



Joint Transparency
Register Secretariat



Annual Report on the operations of the Transparency Register 2014

**Presented by the Secretaries General
of the European Parliament and the European Commission**

to

**European Parliament Vice-President Sylvie Guillaume
and
European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans**

As laid down in **Paragraph 27 of the Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) on the Transparency Register**, established on 23 June 2011 as a joint instrument for the European Parliament and European Commission, and as reviewed by the same parties, **this annual report accounts for the operations of the Transparency Register (TR) during the year 2014.**

This report:

- Presents statistics on the operations of the register from January to December 2014;
- Describes the activities undertaken by the Joint Transparency Register Secretariat (JTRS) to improve the quality of the content of the register, and raise awareness of the tool;
- Outlines the results of the review process of the IIA, which came to a close in the year covered.

Index

I: State of Play of the Transparency Register

1. Trends in 2014
2. Trends since 2011

II: Joint Transparency Register Secretariat's activities during 2014

1. Monitoring and enforcement
2. Guidance and awareness-raising

III: Review of the IIA on the Transparency Register

The review process in 2014

Acronyms used in the report:

EP = European Parliament
EC = European Commission
EU = European Union
GSC = General Secretariat of the Council
IIA = Interinstitutional Agreement
IT = Information Technology
JTRS = Joint Transparency Register Secretariat
MEP = Member of the European Parliament
NGO = Non-Governmental Organisation
TR or "the register" = Transparency Register

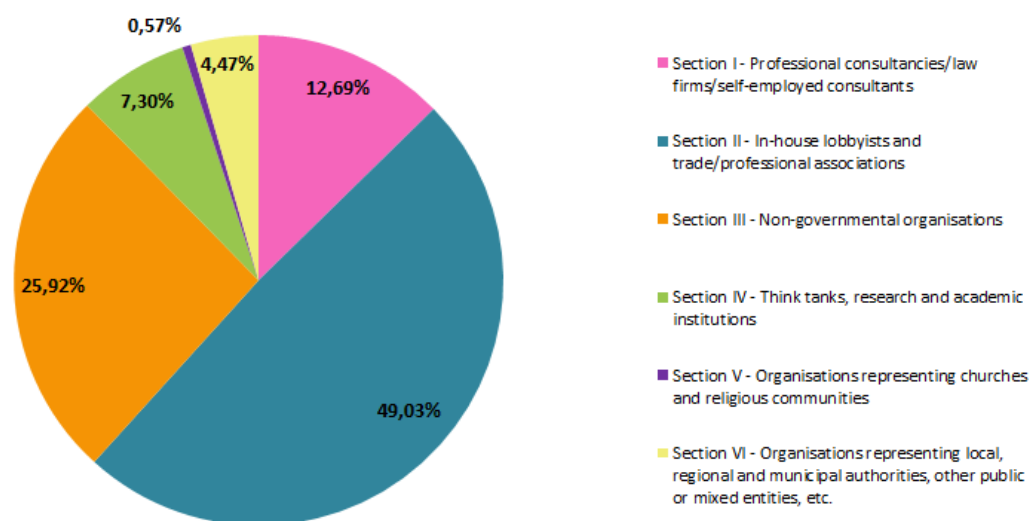
The Transparency Register (TR) was set up as a joint scheme by the European Parliament (EP) and the European Commission (EC) in 2011, to increase the transparency of the EU decision-making process. The register¹ provides citizens with information on organisations seeking to represent their interests at the EU level.

I: STATE OF PLAY OF THE TRANSPARENCY REGISTER²

There are six sections of registrants in the Transparency Register. In 2014, the largest section - representing almost half of all registrants - was *"In-house lobbyists and trade professional associations"* (see table 1). Within this section, the main sub-section was *"Trade, business and professional associations"*, representing 60% of all in-house lobbyists and trade professional associations (see table 2, Section II). *Trade, business and professional associations* represented 30% of all registrants, making it the most present in the register.

"Non-governmental organisations" was the next most common type of registrant, representing over 25% of all registered organisations. *"Companies and groups"* came third, representing almost 15% of all registrants, or 30% of section II. Although *"professional consultancies"* covered 62% of section I, it represented only 8% of total actors. The least common registrants were mixed private-public entities (section VI), followed by organisations representing churches and religious communities (Section V), then law firms (Section I).

Table 1: Total share of 6 sections of interest representatives:



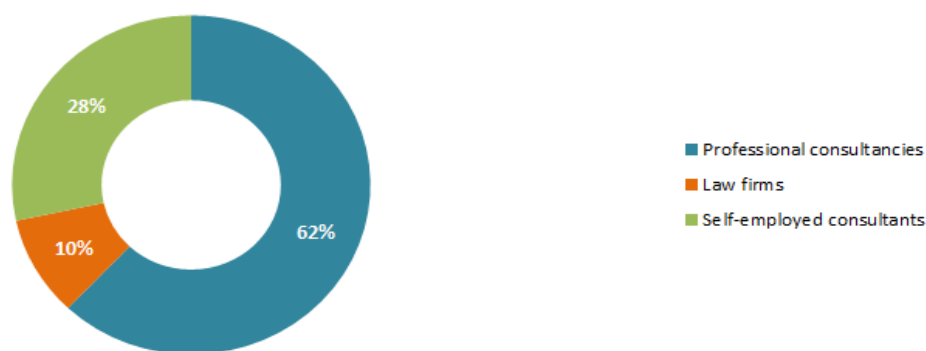
Trade, business and professional organisations were well represented in Belgium, with over 30% providing information about a head office in this country. A large majority of the registrants were EU-based (90%), with over 11% of all registrants from Germany, 10% from France and 10% from the UK. Only 2.5% of registrants are from the USA and just under 2% are Swiss-based entities.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister>

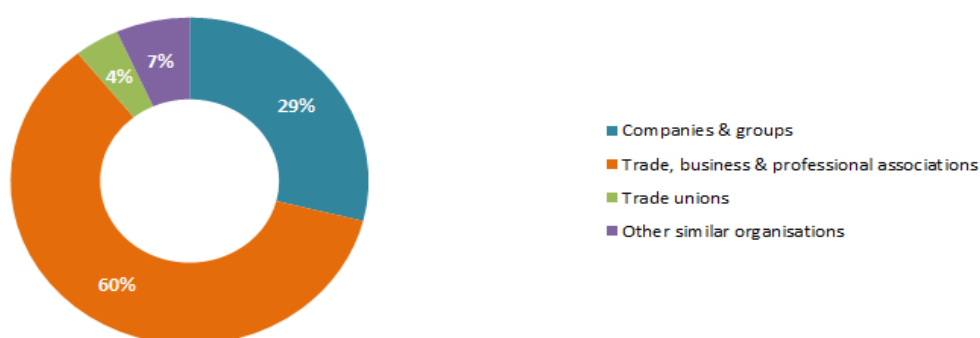
² Figures presented in this report reflect the situation as of 31.12.2014

Table 2: Breakdown per sub-section of registration³:

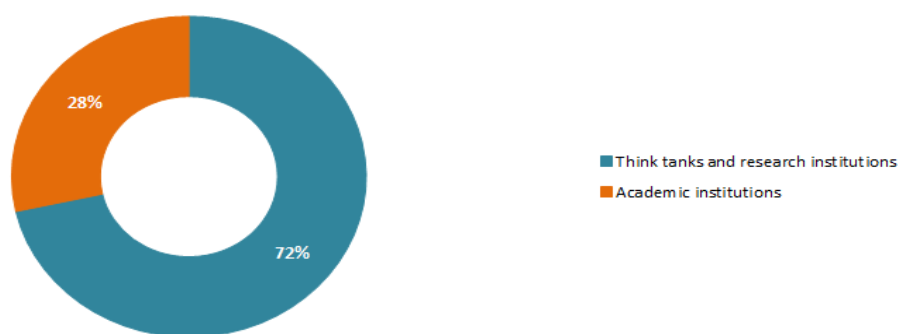
Section I: Professional consultancies/law firms/self-employed consultants



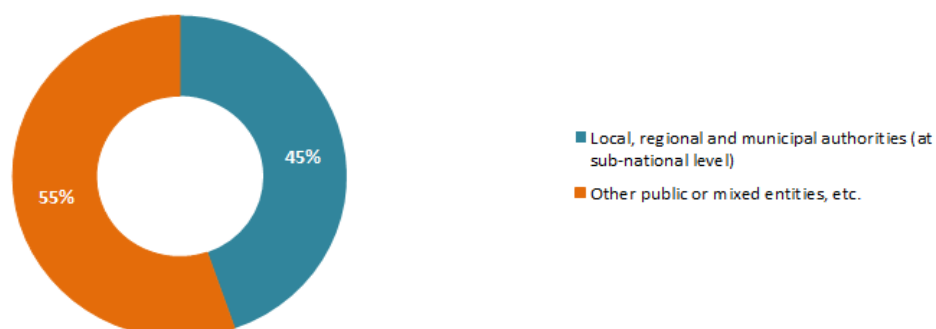
Section II: In-house lobbyists and trade/professional associations



Section IV - Think tanks, research and academic institutions



Section VI - Organisations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, other public or mixed entities, etc.



³ Sections III and V do not have sub-sections

Table 3: Extract of statistics as of 31.12.2014:

On 31/12/14, there were 7 352 registrants in the register spread across the following (sub)categories:	
I - Professional consultancies/law firms/self-employed consultants	933
Professional consultancies	579
Law firms	89
Self-employed consultants	265
II - In-house lobbyists and trade/professional associations	3 605
Companies & groups	1 043
Trade, business & professional associations	2 175
Trade unions	147
Other similar organisations	240
III - Non-governmental organisations	1 906
Non-governmental organisations, platforms and networks and similar	1 906
IV - Think tanks, research and academic institutions	537
Think tanks and research institutions	384
Academic institutions	153
V - Organisations representing churches and religious communities	42
Organisations representing churches and religious communities	42
VI - Organisations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, other public or mixed entities, etc.	329
Local, regional and municipal authorities (at sub-national level)	147
Other public or mixed entities, etc.	182

1. Trends in 2014

2 119 new entities registered in 2014⁴, representing almost double the number of organisations which registered in 2013. Of these new registrants, 355 organisations registered in section I, 894 in section II, 574 in section III, 171 in section IV, 11 in section V and 114 in section VI.

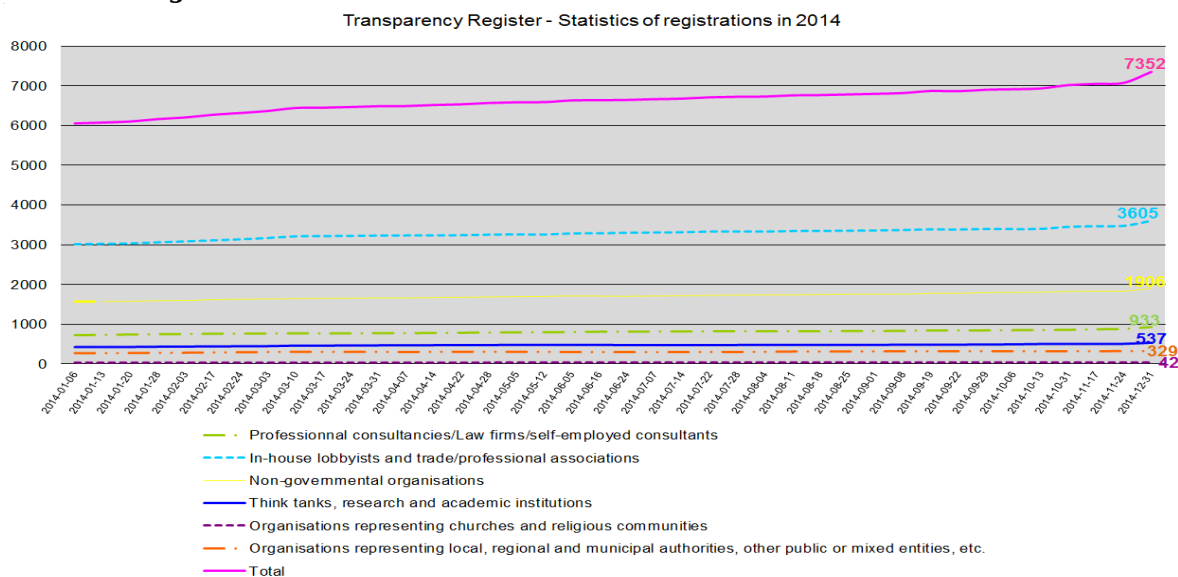
Table 4: Year of registration of currently active registrants

Registration year	Number of registrants still active
2014	2 119
2013	1 112
2012	1 174
2011	1 168

⁴ Statistics correct as of 23.02.15; counting only entities that are still registered.

During 2014, an average of 170 organisations registered per month.

Table 5: Registrations in 2014:



Growth in registrations was strongest at the start and the end of 2014, with one third of total annual registrations recorded in the first quarter and one third in the last quarter. This corresponds to two periods when the Transparency Register received considerable coverage in the press: at the start of the year, due to the review process (see III of this report) and at the end of the year when a new transparency initiative was launched at the Commission.

Indeed, the average number of monthly registrations more than doubled in December, when two new decisions on the part of the Commission took effect, requiring the publication of information concerning meetings held by Commissioners, members of their Cabinets and Directors-General with organisations and self-employed individuals⁵. In principle, these meetings should only be held with organisations and self-employed individuals that are registered in the Transparency Register⁶.

Joining the register is a precondition for organisations and self-employed individuals whose representatives seek facilitated access to the EP buildings. Accreditation needs to be renewed on an annual basis: 5 480 authorisations for access for individuals were granted in 2014 by Parliament, for representatives of almost 2 000 organisations in the register (either as a new request or a renewal).

On a monthly basis in 2014, the Transparency Register website received an average of 25 000 unique visitors (different clients viewing website within one day) or 40 000 visits (aggregate number of pages visited by uniquely identified clients). Up to 30% of visits were directed to the Transparency Register via the *europa* website, while almost 15% reach the TR website via search engines.

2. Trends since 2011

Growth in registrations was strongest in 2011 and the first half 2012, at the start of the Transparency Register. Growth stabilised at 10% in 2013, but has since picked up again, with the number of registered organisations growing by over one quarter during 2014. In terms of variation of growth for the various sections of registrants, section II has shown the strongest

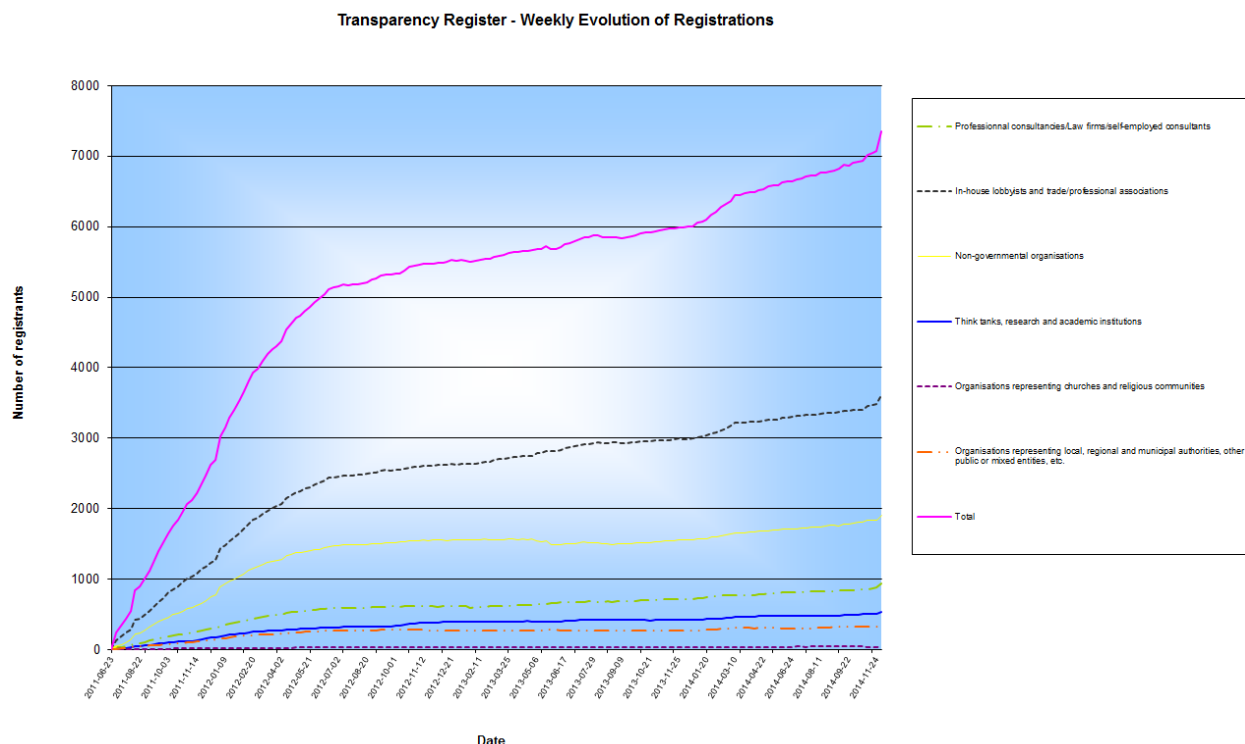
⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/news/2014/docs/c_2014_9051_en.pdf;

http://ec.europa.eu/news/2014/docs/c_2014_9048_en.pdf

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2014/EN/3-2014-9004-EN-F1-1.Pdf>, p. 9

growth since 2011, having more than tripled in size. Lowest growth rates are shown by sections V and VI, which have remained more or less constant since the beginning.

Table 6: Registrations 2011-2014:



II: Joint Transparency Register Secretariat activities during 2014

The Joint Transparency Register Secretariat (JTRS) is made up of a team of officials from the European Parliament's Secretariat and the Commission's Secretariat-General and operates under the coordination of the Head of the Transparency Unit in the Secretariat-General of the Commission. The JTRS meets on a weekly basis, with the Council Secretariat participating in these meetings as an observer since June 2012. The JTRS consists of five staff (three for the EP and two for the EC) to carry out the work associated with the scheme, and has two respective helpdesks⁷ for direct contact with TR users. Section 7 of the IIA attributes to the JTRS several tasks in order to implement the system, such as providing guidance to stakeholders, quality control of the content of the TR and awareness-raising activities.

1. Monitoring and Enforcement

In 2014, the JTRS performed 900 quality checks, with an average of 15 checks made per week - half of which were basic relevance checks (to establish whether the registrant falls under the scope of the IIA on the Transparency Register or not). A quality check consists in verifying the data provided by registrants to ensure that it complies with Annex II of the IIA.

The number of registrants removed from the register, because they had inconsistent, incorrect or incomplete data, did not update as required, or who were non-eligible to register, came to 212 in 2014.

Table 7: An overview of quality checks:

Date of Check	Number of checks	Alerts	Removed from the register
Since 01/01/14	900	61	212

⁷ Contact details are provided on the website:
<https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/contact/contact.do?locale=en>

While a vast majority of checks are random, a certain number consist in following up an alert received by JTRS about incorrect data contained in the register. Alerts, received both from sources internal and external to the institutions, are quantified within the total number of quality checks (see table above).

As a third element of the monitoring procedure, the JTRS also deals with formal "complaints" about more serious breaches of the Code of Conduct by TR registrants. Ten complaints were introduced in 2014, of which only 7 were admissible; this is considerably less than the number of complaints introduced in 2013 (17). The admissible complaints received in 2014 referred to possible breaches of clauses (b) "undue pressure", (c) "misrepresentation" and (d) "correct information" of the [Code of Conduct](#). After investigation by JTRS, and contact with the registrants concerned, one update was introduced and four disbarments ensued (three independent complaints were made about the same registrant, leading to a single disbarment). These disbarments all concerned non-eligible entities (see paragraph 9 of the [IIA](#)).

2. Guidance and awareness-raising

JTRS tasks include training and communication activities to raise awareness of the register and promote its use. In 2014, 17 presentations were made by the secretariat to outside bodies, including three student groups, and at events, including the OECD Lobbying Integrity event held in March 2014. The JTRS also provides implementing guidelines for registrants to help them with registration requirements. Internal presentations are also provided to staff inside the institutions to raise awareness of the tool.

III: REVIEW OF THE IIA ON THE TRANSPARENCY REGISTER

Under paragraph 30 of the IIA, the common register should be subject to review no later than two years after the entry into operation of the Transparency Register. To this end, in 2014 an inter-institutional high-level Working Group between Parliament and Commission was set up to evaluate the IIA and make recommendations on the need to introduce changes. The Working Group was co-chaired by the Vice-Presidents responsible for the dossier, in Parliament and at the Commission, and consisted of MEPs from all the political groups in Parliament, including the Chair and the rapporteur of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) of the EP.

1. The review process in 2014

Following the recommendations of the high-level Working Group, the AFCO committee adopted a draft report on "*the modification of the inter-institutional agreement on the Transparency Register*"⁸, which was then adopted by the Plenary by its decision of 15 April 2014 with 646 votes in favour, 7 against and 14 abstentions. The revised IIA was signed by the European Parliament and the Commission and published in the EU Official Journal in September 2014.⁹ The new IIA entered into force on 1 January 2015.

The review process was fed by a) a public consultation after the first year of operations (2012), b) two annual reports by the JTRS (2012 & 2013), c) European-wide umbrella stakeholders' meetings (three political level meetings held in 2013 and two meetings at technical level), and d) benchmarking with other public regulators (in the context of the OECD). Council was invited by the European Parliament and the Commission to observe the review process.

⁸ See procedure file:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2014/2010\(ACI\)](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2014/2010(ACI))

⁹ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.277.01.0011.01.ENG

Main changes introduced by the review:

- All registrants must declare their estimated costs related to relevant activities (previously this was a requirement only for section II);
- The human resources invested in relevant activities must be broken down into percentages of full time equivalent (FTE) (previously only an overall staff figure was required);
- Registrants must declare their participation in EU Expert Groups, fora, EP intergroups or other similar structures;
- Further clarifications were provided, with regard to definitions (sections, activities and expenditures) covered by the scope of the Transparency Register;
- A streamlined 'alerts & complaints' procedure was introduced to allow for more efficient checks of registrations allegedly containing wrong or misleading information;
- New incentives for registration.

In addition, a more modern design and an improved structure for the Transparency Register website were developed, to be rolled out in January 2015, in line with the new requirements. The main aims of this upgrade were to achieve: a straightforward registration process accompanied by comprehensive guidelines; a faster search tool; improved helpdesk services and useful links. The new register is available in all EU official languages. New guidelines, in line with the revised IIA, were drafted and translated to all EU official languages.