

Lobby transparency register alert by Corporate Europe Observatory

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MC Group

<http://www.mcgroup.com/netzwerk/continental-hub-europe/brussels/?L=1>

If an organisation is paid to organise or co-organise a press conference in the European Parliament on behalf of a client, then it should be part of the EU lobby register. Yet MC Group appears to have organised an event on behalf of the Embassy and or Government of Qatar while being absent from the register. <http://www.mcgroup.com/netzwerk/continental-hub-europe/brussels/?L=1>

On 31 August 2017, a press conference was held with a minister and the ambassador of Qatar in the European Parliament. The event was co-hosted by the office of Daniel Hannan MEP, and the event was held in the Paul-Henri Spaak building of the European Parliament and was entitled “The GCC Crisis: Special briefing with the Foreign Minister of Qatar”. The event was listed on the European Parliament’s website.

We were surprised to learn that invitations for this event were being disseminated to individuals in the Parliament by MC Group, which is a public relations company based in Berlin and which is not in the EU lobby transparency register.

Mr Hannan’s office has told us that he organised the press conference and that he “has had no contact with MC Group; they were presumably hired by the embassy.”

MC Group’s website says that it is “the largest independent PR and advertising agency in both, Germany and Europe, and is also market leader in the fields of corporate branding and communications, political communications and nation branding.” For its Belgian arm it says: “Located in the heart of Brussels’ European district, mc Belgium handles communication activities for national companies and organisations, e. g., in the fields of brand communications, B-to-B and tourism, as well as for various Directorate-Generals of the European Commission and the Belgian government. In addition to managing integrated communications campaigns in 28 EU Member States, mc Belgium also implements high-visibility events in Brussels for other institutional clients, and provides input and expertise for all of mc’s international campaigns.” <http://www.mcgroup.com/netzwerk/continental-hub-europe/brussels/?L=1>

To conclude, it seems clear to us that if an organisation such as MC Group is paid to organise or co-organise a press conference in the European Parliament on behalf of a client, then it should be part of the EU lobby register.