetings are essential to his role, Ms O'Reilly has also suggested that any such meetings should only be with registered lobbyists, if they fall under the scope of the EU Transparency Register.

This would bring the European Council - which sets the EU's overall political direction - into line with current EU standards. It would also send an important positive signal as the Commission, Parliament and Council of the EU begin negotiations on a revised EU Transparency Register.

"European citizens expect President Tusk and his team to listen to all key stakeholders on the main issues facing Europe, whether it is on migration, security or energy. However they also increasingly expect high levels of transparency from politicians and public institutions. The Juncker Commission and the European Parliament have made significant progress in this area in recent years. It would be fitting for the institution that sets the EU political agenda also to have rules about who they meet.

Publishing information about these meetings would give the public a more complete picture of who is trying to influence EU decision-making, when and how," said Ms O'Reilly.

The Ombudsman has also asked President Tusk whether progress reports on evolving discussions by EU leaders on their two-year work programme (the Leaders' Agenda) will be published.

"Events of the last year have led to a strengthening of interest in the EU, its politics and its decision-making, therefore I welcome President Tusk's move to publish background notes setting out discussion points ahead of meetings of EU leaders.

Publishing the progress reports on these discussions would allow citizens to follow European politics in real time and bring greater understanding about the role national leaders play in shaping decisions on vital issues," said Ms O'Reilly.

Background



This initiative follows similar initiatives and inquiries by the Ombudsman to open up the EU decision-making process to the public. Ms O'Reilly inquired into the transparency of Trilogues - informal negotiations on draft EU laws; the transparency of the hundreds of expert groups that give the Commission specialist advice; and most recently into whether the Council allows sufficient public scrutiny of the evolving discussions on draft EU laws.

Ms O'Reilly has also called on the EU institutions to turn the Transparency Register into a central transparency hub for all institutions and agencies. She said a reformed Transparency Register should require full funding transparency of all interest groups and have improved data accuracy, monitoring and sanctioning.

The Ombudsman's letter to President Tusk can be found [here](#) . She has requested a reply by 1 March 2018.