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Answer given by Mr Hoekstra
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.1.2026)

The Commission is committed to transparency in its relations with interest representatives, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. Interest representatives carrying out activities to influence EU policy or legislation must register in the Transparency Register, irrespective of their country of establishment. The Commission requires prior registration for any related meetings with its decision-makers at political and administrative level or for participating in Commission expert groups. EU and third-country NGOs are required to provide in the register the information, including financial information, set out in Annex II to the applicable Interinstitutional Agreement¹.

To increase the transparency and democratic accountability of activities impacting EU decision-making processes, the Commission also adopted in 2023 its proposal for a Directive on interest representation on behalf of third countries. The proposed harmonised transparency requirements would apply to entities carrying out interest representation on behalf of third countries, regardless of their legal form. The proposal is currently being discussed by the co-legislators.

The Commission exercises the necessary scrutiny and due diligence when selecting NGOs with which it partners in the use of EU funds. The Financial Regulation includes a definition of NGO to ensure the reliability and transparency of information in the Financial Transparency System, where information on recipients is available. In the event of incorrect implementation or in cases of fraud, irregularities, substantial errors or serious breach of contractual obligations, including the violation of EU values, the grant may be suspended, terminated or reduced and funds may be recovered.

¹ OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p.1.