

15 January 2024

Dear President Metsola, Commissioner Jourová, and Secretary-General Blanchet

Complaint regarding unregistered influencing activities of European Livestock Voice

Further to our 19 July 2023 complaint about the Consumer Choice Center’s unregistered EU lobbying activities, we are writing to you today with a new complaint, this time regarding European Livestock Voice.

According to an [article](#) by *Desmog* published on 20 December 2023, European Livestock Voice (ELV) is an EU-wide campaign launched in 2019 by livestock industry groups, including Copacogeca, AnimalhealthEurope (pharmaceutical), the European Dairy Association, Avec (poultry) and others. Information about the funding of the campaign is not on ELV’s [website](#). Nor is ELV in the EU Transparency Register.

But it seems clear that ELV is actively trying to influence EU decision-makers. According to *Desmog*:

- In 2019 ELV held a [launch event](#) in the European Parliament with the [support](#) of MEPs and staged a “[flash action](#)” [where](#) policymakers and supporters burst balloons carrying “common myths or misinformation” outside the Parliament.
- In 2021 ELV launched a series of [videos](#) about what it calls the “paradoxes” of the Farm to Fork strategy.
- Also in 2021 ELV [met](#) with Vice-President Frans Timmermans on the Farm to Fork strategy and warned against the “influence of fake news and over-simplification on political decisions”.

Corporate Europe Observatory’s own [research](#) shows that in October 2021 ELV ran a [webinar](#) entitled ‘The Farm to Fork Strategy: what do studies say about its impact on the European Livestock Sector’. This event was part of a set of [activities](#) coordinated with other industry groups (six commissioned impact assessments and promotional events) aimed at undermining the Farm to Fork strategy and its plans for ambitious, binding targets to tackle agriculture’s contribution to the pollution crisis.

In October 2023 ELV [wrote](#) on Twitter: “As far as the transparency register is concerned, we've also been very clear: European Livestock Voice is a comms platform which does not do policy work.”

ELV also [told](#) DeSmog that: “As European Livestock Voice is just an umbrella platform and not a legal entity, it was not considered necessary to register the platform on top of each association already being registered.”

But we consider that this is a fundamental misreading of the register's Interinstitutional Agreement which says, *inter alia*, that “organising communication campaigns, platforms, networks and grassroots initiatives” are in-scope activities.

Furthermore a search on the EU lobby register finds reference to ELV on only 3 of its members' own registrations (ELV indicates it has 14 members and partners) making it implausible for the ELV to rely on its members to provide transparency on ELV activities.

As with the Consumer Choice Center complaint, this new case demonstrates many of the problems with the existing EU lobby register. ELV appears to perform influencing activities towards the EU institutions, yet apparently does not feel any pressure to join the non-legally binding register. None of the conditions put in place by the EU institutions to try to make registration obligatory under the current voluntary regime, such as restricting meetings with Commissioners or European Parliament access passes, have apparently made much difference to this organisation's ability to be active.

ELV is another example of why we need a legally-binding lobby register, as indeed the European Parliament has demanded for many years. That is the only way to ensure that organisations cannot lobby or influence EU decision-makers without being registered, while those that try would receive meaningful sanctions for non-compliance with the rules.

We propose that the European Parliament and the Commission investigate if and how ELV is influencing their work and ensure that ELV is not able to lobby MEPs, Commissioners, and officials without being registered.

I look forward to hearing from you about how you plan to take these issues forward.

Yours sincerely,

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