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European Chemicals Agency tightens conflict-of-interest rules following civil society complaint

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Thursday, January 29th, 2026

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Following a conflict-of-interest complaint submitted by Transparency International EU (TI EU) and three other civil society organisations, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has announced revisions to its conflict-of-interest policies concerning external consultants.

In July 2025, TI EU, alongside Corporate Europe Observatory, LobbyControl and the Good Lobby, submitted a [complaint](#) to the ECHA concerning its contracts with the consultancy Ramboll, following [reporting](#) that Ramboll had advised the ECHA on issues related to so-called ‘forever chemicals’, or PFAS. Ramboll had allegedly simultaneously advised companies who were actively lobbying the EU on PFAS regulation. This constituted a clear conflict-of-interest risk, and we demanded the ECHA review its decision to award Ramboll the PFAS consulting contracts.

In its [response](#), the ECHA maintained it had assessed any potential conflicts of interest related to the case. Nevertheless, it has since expanded its conflict-of-interest rules, now specifically mandating all ECHA service providers to assess any professional conflicts of interest prior to awarding contracts. It further stipulates that all tenderers and contractors must formally declare any potential professional conflicts of interest, and commit to their avoidance. Previous rules did not contain these specific obligations, merely mentioning the eventuality of conflict-of-interest declarations. TI EU will continue to monitor the application of these rules in practice.

Raphaël Kergueno, Senior Policy Officer at TI EU, said

“The European Chemicals Agency must work for one interest alone: the safety of European citizens. Weak conflict-of-interest rules risk undermining that interest, to

the detriment of both citizen health and the environment. We therefore welcome the ECHA's initial recognition of this fact in the much-needed revision of their conflict-of-interest policy. It is now up to the ECHA to ensure these rules are upheld for the duration of their external contracts.”

Notes to editors

- Consult ECHA's former conflict-of-interest rules [here](#)
- Consult ECHA's current conflict-of-interest rules [here](#)

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