

4.3.4.

RULES GOVERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES IN EVENTS HELD ON PARLIAMENT'S PREMISES

BUREAU DECISION

OF 12 JUNE 2023¹

THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

Having regard to the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 232 thereof,

Having regard to Rules 25, 34 and 123(5) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the European Parliament Decision of 27 April 2021 on the conclusion of an interinstitutional agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register²,

Whereas:

(1) The Parliament is committed to implementing the principle of conditionality laid down in Article 5 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register signed on 20 May 2021 ('the IIA')³, under which registration in the transparency register is a necessary precondition for interest representatives to be able to carry out certain activities, and to publishing its conditionality and transparency measures on the website of the transparency register.

(2) The transparency register is a public database where organisations and self-employed consultants, engaged in influencing the EU policy and decision-making process, can register on a voluntary basis to show what interests they represent, and on whose behalf, and the resources they devote to this end.

(3) With a view to protecting and strengthening its integrity, independence and accountability, the Parliament has already adopted a number of measures requiring the registration of interest representatives' activities in the transparency register, which include rules on interest representatives' access to the Parliament's premises⁴, conditions governing their invitation to speak at public hearings organised by committees⁵ and their participation in the activities of Members' intergroups and unofficial groupings⁶.

(4) This Decision seeks to further strengthen the existing regulatory framework by requiring registration in the transparency register as a pre-condition for interest representatives to participate in events taking place on Parliament's premises. Political groups also contribute to

¹ As amended by the Bureau Decision of 5 February 2024.

² P9_TA(2021)0130.

³ OJ L 207, 11.06.2021, p. 1.

⁴ Rule 123 of the Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

⁵ Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 18 June 2003 on rules on public hearings.

⁶ Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure.

strengthening the existing regulatory framework as regards events falling under their responsibility that are organised on their own initiative with interest representatives on Parliament's premises. For events that are organised by one or more Members in rooms allocated by a political group, the political group secretariat should briefly check that the programme of a planned event complies with this Decision. The primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with this Decision should however lie with the Member or Members organising that event. This is especially the case with regard to deviations from the programme that was originally submitted to the secretariat of the political group.

(5) By their very nature, events have an outreach purpose and for Parliament are an important element in its political and democratic life.

(6) This Decision seeks to strike a balance between the right of the Members of the European Parliament to exercise their mandate freely and the prerogatives of the political groups on the one hand, and the obligation laid down Article 15(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union on the Parliament to conduct its work as openly as possible on the other.

(7) Parliament's premises include all spaces and buildings of the European Parliament in the three places of work as well as in all Member States and third countries. This includes inter alia the Parliamentarium, the House of European History, the Info Hub, as well as other spaces and building such as the Jean Monnet House, Parliament's Liaison Offices, Wiertz Garden and the Europa Experience facilities.

(8) The obligations laid down in this Decision should apply to events, including those organised in accordance with the rules governing the use of Parliament's premises by outside bodies⁷, the rules governing cultural events and exhibitions on Parliament's premises⁸, the rules governing the use of Parliament's audiovisual facilities⁹, restaurant facilities and restaurants¹⁰, the Esplanade Solidarność¹¹ and office space in Parliament's liaison offices¹², as well as the rules on public hearings¹³, the library¹⁴ and the panel for the future of science and technology (STOA)¹⁵.

(9) With the view to ensure open dialogue, information given to and exchanges with the public, EU citizens visiting Parliament's premises, petitioners, and journalists, participating in press conferences or other information activities organised for their benefit, should not be considered as interest representatives. Consequently, general information sessions and communication activities by Parliament's services and political groups aiming at reaching out to audiences of multipliers should not be considered as events for the purposes of this Decision.

⁷ Bureau Decision of 14 March 2000 on rules governing the use of Parliament's premises by outside bodies.

⁸ Bureau Decision of 8 June 2015 on rules governing cultural events and exhibitions on Parliament's premises.

⁹ Bureau Decision of 10 December 2007 on rules governing the use of the European Parliament's audiovisual facilities, and particularly its chapter 5.

¹⁰ Bureau Decision of 24 October 2016 on rules governing the use of the restaurant facilities and restaurant and catering services at the European Parliament.

¹¹ Bureau Decision of 17 April 2012 on rules governing the use of the Esplanade Solidarność 1980.

¹² Bureau Decision of 25 February 2004 on rules governing the use by Members and political groups of office space in Parliament's liaison offices.

¹³ Bureau Decision of 18 June 2003 on rules on public hearings, in particular its Article 7.

¹⁴ Bureau Decision of 17 June 2019 on rules of the European Parliament Library and its implementing provisions "Administrative rules for the use of the EP library reading room in Brussels" adopted by the Director for the Library.

¹⁵ Bureau Decision of 15 April 2019 on STOA.

(10) Internal meetings of political groups aimed at coordinating and supporting the parliamentary activities of their Members should not be considered as political group events for the purposes of this Decision.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1 Scope

This Decision shall govern the participation of interest representatives in events held on Parliament's premises.

Article 2 Definitions

For the purposes of this Decision:

- (a) 'interest representative' means any natural or legal person, or formal or informal group, association or network, that engages in activities carried out with the objective of influencing the formulation or implementation of EU policy or legislation, or the decision-making processes of Parliament, as defined in the IIA;
- (b) 'conditionality', as defined under point (h) of Article 2 of the IIA, means the principle whereby registration in the transparency register is a necessary precondition for interest representatives to be able to carry out certain interest representation activities;
- (c) 'Parliamentary body' means Parliament's governing bodies, including any body set up by those governing bodies, parliamentary committees, and interparliamentary delegations;
- (d) 'Parliament's Secretariat' means the staff of the Secretariat as established pursuant to paragraph 2 of Rule 234 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure;
- (e) 'secretariat of a political group' means the staff provided to each political group pursuant to paragraph 1 of Rule 34 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, as well as the staff provided to the secretariat of non-attached Members pursuant to paragraph 1 of Rule 36 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure;
- (f) 'Parliamentary event' means any conference, meeting, workshop, seminar, hearing, exhibition or other type of gathering, irrespective of its denomination, of a Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat, which is organised by Parliament's Secretariat on Parliament's premises;
- (g) 'co-hosted event' means any conference, meeting, workshop, seminar, hearing, exhibition or other type of gathering, irrespective of its denomination, other than a Parliamentary event, which has been authorised by a Parliamentary body or a service of

Parliament's Secretariat and which is co-organised by an interest representative on Parliament's premises;

- (h) 'political group event' means any conference, meeting, workshop, seminar, hearing, exhibition or other type of gathering, irrespective of its denomination, organised by the secretariat of the political group or at the initiative of one or more Members, in rooms allocated by a political group, and authorised by the secretariat of that political group and which is co-organised by an interest representative on Parliament's premises;
- (i) 'Parliament's premises' means all spaces and buildings of the European Parliament;
- (j) 'invited active guest' means an interest representative, as defined in point (a), invited as speaker, moderator, presenter, orator, or contributor to a Parliamentary or co-hosted event.
- (k) 'co-organised' means involvement in the organisation of an event, be it from a logistical, a practical or a financial point of view.

Article 3

Conditionality relating to Parliamentary events

1. Participation of interest representatives as invited active guests to a Parliamentary event shall be conditional upon prior registration of the interest representatives concerned in the transparency register.
2. By way of derogation from paragraph 1, the requirement of prior registration in the transparency register may be waived, upon request of the interest representatives concerned, by the Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat responsible for ensuring compliance with this Decision, where that body or service is of the informed opinion that registration is liable to undermine the protection of the life or integrity of an individual or where other compelling reasons require confidentiality.

Article 4

Conditionality relating to co-hosted events

1. Co-organisation by an interest representative of a co-hosted event shall be conditional upon prior registration of the interest representative in the transparency register.
2. Participation of interest representatives as invited active guests to a co-hosted event shall be conditional upon prior registration of the interest representatives in the transparency register. Paragraph 2 of Article 3 applies *mutatis mutandis*.

Article 5

Conditionality relating to political group events

Co-organisation by an interest representative of a political group event shall be conditional upon prior registration of the interest representative in the transparency register.

Article 6

Compliance and inter-service cooperation in relation to Parliamentary events

1. The Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat organising the Parliamentary event shall ensure compliance with this Decision and to that end shall verify that the interest representatives invited as active guests are registered in the transparency register. Should this not be the case, it shall request them to apply without delay for registration ahead of the date of the Parliamentary event.
2. Where there is more than one Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat organising a Parliamentary event, they shall be jointly responsible for ensuring that interest representatives comply with this Decision in accordance with paragraph 1. To that end, they shall cooperate and exchange information as appropriate.
3. The Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat organising the Parliamentary event and the Transparency Unit shall cooperate and exchange all relevant information to ensure proper and efficient implementation of this Decision. Upon request from the Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat organising the Parliamentary event, or on its own initiative, the Transparency Unit may provide assistance in verifying the status of the interest representatives concerned on the transparency register.
4. In line with criteria set annually by the Secretary-General, the Transparency Unit shall check on the basis of representative samples whether or not the Parliamentary bodies or services of Parliament's Secretariat organising the Parliamentary event have complied with the conditionality principle in Article 3 and to this end it may request detailed information on Parliamentary events that they have organised.

Article 7

Compliance and inter-service cooperation in relation to co-hosted events

1. The Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat authorising a co-hosted event shall ensure compliance with this Decision and to that end shall verify that:
 - a) the interest representatives referred to in paragraph 1 of Article 4 are registered in the transparency register ahead of authorising the event in question;
 - b) the interest representatives referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 4 are registered in the transparency register in view of the event in question.
2. The Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat authorising the co-hosted event and the Transparency Unit shall cooperate and exchange all relevant information to ensure proper and efficient implementation of this Decision. Upon request from the Parliamentary body or service of Parliament's Secretariat authorising the co-hosted event, or on its own initiative, the Transparency Unit may provide assistance in verifying the status of the interest representatives concerned on the transparency register.
3. In line with criteria set annually by the Secretary-General, the Transparency Unit shall check on the basis of representative samples whether or not the Parliamentary bodies or services of

Parliament's Secretariat authorising the co-hosted event have complied with the conditionality principle in Article 4 and to this end it may request detailed information on co-hosted events that they have authorised.

Article 8 Compliance in relation to political group events

1. The secretariat of a political group authorising a political group event shall ensure compliance with this Decision for the events that it organises. Before authorising such an event, the secretariat of the political group shall verify that the interest representatives referred to in Article 5 are registered in the transparency register.
2. For events organised by one or more Members in rooms allocated by a political group, the Member or Members concerned shall verify before the event that the interest representatives referred to in Article 5 are registered in the transparency register. The Member or Members concerned shall communicate the transparency register numbers of those interest representatives to the political group in case meeting facilities are being requested from the political group secretariat.
3. The Transparency Unit shall provide assistance in verifying the status of the interest representatives concerned on the transparency register.

Article 9 Non-compliance

1. Without prejudice to paragraph 2 of Article 3, interest representatives not registered in the transparency register on the date of the Parliamentary or co-hosted event shall not be allowed to participate in the event as an invited active guest.
2. Interest representatives not registered in the transparency register on the date of the co-hosted event shall not be allowed to co-organise it.
3. Interest representatives not registered in the transparency register on the date of the political group event shall not be allowed to co-organise it.

Article 10 Implementation and review

1. The Secretary-General may adopt guidelines for the implementation of this Decision.
2. The Secretary-General shall submit an annual report to the Bureau on the application of this Decision. The secretariats of the political groups may contribute on a voluntary basis to this report on their application of this Decision.
3. The Bureau shall evaluate the implementation of this Decision by the end of 2026 on the basis of a report from the Secretary-General.

Article 11
Entry into force

This Decision shall enter into force on 12 July 2023.