



Annual report on the functioning of the Transparency Register 2023

Presented by the Transparency Register Management Board

to

**the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the
European Commission**

An annual report on the functioning of the Transparency Register is to be submitted to the signatory institutions, in line with Article 13(3) of the Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register.

This report sets out factual information on the Transparency Register, its content and any changes concerning it in 2023. It also reports on the conditionality and complementary transparency measures, which are in force in the signatory institutions in the same year.

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I. Executive summary

The year 2023 was a year of intense scrutiny and activity for the Transparency register. The use of the register as an information and reference tool for interest representation activities at EU level continued to increase, as shown by the rise in applications for registration and in the number of direct requests by applicants and registrants for helpdesk assistance, as well as information requests by the general public. Both the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions adopted measures of their voluntary involvement in the Transparency register framework. Importantly, the register underwent a complex audit by the European Court of Auditors and was the subject of an investigation by the European Ombudsman.

The Secretariat of the register increased its targeted monitoring on registrants to one third of the overall number of registrants in 2023. In addition, there was considerable interest in the use of the complaints tool in 2023, showing steady scrutiny of the database content. The Secretariat launched several new own-initiative investigations and continued its work on the ones pending from the previous year.

These activities are outlined in more detail in the report.

II. Introduction

The Transparency register is the go-to reference tool for interest representation at EU level. It is a database set up to provide the public with up-to-date information about interest representation activities aimed at influencing the law-making and policy implementation processes of the EU institutions. It helps to keep track of which interests are being represented to the institutions, who is representing them and on whose behalf, what legislative files are targeted and what resources are devoted to the related activities. It is the EU's key tool for promoting transparent and ethical interest representation and for increasing the openness and visibility of stakeholders' and civil society's participation in the EU's democratic decision-making process.

The European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission operate the Transparency register jointly, on the basis of the Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) adopted in 2021¹.

In line with Article 13 of the IIA, this report contains factual information on the Transparency register, its content and any changes introduced during the reporting period. It also provides an overview of the conditionality and complementary transparency measures currently in force in the signatory institutions.

¹ Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register, OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1.

III. Governance

The Transparency register has a two-level governance structure: a Management Board that provides general oversight and direction concerning the register and a Secretariat in charge of its day-to-day management.

The Management Board ensures the overall implementation of the IIA. In this context, it is responsible for identifying the annual needs and priorities for the Transparency register, adopting the annual report on its functioning and issuing general instructions to the Secretariat. It is also tasked with examining and deciding on any requests to review measures that have been applied by the Secretariat, following an investigation.

The Secretaries-General of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission together make up the Management Board. They meet at least once a year and each Secretary-General holds the chair for an annual term. The Secretary-General of the Council chaired the Management Board in 2023.

The Secretariat offers guidance on the registration process to interest representatives, monitors and verifies the eligibility of applications, and carries out checks on the quality of information provided by registrants. It handles complaints concerning alleged breaches of the code of conduct by registrants and can apply measures where it finds that the code has not been appropriately observed. The Secretariat also prepares the annual report and raises awareness about the Transparency register (see section V).

The Secretariat is made up of staff from the three signatory institutions, in 2023 it amounted to 11 full-time equivalent. It is represented at the Management Board and in public by a Coordinator, who oversees the daily operations. In 2023, the head of the unit responsible for transparency in the Commission's Secretariat-General was the designated Coordinator of the Secretariat.

Detailed information on the governance of the Transparency register can be found on its [website](#).

IV. Conditionality and complementary transparency measures

The European Parliament, Council and Commission each adopt, by means of individual decisions, conditionality measures whereby registration in the Transparency register is a precondition for interest representatives to be able to carry out certain key interest representation activities. The three institutions may also adopt complementary transparency measures to further encourage registration and strengthen the joint framework established by the IIA.

The conditionality and complementary transparency measures that are currently in force in each of the three institutions are outlined below.

Other EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, as well as Member States in relation to their permanent representations to the EU, may notify the Management Board of conditionality or complementary transparency measures that they adopt and ask for these to be published on the Transparency register website. In 2023, the European Economic and

Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions made such notifications. Discussions also took place at service level with a number of other EU bodies in response to their inquiries.

All Member States have committed to apply a conditionality measure during their Presidency of the Council and in the six months preceding it, by making meetings between their respective Permanent Representative and Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU and interest representatives conditional on the latter registering in the Transparency register.

That conditionality measure applies to meetings organised with the Permanent Representative and Deputy Permanent Representative when acting in their capacity of acting or incoming Presidency of the Council². Therefore, interest representatives are not able to participate in such meetings unless they are registered. In 2023, this applied to Sweden³ and Spain⁴ as they were holding the Presidencies of the Council of the EU, and Belgium⁵ as the incoming Presidency.

A list of the [conditionality and other transparency measures](#) currently in force in the EU institutions can also be found on the dedicated page of the Transparency register website.

European Parliament

In 2023, the European Parliament put in place additional conditionality and complementary transparency measures, adopted in the context of Parliament's internal reform package aimed at strengthening integrity, independence and accountability. These rules entail certain changes to Parliament's relations with registered interest representatives and further develop the already existing framework.

Parliament has strengthened its transparency policy by putting in place measures that require interest representatives to be registered, when they are given a platform on Parliament premises. Active participation or co-organisation of events held on Parliament premises is conditional upon prior registration on the Transparency register⁶ following a decision of the Bureau of 12 June 2023. This entails that any interest representative acting as a speaker, moderator or any other active role or involved from a logistical, practical or financial point of view in an event must be registered. These rules apply in addition to the already established conditionality measure requiring⁷ that speakers at Parliament's committee hearings are registered prior to the hearing.

Parliament also broadened its conditionality and transparency requirements related to the activities of Members' intergroups or other unofficial groupings⁸. Only registered interest representatives may participate in the activities of such intergroups and groupings on Parliament's premises, by offering support to them, or by participating or co-hosting their

² https://transparency-register.europa.eu/document/download/0c791fb8-e64d-47cc-a3b0-175913788b7c_en?filename=Transparency%20register%20-%20Member%20states%27%20political%20declaration.EN_.pdf.

³ [Öppenhetsregistret - Regeringen.se](#).

⁴ <https://es-ue.org/erp/>.

⁵ <https://europeanunion.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/transparency>.

⁶ Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 12 June 2023

⁷ Article 7 of the [Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 18 June 2003](#).

⁸ [EP Rules of Procedure](#): Rule 35(5) and 35a(5).

events. Further transparency is envisaged in particular regarding declarations of any support received. The applicable rules have been tightened in terms of enforcement.

Parliament also introduced a new conditionality measure requiring Members to observe a six-month cooling-off period after the end of their mandate before they may engage in interest representation activities with sitting Members⁹. The code of conduct for Members of the European Parliament regarding integrity and transparency mirrors this rule¹⁰.

In terms of access to decision-makers for lobbying purposes only registered interest representatives may apply for long-term access to Parliament's premises¹¹. On 31 December 2023, of the 12 425 entities registered in the Transparency register 2 030 had at least one accredited representative permitted to access Parliament's premises. On 31 December 2023, there were 7 904 active badges.

All Members are required to publish online information on their scheduled meetings with interest representatives falling under the scope of the interinstitutional agreement¹². This means any meeting relating to parliamentary business (report, opinion, resolution, plenary debate or urgency) held with the purpose of influencing the policy or decision-making process of the European institutions, whether in person or remote. The obligation applies regardless of whether Members attend the meeting personally or Member's parliamentary assistants attend on their behalf. As of 31 December 2023, Members had declared 20 301 meetings for the calendar year 2023. Taking account of their specific role and mandate, it is recommended¹³ that Members of the European Parliament only meet those interest representatives that are registered in the Transparency register.

In addition, rapporteurs are required to add a so-called declaration of input to their draft reports or opinions, which lists the entities or persons from whom they received input on matters pertaining to the subject of the file¹⁴.

Council of the EU

As set out in Council Decision (EU) 2021/929¹⁵, registration in the Transparency register is a precondition for interest representatives to meet the Secretary-General of the Council or the Directors-General. The same rule applies for participation by interest representatives, in their professional capacity, in thematic briefings organised by the General Secretariat of the Council (where appropriate and after consulting the Presidency) or as speakers at public events organised by the General Secretariat of the Council. Staff are also requested to check the credentials of interest representatives in order to ensure that they have an entry in the Transparency Register. If that is not the case, staff should carefully consider the appropriateness of meetings, and consult with their line manager¹⁶.

⁹ Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 17 April 2023.

¹⁰ Article 9 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament.

¹¹ Rule 123 of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

¹² Article 7 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament

¹³ European Parliament Rules of Procedure (Rule 11(2)).

¹⁴ Article 8 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament

¹⁵ OJ L 207, of 11.6.2021, p. 19.

¹⁶ Staff note CP 35/21 and Staff note CP 42/22.

As a further measure to improve transparency and encourage registration, invitations to interest representatives to attend a meeting of the Council or its preparatory bodies should be conditional on them being registered in the transparency register. Their registration number should be recorded on the provisional agenda. The Council's annual report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents includes relevant information about the attendance of interest representatives at meetings of the Council or its preparatory bodies¹⁷.

European Commission

The Commission has strict rules in place regarding its contacts and interactions with interest representatives. In particular, it requires all Members of the Commission, members of their Cabinet and Directors-General of the Commission to only meet interest representatives that are registered in the Transparency register. That obligation, enshrined in the Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission¹⁸ and the Commission's Working Methods¹⁹, means that an interest representative needs to be registered before such meetings take place.

The Commission publishes online information on all such meetings with (registered) interest representatives, in line with its Decisions 2014/838/EU, Euratom²⁰ and 2014/839/EU, Euratom²¹. In 2023, the Commission published information on meetings²² held with 1 980 registrants. Those registrants held 2 891 meetings with Members of the Commission and/or members of their Cabinets and 718 meetings with Directors-General of the Commission²³. That information, in addition to being published on the Commission website²⁴, is also made available as a list of meetings on the entries of the registrants concerned in the Transparency register. The Commission makes publicly available consolidated datasets of meetings held with registered interest representatives on [Data.europa.eu](https://data.europa.eu) in machine readable and Excel format. This provides interested parties and the public with accessible information that is comprehensive and easily processed to extract the relevant information.

Recommendations are provided to all members of the administration below Director-General level in the Commission's staff ethics and conduct guidance, to check the credentials of interest representatives they are in contact with in order to ensure that they have an entry in

¹⁷ Guidelines on the occasional attendance of third parties, including interest representatives, at meetings of the Council or its preparatory bodies, 22 July 2021.

¹⁸ Article 7 of Commission Decision of 31 January 2018 on a Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission (C(2018) 700), OJ C 65, 21.2.2018, p. 7

¹⁹ Point V of the Working Methods of the European Commission.

²⁰ Commission Decision 2014/838/EU, Euratom of 25 November 2014 on the publication of information on meetings held between Directors-General of the Commission and organisations or self-employed individuals, OJ L 343, 28.11.2014, p. 19-21.

²¹ Commission Decision 2014/839/EU, Euratom of 25 November 2014 on the publication of information on meetings held between Members of the Commission and organisations or self-employed individuals, OJ L 343, 28.11.2014, p. 22-24.

²² The information that is made public consists of the date of the meeting, the location, the name of the Member of the Commission and/or Member of the Cabinet or the Director-General, the name of the interest representative, i.e., organisation or self-employed individual and the subject of the meeting. It is published within 2 weeks following the meeting.

²³ The same registrant may be concerned by more than one meeting.

²⁴ In particular, the dedicated transparency webpages of the websites of the Members of the Commission, and of Directorates-General of the Commission respectively.

the Transparency register. If they are not therein, staff are advised to always invite them to register before engaging in any further contact.

The Commission appoints only registered interest representatives to Commission expert groups in line with its relevant rules²⁵. That requirement for prior registration applies to both Type ‘B’²⁶ and ‘C’²⁷ members. If these members are suspended or removed from the Transparency register, the Commission suspends them from the expert group(s) of which they are members, until their registration has been re-established.

As a further measure to improve transparency and encourage registration, the Commission provides automatic alerts to registrants that have specified an interest in particular policy areas, notifying them of the launch of public consultations or roadmaps in the relevant fields. Contributions from registrants are also processed separately from those of non-registered respondents²⁸. These contributions are accessible from the entries of the registrants concerned in the Transparency register.

Measures taken by other EU institutions and bodies

In 2023, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions adopted internal transparency measures linked to the Transparency register. They are the first EU bodies beyond the IIA signatory institutions to take such measures in accordance with Article 11 of the IIA.

On 21 March and 4 July 2023 respectively, the two committees notified the Management Board of their legally binding decisions by which they put in place the following complementary transparency measures within the meaning of the IIA:

- a recommendation to their office-holding members, as defined in their respective decisions, to meet only with registered interest representatives;
- compulsory publication of information on meetings held between covered office-holding members and interest representatives on their respective website;
- an option for committee rapporteurs to attach a ‘legislative footprint’ on input from interest representatives to their opinions, per similar practice in the European Parliament.

The Management Board considered that those measures were consistent with the objectives pursued by the IIA. Consequently, they were published on the Transparency register website following their entry into force on 1 June 2023 and 1 January 2024 respectively.

²⁵ Article 8 of Commission Decision of 30 May 2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups (C(2016)3301).

²⁶ Individuals appointed to represent a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular policy area.

²⁷ Organisations in the broad sense, including companies, associations, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, universities, research institutes, law firms and consultancies.

²⁸ Better Regulation Guidelines of the European Commission (SWD(2017)350), in particular Chapter VII Guidelines on Stakeholder Consultation.

V. Activities of the Secretariat

In 2023, the annual priorities determined by the Management Board for the Transparency register were:

- using state-of-the-art technology to upgrade the register website;
- ensuring net progress on data quality;
- continued cooperation with the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on their audit of the Transparency register;
- cooperation with other institutions, bodies & agencies;
- continued awareness-raising activities.

The Secretariat worked on delivering on these annual priorities, including by strengthening its eligibility checking, increasing helpdesk assistance and introducing a number of improvements to the IT platform in conjunction with its daily activities, detailed below.

1. Data quality monitoring

The Transparency register offers a snapshot of current lobbying activities performed by interest representatives on the recent formulation or implementation of policy cycles and decision-making processes of the EU institutions, including specific details on the main legislative proposals or policies targeted. This explains why the data is continuously changing, and why some interest representatives register only for a limited period, while others may remain in the database for longer.

By registering, interest representatives commit to providing information that is complete, up-to-date and not misleading at the time of registration, and are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of their registration data. To that end, registrants are encouraged to review and update the information provided as soon as any major changes occur and they must update their registration at least once annually in order to remain in the register.

Reminding registrants of their obligations and securing the best possible quality of data in the Transparency register is one of the main tasks of the Secretariat. In the context of its general monitoring activities in 2023, the Secretariat checked a total number of 7 705 entities²⁹ that either applied for registration or were already entered in the register, which is a 13% increase on the number of checks performed the previous year. These checks consisted of screenings carried out at the application stage, targeted quality checks of already registered entities and any additional checks carried out in the context of investigation procedures.

Application stage: Although the number of total registrants has remained stable³⁰, the turnover of new registrants is relatively high, therefore the quality of the information available in the register has increased in parallel. The Secretariat assesses the eligibility and data quality of all new applications for registration before they can be activated and published on the register. This helps to improve both the relevance and consistency of the data provided. Of the 3 404 applications received in 2023 (+/- 9 a day and an increase of 14% of applications compared with the previous year), 2 255 (66 %) were accepted and activated following the checking process, which in most cases requires an update or correction by the applicant concerned.

²⁹ Some entities underwent more than one check in 2023 and therefore the total number of checks was higher.

³⁰ 12 425 on 31 December 2022, and 12 469 on 31 December 2023.

Targeted checks: In addition to its daily checking of new applications, the Secretariat also takes a more targeted approach, in particular in circumstances where it has reason to believe that registrations do not accurately provide the information required. A total of 4 301 targeted quality checks were performed by the Secretariat in 2023. Of these:

- 3 572 checked registrants provided satisfactory data quality (83%), either from the outset (2 550 registrations checked or 59.2%), or after being prompted by the Secretariat to update (1 022 registrations or 23.8%);
- 453 were removed from the register following the contact with the Secretariat, for ineligibility or failure to update (10.6%);
- 276 were still pending at the end of 2023 (6.4%).

In 2023, the overall data quality in the register was significantly improved, with the share of those registrations checked providing satisfactory data quality at the time of the check having increased by 40%, while the share of removals from the register for ineligibility or failure to update, following a check, decreased by 22% compared to the previous year.

Targeted checks requires particular focus on registrations where an inconsistency or other issue has been detected or is likely to exist. In the context of its tailored monitoring of the register, the Secretariat performed targeted quality checks on non-commercial entities declaring to have a budget of 0 EUR. The Secretariat checked the registrations concerned thoroughly also for any other inconsistencies and resolved the issues with a high success rate: 17% were correct from the outset, 54% updated or provided a satisfactory explanation, and 28% were removed.

2. Helpdesk service

The Secretariat provides a helpdesk service to answer all types of questions about the Transparency register via a multilingual website, open to applicants and registrants and to the public. The Secretariat tries to provide assistance as quickly as possible, generally answering within 48 hours.

In 2023, the Secretariat answered 2 567 inquiries, which included requests for information about the Transparency register from stakeholders, researchers and individuals, as well as requests for technical support and guidance from applicants and registrants during the registration process or when encountering technical difficulties. The number of questions received was 25% higher than in 2022³¹.

3. Investigations

In addition to monitoring the quality of data in the Transparency register, the Secretariat handles incoming complaints and carries out own-initiative investigations in line with the procedures laid down in Annex III to the IIA. In doing so, the Secretariat acts in accordance with the underlying principles of proportionality and good administration.

‘Complaint’ refers to a procedure that concerns allegations brought to the attention of the Secretariat about a registrant’s non-observance of the code of conduct. Any natural or legal person making such allegations against a registrant may lodge a complaint with the Secretariat

³¹ In 2022, the Secretariat answered 2056 inquiries and requests.

by filling in the relevant form on the Transparency register [website](#) and providing supporting evidence.

‘Own-initiative investigation’ refers to a procedure whereby the Secretariat examines whether a given registrant is eligible to remain on the register, in the light of information received or identified, which may indicate ineligibility to remain on the register either due to absence of relevant activities or non-observance of the code of conduct.

In 2023, the Secretariat closed 10 investigations into complaints pending from the previous year, in which the respective registrants updated their registration or otherwise provided satisfactory explanations. It further closed one investigation which led to the removal of the registrant concerned.

In the same year, the Secretariat received 35 new complaints. Of these, 22 were found to be inadmissible, as either they did not relate to matters falling within the scope of the Transparency register (e.g. personal grievances or consumer-related complaints) or did not meet the admissibility criteria set out in Annex III to the IIA. Of the 13 admissible complaints, 10 were closed in 2023 with a positive outcome in terms of full cooperation of the registrants concerned. The remaining 3 were still under investigation at the end of the year. Over half of the admissible complaints concerned alleged non-observance of point (f) of the code of conduct by the registrants concerned, in terms of accuracy and completeness of the information provided in the registration, sometimes combined with allegations of possible non-observance of other points of the code. Where cases concerned only point (f) of the code, those were resolved by the registrants updating within the deadline of 20 working days and were closed within two months.

Other cases related to alleged non-observance of point (b) of the code, whereby registrants must specify the clients or members whom they represent, or point (j) regarding the client-intermediary relationship. In terms of public expectations, there is clearly a concern about the underlying interests promoted by any given organisation which must be clearly and consistently declared in the registration: to that effect, in the context of a client-intermediary relationship, both parties in such a relationship must be entered in the register and the corresponding declarations must be consistent.

When handling an investigation, the Secretariat always seeks to ensure a constructive dialogue with the relevant registrant(s) in order to clarify and resolve the identified issues as far as possible, prior to taking any necessary measures. In 2023, the Secretariat did not find it necessary to apply measures under point 8 of Annex III to the IIA against a registrant.

In 2023, the Secretariat opened 2 own-investigation cases targeting registered entities, of which 1 was still ongoing at the end of the year. The Secretariat closed 7 investigations from the previous year, including the 4 remaining investigations concerning registered interest representatives headquartered in the Russian Federation.

4. 2023 Management Board meeting

The Secretariat prepared the second meeting of the Management Board, which took place on 31 March 2023. At that meeting, the Management Board took the following decisions:

- appointed the head of the unit responsible for transparency issues at the General Secretariat of the Council as Coordinator of the Secretariat for a term of 1 year (1 January until 31 December 2024);
- adopted the annual report for 2022, agreed to submit it to the signatory institutions and to publish it on the Transparency register website;
- determined the annual priorities for the register in 2024, together with the budget estimates and share for the implementation of those priorities for each signatory institution³²;
- took note of the increasing challenges for the register and the Secretariat's work in terms of significant number of complaints, sensitive own-initiative investigations and the ever-increasing demand for high quality data in the Transparency register.

All documents relating to the meeting of the Management Board, including the agenda and minutes of the meeting, are published on the [governance subpage](#) of the Transparency register website.

5. Guidance and awareness raising

The Secretariat issues guidance to clarify and explain in more detail certain provisions of the IIA. This guidance is the result of regular exchanges with stakeholders and aims to support applicants and registrants in their efforts to provide accurate information and avoid common mistakes.

When carrying out its monitoring activities, the Secretariat may also invite entities to register in the Transparency register, where relevant. The Secretariat undertakes regular communication and awareness-raising activities to raise awareness of the tool among stakeholders. In 2023 this included information sessions and exchanges held with various stakeholders³³ and university students as well as contacts and exchange of best practice with similar bodies at national or European level³⁴.

The three institutions made additional efforts to raise awareness of the Transparency register within each institution, through dedicated information and training sessions for staff³⁵.

6. Technical developments

The Secretariat coordinates the development of IT solutions to improve the Transparency register.

³² For 2024 the budget estimates can be found on the [website](#). The following shares were agreed: Commission: 57%; Parliament: 33%; Council: 10%.

³³ European Public Affairs Consultancies Association (EPACA), European Centre for Public Affairs (ECPA), Public Affairs Council (PAC) Transparency International Brazil (EUVP).

³⁴ European Lobbying Registrars' Network (ELRN). Serbian Parliamentary Delegation visit, Region Auvergne Rhones Alpes, Ukrainian Parliament Members, European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

³⁵ This includes 46 information sessions on interest representation for staff and accredited assistants in the European Parliament. The Commission also provided five such training sessions for its own staff, as well as tailored presentations to Cabinets of Members of the Commission and to their network of transparency and ethics contact points. In the Council, a series of communication and awareness-raising activities were undertaken in order to explain the IIA and the practical implementation of Council Decision (EU) 2021/929, in particular for managers.

In 2023 the Secretariat aimed at further increasing the transparency and usefulness of the reregister's public website. To that end, registrants which are temporarily suspended are now visible in a dedicated list appearing on the website homepage.

In the same year, the Secretariat launched its work into building the new Transparency register digital platform to adapt to contemporary technological and information security standards and enhance user experience. The new IT tool will replace the register's existing technological infrastructure and includes a new version of the Transparency register public website, as well as new back-office environments. The new version of the Transparency register is expected to be delivered in early 2024.

7. ECA audit on the Transparency register

The Transparency register underwent a major audit by the ECA throughout 2023, officially launched already in July 2022. The Secretariat cooperated constructively with the auditors and worked intensely to support the audit process with all necessary input to help ensure that the outcome of the audit yields useful recommendations for the further development and improvement of the register. The special audit report including the ECA recommendations and the replies of the three auditee institutions making up the Transparency register are expected to be published in the second quarter of 2024.

8. European Ombudsman decision in case 532/2023/FA

In March 2023 one registrant complained to the European Ombudsman regarding the Secretariat's handling of two connected investigations based on complaints filed by that registrant in July 2022.

The Secretariat cooperated actively with the services of the European Ombudsman in the course of the investigation.

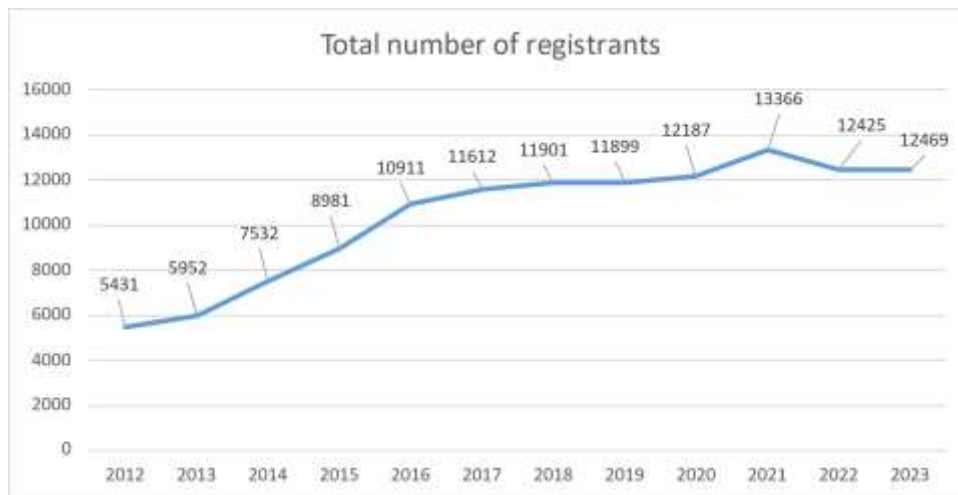
The European Ombudsman adopted a decision finding maladministration and making suggestions concerning the Secretariat's carrying out of investigations into complaints in early 2024³⁶.

VI. Statistics

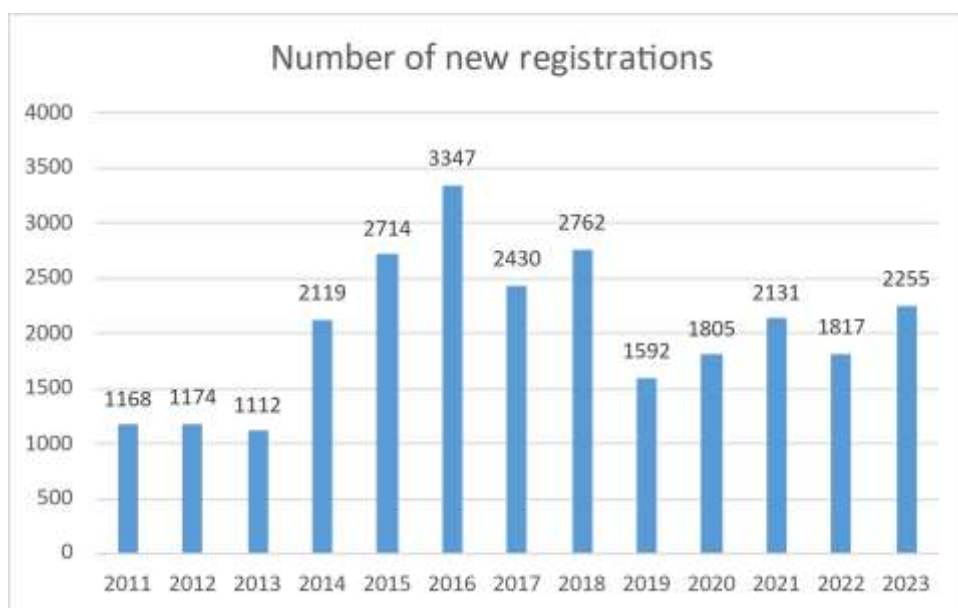
1. Development of the Transparency register

The Transparency register has grown steadily in size from its inception as a joint public database of the European Parliament and the Commission to the current tripartite scheme established by the IIA. In 2023 the total number of registrants remained overall stable compared to 2022. There were 12 469 registered interest representatives at the end of 2023.

³⁶ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/opening-summary/en/168956>.

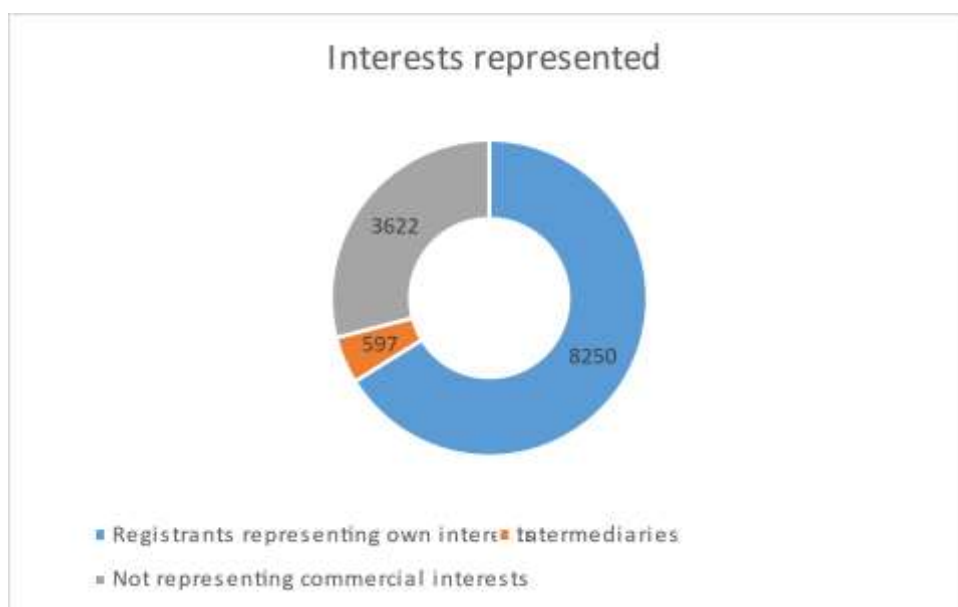


The chart below shows the changes in numbers of new registrations, covering interest representatives registered over a period of 12 months, between 1 January and 31 December 2023, and which were still active at the end of that period. The number of new registrations in 2023 (2 255) is higher than in the years preceding the entry into force of the (2021) IIA. The Secretariat received 3 404 applications (+/- 9 a day), which entails that only 66% of those were accepted and activated by the Secretariat following its screening.



2. Interests represented

Pursuant to the IIA, registrants are sorted into three main types of interests represented, with different corresponding bands of financial information applicable to each category.

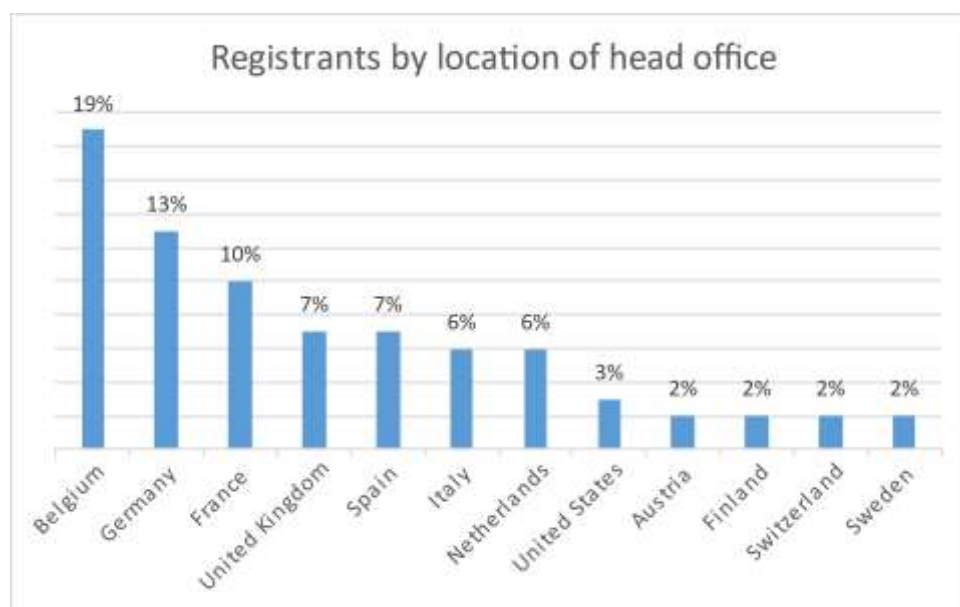


Registrants selected the following sections:

Professional consultancies	523
Law firms	64
Self-employed consultants	131
Companies and groups	3 172
Trade and business associations	2 599
Trade unions and professional associations	961
Non-governmental organisations, platforms and networks and similar	3 480
Think tanks and research institutions	569
Academic institutions	312
Organisations representing churches and religious communities	46
Associations and networks of public authorities	151
Entities, offices or networks established by third countries	2
Other organisations, public or mixed entities	459

3. Geographical data

Registration on the Transparency register is not limited to interest representatives established in the EU, although the largest group of interest representatives do carry out their activities from an establishment in Belgium. However, since the scope of EU legislation and policy also affects individuals and businesses outside the EU and can have an impact on trade and other external relations beyond the borders of the 27 Member States, this global reach is also reflected in the Transparency register.



4. Transparency register data views

In 2023, the Transparency register consolidated dataset on [Data.europa.eu](https://data.europa.eu/data/eu/dataset/transparency-register) was the 8th most viewed among more than 1 600 000 datasets published thereon. The datasets allow users to download (in xml or Excel format) the list of individuals accredited for access to the European Parliament premises and the list of organisations featuring on the Transparency register, going back several years.

VII. Conclusions

The year 2023 was a year of establishment for the operations of the Transparency register. As a database, the register is the go-to information and reference tool for following interest representation activities carried out at EU level. This can be seen in the popular use of its data content, the growth in number of applications - up 14% year on year - as well as the adoption by two EU bodies of internal transparency measures linked to register's framework.

It was also a busy year in terms of the Secretariat's core activities, including handling helpdesk requests, communication and awareness-raising activities, data quality monitoring and investigations on registrants. The overall data in the Transparency register is showing strong signs of stabilisation and improvement, as a result of the Secretariat's intensified monitoring and checks. The Secretariat further cooperated with the ECA on their audit on the Transparency register, introduced improvements to the IT platform in conjunction with its daily activities, and liaised actively with other EU institutions and bodies interested in joining the register's transparency framework, as detailed in the report.

As a public tool, the Transparency Register has an important role to play in preserving public trust and strengthening accountability, within the wider transparency policy of the EU institutions, and in showcasing the common commitment of the EU institutions to promoting transparent and ethical interest representation. As public expectations on transparency continue to grow and evolve, in particular ahead of the upcoming European Parliament elections in 2024, it is important for the EU institutions to continue to use and reinforce the Transparency register to achieve concrete results on lobbying transparency.