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COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 18:37

Watchdog: Lobbyists infiltrate EU 'expert groups'

BRUSSELS (EUX.TV) -- The European Commission depends too heavily on input from corporate lobbyists, giving companies a dominant role in the union's legislative process, according to a new study published today.

According to an analysis of the commission's 'Expert Groups' that was conducted by lobby-watchdog Alter-EU, "public interest may be at risk given the predominance of industry representatives."

Alter-EU says the Commission should dissolve the Expert Groups dominated by industry and that methods must be found to prevent privileged access of Expert Groups.

"Our research shows that industry representatives are playing an important role. These groups should act in the public interest, but it appears that some are being allowed to further their own commercial interests," said Yiorgos Vassalos of Corporate Europe Observatory.

"The Commission seems unwilling to provide information about who is on its Expert Groups, and in some cases does not even appear to know whether groups exist or not," said Paul de Clerck of Friends of the Earth Europe.

"This reveals an appalling attitude to transparency and public accountability in the law-making process."

Alter-EU stands for the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation in the European Union. The group includes 160 social society groups, trade unions, academics and public affairs firms concerned with the influence of corporate lobbyists.

The commission is the executive body of the European Union. It is not democratically elected; its members are hand-picked by the heads of government of the EU member states. It has the habit of launching wideranging consultations before it makes proposals for legislations, but it's not clear how the input from these consultations is treated.

[Click here for the full Alter-EU report.](#)

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