



62,684 entries a year: the private lobbies ruling the European Parliament.

Executive Summary

There is a heavy presence of lobbyists at the European Parliament. In one year, from the beginning of the 2025-2026 parliamentary sessions in August 2025 to the summer recess in July 2026, **lobbyists entered the European Parliament 62,684 times**. At times, there were more lobbyists than Members of the European Parliament. In fact **lobbyists outnumbered MEPs in their own workplace one day in 10**.

These previously unpublished data on lobbyists in the European Parliament reveal the forces at play. It is perhaps not surprising that lobbyists representing private economic and financial interests make up the overwhelming majority of visitors. **Private interests account for at least 62% of visits and 67% of meetings with MEPs**. NGOs promoting the “public” interest, such as the European Union’s energy independence, account for only 26% of visits and 22% of meetings.

Among the 21 companies and groups with the highest number of recorded entries to the European Parliament, 12 represent non-European interests, while 5 companies are directly involved in oil and gas expansion. **Fossil fuel industry lobbyists were present at Parliament 4 days out of 5, with an average contingent of 8 people per day**.

By cross-referencing public data on meetings with MEPs and data on lobbyist attendance, we see that lobbyists are at times in the European Parliament without any clear reason. **For example, almost two thirds of the visits made by fossil fuel industry lobbyists are unexplained**. Just 37% of those visits correspond to a declared meeting.

This influence all too often coincides with pivotal moments, such as the dismantling of laws on climate, health, human rights, and sustainable finance. **The law, which is supposed to benefit the greatest number of people, appears to be shaped by and for private interests**. It is urgent that the European Union put its own interests back at the center of parliamentary debates.

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Introduction: How to analyze a year of lobbying in Parliament?

Understanding the scope of lobbying activities within the European Union generally relies on the analysis of two types of data: the money spent by lobbyists and the meetings held with policymakers. Data on the amounts allocated to lobbying activities is drawn from the European Union's Transparency Register, in which lobby groups themselves report the sums they spend to influence European decision-making. Data on meetings is available on the European Parliament's website. Article 7 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament regarding Integrity and Transparency¹ requires members to publish details of their meetings with interest representatives.

Data can also be found on the physical presence of lobbyists in the European Parliament. Any lobby group registered in the European Union's Transparency Register can apply for a badge granting access to the European Parliament. Once obtained, this badge allows lobbyists to enter the European Parliament without being required to provide any additional justification.

Unlike the data already analyzed, this data is not based on self-reporting. It provides insight into the exact balance of power within the European Parliament, thereby going beyond the usual analysis of lobbying. **This data should be publicly and automatically accessible on the European Parliament's website. It is in the public interest.**

For the first time, Reclaim Finance is publishing an analysis of the number of times lobbyists entered the European Parliament over a full year. This analysis is based on a simple methodology of counting the number of times lobbyists entered the European Parliament while

¹ European Parliament, [Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament regarding Integrity and Transparency](#) (accessed on 1 October 2026)

it was open for a parliamentary session. The analysis period is from Monday, August 25, 2025, the day before the start of the session, to Friday, July 24, 2026, the day before the summer recess². It spans 223 days.

During the times the European Parliament was in session over this one-year period, **lobbyists entered its premises 62,684 times**, whether in Brussels or Strasbourg. Assuming that each lobbyist speaks with one Member of Parliament per visit, this would suggest that a Member of Parliament has at least 87 interactions with lobbyists every year.

Who Are the Lobbyists? When Private Interests matter.

In one year, representatives from 3,301 different entities visited the European Parliament. These entities are classified according to the categories in the Transparency Register, this is how we know whether they are a non-governmental organisation, trade association, companies, consultancy, etc³.

On average, each entity visited the Parliament 19 times (62,684/3,301). This average obviously masks the immense disparity among the entities, with just half of the lobby groups visiting more than 8 times. Some **11% of lobby groups visited only once, while the top 1% of the most active lobby groups accounted for 11.7% of visits**. These figures do not take into account the approximately 13,000 other lobbies registered in the transparency register who never visited the European Parliament over the past year.

Some entities hold multiple access badges for the European Parliament, allowing several representatives from the same lobby to visit the European Parliament on the same day. When considering unique days of attendance, we find that the average lobby group visited the European Parliament on 13 different days (for 19 visits), with a median of 7. Half of the lobbies, therefore, visited the European Parliament at least 7 times.

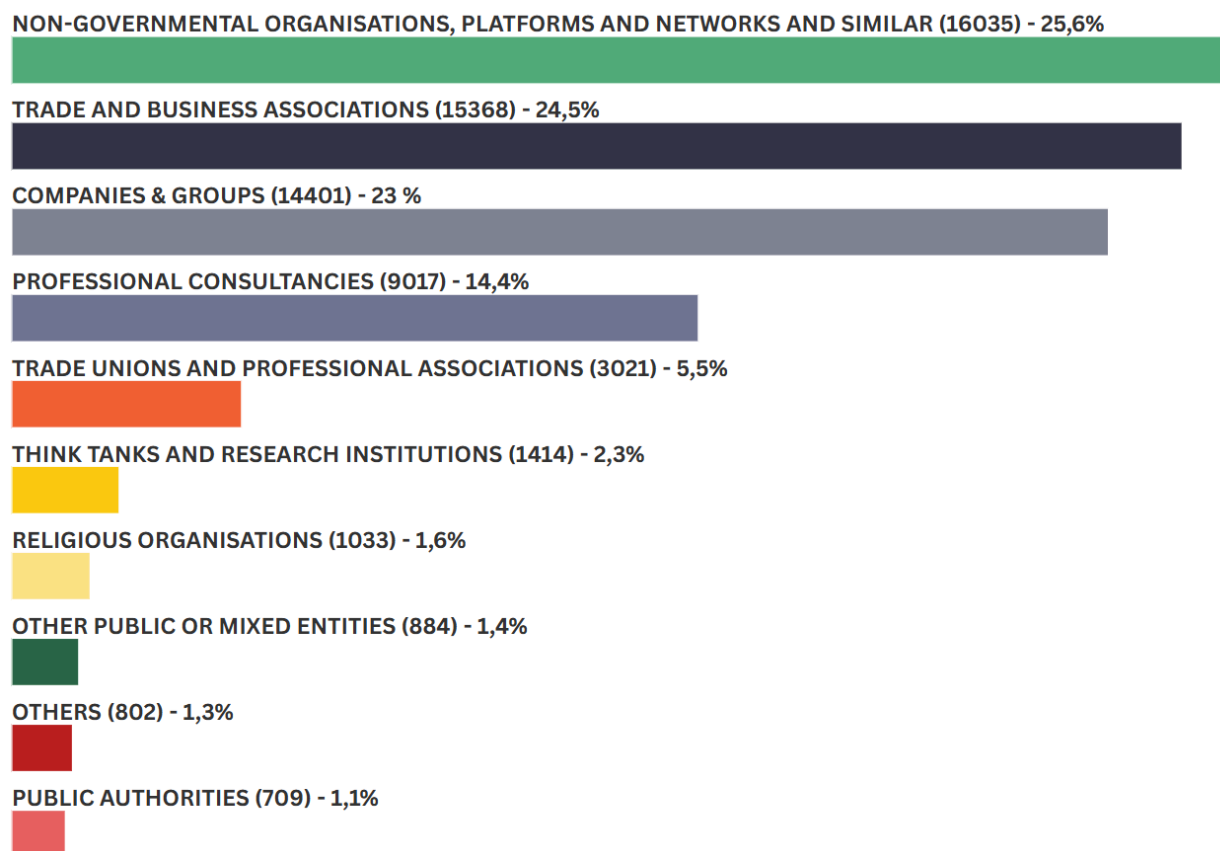
Private interests dominate lobbying visits. **Private companies and groups, their trade associations, and the consulting firms that are paid to represent them account for 62% of visits** (38,786 visits, or an average of 174 visits per day). So while NGOs are the largest group represented in Parliament according to the registry's classification, they account for only one-quarter of the visits.

² A more detailed methodology can be found in *Annex I - Methodology*.

³ (1) Non-governmental organisations, platforms and networks and similar, (2) Trade and business associations, (3) Companies & groups, (4) Professional consultancies, (5) Trade unions and professional associations, (6) Think tanks and research institutions, (7) Organisations representing churches and religious communities, (8) Associations and networks of public authorities, (9) Other organisations, public or mixed entities, (10) Self-employed individuals, (11) Academic institutions, (12) Law firms, (13) Entities, offices or networks established by third countries.

For statistical reasons, categories 9 to 13 have been combined into a single category, which accounts for 1.28 per cent of entries in the European Parliament, or 802 entries out of 62,684.

Visits to the European Parliament by type of entity (number of visits and percentage)

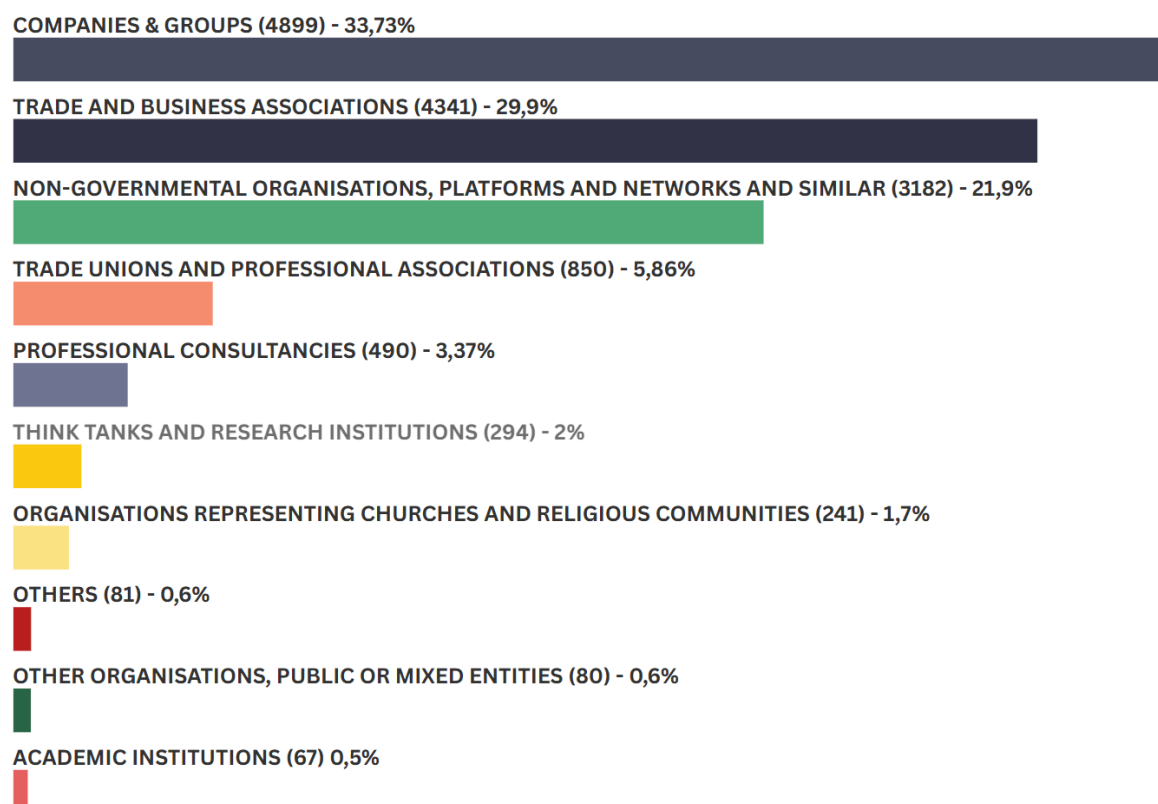


Every day, 174 lobbyists come to represent private economic or financial interests. This figure does not include visits from professional associations. The corresponding category in the transparency registry, in fact, groups together labor unions and professional associations and therefore cannot be fully counted as private interests. The same applies to think tanks, which are sometimes affiliated with universities and sometimes with business groups.

It is also important to note here that the classification of lobby groups is based on self-reported information in the transparency registry. **Private oil and gas interests are, in fact, also represented in the category “NGOs, platforms and networks and similar.”** More broadly, many associations classified as NGOs in the registry were created by or for industry and/or are funded by these entities. For example, the *European Energy Forum* is listed as an “NGO, platform, network, or similar.” This classification clashes with other NGOs, since the *European Energy Forum* reports receiving its funding from membership dues, with members including major oil and gas companies such as Shell, TotalEnergies, ExxonMobil, ENI, the association FuelsEurope, etc.

Attendance at the Parliament can be compared with the meetings reported on the European Parliament’s website. Last year, Members of the European Parliament had 14,525 meetings as reported by their staff. This works out as an average 65 meetings per day.

Meetings scheduled at the European Parliament by type of entity (meetings and percentage)



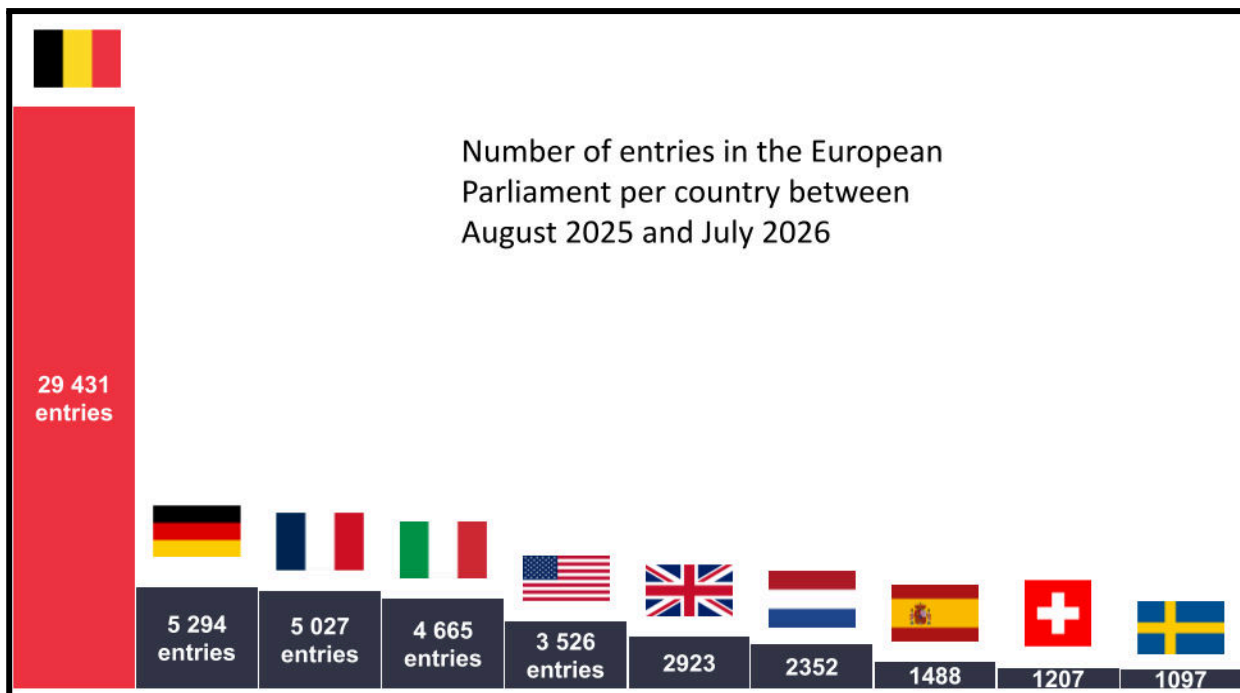
The data show that two out of every three meetings are held with lobby groups representing private interests. In contrast, fewer than 22% of meetings are held with NGOs, platforms, or similar networks. The European Parliament's data contradicts the conservative narrative⁴ that places NGOs at the heart of power and political decision-making. **It is indeed private interests that dominate in the European Parliament, accounting for at least 62% of visits to the European Parliament and 67% of meetings.**

An analysis of these representatives is therefore essential. Identifying the largest lobbies in the European Parliament reveals not only which interests are being particularly aggressively promoted, but also who is funding these positions—which often run counter to European objectives, particularly regarding competitiveness and decarbonization (seen later in "[Fossil fuels: a year of exceptional pressure](#)").

Who are the most active players? A look at the lobbying giants

The transparency registry also reveals where lobby groups are based. An analysis of the 62,684 entries shows that the majority of lobbies are registered in Belgium, but this is due to many lobby groups listing their Brussels office as their primary address. It would be misleading to confuse the interests of "Belgian" lobbies with the prevalence of lobbies whose only Belgian connection is their mailing address.

⁴ Politico, [EPP's war on NGOs is driving a wedge through Europe's political center](#), May 5th, 2025.



Excluding Belgium, Germany and France share the top spot with 5,294 and 5,027 admissions, respectively (8.5% and 8% of total admissions). Next comes Italy (4,665 entries—7.45%), followed by the United States (3,526 entries—5.6%). The United Kingdom, meanwhile, accounts for 4.7% of entries, with 2,923 visits to the European Parliament.

Out of the 223 opening days of the European Parliament between 2025 and 2026, the United States missed only 18, 13 of which occurred during weeks of external activities (when MEPs generally do not stay in Brussels). In other words, **American interests were represented 92% of the time in the European Parliament (and therefore absent only 8% of the days)**. This figure is huge, and does not even take into account the numerous lobbies based in Belgium, such as ExxonMobil, the American Chamber of Commerce, Meta Platforms, Walt Disney, McDonald's, or Coca-Cola.

An analysis of the top 10 professional and trade associations also provides further insight into the significance of "Belgium." Only two are not officially based in Belgium, but these Belgium associations either centralize requests from various industries (e.g., FuelsEurope) or are simply based in Belgium but represent other interests, such as *Servizi all'Industria Italiana*.

Organisation name	NB of visits	NB of unique days		Location of head office
EuroCommerce	205	72		BELGIUM
Servizi all'Industria Italiana S.A.	195	96		BELGIUM
European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries	190	89		LUXEMBOURG
CEFIC - European Chemical Industry Council	185	76		BELGIUM
Community of European Railway and Infrastructure	182	137		BELGIUM
MEDICINES FOR EUROPE	173	89		BELGIUM
Confederazione Generale dell'Industria Italiana	163	93		ITALY
FuelsEurope	158	57		BELGIUM
BUSINESSEUROPE	158	75		BELGIUM
European Association Automotive Suppliers	153	61		BELGIUM

Of the 21⁵ companies and groups⁶ with the most representatives in the European Parliament, 8 are officially based outside the European Union. Four other multinational companies that rely on European subsidiaries could be added to this list: Yara (Norway), ExxonMobil Petroleum & Chemical (U.S.), Vodafone (U.K.), and Meta Platforms (U.S.).

This Top 21 list includes 5 companies involved in oil and gas expansion: ENI SpA, ENEL SpA, TotalEnergies, ExxonMobil Petroleum & Chemical, and A2A⁷, with a combined total of 594 entries—an average of more than 118 entries per lobby group in a single year.

British American Tobacco is the company that has made the most visits to the European Parliament to advocate for its political positions, appearing 154 times over 82 different days. It is not the only tobacco lobby group to have visited the European Parliament frequently. Philip Morris International Inc. also visited 85 times over 53 days.

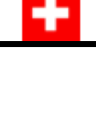
The top list also includes the first three letters of GAFAM: Google (10th, 108 visits over 65 days), Apple (8th, 128 visits over 83 days), and Facebook, now known as Meta (6th, 139 visits over 79 days). Amazon and Microsoft rank 135th (30 visits over 22 days) and 26th (78 visits over 49 days), respectively. The five GAFAM companies thus account for 483 visits across 136 different days. **The European Parliament therefore hosted a lobbyist representing one of the five GAFAM companies on 61% of its opening days over the past year.**

⁵ Total Politics Group is the company responsible for producing the magazine *The Parliament*, which is distributed within the European Parliament. The company has no links with the TotalEnergies group and does not appear to be engaged in any specific lobbying activities.

⁶ As the 20th and 21st places had the same number of seats in the European Parliament, Reclaim Finance decided to present a top 21 list.

⁷ According to data from the Global Oil & Gas Exit List (GOGEL), as at 25 November 2025. <https://gogel.org/>

See Annex I – Methodology

Organisation name	NB of visits	NB of unique days		Location of head office
Total Politics Group	202	68		UNITED KINGDOM
British American Tobacco	154	82		UNITED KINGDOM
Eni S.p.A.	149	68		ITALY
Merck Sharp & Dohme Europe Belgium	148	73		UNITED STATES
ENEL SpA	142	85		ITALY
Meta Platforms Ireland Limited and its v	139	79		IRELAND
TotalEnergies SE	130	77		FRANCE
Apple Inc.	128	83		UNITED STATES
Telefonica, S.A.	122	62		SPAIN
Google	108	65		UNITED STATES
BASF SE	101	65		GERMANY
Think-Film Impact Production	99	92		UNITED KINGDOM
Orange	89	51		FRANCE
YARA BELGIUM S.A.	89	50		BELGIUM
ExxonMobil Petroleum & Chemical	88	44		BELGIUM
Vodafone Belgium SA	87	52		BELGIUM
Leonardo S.p.A.	86	51		ITALY
Enterprise Rent-A-Car UK Limited	86	63		UNITED KINGDOM
Ericsson	86	62		SWEDEN
A2A	85	39		ITALY
Philip Morris International Inc.	85	53		SWITZERLAND

These figures on lobbyists' visits to and departures from the European Parliament also give us a snapshot of an average day at the European Parliament. On average, the Parliament hosts 281 lobbyists each day. At least 37 of these lobbyists represent non-European entities (including nearly 16 from the United States). **Over the past year, there were, on average, 8 lobbyists from the fossil fuel industry and 12 from the financial sector at the European Parliament each day (see table, row 2).**

	Fossil Fuel lobbyists	Finance lobbyists	Tobacco lobbyists	Non-EU lobbyists...	...including USA ⁸	Entries total
All days (223 days)	1 823	2 689	412	8 310	3 517	62 684
Average per day (all year)	8,17	12,06	1,85	37,26	15,77	281,09
Average (without external activities)	9,35	13,65	2,16	42,32	17,95	318,81
Average Committee (70 days)	11,40	19,40	2,11	55,83	23,99	437
Average Plenary (61 days)	7,77	6,13	2,07	23,11	10,77	151
Average EP Groups (60 days)	8,57	14,60	2,23	46,08	182,17	352
Average External activities (32 days)	1,09	2,41	0,13	7,09	2,75	51

Excerpt (red box): "During the weeks when legislation was being reviewed by parliamentary committees, there were an average of 19.4 financial lobbyists on the European Parliament's premises each day.

Fossil fuels: a year of exceptional pressure

This heavy presence of fossil fuel lobbyists is obviously linked to the various regulations discussed last year; from transition plans in the Due Diligence Directive (Omnibus I—CSDDD) to the reform of the Sustainable Finance Directive (SFRD), lobbyists had a busy year.

The annual presence of the fossil fuel industry

In April 2026, the European Commission attended Santa Marta, the first international conference on phasing out fossil fuels. Accompanied by Members of the European Parliament from various political parties, European Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra⁹ reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to ending its dependence on fossil fuels¹⁰.

⁸ Lobby groups registered in the United States on the transparency register website. The American Chamber of Commerce, ExxonMobil Petroleum, Walt Disney and PepsiCo are among those excluded, as these organisations are registered in Belgium.

⁹ Wopke Hoekstra, European Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth

¹⁰ "We already had a very good reason with climate action to transition away from fossil fuels. We also now have commercial and independence reasons."

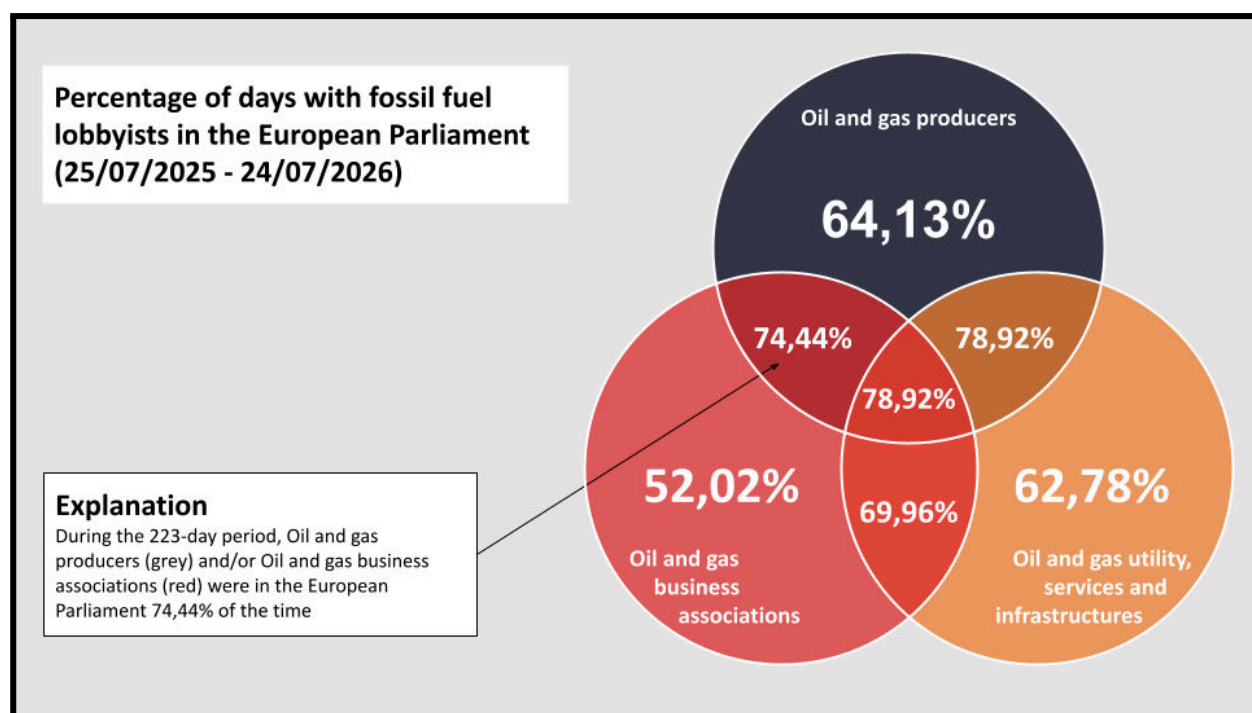
European Commission, [Speech by Commissioner Hoekstra at the Opening of the Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels](#), April 28, 2026 (accessed on 1 October 2026)

This transition away from fossil fuels requires legislation. Numerous regulations and directives have been under consideration since the European Commission took office in December 2024, but these draft laws presented by the European Commission seem to be systematically watered down after review by the European Parliament. This is particularly the case with the removal of transition plans from the Due Diligence Directive, or the relaxation of fossil fuel exclusions in “transition” financial products under the SFDR regulations.

There are two reasons for this scaling back of climate ambitions and this reversal on phasing out fossil fuels: the presence of numerous fossil fuel lobbyists in the European Parliament, and the arrival in 2024 of a particularly conservative majority that is highly responsive to the oil and gas industry.

During the 223 days the European Parliament was in session between 2025 and 2026, lobbyists directly representing the fossil fuel industry entered the European Parliament 1,823 times. On average, there were at least 8 fossil fuel lobbyists at the European Parliament each day.

Companies developing new fossil fuel extraction projects visited 635 times on 143 different days. Among them were TotalEnergies (130 visits over 77 days), Eni (149 visits over 68 days), ExxonMobil (88 visits over 44 days), and Shell (35 visits over 25 days). They were accompanied by associations representing their interests, such as FuelsEurope (158 visits over 58 days) and the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers Europe (83 visits over 42 days). Companies responsible for other oil and gas infrastructure and services—such as pipelines or gas-fired power plants—visited the Parliament 734 times¹¹. In total, 560 official meetings were organized and subsequently reported by Members of the European Parliament.



¹¹ For more information, please read *Annex I - Methodology*

Fossil fuel lobbyists were present four out of every five days over the past year (176 days out of 223, or 78.92% of the time; see chart below). The fossil fuel industry, whose goal is to continue producing and selling fossil fuels for as long as possible, is therefore particularly active in undermining the European energy transition.

Knowing the days they are present allows us to also calculate that when fossil fuel lobbyists are in the Parliament, on average **there are 10 fossil fuel lobbyists present**.

Fossil fuel lobbyists are, of course, at the European Parliament when Members of Parliament are there as well. Since MEPs often have to return to their constituencies on weekends, there is a lower presence of lobbyists on Fridays and Mondays (42 days missed) than during the rest of the week (only 14 days missed).

Furthermore, the data reaches one of its limitations here, as it is not possible to know how long a lobbyist remained in the European Parliament. **Having a meeting with a Member of Parliament does not necessarily account for the entire duration of a lobbyist's presence:** a lobbyist with a 9 a.m. meeting might leave the European Parliament at 10 a.m. or at 7 p.m. There is no way to know how long that lobbyist remained at the European Parliament.

Fossil fuel lobbyists are particularly present at key moments—just before or during votes, or just before amendments are tabled.

The case of the Sustainable Finance Regulation (SFDR)

At the end of 2025, the European Commission proposed a reform of the SFDR to address loopholes in the regulation. This regulation classifies financial products according to their “sustainability,” helping investors make informed choices about financial products. The European Commission proposed three categories: “Basic ESG,” “Transition,” and “Sustainable.” In “sustainable” and “transition” funds, it would not be possible to invest in companies involved in coal, oil, and fossil gas.

This would prevent investors from being misled. Oil and gas companies have already been found to be misleading the public over their role in the transition. For example, TotalEnergies was found guilty of greenwashing in France for implying that it was “a major player in the transition”¹². Yet oil and gas companies are lobbying to be reinstated into the SFDR’s “transition” category. This reinstatement would allow them to be financed by “transition” financial products. The core of their business model, however, rests on oil and gas, and the outlook for their investments does not suggest a genuine transition¹³.

¹² Greenpeace France, [TotalEnergies condamnée pour greenwashing](#), 10/2025 (accessed on 1 October 2026)

¹³ TotalEnergies therefore announced in September that it planned to further increase its oil and gas production, whilst reducing its renewable energy production targets. Reclaim Finance, [‘Why TotalEnergies is losing support amongst investors’](#), 28 September 2026 (accessed 1 October 2026).

On June 23, while the 60 members of the European Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) were discussing amendments to the SFDR, fossil fuel lobbyists flooded into the European Parliament in large numbers. There were 35 fossil fuel lobbyists and 45 financial lobbyists present that day (although the hearing was streamed online. In this highly strategic text for the financial sector and for fossil fuel companies' financing, there were more financial and fossil fuel lobbyists than there were members of the ECON Committee.

This over-representation of lobbyists at key moments is not unprecedented. Over the course of the year, the 720 members of the European Parliament found themselves in the minority more than 10% of the time. **In fact, there were 23 days when the number of lobbyists exceeded 720.** The record for the year was 899 lobbyists on March 18, 2026 (or 5 lobbyists for every 4 MEPs).

The case of the Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).

The oil and gas industry successfully sought to remove the transition plans from the CSDDD. The requirement for companies to adopt and implement a climate transition plan was seen as a threat to the interests of oil and gas companies, whose current practices would have had to change significantly to meet such a requirement. As the JURI Committee, responsible for the text, met for the last time before the final vote in plenary, fossil fuel lobbyists arrived en masse at the European Parliament.

Their strategy involved increasing the number of lobbyists on the ground. On that day, fossil fuel lobbyists quadrupled their usual presence at the European Parliament. **A total of 34 fossil fuel lobbyists came to the Parliament on the day in question** (compared to a usual average of 8.17).

The goal was clear: to get the right and the far right¹⁴ to table amendments to scrap the transition plans¹⁵, and to secure a majority to pass those amendments.

A more detailed analysis of the impact of lobbying on Omnibus I was published in March 2026 on [Reclaim Finance website](#).

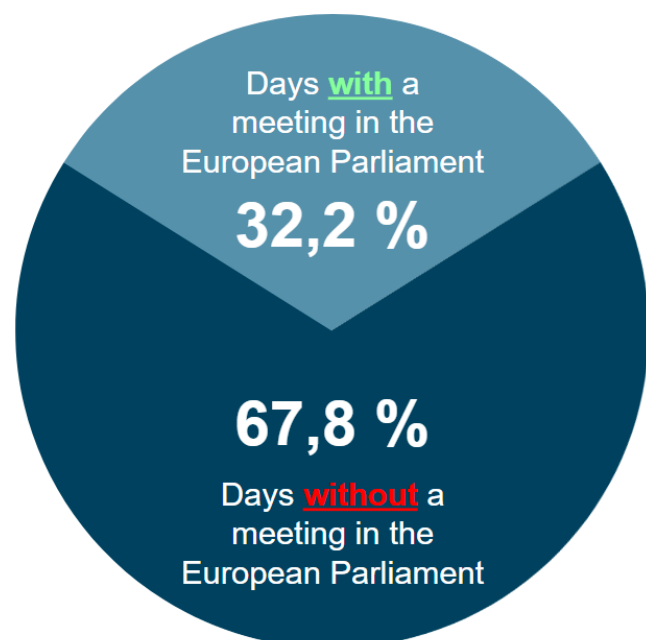
What are fossil fuel lobbyists doing in the European Parliament?

Fossil fuel lobbyists have a massive presence in the European Parliament. But do they have many "official" meetings?

¹⁴ Excerpt from the press conference given by MEP Pascale Piera (Patriots for Europe), in which she supports the amendments tabled by the EPP Group to scrap the transition plans. Excerpt from the MEP's X (formerly Twitter) account (accessed on 1 October 2026)
<https://x.com/PascalePiera/status/1988989371710660999>

¹⁵ Hearing of Patrick Pouyanné, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of TotalEnergies, before the French National Assembly: "[The] Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, known as the 'CS3D Analysis Directive', which had reached the pinnacle of punitive regulatory texts. [...] An article on climate plans has been slipped into the middle of the directive, obliging us to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, which has nothing to do with the subject." Available on the National Assembly's website (link accessible on 1 October 2026):
https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/17/comptes-rendus/cereind/l17cereind2425045_compte-rendu.pdf

By cross-referencing the days each fossil fuel lobby group was present with their reported meetings with Members of the European Parliament or their staff reveals the days spent at the European Parliament with a meeting scheduled, and the days without one. In the case of the oil and gas industry, more than two-thirds of the days lobbyists were present are not accounted for by a meeting.



For example, the British oil and gas giant Shell visited the European Parliament on 25 different days. **During those 25 days, it had only 5 meetings. This leaves 20 days (80% of its time) when Shell lobbyists entered the European Parliament but did not meet with any Members of Parliament.**

ExxonMobil similarly had only nine meetings during the 44 days it was present (79,55% of the firm's time in the European Parliament).

Most hearings at the European Parliament are streamed live online, making this systematic physical presence particularly puzzling.

So why are lobbyists at the European Parliament if they aren't meeting with Members of Parliament and the hearings are being filmed?

The answer is simple: they engage in lobbying, in the truest sense of the word. **Lobbyists arrange chance encounters.** They wander through the hallways, lobbies, and cafés. They're part of the scenery. And they are particularly present before votes or before amendments are filed. Many of them knock on the doors of lawmakers and their staff to speak briefly about a topic (which is always "important") and remind the lawmaker of the importance of a filed amendment or a change to be added to a bill.

The first step for a private-sector lobbyist is always to convince a lawmaker to introduce the amendment to advance the private interests they represent. The second step is to ensure that the amendment will be voted on, which sometimes requires going door-to-door to key lawmakers. This requires manpower, and sometimes reinforcements, particularly from consulting firms.

The three lobbies mentioned above—Shell, ExxonMobil, and Fuels Europe—are, in fact, the three fossil fuel lobbies that spent the most over the past year on their lobbying efforts. All three reported spending between €3,500,000 and €3,999,999¹⁶ last year—a total of 10.5 to 12 million euros protecting their interests, at the expense of the transition away from fossil fuels. Yet the

¹⁶ Entries for Fuels Europe, ExxonMobil Petroleum & Chemical and Shell Companies in the European Union Transparency Register (accessed on 1 October 2026)

https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=26207914726-42

https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=0745650927-75

https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=05032108616-26

latter is essential for the climate and for freeing the European Union from its dependence on imported fossil fuel energy, particularly the United States.

Fossil Fuel industry's spending on lobbying					
Average spent on consultancies	Minimum spent on consultancies	Maximum spent on consultancies	Average declared lobbying costs	Minimum declared lobbying costs	Maximum declared lobbying costs
2 857 490,00 €	2 995 002,00 €	4 919 970,00 €	51 767 480,00 €	47 910 000,00 €	55 624 960,00 €

These are just three of the 40 fossil fuel lobbies identified. The total amounts spent by each of these actors add up to astronomical sums. **In total, fossil fuel lobbies spent between 47.9 and 55.6 million euros¹⁷ in an attempt to shape European policies in their favor¹⁸.**

These funds are used, in particular, to pay consulting firms that lobby on behalf of their clients' interests. Fossil fuel and financial lobbies are involved in numerous legislative proposals, so their presence in the European Parliament is sometimes difficult to link to a specific proposal.

The influence of consultancies in European lobbying: the tobacco lobby

The 15 biggest tobacco industry companies and trade associations account for just over 400 entries and pay substantial sums to a number of consulting firms¹⁹. For example, Utopia Lab reports having received between €850,000 and €1,700,000 last year, primarily to defend the interests of the tobacco industry.

Utopia Lab reports receiving between €200,000 and €299,999 from Philip Morris International Inc. for example, to work on the European beating cancer plan²⁰. This consulting firm is one of seven paid by Philip Morris International, which reports spending between €2,750,000 and €2,999,999 annually on its lobbying activities²¹.

Utopia Lab visited the European Parliament 254 times over 110 days last year. This means the consulting firm was at the European Parliament every other day (49.33% of the time). Despite this massive presence at the European Parliament, only four official meetings were reported by

¹⁷ More specifically, between €47,910,000.00 and €55,624,960.00. This gives an average per fossil fuel lobby group of between €1,197,750.00 and €1,390,624.00.

¹⁸ These figures do not take into account the influence of consultancies paid by the fossil fuel industry.

¹⁹ In particular, British American Tobacco, Philip Morris International Inc, Imperial Brands PLC, the European Cigar Manufacturers Association, Tobacco Europe AISBL, Federazione Italiana Tabaccai and Tabaqueira II

²⁰ « Philip Morris International Inc. | €200,000 - €299,999 | Legislative proposals regarding the European beating cancer plan ».

Utopia Lab's page on the transparency register (accessed on 1 October 2026):

https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=511123241099-96

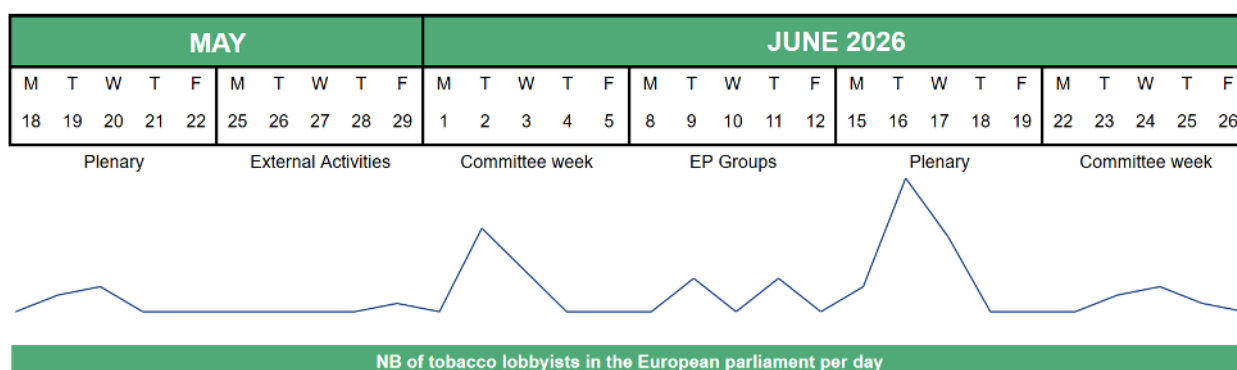
²¹ Philip Morris International Inc.'s page on the transparency register (accessed on 1 October 2026):

https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=51925911965-76

Members of the European Parliament²², including one held online. **This means that 97.27% of the time, Utopia Lab was at the European Parliament for no apparent reason.**

British American Tobacco is another major tobacco company involved in lobbying the European Parliament; it pays consulting firms and spends between €3,500,000 and €3,999,999 on lobbying each year, particularly to influence European health policies. This amount has likely increased since the annual publication of these figures last year. The firm EUTOP Europe, for example, reports having received between €700,000 and €799,999 this year for work related to tobacco directives—an amount €200,000 higher than British American Tobacco's declared amount. NC+ is another consulting firm with a long history of unexplained activity in the European Parliament. **Funded by British American Tobacco with between €300,000 and €399,999 to influence European health policy²³, the firm attended 77 times (over 55 days), yet only one meeting was reported. This represents an unexplained attendance rate of 98.19%.**

Closer analysis of the dates of attendance, however, sheds light on certain key moments at the European Parliament, such as the reform of the Tobacco Excise Directive (TED), whose stated goal by the European Commission is to pave the way for a "smoke-free generation" starting in 2040. This proposal directly conflicts with the interests of the tobacco industry.



On June 3, members of the European Parliament voted in committee on their position regarding the reform of the Tobacco Taxation Directive. Records from the European Parliament show that numerous tobacco lobbyists²⁴ visited the Parliament on June 2 and 3 to try to sway members on this highly sensitive issue for the future of their industry. Once adopted by the parliamentary committee, the position was to be presented during the plenary session two weeks later.

On June 16 and 17, just before the vote, lobbyists flocked to Strasbourg in droves to try to secure the most favorable outcome for their paymasters. On June 16, one out of every 16 lobbyists present in the European Parliament was directly paid by the tobacco industry—not

²²European Parliament website, appointment search (accessed on 1 October 2026):

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/search-meetings?textualSearch=&transparencyRegisterIds=511123241099-96&fromDate=25%2F07%2F2025&toDate=24%2F07%2F2026>

²³ NC+'s page on the Transparency Register (accessed on 1 October 2026):

https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=681352437701-33

²⁴ The chart does not take into account consultancy firms funded by the tobacco industry. These firms deal with a wide range of issues and are therefore also involved when parliamentary debates focus on other topics.

even counting lobbyists from consulting firms. This represented an unprecedented mobilization by the tobacco industry for the 2025–2026 period.

Conclusion

In a single year, lobbyists thus entered the European Parliament 62,684 times, at times even outnumbering the MEPs themselves. This unprecedented data on lobbyist entries into the European Parliament reveals the forces at play. Unsurprisingly, private actors representing private economic and financial interests make up the vast majority: private interests account for at least 62% of entries and 67% of meetings with parliamentarians.

Among the 21 companies and groups with the highest number of entries into the European Parliament, 12 represent non-European interests and 5 are involved in oil and gas expansion. **Fossil fuel industry lobbyists were present 4 out of every 5 days at the Parliament, with their contingent averaging 8 people per day.** It is notably through this massive presence of fossil fuel lobbies that the European Union's numerous environmental setbacks can be explained.

Over the past year, the European Union has begun to dismantle its laws, often to the detriment of Europeans' health, the sustainability of natural resources, and its energy independence. By showing complacency toward Donald Trump, who personally called for the abolition of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, the European Union has progressively abandoned its principles and some of its laws. The new planned "omnibus" regulations, particularly on forever chemicals (PFAS), could follow the same path. **It is imperative to break with this trend that endangers democratic processes: laws meant to benefit everyone should not be written by private interests.**

ANNEXE I - Methodology

To understand the scale of lobbying in the European Parliament, three sets of data are important: the budgets allocated to lobbying by actors seeking to influence policy decisions, the meetings held with policymakers, and entries and exits at the European Parliament. This last set of data had never been published, leaving the extent of private interests and their influence on European legislation completely unclear.

In November 2025, the NGO Reclaim Finance initiated a series of five requests for access to administrative documents. These requests all had the same goal: to obtain data on lobbyists' entries into and exits from the European Parliament. After five requests (July–November 2025, November–December 2025, January–April 2026, May–June 2026, and July 2027), Reclaim Finance compiled the files and began processing the 1,387 pages provided by the European Parliament.

An initial analysis, covering the period from September to December 2025, was published in March 2026 on the Reclaim Finance NGO's website (in French and English).

This analysis is based on a full year at the European Parliament, from the resumption of work after the summer recess until the suspension of parliamentary proceedings—a total of 223

	07					08				
	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35
①		7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25
②	1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26
③	2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27
④	3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28
⑤	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29
⑥	5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30
⑦	6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24	31

days. Reclaim Finance has chosen to count only the days on which the European Parliament is officially in session, as per the parliamentary calendar it publishes. This includes committee weeks, political group weeks, external weeks, and plenary sessions. Excluded are the 5 weeks with no activities (from July 26, 2025, to August 24, 2025, and from December 25, 2025, to January 4, 2026), as well as public holidays on

which the Parliament was closed. Finally, days on which no lobbyists visited Parliament were excluded. This decision led to the exclusion of December 23 and 24 (the days before the parliamentary recess), April 2 and 3 (before Easter Monday), and Friday, May 15 (the day after Ascension Day).

The analyses regarding the number of meetings reported by members of Parliament were conducted in late September 2026, two months after the last meetings held by members of Parliament in July. The analyses take into account meetings held during the period from August 25, 2025, to July 24, 2026.

The classification of lobby groups ("Companies and groups," "professional consultancies," "Trade and business associations," etc.) and their nationality are as reported by the lobby groups in the Transparency Register.

"Fossil fuel" lobby groups are those that directly and exclusively represent the interests of the industry. This includes FuelsEurope and Eurogas, but not CEFIC or the American Chamber of

Commerce, which nevertheless represent some fossil fuel interests. Fossil fuel companies are those developing oil or gas projects—in the upstream and midstream sectors—according to data from the Global Oil and Gas Exit List 2025 (gogel.org). For example, Enel SpA is included based on its LNG expansion activities totaling one million metric tons or more per year.

Finally, regarding the cross-referencing of data on days of presence and meetings, Reclaim Finance tallied the number of unique days for each of the 40 identified fossil fuel industry actors (for a total of 1,143). For each actor, the number of days with meetings was also counted (428). This number differs from the number of appointments (560) because lobbyists sometimes have multiple appointments on the same day. Finally, appointments outside Brussels or Strasbourg—such as site visits or virtual meetings (60)—were subtracted from the number of days with appointments. This gives us:

$$\begin{aligned} &= (\text{Days of meetings} - \text{meetings outside the Parliament}) / \text{Days present} \\ &= (428 - 60) / 1,143 \\ &= 0.322 (=32,2\%) \text{ of days present accounted for by a meeting.} \end{aligned}$$

Reclaim Finance would like to once again thank the staff of the European Parliament's Transparency Unit for their time.

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