



Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation
Rue d'Edimbourg 26
1050 Brussels

Brussels, 23 February 2016

To: Vice President Frans Timmermans;

cc: Deputy Head of Cabinet Michelle Sutton; Secretary General Alexander Italianer; Head of Unit for Institutional Affairs Klaus Henning; Dennis De Jong MEP; Helga Trüpel MEP; Ingeborg Gräßle MEP; Monica Macovei MEP; Jens Geier MEP; Heidi Hautala MEP; Indrek Tarand MEP; European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly

Rue de la Loi 200,
1049 Brussels,
Belgium

Re: changes to the rules of procedure for the European Commission's Expert Groups

Dear First Vice-President Timmermans,

We are writing to you as civil society organisations regarding the updating of the Commission's Rules of Procedure (RoP) for Expert Groups.

We welcome the Commission's decision to review the horizontal rules governing Expert Groups, as it has been a long-standing demand of not just civil society, but the European Parliament and, more recently, the European Ombudsman.

However, the timing of the process and the closed manner in which it is being carried out – not including either the Parliament or civil society – are particularly worrying, especially given the long-standing involvement of the Parliament and the report being currently written by the Budget Control Committee on the topic.

Therefore in keeping with President Juncker's transparency agenda, we ask that the draft new rules are made public, and that both the Parliament and civil society are able to comment before adoption.

In the case of the Parliament, this would also entail waiting for the upcoming Budget Control Committee report to be released, taking its findings into account.

In the case of civil society, this would entail organising a public consultation on the rules of

procedure across all Expert Groups.

As you have indicated in your Communication on Better Regulation, new policy processes benefit from a public consultation.

And given the significant impact this initiative has on the working methods of all Commission Expert Groups, and that participatory democracy is considered a priority issue for both the Commission and the undersigned, we believe the reform of the RoP therefore qualifies it as a 'major initiative' under which public participation is required.

We hope that doing so will allow this important review to resolve a long-standing issue, one on which the Ombudsman has investigated and issued recommendations, which we imagine will also be taken into consideration in any draft RoP proposal.

Yours,

Pascoe Sabido
Coordinator of the ALTER-EU Working Group on Expert Groups

On behalf of:

