

Lobby register for Hamburg

Lobby register for Hamburg! - Transparency through lobby contacts strengthens democracy

Lobby register for Hamburg! - Transparency through lobby contacts strengthens democracy

09/15/2020

•

transparency

The discussion about a lobby register is currently in full swing at the federal level after the grand coalition presented a draft law on this. There are good reasons to also have this debate at state level. Here too, a publicly accessible transparency register of contacts between lobbyists and politicians and administrators can help to make political discourse more comprehensible and prevent corruption.

Hamburg has taken a successful path with its Transparency Act and is known across national borders for the openness of its administrative activities. The amendment to the Transparency Act at the end of 2019 expanded the special position of transparency in Hamburg by extending the obligation to publish information in the transparency register to the entire indirect state administration and introducing a legally binding review of violations of transparency obligations by the freedom of information officer. In Hamburg, however, transparency should not stop at the current legal situation, but should be open to developments.

The influence of business representatives and lobby groups on politics is neither prohibited nor questionable per se. It is part of our indirect democracy, but it nevertheless depends to a large extent on transparency and openness. We live in a time of credibility crisis of democratic rule of law. Transparency and public discourse are central elements that can strengthen the ideal of democratic participation and control in the future. Confidence in the integrity and incorruptibility of democratic institutions, however, requires clear rules that make attempts to covertly exert political influence more difficult and reveal the links between lobbyists, the clients behind them and political decision-makers. A legally binding lobby register of all interest groups that hold regular talks with political decision-makers in Hamburg can create this trust if, in addition to the legislative and executive branches, it not only lists the lobby groups, but also their clients. In addition, a lobby register should not only document who had discussions with whom at what time, but also on which topic they were held. A pressure to explain and justify that may result from this is a direct part of the comprehensive responsibility of elected representatives and officials for

the community and is associated with the exercise of prominent public functions.

Johannes Caspar, the Hamburg Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information: "Not only since the recent debates about the secondary activities of members of parliament, the role of state decision-makers in processes involving the Wirecard company and the cum-ex transactions of the Warburg Bank have been contacts between politicians and business representatives at the center of public attention. Secrecy and concealment of such contacts undermine trust in the integrity of democratic institutions. Lobby talks with representatives of public interests and the community should therefore always be placed in the light of public discourse from the back rooms. In Germany as a whole, especially in Hamburg, there is a clear need to catch up. Many other countries have already taken the first steps towards more openness. In order to strengthen democratic processes, this topic must be actively promoted. However, half measures or symbolic legislation are not enough here, with which an effective, binding lobby register law would ultimately be missed."

press contact

rot13("Znegva Fpurzz", "jwyhrumotkgcsqfp");mmehcS nitraM

Phone:

+49 40 428 54-4044

Email: rot13("cerffr@qngrafpuhgm.unzohet.qr", "bujezdlihamnvfcq");ed.grubmah.ztuhcsnetad@esserp