



Brussels, 26. October 2004

## **SEAP rejects NGOs request for registration and reporting requirements**

The Society of European Affairs Professionals SEAP is against the compulsory registration of lobbyists in Brussels.

SEAP does not share the view expressed by the Corporate Europe Observatory CEO in its recent open letter to Commission President-designate Barroso, that “the excessive influence of corporate lobby groups over EU policy making has to be curbed”.

EU affairs practitioners play an essential and recognised role in informing the European policy makers on the views held by business and other interests concerning proposed EU legislation. They thus perform a vital function in the modern democratic process. By the way, the same role is being played by the NGOs themselves.

SEAP was founded in order to set and promote the highest ethical standards for EU affairs practitioners, and has developed a code of conduct, which all its members are required to comply with. Membership is open to all EU affairs professionals, including those working for NGOs. Self-regulation is the best way to promote ethical behaviour with lobbyists, whether they represent business or other civil society group interests.

The registration and reporting requirements on which the CEO insists, would, if accepted by the Commission, introduce the American model in Europe. This model does not correspond with the position of civil society in the EU, and trying to promote in Europe is in any case inconsistent with the CEO statement that “we have to prevent Europe from drifting towards the levels of corporate control exercised over politics in the US”.

SEAP will continue to defend the profession of EU affairs practitioners, and to raise awareness on the ethical standards by which they abide. It is preparing a further strengthening of its code, including sanctions for non-compliance. There is no need for EU legislation in this respect.

### **Further information:**

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