

Lobby transparency register complaint by Corporate Europe Observatory
15 November 2017

Audible Magic Corporation

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=467515522378-58>

(d) ensure that, to the best of their knowledge, information, which they provide upon registration, and subsequently in the framework of their activities covered by the Register, is complete, up-to-date and not misleading; accept that all information provided is subject to review and agree to co-operate with administrative requests for complementary information and updates;

We have a number of concerns about Audible Magic Corporation's lobby register declaration and whether it may be under-declaring its EU lobby expenditure. Audible Magic's content filtering technology is at the center of a controversial policy measure included in the current Copyright Directive proposal. This will likely affect its interest in influencing the institutions.

Audible Magic currently declares 2 members of staff each working as 0.25 full time equivalents, which amounts to 0.5 of an FTE in total. It also declares less than €9,999 spending for 2015. Audible Magic's lobby register entry says it has "carried out meetings with members of the European Parliament and their policy advisers, and with the permanent representation of member states in order to provide information regarding Audible Magic's content recognition technology and its application."

We are aware of several meetings Audible Magic has held with MEPs. Additionally, in 2016-17 Audible Magic has had at least three meetings and / or phone calls with DG Connect officials including one with Commissioner Ansip and DG Connect staff on 12 July 2016, and it had further contact in June 2017 when DG Connect staff visited its Silicon Valley office in the US. Aside from these meetings, various emails have been sent by Audible Magic to the Commission. (Information gathered via this access to document request:
https://www.asktheeu.org/en/request/contacts_with_audible_magic?nocache=incoming-14679#incoming-14679)

All in all, this would seem to amount to quite a sizeable lobbying operation and one that seems under-represented by its declaration of an annual EU lobby spend of less than €9,999. In addition, if the two lobbyists referred to in the lobby register declaration are paid members of Audible Magic staff who spend a full 0.25 of their time on EU lobbying, again, the declared lobby spend should surely be higher.

Furthermore, at the moment Audible Magic only declares its 2015 lobby spend. As we are in the eleventh month of 2017, and Audible Magic first joined the register on 16 June 2016 using 2015 figures, it seems as if an update to its financial information is long overdue.

To conclude, it is our opinion that Audible Magic does not have an up-to-date lobby register entry and that it is under-declaring its true EU lobby expenditure.

Was any harm caused to the complainant?: No

Was the non-compliance intentional?: I don't know. It is hard to assess intention. As it is a relative newcomer to the lobby register, it may be that Audible Magic simply has not correctly followed the implementation guidelines, particularly as it relates to financial reporting. But as Audible Magic has a visible lobby footprint, we consider it is vitally important to ensure that all effort is made to provide a fully up-to-date and accurate entry.