

Dear readers,

Please find below your weekly mailing of February 20, 2009. I would like to call your attention on the first article informing you about **the possibility to send suggestions to the European Commission on transparency and accountability of non-profit sector in the context of the fight against terrorism**. Deadline is 15 of March.

Do not hesitate to disseminate this information towards your own constituencies as this is in an issue that have potential impacts on the daily work of NGOs including at national level.

Also interesting to note is an increased interest in the issue of transparency, and the lobby register in particular, translated in numerous articles that you will find below.

Enjoy your reading!

Laetitia Sédou

#### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

- **EC consultation on the way forward in protecting the non-profit sector from abuse to finance terrorism - deadline 15 March 2009**

On February 12, the European Commission (DG JLS) conveyed a meeting to discuss recommendations of a [study](#) on “*recent public and self-regulatory initiatives improving transparency and accountability of non-profit organisations in the European Union*” as well as suggestions for follow-up in the counter terrorist financing context.

The CSCG and other civil society organisations considered such meeting as not being a proper consultation (in particular as the 100-pages study was received only 3 days before the meeting), and **the EC proposed that written contributions could be sent to them by 15 of March** (Contributions to be sent to Mr Sebastiano TINE ([sebastiano.tine@ec.europa.eu](mailto:sebastiano.tine@ec.europa.eu)) and Mr Ingo WEUSTENFELD ([ingo.weustenfeld@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ingo.weustenfeld@ec.europa.eu)))

On future initiatives, the EC only said it will be drafting a “roadmap” on the basis of the study and contributions received. But from the study and other elements (see useful links below), one can already identify some trends, in particular the fact that the national level will remain the most relevant for concrete measures, while the EU added value would rely on exchange of information and best practices. Also possible is a code of conduct or EU-wide guidelines, as well as a focus on the “*know your beneficiaries and associates*” principle (e.g. that NPO should use all possible means to verify who are the beneficiaries and partners of their activities).

## Useful links

relevant [DG JLS webpage](#)

[Revised Strategy on Terrorist Financing](#) (adopted by the EU Council in July 2008)

Access to the [full study](#)

## PRESIDENCY

- **Priorities of future Spanish Presidency based on innovation and equality**

On 12th February Spanish government chief José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero spoke to the AEJ (Association of European Journalists) of the three priorities of the future Spanish presidency of the EU during the first half of 2010: provide impetus to a new economic model, enhance and strengthen social Europe, the adaptation of Europe to a multi-polar world, notably via its ability to speak with one voice. The Spanish leader indicated that the Spanish presidency would be an ambitious one based on two ideas: innovation, both technological, institutional and political and equality, notably between men and women

Read more [here](#) (Spanish only)

- **Czech president attacks supporters of EU integration**

In a speech before the European Parliament yesterday (19 February), Czech President Vaclav Klaus likened supporters of greater European Union integration to communists of the Soviet era

Read more on [EurActiv](#)

## EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

- **Polish commissioner to take on Libertas in campaign**

Polish commissioner Danuta Hubner has agreed to stand for European elections and defend Europe against any criticism to be raised by anti-treaty group Libertas during the campaign.

Read more on [euobserver](#)

- **EU blogging competition launched ahead of June elections**

Europe's first continent-wide blogging competition was launched by the European Journalism Centre in Brussels yesterday (26 January) in a bid to boost debate on EU issues ahead of the next elections to the European Parliament in June.

Read more on [EurActiv](#) and visit [blogging website](#)

- **Useful links on EP elections**

European Parliament special elections [website](#)

CSCG [toolkit](#) for the 2009 European Parliament

## TRANSPARENCY OF EU POLICY MAKING

- **Irish cheerleaders mistake lobby registry for grant application while Parliament and commission agreed joint registry website**

The Cheerleading Federation of Ireland last December signed up to the European Commission's lobbying registry in the mistaken hope that doing so would give it some recognition at the European level in order to win funding for the body. Separately, on Wednesday evening (18 February), a high-level group bringing together the European Commission and the European Parliament agreed to launch a website connecting the two institutions' lobbying registries before June.

Read more on [euobserver](#)

- **[Swedes to prioritise transparency at EU helm](#)**

The European Ombudsman expressed his conviction that the incoming Swedish EU Presidency would make progress on making the EU more transparent and accountable to its citizens. Meanwhile, MEPs insisted that "no legislative documents should be kept secret" under a reformed access to documents policy.

Read more on [Euractiv](#)

- **Transparency International calls for introduction of mandatory EU register of lobbyists**

In a press release dated 17 of February, Transparency International calls for a total review of the EU voluntary register of lobbyists, following the very disappointing results of the current register launched in June 2008.

Read the full [press release](#)

- **Friends of the Earth report denounces Commission expert groups biased towards business**

Friends of the Earth Europe published a report called *'Whose views count? Business influence and the European commission's high level groups'* which claims that composition of most high level groups established by Gunter Verheugen's enterprise and industry directorate is "skewed" in favour of industry interests and that their recommendations and conclusions are "geared towards improving the competitiveness of European business at the expense of other public interests"

Read FoE [press release](#) and access the [full report](#)

- **Italian 'spammer' used EU registry to boost his image**

The Italian lobby "spam" author intended no harm to the EU's lobby registry, he has claimed, adding that he believes in the European ideal. But arguments are not convincing.

Read more on [euobserver](#)

- **UK Prime Minister hints at lobbying shake-up**

During the weekly half-hour prime minister's questions on February 11, Gordon Brown has said that the government is taking the issue of a potential shake-up of lobbying regulation "very seriously" and "will have to look at all measures that will make the system work better"  
Read more on [epolitix.com](http://epolitix.com)

#### LISBON TREATY

- **[Czech lower House approves Lisbon Treaty](#)**

The lower House of the Czech parliament today (18 February) approved the European Union's Lisbon Treaty, taking a key but not final step towards ratifying the text.  
Read more on [Euractiv](http://Euractiv)

- **Irish government considers holding Lisbon revote in June**

The Irish government is seriously considering the possibility of moving a second referendum on the EU's Lisbon Treaty forward from October to June to coincide with this year's European elections, EurActiv has learned.  
Read more on [EurActiv](http://EurActiv)

- **Germany: ministers defend Lisbon Treaty before the Constitutional court**

German Foreign and Home Ministers, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Wolfgang Schäuble, defended the constitutionality and the advantages of the Lisbon Treaty for the EU before the Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe (read more [on euobserver](http://euobserver))

The German government believes that there is no doubt about the conformity of the Lisbon Treaty with the Fundamental Law. The Constitutional Court is to examine the treaty ratification law since several complaints have been lodged against it by German MPs. The treaty is being accused of transferring too many competences over to Europe, notably with regard to justice and security (read more on [euobserver](http://euobserver)); it is also accused of depriving the Bundestag of its decisional powers. The text was ratified by both assemblies; German President Horst Köhler has to sign the ratification law but he prefers to wait for the conclusion of the procedure before the Constitutional Court.

#### EVENTS

- **Invitation to a Briefing by the European Investment Bank, Brussels, 9 March 2009**

EIB Vice-President Philippe de Fontaine Vive invites Brussels-based Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), to a briefing on the Bank's 2008 Results and 2009 Perspectives – [More information](#)

- **"Problem solving in the EU - Where to turn?" – a seminar organised by the European Ombudsman, 13 March 2009, European Parliament, Brussels**

The European Ombudsman, P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, invites NGOs, business associations, interest groups, journalists, regional offices and other interested organisations to a seminar about different problem-solving mechanisms at the EU level: difficulties obtaining information from the EU administration, Complaints about poor or failed implementation of EU law, Cross-border problems, Contractual disputes with the EU institutions, Problems getting paid for an EU project,...

[More information](#)

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The EU Civil Society Contact Group brings together eight large European platforms of public interest organisations in the following fields: culture (culture action europe), development (CONCORD), environment (Green 10), human rights (HRDN), lifelong learning (EUCIS-LLL), public health (EPA), social (Social Platform) and women (EWL). Together we work to develop the dialogue between civil society organisations and the EU institutions as an essential part of strengthening participatory democracy.

[www.act4europe.org](http://www.act4europe.org)