

Agreement on common EP–Commission register in sight

On 17 March 2009, Vice-President Siim Kallas met MEPs Wallis, Friedrich and Leinen at a third meeting on the creation of a common register for interest representatives (lobbyists). After the meeting, Vice-President Kallas said: "We're making progress, much faster than I expected. I see no political obstacles to putting in place a common register before the end of the year."

Work on common EP–Commission register accelerates

As part of the European Transparency Initiative, the Commission launched a Register for Interest Representatives on 23 June 2008. The Parliament already maintains a list of "Lobbyists accredited to the European Parliament" and, in a resolution adopted on 8 May 2008, supported the principle of a "one-stop shop" and proposed a joint working group.

The group agreed the content of a common webpage for the two existing registers, to be launched in April.

Based on joint work by departments of the Commission and Parliament, it was further agreed to conclude, in April, the work on a common Code of Conduct that will eventually apply to a common register.

Finally, the Commission and Parliament representatives endorsed the technical work of their respective departments on the definition of lobbying, the scope of interest representatives expected to register, and likely future formula for ensuring meaningful financial disclosure. Based on the positive experience so far with the Commission's Register for Interest Representatives, it was agreed to jointly pursue the voluntary approach, enhanced with mandatory requirements for obtaining permanent access badges to the premises of the European Parliament.

Encouraged by progress made on all those important aspects, the group agreed to meet again at the end of April, in order to reach political agreement on a comprehensive concept for a common register. This agreement would then be proposed for endorsement in the respective institutions, and possible implementation after the summer break.