



# EU transparency registry and cities

June 2015



Cities should not be obliged to join the EU's transparency register. We call on the European institutions to exempt city governments, and their representative offices, from the mandatory requirement to sign the EU transparency register.

Recent changes to the transparency registry mean that cities throughout the EU are now treated in the same way as private businesses, instead of as a level of representative government.

Whilst fully supporting the commitment to improved transparency and better policy-making, and the role of the transparency register in that respect, we believe a clear differentiation is needed between local and regional governments, and other groups and stakeholders.

The Lisbon Treaty underlines the respect for regional and local self-government. At the same time, current discussions on an EU urban agenda highlight the importance of cities as partners in delivering on the EU's objectives, and stress the value of improved multi-level governance within the EU.

City governments, with our democratically elected representatives, are the level of government closest to the citizens, best placed to understand and reflect their current needs and hopes for the future. We provide many of the public services needed to guarantee a good life quality for all. Our major cities in particular are key players in stimulating economic growth, innovation and job creation in Europe. In our cities, where policies and strategies connect and come together, we have the role of ensuring that social equity can be combined with sustainable growth; a quality that has been widely recognised by regional, national and European institutions.

There is a special relationship between the members of the European Parliament and the EU population. The European Parliament is the EU institution directly elected by the citizens, of which more than 70% live in cities or urban areas. In the interest of better policy-making and better representing the public interest of our citizens, we should strengthen the connection between their elected representatives at local and European level.

This highlights that a clear differentiation is needed between local and regional governments, and other groups and stakeholders. The direct access by our democratically elected city governments to our European institutions should be encouraged and enabled. We therefore call for an exemption for local governments from the obligation to sign the EU transparency register.

Furthermore, we would welcome an open discussion about the possibility for elected representatives of cities to receive formal speaking rights in the European Parliament in areas where they are concerned (e.g. urban-related topics).

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