

CORPORATE EUROPE OBSERVATORY

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



**Corporate
Europe
Observatory**



Exposing & challenging corporate capture.

WHO WE ARE

Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) is a research and campaign group working to expose and challenge the privileged access and influence enjoyed by corporations and their lobby groups in EU policy making.

In 2018, CEO worked for stricter EU lobbying rules and more transparency in decision-making. We exposed corporate lobbying that worsens social and economic inequality, aggravates climate change, harms the environment, and puts public health on the line.

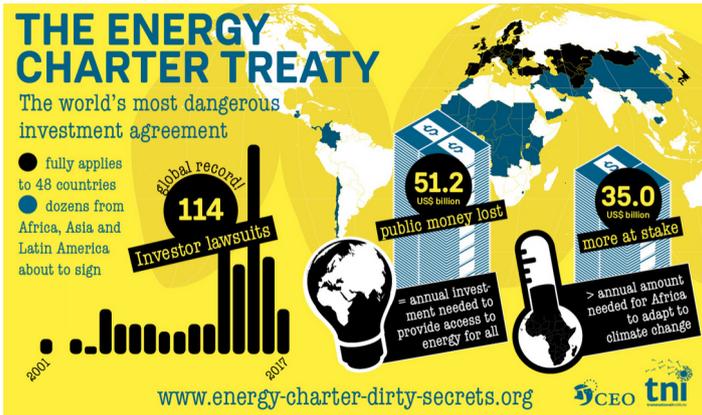
WHAT WE DO

Corporate lobbies like to act in secrecy - so we expose what they do, increase public awareness, and build momentum to curb corporate influence over EU policy-making by:

- Revealing the tactics, financial firepower, privileged access and connections of corporate lobby actors – and their negative impact on public-interest policy-making.
- Exposing revolving door scandals, which see (former) EU politicians joining the private sector as lobbyists – and vice versa.
- Promoting lobbying transparency at the EU level and empowering citizens to partake in EU politics through petitions, public consultations, citizens' initiatives.
- Highlighting the common dominance of corporate interests in European Commission advisory groups, which set the direction for many EU policies.
- Campaigning for stricter EU lobby regulation, also with our partner the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU, a coalition of more than 200 NGOs and trade unions, in which CEO is involved in the steering committee).
- Campaigning with allied NGOs and civil society coalitions against (proposed/ draft) EU policies skewed in favour of corporate interests.

2018 IN RESEARCH

KEY REPORTS



“One treaty to rule them all”, namely the Energy Charter Treaty, which gives companies the power to halt the energy transition - and which is now being aggressively extended.

“UnFairBnB”, or more precisely the lobbying activities of online rental platforms in Brussels, which seek to defeat cities’ affordable housing measures.



A dangerous distraction: ‘renewable’ gas keeps us on the fossil fuel path



PART 1 The 7 myths industry uses to sell us so-called renewable gas

November 2018, Brussels

PART 1 dissects some of the key myths about renewable gas being promoted by industry and shows why they shouldn’t be believed.

PART 2 gives a first glimpse into the tactics and strategies used by the renewable gas lobby to influence Brussels decision makers.

“A dangerous distraction: renewable gas”, exposing the gas industry’s lobby tactics, networks and financial firepower, and busting the myths used to promote its product.

2018 IN RESEARCH

KEY REPORTS



“**Accounting for Influence**”, and how the Big Four accounting firms are embedded in EU policy-making on tax avoidance while selling tax avoidance schemes to corporate clients. [🔗](#)

“**Corporate Capture in Europe**”, a case study collection underlining the threat to democracy posed by excessive corporate influence over policy-making, across Europe & at the EU level. [🔗](#)



“**Plastic pressure, plastic promises**”, a three-part investigation into the plastics and packaging industries’ attempts to blame consumers for increasing plastic pollution and to undermine the EU Single-Use Plastics Strategy at every turn. [🔗](#)

2018 IN RESEARCH

SELECTED ARTICLES



The beginning of a Parliamentary rebellion?

177 Members of the European Parliament took a stand in Strasbourg yesterday, voting to not give EU money and political support to more than a hundred new pipelines and other gas infrastructure projects.

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Climate



Coal is king at UN climate talks in Poland

Concerns about corporate co-option at the upcoming climate meeting COP24 in Poland are growing as the sponsors are revealed. Many are dirty energy companies, among them several from Poland's state-owned coal

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Big Polluters bankrolling COP24

The slogan of this year's climate talks is "black to green" - appropriate, given the dirty energy companies that are bankrolling the conference.

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Chemicals



Beyond the pale on Titanium Dioxide

Industry lobbyists are spending millions of euros to influence an upcoming EU decision on labelling titanium dioxide – found in everyday products like sunscreen – a “suspected carcinogen”.

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Lobby “deluge” on titanium dioxide, while labelling is postponed

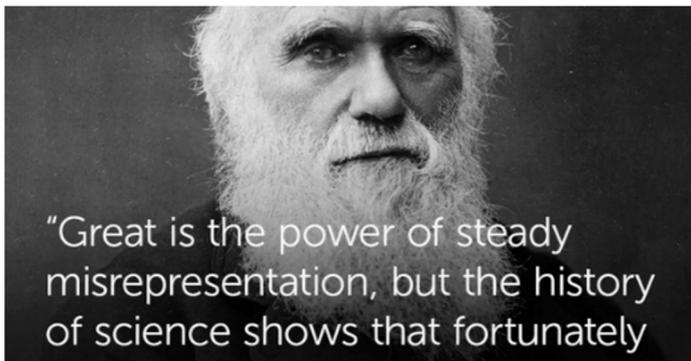
To classify as strongly and widely as possible, or not to – that is the EU's question on titanium dioxide right now. The chemical is found in many everyday items including sunscreen and paint and is a “suspected

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2018 IN RESEARCH

SELECTED ARTICLES

Food, agriculture & biodiversity



What the Monsanto Papers tell us about corporate science

The Monsanto Papers are a trove of internal documents slowly released since March 2017 in a US lawsuit by cancer victims against Monsanto over its ubiquitous herbicide, Roundup.

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The 'innovation principle' trap

A seemingly innocent concept, the "innovation principle" has been invented by some of the dirtiest industries in Europe. They have carefully and strategically inserted it into the EU system, where it could have a significant

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Biosafety in Danger

Documents released to Corporate Europe Observatory following a Freedom of Information request reveal how pro-biotech lobby platform Public Research Regulation Initiative (PRRI) unites industry, researchers and

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Will a food industry lobbyist again be appointed to EFSA's Management Board?

Wouldn't it be time that the EU stops allowing a direct representation of the food industry's interests on the Board of the EU Food Safety Authority (EFSA)?

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Conflict of interest policy and caution on gene drives at UN biodiversity talks

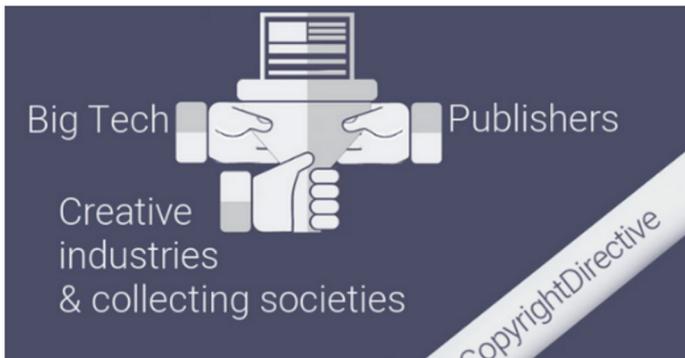
Climate change and biodiversity losses loom large on the list of global environmental concerns. Both UN processes for addressing these issues – the UNFCCC for climate change and the UN CBD for biodiversity – are

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2018 IN RESEARCH

SELECTED ARTICLES

Copyright & online privacy



Copyright Directive: how competing big business lobbies drowned out critical voices

Lobbying around the EU Copyright Directive has been intense: big-budget tech platforms led by Google as well as tech industry trade associations on one side, historically important collecting societies, the creative industries

[corporateeurope](#)



Post-scandal Facebook: will the EU stop treating the tech giant as a trusted partner?

Following the Cambridge Analytica affair and the massive leak of 87 million people's data revealed earlier this year, Facebook is facing unprecedented scrutiny of its business model. Regulators must stop treating the social

[corporateeurope](#)



Shutting down ePrivacy: lobby bandwagon targets Council

Industry lobbyists who want to continue monetising users' online data are battling against new ePrivacy regulations, targeting EU member states in the Council. And some member state governments are only too happy to

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Finance



ECB President Draghi's membership of mega-bankers' club is "maladministration"

The decision of the European Ombudsman to ask the European Central Bank President to end his membership of an opaque and exclusive club...

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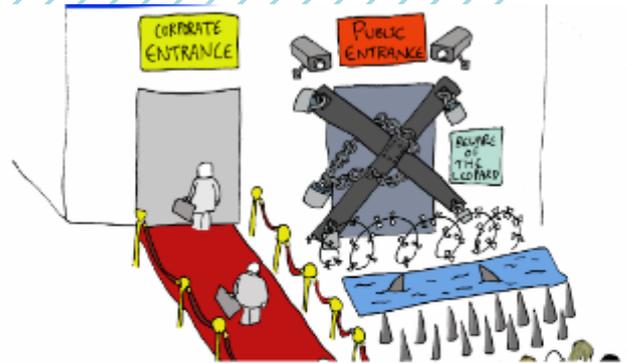


How the financial lobby won the battle in Brussels

Corporate Europe Observatory shows how the past ten years of financial lobbying have left us vulnerable

2018 IN RESEARCH

SELECTED ARTICLES



Quiet on the set! The EU is negotiating trade deals...

Following calls for openness and public participation, the European Commission now advertises its trade negotiations as transparent and inclusive. But crucially...

Trade



Brexit trade deal: finance lobby allowed to work in secret

All eyes may be on the 'Brexit' process, but far more attention needs to be given to the way in which post-Brexit EU-UK trade negotiations are being conducted...

WHO DID THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION MEET ON THE EU-JAPAN TRADE DEAL?



JEFTA: An exclusive trade between EU negotiators and big business

The EU member state vote on the EU-Japan trade agreement is close, but not all interest groups had an equal voice.

Local Democracy



Bolkestein returns: EU Commission power grab for services

The EU institutions are currently negotiating new single market rules that could have a severe and distinctly negative impact on decision-making in...



Selmayrgate: Or why the Secretary-General job matters

The appointment of Martin Selmayr as new Secretary-General of the European Commission took almost everybody by surprise. This new role makes Selmayr...

2018 IN RESEARCH

SELECTED ARTICLES

The revolving door & privileged access



Lobbying at Permanent Representations of Member States

Check out who lobbies the Permanent Representations of Romania, the Netherlands, and Ireland by viewing



Financial regulators and the private sector: permanent revolving door at DG FISMA

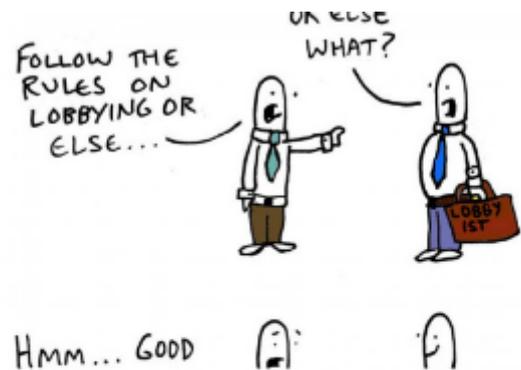
One third of the people who occupied top positions in the Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (DG...

[comarsteuropa](#)



Will 2018 finally bring a revolving doors reform?

The push for reform continues from within the European Parliament, from the Ombudsman's office and from civil society. This year, two Ombudsman...



Real sanctions vital to stop lobby register abuses

Find out how the EU lobby register Secretariat has been dealing with CEO complaints about dodgy data,



Corporate Capture

EU tax officials: open door for tobacco lobbyists

New research by the Tobacco Investigations Desk shows that tobacco industry lobbyists worked hard to weaken the European Commission's stance on...

THE FIGURES

6

IN-DEPTH
REPORTS

42

RESEARCH
ARTICLES

+450

MEDIA
HITS

CEO IN THE MEDIA

SELECTED COVERAGE

Libération interview with Olivier Hoedeman about the world of EU corporate lobbying:



Olivier Hoedeman : «A Bruxelles, il n'y a pas d'équilibre entre lobbyistes du privé et de...

Après la démission de Nicolas Hulot, qui a dénoncé le poids des lobbys dans les «lieux de pouvoir», Olivier Hoedeman, coordinateur de l'association Corporate...

Libération.fr / Aug 31, 2018

Handelsblatt zooming in on European Central Bank President Draghi's membership in banking lobby group G30:



Draghi soll Mitgliedschaft in G30 aussetzen

Mario Draghi steht erneut wegen seiner Mitgliedschaft in der G30-Gruppe in der Kritik. Dem Club gehören Top-Entscheider der Finanzszene an. Die EU...

handelsblatt.de / Jan 17, 2018

Süddeutsche Zeitung on the double role of 'Big Four' accounting firms:



Die Fragwürdige Doppelrolle der Wirtschaftsprüfer

Die EU lässt sich von den Wirtschaftsprüfern von PwC und anderer Großkanzleien in Steuerfragen beraten.

The Guardian about Jonathan Hill's revolving door moves:



Call for Inquiry into ex-EU commissioner's jobs with six firms

Campaigners want investigation into posts taken up by Lord Hill since quitting as commissioner in 2016

France TV Info's flagship programme Cash Investigation about lobbying by the plastics and packaging industries:



CEO IN THE MEDIA

SELECTED COVERAGE

Aljazeera reporting about EU cities fighting water privatisation:



Up to the Last Drop: The Secret Water War In Europe

Is water a commodity or a human right? Cities across Europe are fighting water privatisation.

CNBC reporting ex-EU Commission President Barroso's revolving door move to Goldman Sachs:



Goldman Sachs executive Jose Manuel Barroso, a former top EU chief, in row over...

Jose Manuel Barroso, a non-executive chairman of Goldman Sachs, has been criticized for allegedly trying to lobby members of the European Commission.

CNBC / Silvia Amari / Feb 21, 2018

Euronews about AirBnB lobbying in Brussels:



Airbnb se conforme aux règles de l'UE

La plateforme de location de biens immobiliers s'engage à suivre l'ensemble de la réglementation européenne sur la transparence des prix et sur les...

euronews / Elena Cavallone / Sep 20, 2018

Les Echos about the leaked BusinessEurope climate strategy on 'business as usual':



Négociations sur le climat : la stratégie secrète du patronat européen

Une note secrète révèle la stratégie de Business Europe pour lutter contre une réduction trop drastique

France 24 about the corporate sponsorship of UN Climate Conference COP24:



Mention of 'fossil fuels' cut from videos at UN climate talks

CEO IN THE MEDIA

SELECTED COVERAGE

The **New York Times** about the EU plans to ban certain single-use plastic products:



THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

E.U. Proposes Ban on Some Plastic Items to Reduce Marine Pollution

By Milan Schreuer May 28, 2018

The proposal would ban many single-use plastic items, like straws and disposable cutlery, that litter Europe's beaches and seas.

The **New York Times**

Le Monde about the 'innovation principle':



Un « principe d'innovation » porté par l'industrie chimique pourrait entrer dans l...

En apparence anodin, le concept a été imaginé pour neutraliser le principe de précaution par un think tank issu de la pétrochimie et du tabac.

Pravda looking at the weak reform of ethics rules for former EU Commissioners:



Európska komisa prijala nový etický kódex, definuje konflikt zájmov

Európski komisári teraz prvýkrát presne vedia, čo presne pre nich znamená termín "konflikt zájmov".

Westdeutsche Zeitung about e-Privacy:



Auf die DSGVO folgt die ePrivacy-Verordnung

Die EU-weite Datenschutz-Grundverordnung (DSGVO) ist im Mai in Kraft getreten. Der darauf folgende Ansturm auf die Behörden zeigt, dass zahlreiche...

Spiegel Online on a German MEP's 2nd jobs:



Zusatzverdienste Im EU-Parlament: Nebulöse Nebenjobs - SPIEGEL ONLINE - ...

Angelika Niebler ist Chefin der CSU-Gruppe im EU-Parlament. Nur wenige Abgeordnete sind bei Zusatzverdiensten umtriebiger - und die inhaltliche...

SPIEGEL ONLINE / Juli 10, 2018

FUNDING

WHO FUNDS CEO

We receive donations from individual supporters as well as grants from a number of trusts and grant-making foundations. Our funding policy rejects funding from the EU, governments, political parties and corporations in order to maintain the independence of our research.

In 2018, our work received financial support from the following trusts and foundations:

| Name of foundation | Mission statement | CEO activities funded | Financial year 2018 |
|---|---|---|---------------------|
| Isvara Foundation | The Isvara Foundation was established in 2007 and is fully funded by a donation from founder Ayman Jallad . It is "a progressive trust that awards grants to civil society organisations working to halt the unsustainable and socially destructive neo-liberal policies that characterize the currently dominant process of corporate-led globalisation ." | Investigating corporate influence & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 191,000.00 |
| Adessium Foundation | " Adessium Foundation was established in 2005 by the Van Vliet family, which has a background in asset management." "The Foundation works to achieve a balanced society characterized by integrity, a balance between people and nature, and social harmony." | Investigating corporate influence & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 143,250.00 |
| Open Society Initiative for Europe | The Open Society Foundations were set up in 1979 by George Soros . "The Open Society Initiative for Europe aims to contribute to more vibrant and legitimate democracies in the European Union by supporting the activists and civil society organizations confronting Europe's many challenges." | Investigating corporate influence & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 94,446.00 |
| Schöpflin Foundation | The Schöpflin Foundation , established by Hans Schöpflin in 2001, and "is committed to a more liveable world for all. We want a fairer world and a better future for the younger and future generations." | Investigating corporate influence (EU trade and climate policies) & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 72,200.00 |
| Olin Foundation (not to be confused with the now defunct John M Olin Foundation) | The Olin Foundation "is committed to the protection of natural habitats. The focus of Olin is the temporary support of smaller organizations and projects." "Olin gGmbH was founded in May 2012 by Alexander Szlovák . It receives its financial resources from his private foundation." | Investigating corporate influence (EU food and agriculture policies) & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 60,000.00 |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------|
| Funders for Fair Trade | Funders for Fair Trade Foundation (established in 2014 by the Jenifer <u>Altman</u> Foundation and <u>MAVA</u> Foundation) “intends to support the best possible outcome on EU trade negotiations from the perspective of public health, environmental protection and human rights.” | Investigating corporate influence (EU trade policy) & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 40,000.00 |
| Marisla Foundation | The <u>Marisla</u> Foundation was established in 1986 by Anne Getty <u>Earheart</u> . “The Foundation makes grants in two program areas (the Human Services Program and the Environmental Program) and one special interests category.” | Investigating corporate influence (EU food and agriculture policies) & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 26,004.29 |
| Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust | “The Joseph <u>Rowntree</u> Charitable Trust is a Quaker trust which supports people who address the root causes of conflict and injustice. At <u>JRCT</u> , we want to engage in philanthropy which challenges the existing power imbalances in society to effect real change.” | Investigating corporate influence & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 26,000.00 |
| Fondation pour le progrès de l'Homme | “The Charles <u>Léopold</u> Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (<u>fph</u>) is a foundation under Swiss law. Our aim is to contribute to the emergence of a global community. Our work focuses on governance, ethics and sustainable living modes.” | Investigating corporate influence & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 25,000.00 |
| Plastic Solutions Fund | The Plastic Solutions Fund was established with the help of the Oak and <u>Marisla</u> Foundations in January of 2017 to “support and build the foundations of the global movement to say no to plastic packaging waste, to embrace zero waste principles and stop the tide of plastic flowing into the ocean” and to “fuel this movement with strategic philanthropic investment.” | Investigating corporate influence & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 10,000.00 |
| Oak Foundation | Oak Foundation was formally established in 1983 and “commits its resources to address issues of global, social and environmental concern, particularly those that have a major impact on the lives of the disadvantaged.” | Investigating corporate influence (EU food and agriculture policies) & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 10,000.00 |
| Sigrid Rausing Trust | The Sigrid <u>Rausing</u> Trust aims to “promote the values and principles of human rights and freedoms, equality and the rule of law, and to preserve nature from further degradation.” | Investigating corporate influence & strengthening EU lobbying regulation | € 7,486.46 |
| Total grant funding in 2018 | | | €705,386.75 |

We also receive private donations from individual supporters. Thanks so much for your contributions, which boost our independence and help us expose and challenge corporate power. We are particularly grateful for the very generous financial backing of Ms Karde-Marie Wirtz, who in 2018 supported our work with a total of €44,120.

CORPORATE EUROPE OBSERVATORY

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To support CEO's work, you can donate online at corporateeurope.org/donate, or make a bank transfer. Thanks very much!

