



Merkel's EU presidency must open "black box" of EU rule-making

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Chancellor Angela Merkel must put public interest and citizens' right to know centre-stage when Germany takes over the EU Presidency from July, according to MEPs and lobby watchdog groups.

The Council of the EU remains a fertile ground for corporate lobbies says a [letter](#) [1] signed by 91 MEPs and NGOs Lobby Control and Corporate Europe Observatory. They call on Merkel to boost transparency and scrutiny of decision-making in the institution, at a time when industry lobbyists are demanding billions in bailouts and massive deregulation.

The Council and most of the powerful permanent representations of the member states have repeatedly refused transparency. This opacity enables privileged access to decision-makers for corporate lobby groups.

"In hardly any other area do reality and self-perception of the EU diverge as much as in questions of transparency," says GUE/NGL Co-President **Martin Schirdewan**.

"The Council of the EU is a key player in the legislative process and it should be in its interest to avoid any impression of backroom politics and covert influence. Instead, Council meetings take place behind closed doors, minutes of such meetings are not publicly available, unilateral influence at secret lobbying meetings is no exception, and the corporate sponsorship of Presidencies take place without it being clear what the companies gain from their contribution.

"Germany now has the chance to put an end to this undemocratic activity during its EU Presidency and we urge the government to seize this opportunity."

The signatories insist that the German presidency refuse all corporate sponsorship. Sponsorship of previous Presidencies, by the car and fossil fuels industry, has led to potential conflicts of interest.

The GUE/NGL group is pushing the German Presidency to work for an EU coronavirus recovery package based on solidarity and tackling the climate crisis.

The letter: <https://www.guengl.eu/content/uploads/2020/06/MEP-Merkel-letter-FINAL.pdf> [1]

[European Left Party News](#) [2]

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