

**Mr. Johannes Hahn**

European Commissioner for Budget and Administration

**Ms. Vera Jourová**

Vice-President of the European Commission  
for Values and Transparency

Brussels, 08 June 2023

Dear Commissioner Hahn,  
Dear Commissioner Jourová,

**RE: Civil society call to restore the details of European Commission officials in the EU Whoiswho register**

We, European civil society organisations advocating for the accountability of institutions towards the public and for civil dialogue, express our concern about the decision of the European Commission to remove the details of civil servants below the Heads of Unit level from the official directory of the European Union Whoiswho.

Restricting access to officials limits opportunities for civil dialogue and reduces institutional transparency at a time where this needs to be increased more than ever. This decision risks fostering inequity and bias, creating an environment where only those stakeholders with greater capacity and resources will be able to continue to engage with civil servants. Such an unbalanced representation of interests could open the door to shady areas where undue influence can thrive, which is exactly what the Commission should be seeking to avoid.

Without access to contacts of key civil servants, activities such as sending relevant feedback, sharing examples of gaps in policy implementation or inviting officials to events cannot take place. National civil society organisations will no longer have the possibility to build and nurture relations with the desk officers for their countries. Consequently, the Commission will be deprived of the input it seeks from the many and diverse stakeholders civil society organisations represent, both when drafting and when implementing policy.

Moreover, restricting access to the full organigram will increase external pressure on the Heads of Unit themselves, who will have to cope with the substantial amount of requests for information that will be directed at them.

**The European Commission must create an open and transparent environment where access to information is made public as an essential pre-requisite for meaningful civil dialogue and democratic participation. We call on the Commission to at least restore the details of civil servants that were made available before the latest changes.**

We also wish further steps for even greater institutional transparency to be taken in the future, following existing best practices from the Permanent Representations to the EU of Member States such as Sweden or Finland who disclose names, phone numbers and email addresses of officials at all

levels.

As the largest of the EU institutions, the only one with the right of initiative, and the one that has traditionally demonstrated a greater level of transparency than the others, we believe the European Commission should continue to set the example.

Yours sincerely,

Laura de Bonfils, Secretary General, Social Platform (letter's initiator)

Carlotta Besozzi, Coordinator, Civil Society Europe (letter's initiator)

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Ariel Brunner, Regional Director, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia

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Ghislain Stéphanie, Political Affairs Manager, Eurogroup for Animals

Timothy Ghilain, Interim Chief Executive, European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD)

Mathieu de Poorter, President, European Council of Associations of General Interest

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Elisa Gambardella, Coordinator, SOLIDAR Foundation

Lars Ebert, Secretary General, Culture Action Europe

Catherine Naughton, Executive Director, European Disability Forum (EDF)

Jagoda Munic, Executive Director, Friends of the Earth Europe  
Ally Dunhill, Director of Policy, Advocacy & Communications, Eurochild

Richard Köhler, Advocacy Director, TGEU

Victor Petuya, President, European Parents' Association (EPA)

Maria Nyman, Secretary General, Caritas Europa

Stecy Yghemonos, Director, Eurocarers

Ester Asin, Director, WWF European Policy Office

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Aurelie Baranger, Director, Autism-Europe

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Maria van der Heide, Head of EU Policy, ShareAction

Dominik Kirchdorfer, President, European Future Forum (EFF)

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