

Subject: EBPS offices in the Parliament  
From: Worst EU Lobbying Awards organisers  
Date: Thu, November 13, 2008 10:34 pm  
To: Members of the EP Bureau

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Dear Member of the Bureau of the European Parliament,

In April this year, the European Business and Parliament Scheme (EBPS) came under criticism for using its rent-free offices inside the European Parliament (EP) to help large corporations influence EU decision-making. Parliamentarians from different political groups expressed concern about the EBPS' lobbying operations, and the Parliament's Conference of Presidents decided that the organisation should be asked to move out of the building. We notice, however, that this decision has not yet been implemented, more than six months later. The delay seems to be caused by both the Quaestors and the Bureau having postponed their confirmation of the decision of the Conference of Presidents. In the meanwhile, the EBPS has remained very active in facilitating lobbying events involving MEPs and large corporations.

Recently for instance, the EBPS wrote to an MEP with a high public profile on energy issues to offer an 'educational programme', to "better understand economic issues and the businesses that work within the legislative framework created" by the Parliament. Among the firms which the EBPS recommended the MEP to engage with through a "company attachment" was Suez, the France-based energy, water and waste management corporation. In a two-page appendix, a wide range of options are presented, starting with the offer of "Meeting with top specialists and panels of experts at SUEZ headquarters in Paris and/or Brussels with possible additional on-site visits and meetings." This type of meetings clearly represent very attractive lobbying opportunities for a company like Suez, which, clearly, has a direct commercial interest in influencing several important dossiers under discussion in the European Parliament at the time, including reports on emissions trading, greenhouse gas reduction, CO2 capture and storage as well as the directive on renewable energy. The claims by EBPS that its corporate members do not use the opportunities facilitated by EBPS to lobby MEPs is simply unconvincing.

EBPS staff continue to work from offices within the European Parliament to facilitate big business lobbying of MEPs, using EP email addresses. This is an unacceptable situation. Implementing the decision of the Conference of Presidents is long-overdue. We appeal to you to ensure that this happens at the next forthcoming meeting of the Bureau of the European Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Will Dinan

On behalf of the organising committee for the 2008 Worst Lobby Awards

<http://www.worstlobby.eu/2008/>