

Divide and Conquer: A look behind the scenes of the EU pharmaceutical industry lobby

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Executive Summary

This report surveyed the entries made by pharmaceutical companies and their representatives in the EU's lobby Transparency Register to find out how much the industry claimed to spend on lobbying. According to these findings, the pharmaceutical industry lobby is spending more than €40 million annually to influence decision making in the European Union (EU) - of which nearly half is spent by drug manufacturers on in-house lobbyists.

Results from this study show that many pharmaceutical companies lobbying the European Commission on legislation fail to declare their activities to the Register. As registration to the Transparency Register is voluntary, many pharmaceutical companies choose not to declare their expenditures. If recorded properly, expenditure on lobbying activities by the industry could be shown to be as high as €91 million annually.

Civil society organisations active on EU medicines issues, on the other hand, spend a combined €3.4 million per year. With the immense disparity between the affluence of public interest groups and the industrial lobby, it becomes even more difficult to level the policy playing field. This estimate is more comparable to pharma's lobby footprint in the USA, where the pharmaceutical manufacturing sector has reportedly spent about €85.5 million (\$115 million USD) in lobbying the American government in 2011. The report estimates that 220 lobbyists are active in the EU on behalf of the pharmaceutical industry, which pales in comparison to nearly 1500 industry lobbyists documented in the US in 2011. Clear and enforced reporting rules in the US yield a more accurate picture of pharma's lobby contingent in America as compared to the EU.

This report also reveals a number of persistent shortcomings in the EU Transparency Register...

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