Industry interests in the advisory bodies for EU health policy

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Industry influence over EU expert bodies

- Expert groups (incl. High Level Groups)
- EU agencies: EFSA and EMEA
- European Technology Platforms (ETPs)
- (Direct lobbying (CEFIC lobby on REACH))
- (Impact and risk assessments 'Better Regulation' agenda)

Expert Groups

- Around 1000 expert groups. According to Commission figures, 35.000 experts of which 7.000 form industry
- Before 2005 complete darkness
 After 2008 membership of most expert groups disclosed
- ALTER-EU found > 100 groups dominated by industry
- What is an expert?? Not defined

Expert Groups

- DG Internal Market Financial regulation: around 80% of the non-state members come from banks, insurance, investment fund managers etc.
- DG Enterprise and Industry: one third (37/46) of expert groups balanced in favour of business

Health-related Expert Groups

DG SANCO: "Someone who [...] works for an organisation with a 'vested interest' on a particular policy issue [...] should simply not be appointed" as an adviser

Is this rule respected? Not for "Special Advisers" Commissioner Kuneva:

Pat Cox Special Advisor for Consumer Affairs (lobbyist for APCO - Pfizer, Microsoft..)

Health-related Expert Groups

- 13 Expert Groups under DG SANCO with industry representation
- Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health
- 2. Animal health and animal welfare
- 3. European Alcohol and Health Forum
- 4. Tobacco Control Stakeholder Consultation Expert Group
- 5. Export import of certain dangerous chemicals

High Level Groups

- Competitiveness of the European Chemical industry
- Competitiveness of the Agro-food industry (out of 19 non-govt members 16 industry)
- Pharmaceutical Forum out of non-state members, 5 industry and 5 "NGO" of which one corporate funded (EPF)
 > devil in the detail: Information to patient working group

Source: FoEE's report 'Whose views count? Business Influence and the EC's HLG' (February 2009)

Example by European Beekeeping Coordination: Pesticide risk asessment for bees

Problem: the current assessment of the pesticide risk for bees does not incorporate the impact of systemic insecticides (seed coating)

- EC including EFSA does not have any bee-expert available
- DG SanCo asked the EBC to find an expert. Via EPPO (European and Mediterranean plant protection organisation; also no bee expert), they asked an academic organistion ICPBR (International Commission for Plant-Bee Relations)
- ICPBR formed 3 working groups for 3 topics (global assessment scheme, larvae tests, tunnel and field tests). Out of 17 working group members, 6 industry (some in 2 working groups): Roland Becker (BASF), Mike Coulson, Natalie Ruddle and Ed Pillins (Syngenta), Christian Maus (Bayer CropScience), Mark Miles (Dow)
- Result: Draft proposals dramatic
 - a product considered as "low risk" when the larvae lost is below 30% (!)
 - assessment based only on acute toxicity, not systemic exposure through nectar and pollen.

EU expert agencies

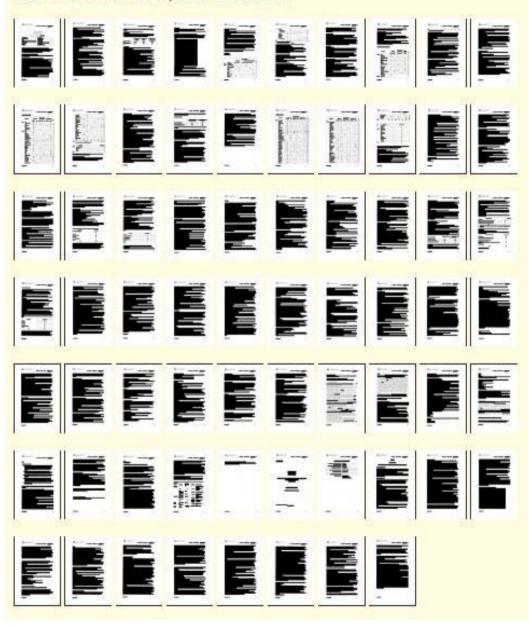
EFSA:

- cases of conflicts of interest in Panels
- Transparency: scientific opinion Amflora potato not online on day approval.

EMEA:

- Industry funded patients organisations in committees and Management Board, ad hoc experts (Roche)
- Transparency: missing documents and conflict of interest declarations (Prescrire example Rimonabant)

Censorship masquerading as "transparency": the EMEA assessment report on rimonabant



European Technology Platforms

Mission:

Improve industry competitiveness by advising on research priorities and funding

36 ETPs, Highly industry-dominated

Direct FP7 funding

Experts from companies can also decide on projects

European Technology Platforms

- ETP for Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem) (board: 16 total, 10 industry)
- Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform (board: 24 total, 14 industry)
- Plants for the Future (members: 14 total, 10 industry)
- European Biofuels Technology Platform (125 WG members, 1 NGO active)
- CEO Ombudsman complaint
- ETP for Water (WssTP): dropped Millennium Development Goals
- Zero Emissions Platform (promoting CCS; board 40 total, 28 industry)

Call for Action

- European Commission:
 End corporate influence over (health) policy making
 Dissolve industry-dominated bodies
 Put social and environmental concerns first
- MEPs and NGOs: Scrutinise expert groups, agencies and Technology Platforms

Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU)