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.

OUR MISSION

The corporate capture of EU decision-making leads to policies that exacerbate social injustice, economic inequality, climate change, and environmental destruction. Our mission is to expose and challenge the privileged access and influence enjoyed by corporations and their lobby groups in EU policy making.
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.

- Campaigning with allied NGOs and civil society coalitions against (proposed/draft) EU policies skewed in favour of corporate interests.

- Highlighting the dominance of corporate interests in European Commission advisory groups, which set the direction for many EU policies.

- Campaigning for stricter EU lobby regulation.
HIGHLIGHTS & FLAGSHIP REPORTS

In 2020, the CEO team has had to cope, like everyone else, with the impact of the devastating corona-crisis. CEO has nevertheless published major reports in each of our focus areas. In addition, we included new issues of high relevance for the public interest into our work, such as Big Pharma and lobbying during the corona crisis; the link between corporate lobbying and the rise of the far right; conflicts of interest around oligarchs receiving EU funding; digital rights; and lobby firms working for repressive regimes.
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SAFETY

CEO exposes the biotech, food, chemicals, agrofuels, and pesticide producers and their lobby groups which target decision makers to weaken regulation of their activities. We campaign to make the EU body evaluating the safety of all food products in the EU (EFSA) independent from the food industry, with a special focus on pesticides and GMOs.

FEBRUARY 2020

Toxic residues through the back door: Pesticide corporations and trade partners pressured EU to allow banned substances in imported crops.

MAY 2020

Research & Destroy: The factories of the industrial bioeconomy threaten the climate and biodiversity.

OCTOBER 2020

CAP vs Farm to Fork: Will we pay billions to destroy, or to support biodiversity, climate, and farmers?
The European Green Deal (EGD) is a major new plan for the EU that seeks to make its economy 'climate-neutral'. A seemingly positive step, but is the deal really “climate proof”? The fossil fuel industry’ fingerprints can be seen all over it. Carbon trading will continue, emissions reductions targets are too modest and too slow, fossil gas is kept as a transitional fuel, and public money will finance ‘false solutions’. CEO revealed the lobbying impact.

MAY 2020
The future according to Shell:
Climate rhetoric and fossil fuel expansion

JULY 2020
A Grey Deal?
Fossil fuel fingerprints on the European Green Deal

DECEMBER 2020
The Hydrogen Hype:
Gas industry fairy tale or climate horror story?
TRADE & INVESTMENT
In recent years CEO has uncovered and challenged the corporate bias of and secrecy around neoliberal EU trade deals like CETA and the investor-state dispute settlement system (ISDS), both of which threaten social and environmental justice and enshrine corporate power. In 2020 CEO focused on the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), which gives foreign investors sweeping powers to sue states over government actions that have supposedly ‘damaged’ their investments.

APRIL 2020
Silent Expansion: The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) is becoming increasingly controversial

MAY 2020
Cashing in on the pandemic: how lawyers are preparing to sue states over COVID-19 response measures

DECEMBER 2020
Busting myths around the Energy Charter Treaty
ECONOMY & FINANCE

We expose the great leverage of banking and other financial industry lobbies, the failure of the EU to better regulate the sector since the financial crisis, and the extent to which big banks and the financial industry continue to set the European agenda on for example sustainable finance.

JANUARY 2020

European Banking Authority disregards conflicts of interest

JULY 2020

Time to block BlackRock: Why did the European Commission hire a major fossil fuel investor as key advisor on ‘sustainable finance’?

NOVEMBER 2020

The BlackRock Model: How the EU is choosing the wrong path on banks and climate change
CEO invested in exposing increasing ‘digital lobbying’. Big Tech firms are spending more and more lobbying in Europe – a clear sign of the industry’s growing power. Its increased lobby spending also reflects the importance of key upcoming policy battles. Yet, excessive influence and lack of transparency remains.

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

Big Tech Lobbying: Google, Amazon & friends and their hidden influence

**OCTOBER 2020**

From Facebook friends to lobby consultants: Revolving door scandals show the weakness of EU staff rules on officials becoming private lobbyists

**DECEMBER 2020**

Big Tech brings out the big guns in fight for future of EU tech regulation
EU LOBBYING REGULATION

CEO continued to highlight the many gaps in and shortcomings of EU lobby transparency tools and underline how they must be addressed in order to curb corporate influence over policy-making and improve public scrutiny of EU decisions and the accountability of Members of the European Parliament, politicians, and desk staff at the EU institutions and affiliated EU bodies.

JANUARY 2020

Banking regulator scores another own goal: The European Banking Authority chose to nominate a director who used to be a lobbyist for the finance lobby group AFME

JUNE 2020

Tainted Love: Corporate lobbying and the upcoming German Presidency

DECEMBER 2020

NGOs demand Portuguese EU Presidency puts public interest centre stage
HEALTH SECTOR

From tobacco companies lobbying EU officials in the light of the upcoming revision of the Tobacco Products Directive, to chemical companies trying to influence a roadmap for how the EU is to regulate toxic chemicals, CEO exposed the fact that it is high time the EU meets its obligations to ensure that lobbying by the tobacco and chemical industry faces tighter scrutiny and pro-active transparency.

JULY 2020
Chemical industry cheerleader: how DG Grow puts industry above public interest regulation

SEPTEMBER 2020
Smoke and mirrors: Weak EU transparency rules allow tobacco industry lobbyists to dodge scrutiny

SEPTEMBER 2020
Power and profit during a pandemic: Why the pharmaceutical industry needs more scrutiny not less
SPECIAL FOCUS
BIG PHARMA

In 2020 CEO started new research into how the EU is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and why there seems to be a deep love affair with Big Pharma. CEO exposed how public-private partnerships of the European Commission are largely corporate driven. This resulted in several breaking publications in 2020. These showed the EU has a very eurocentric way of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, and it persists in complete secrecy on how it negotiates with powerful pharmaceutical companies.

MAY 2020
In the Name of Innovation: Industry controls billions in EU research funding, de-prioritises the public interest

JUNE 2020
Unkept promises on flucytosine: EU research funds for helping people living with HIV in Africa appear to have only helped Sanofi’s profits

SEPTEMBER 2020
Power and profit during a pandemic: Why the pharmaceutical industry needs more scrutiny not less
CAMPAIGNS, OUTREACH & PUBLICATIONS

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 producing:

- 42 publications (articles and reports) in 2020;
- 15 episodes of our podcast EU Watchdog Radio;
- Participating in campaigns, petitions, open letters and webinars;
- Several cooperations and contacts with investigative journalists and investigative platforms like Investigate Europe, Apache, Follow the Money, and Mediapart.

EXAMPLES

- Taking action to stop corporate tax dodging
- European Commission: Take action to stop revolving doors
- NGOs demand Portuguese EU Presidency puts public interest centre stage
- Don’t let industrial farming and corporate lobbies use the COVID-19 crisis to defend continued pesticide use, sign the Save Bees and Farmers petition!
- Wakeup call for the European Commission in its failed power grab over local services - Commission continues deregulation push, targeting Spanish island Formentera’s efforts to limit harmful impacts of mass tourism
MEDIA OUTREACH

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 achieving coverage in:


- 20+ Opinion Articles in in various EU news outlets.

EXAMPLES

NEW YORK TIMES

- Big Tech Turns Its Lobbyists Loose on Europe, Alarming Regulators

THE GUARDIAN

- Exclusive: big pharma rejected EU plan to fast-track vaccines in 2017

LE MONDE

- Un soutien public massif va continuer de financer le gaz fossile... via l’hydrogène!

DE STANDAARD

- De 'fake politics' van de Europese politieke families

NRC HANDELSBLAD

- Farmaceuten voorkwamen onderzoek naar epidemieën
Pharmaindustrie blockierte schnellere Impfstoffentwicklung

Das war für die Pharmaindustrie finanziell nicht interessant

Agenda propia y daño al clima: la bioindustria redefine las prioridades de la entidad público-privada de la UE

La ricerca in Europa è ostaggio di Big Pharma. Che usa i soldi pubblici solo per fare profitti

Big Pharma rejected vaccine prep efforts, watchdogs say

Backroom deal will make CAP reform a catastrophic failure

To beat cancer, Commission must first beat chemicals lobby

‘New GMOs’: Kyriakides gets off on wrong foot with biased consultation

How the fossil fuel lobby is hijacking the European Green Deal

On climate change, don’t believe Europe’s hydrogen hype
Please also take a look at our guide on the corporate lobby scene in Brussels: The ‘Brussels Lobby Planet’ is available in English, French, and German, and provides a thorough and thought-provoking introduction to corporate lobbying and its impact on the EU’s ability to pass policies in the public interest.
SECRETARIAT & CONTACT

Corporate Europe Observatory
Mundo B
Rue d’Edimbourg 26
1050 Brussels

OUR TEAM

Kat Ainger
Editor (freelance)
kat.ainger@corporateeurope.org

Belén Balanyá
Researcher & Campaigner
Field: Climate, Energy, Environment
belen.balanya@corporateeurope.org

Vicky Cann
Researcher & Campaigner
Field: Lobbying the EU, Captured States
vicky.cann@corporateeurope.org
0044 1494 864649

Kenneth Haar
Researcher & Campaigner
Field: Finance, Lobbying the EU, Trade
kenneth.haar@corporateeurope.org
0045 2360 0631

Olivier Hoedeman
Coordinator
Field: Lobbying the EU
olivier.hoedeman@corporateeurope.org
0032 4 74486545
**Nina Holland**  
Researcher & Campaigner  
Field: Agribusiness, GMOs, Lobbying the EU, EFSA  
nina.holland@corporateeurope.org

**Pascoe Sabido**  
Researcher & Campaigner  
Field: Lobbying the EU, Expert groups, Climate, Energy, Environment  
pascoe.sabido@corporateeurope.org

**Kees Kimman**  
Finance Manager  
kees.kimman@corporateeurope.org

**Margarida Silva**  
Researcher & Campaigner  
Field: Lobbying the EU, Revolving doors, Lobby Transparency  
margarida.silva@corporateeurope.org

**Karin Lotz**  
Office Manager  
karin.lotz@corporateeurope.org

**Hans van Scharen**  
Media Officer  
hans@corporateeurope.org  
0032 484 729776
CEO’s board consists of three members:

- **Analía Penchaszadeh**  
  (The Netherlands/Argentina)

- **Brid Brennan**  
  (The Netherlands/Ireland)

- **Adam Ma’anit**  
  (UK/US)

Our advisory council includes the board members, as well as:

- **Pratap Chatterjee**  
  (India/US)

- **Jakub Patocka**  
  (Czech Republic)

- **Saskia Ozinga**  
  (Belgium)

- **Thomas Wallgren**  
  (Finland)