

Lobby transparency register complaint by Corporate Europe Observatory
15 November 2017

G Plus Ltd

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=7223777790-86>

(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;

It is our opinion that the lobby consultancy firm GPLUS has not properly reported its relationship with the European Fisheries Alliance within its lobby register entry.

Information from the EU Brexit task force, released to Corporate Europe Observatory under Access to Documents, shows us that on 02/03/2017 and 16/05/2017, lobby consultancy GPLUS attended meetings with a Brexit task force official, alongside the European Fisheries Alliance (EUFA).
<https://www.asktheeu.org/en/request/4357/response/13983/attach/5/Annex%201%20GESTDEM%203332%20TF50%20STAFF%20Register%20of%20meetings%202016%202017.pdf>

At the time of these meetings, EUFA was not part of the lobby register; it only joined on 21 August 2017. The attendance of EUFA at these meetings was a breach of the rules of the Brexit task force which President Juncker has said will not meet with any unregistered lobby groups.

https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/showResource?resourceId=1493715098701_Brexit_reply.pdf&type=pdf&download=true&lang=en

Now that EUFA has registered, its lobby register entry reads “GPLUS EUROPE functions as the secretariat of the European Fisheries Alliance.”

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=263936828049-68>

However, GPLUS’ entry to the lobby register, while listing several members of the EU fishing lobby, does not list EUFA as a new or pre-existing client. We do not know when GPLUS started to function as the secretariat of EUFA, but we do note that the lobby meetings in question took place in March and May 2017, which would have allowed plenty of time for an update to be made to GPLUS’ lobby register entry.

The relationship between GPLUS and EUFA should be clear in both GPLUS’ and EUFA’s entries to the lobby register, especially in terms of any funding arrangement or staff capacity devoted to it. Yet it is not referred to in GPLUS’ entry. Furthermore, we think that all lobby consultancies and law firms should have in place strict procedures to ensure that new clients are promptly notified to the register. We note that this is not the first time that CEO has made a complaint to the register authorities regarding lobby consultancies which have not listed current clients in their declaration (see our complaint of January 2016 regarding Hume Brophy and World Coal Association).
<https://corporateeurope.org/power-lobbies/2016/02/coalface-unregistered-lobbying>

To conclude, it is our opinion that GPLUS has not properly reported its relationship with EUFA within its lobby register entry.

Our original public report which includes this information can be accessed here:

https://corporateeurope.org/sites/default/files/analysis_of_dexeu_and_brexit_taskforce_august_2017_final_2.pdf

Was any harm caused to the complainant?: No

Was the non-compliance intentional?: I don't know. It is hard to assess intention. But experienced lobby consultancies such as GPLUS, who should be very familiar with the rules of the lobby register, should have in place strict procedures to ensure that new clients are promptly notified to the register.