



Fossil Free Politics MEP Pledge: FAQ

This comprehensive FAQ addresses all key questions from decision makers considering the Fossil Free Politics pledge. It combines practical guidance with political rationale and clear definitions to support a strong stance against fossil fuel industry influence in public policy.

If you have a question that is not on this list, please email info@fossilfreepolitics.org

[Q: What is the Fossil Free Politics MEP Pledge?](#)

[Q: What do you understand as Fossil Fuel Companies?](#)

[Q: What do you understand as lobbying? Is corporate lobbying a problem?](#)

[Different stakeholders are lobbying their decision makers, no?](#)

[Q: How is the FF industry blocking Climate action?](#)

[Q: Can you give some example scenarios where the pledge does or does not apply.](#)

[Q: What is the problem with fossil fuel lobbying?](#)

[Q: How does the fossil fuel industry block climate action?](#)

[Q: Aren't current lobbying rules enough?](#)

[Q What is a firewall?](#)

[Q: Why focus only on fossil fuel companies and not all polluting sectors?](#)

[Q: I support the pledge, but what if I unintentionally break it?](#)

[Q: How can I commit to FFP as a decision-maker ?](#)

[Q: The fossil fuel industry supports jobs, why exclude them?](#)

[Q: What if I cannot sign the pledge now?](#)

[Q: Why sign if I already comply with ethics rules of the European Parliament?](#)

[Q: Will this restrict informed debate?](#)

[Q: Can non-MEPs sign?](#)

[Q: Can I still attend events where fossil fuel companies might be present?](#)

[Q: What if my party receives fossil fuel donations?](#)

[Q: Will this hurt my visibility or networking?](#)

[Q: Is partial commitment possible?](#)

[Q: Are materials available to explain this publicly?](#)

[Q: Will I be supported after signing?](#)

[Q: Can I sign confidentially or delay the announcement?](#)

[Q: Who else has signed?](#)

[Q: What about partnerships with fossil fuel companies for renewable projects?](#)

Q: What is the Fossil Free Politics MEP Pledge?

A: The Fossil Free Politics (FFP) Pledge is a voluntary political commitment made by elected representatives or decision makers at various levels (local, national, or European) to protect democratic institutions from the influence of the fossil fuel industry. By signing the pledge, decision makers commit to taking clear, concrete steps such as limiting lobby meetings with the fossil fuel industry to the minimum and publicly disclosing interactions with fossil fuel lobbyists if there are any. The goal is to limit undue influence that obstructs climate action, improve transparency, and ensure that public policy serves the people and the planet, not polluting industries.

Q: What do you understand as Fossil Fuel Companies?

A: The **Fossil Free Politics campaign's definition** of fossil fuel companies is, as follows:

- Companies involved in the **extraction of fossil fuels** (coal, oil and gas);
- Companies involved in **building and operating infrastructure used to transport and/or store** fossil fuels;
- Companies involved primarily (**more than 51%** of their turnover) in **trading and selling** fossil fuels;
- Energy utilities who primarily (**more than 51%** of their turnover) consume **fossil fuels to generate electricity**.

If we talk about the **Fossil Fuel Industry**, we refer to the fossil fuel companies but also to their whole network of influence¹, like trade associations, sectoral associations... We also include individuals / organisations representing fossil fuel industry interests - PR firms and consultancies working for the industry, individuals or organisations with commercial or vested interests in the industry.

Q: What do you understand as lobbying? Is corporate lobbying a problem? Different stakeholders are lobbying their decision makers, no?

[Lobbying refers to any form of communication](#) initiated by or on behalf of an organized interest group with the explicit aim of influencing public policy decisions. This can involve direct engagement with policymakers—such as face-to-face meetings, phone calls, or email correspondence. Indirect strategies, including the use of publications, events, or advertising campaigns, also fall under the umbrella of lobbying, as they utilize substantial resources to convey policy messages. Ultimately, all lobbying activities share a common goal: to shape decisions made by public authorities in a way that aligns with the lobbyist's preferred legislative outcomes.

Unequal & Undue Influence and Access

Corporations often possess the financial means to invest heavily in lobbying, enabling them to exert a disproportionate influence on policy making compared to civil society organizations

¹ The Big Seven - Shell, Total, Eni, Equinor, ExxonMobil, BP and Chevron - belong to a total of 52 networks. This includes some of the largest business associations active in Brussels, such as Business Europe, European Chemical Industry Council, International Association of Oil & Gas Producers as well as sectoral associations such as Hydrogen Europe and the Carbon Capture & Storage Association. Source: https://transparency.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/embargoed_TI-EU_pipelines-of-power_report.pdf

(CSOs). CSOs frequently encounter barriers when trying to access decision-makers and contribute meaningfully to the policy process. At the EU level in particular, institutional structures tend to favor corporate access to decision-making. It is important to distinguish between the interests represented by each group: CSOs advocate for the public good, whereas corporations pursue private interests that may conflict with broader societal needs. This is definitely the case for fossil fuel companies, who have a long documented history of blocking and weakening climate and energy policies. This imbalance is evident in the disparity between the number of lobbying meetings high-level EU officials have with fossil fuel companies versus those with CSOs. ([See our report on the lobby contacts of the Commission.](#))

Fossil Fuel Lobbying and Institutional Vulnerabilities

The fossil fuel lobby has established a powerful and entrenched network of influence within Brussels, often enjoying significant access and authority in shaping EU policies. This influence is further reinforced by the presence of some of the world's most well-funded and well-connected organizations operating within a system that lacks strong safeguards against undue influence and conflicts of interest.

These issues are particularly acute in the European Parliament. MEPs are permitted to hold secondary jobs and engage in activities that may present conflicts of interest—as long as they are disclosed. However, the oversight mechanisms in place are weak, with limited proactive enforcement of ethical standards. Sanctions for violations are rare and insufficient to serve as a meaningful deterrent.

Q: How is the Fossil Fuel industry blocking climate action?

A: The fossil fuel industry has spent decades lobbying to delay, weaken, or block effective climate policies, despite knowing the science behind climate change. Through lobbying, greenwashing, and promoting false solutions like CCS, blue hydrogen, and bioenergy, they continue to protect profits at the expense of people and the planet. Their influence has significantly undermined the EU's ability to meet climate goals and phase out fossil fuels.

➡ For more detail, see our background [info sheet](#)

Q: Can you give some example scenarios where the pledge does or does not apply.

A: Here are a few example scenarios to help clarify when the pledge does or does not apply:

The pledge **applies** in these cases:

- Private meeting with a fossil fuel lobbyist: You should avoid such meetings unless strictly necessary for regulatory purposes—and if held, they must be transparently disclosed.

The pledge **does not apply** in these cases:

- Incidental presence: You attend a public event or panel where fossil fuel representatives are in the audience or on a separate panel—and the event is not sponsored or organized by the industry.

- Engaging in legislative work (e.g. hearings, inquiries, committee meetings): When fossil fuel actors are invited by the Parliament itself as part of a balanced, transparent process, your participation is allowed.
- Unintentional encounters: If you find yourself unintentionally in a meeting with a fossil fuel lobbyist, the pledge allows for this—but asks that you transparently report the interaction afterward.

Q: What is the problem with fossil fuel lobbying?

A: Fossil fuel companies enjoy disproportionate access and influence over political processes compared to civil society groups. This often leads to delays and weakening of climate legislation. E.g. in the two and a half months following the start of the invasion on 24th February 2022, Commissioner Simson and her cabinet met nine fossil fuel companies, including two meetings with Shell. That was double the average frequency of fossil fuel company meetings she'd had over the two and a half years since she'd been in office. At least five of those meetings related to Ukraine, fossil fuels from Russia, security of gas supply or energy prices. Two years on, we've seen how inviting the fossil fuel lobby to advise on Europe's response to the energy crisis has led to locking-in more fossil fuel imports and infrastructure, instead of improving Europe's energy security through domestic, decentralised renewable energy production, energy efficiency and savings. For more info read [this report](#) on the undue influence of the fossil fuel lobby on the EU Commission's agenda.

Q: How does the fossil fuel industry block climate action?

A: By lobbying against regulations, promoting false solutions, protecting subsidies, and delaying or weakening climate laws.

Q: Aren't current lobbying rules enough?

A: Existing lobbying and transparency rules in the EU set some important foundations, such as the obligation to register in the EU Transparency Register (See: Annex I Article 7 of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure), to declare meetings with lobbyists (for Commissioners, their cabinets, and high-level officials), and disclose gifts above a certain value (Art. 6, Annex I). See: [EP RULES OF PROCEDURE 2024-2029](#)

However, these rules have significant weaknesses:

- They do not cover all policymakers equally - many Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are not required to disclose all meetings;
- There is little enforcement of conflict-of-interest rules and no sanctions for violations in many cases;
- Sponsorship of events, travel, accommodation, and indirect benefits by fossil fuel companies is often allowed and rarely monitored, providing a backdoor for influence. The Fossil Free Politics pledge calls for a firewall, inspired by tobacco control measures, to block this.



Q What is a firewall?

A: A firewall is a clear, enforceable separation between public decision-making and corporate interests that undermine climate goals. It means no fossil fuel sponsorships, no private meetings without transparency, no lobbying privileges, and no revolving doors between government and polluters.

Just as Article 5.3 of the WHO's tobacco treaty protects health policy from tobacco industry interference, we need strong rules to keep fossil fuel money out of politics.

Q: Why focus only on fossil fuel companies and not all polluting sectors?

A: Fossil fuel companies are at the core of the climate crisis. They are responsible for a major share of global greenhouse gas emissions and have spent decades knowingly misleading the public and governments about the devastating consequences of their operations. At the same time, they have led aggressive lobbying campaigns to delay, weaken, or sabotage climate legislation around the world.

What sets fossil fuel companies apart is that their core business model is fundamentally at odds with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the EU's climate commitments. Their profits depend on continued extraction and burning of coal, oil, and gas, activities that must be rapidly phased out if we are to limit global heating to 1.5°C. In other words, their private interests are in direct contradiction with global climate goals.

While other polluting sectors may be part of the transition and subject to regulation, fossil fuel companies continue to act as barriers to progress. That's why urgent action to restrict their political influence is a priority, and why we need a fossil-free politics that puts people and the planet before polluters.

Q: I support the pledge, but what if I unintentionally break it?

A: The pledge is not a punitive tool, but a public commitment to integrity and accountability. We recognise that unintentional breaches can happen, for instance, by attending a sponsored event or meeting without knowing the organiser's affiliation with the fossil fuel industry.

In such cases, the key is to act transparently and responsibly. Be open about the incident, report it publicly, and use the opportunity to call out the fossil fuel industry's veiled lobbying attempts. This not only reinforces your commitment to the pledge but also helps expose the tactics used to influence policy making.

The Fossil Free Politics campaign team is available to support MEPs in interpreting grey areas, providing background on industry affiliations, and helping take corrective steps. The goal is not to punish, but to promote a culture of transparency, learning, and ethical political conduct, raising the bar collectively and ensuring that policymaking serves the public interest, not fossil fuel interests.



Q: How can I commit to Fossil Free Politics as a decision-maker ?

A: Signing the pledge is a strong individual commitment, but there are additional ways to strengthen your support for fossil-free policymaking:

- Be cautious about participating in events where fossil fuel industry representatives are present. While attending is not forbidden, we advise against participating in events that are sponsored by fossil fuel companies or used as platforms for greenwashing. Sponsorships and special access can lend legitimacy to the industry's influence, even if you're not directly engaging with them. If fossil fuel representatives are simply in the audience or on a panel, the context matters, use your judgement and prioritize transparency.
- Take a stand on party funding. If your political party receives donations from fossil fuel interests or hosts events sponsored by the fossil fuel industry, your personal pledge can help spark internal discussions to push for change. This pledge is a personal commitment, and by signing it, you're setting a public example and encouraging your party to align with climate justice principles.

By going beyond the basic commitment to limit meetings, these actions help further isolate fossil fuel influence from democratic spaces and climate policy.

Q: The fossil fuel industry supports jobs, why exclude them?

A: The pledge does not target workers or the broader economic debate, it focuses specifically on limiting the political influence of fossil fuel corporations, whose vested interests have consistently undermined climate action and democratic decision-making.

Public policy must serve the public interest, climate goals, and democracy, not the private profits of polluting industries. When decision-makers are disproportionately influenced by fossil fuel lobbyists, the balance of power shifts, and democracy is weakened.

We fully recognise the importance of protecting jobs and communities. But it is precisely the lack of a clear, just transition plan that leaves many workers feeling they must defend fossil fuel jobs. Studies and real-world examples show that when offered viable alternatives and secure pathways into renewable energy or green industries, most workers are not only willing but eager to make the shift.

This pledge is about cutting the influence of fossil fuel companies, not silencing workers. In fact, by removing corporate obstruction, we can open the way for ambitious climate policies that include strong social protections and real plans for a fair transition.

Q: What if I cannot sign the pledge now?

A: Even if you're not in a position to sign the pledge publicly at this time, you can still support the goals of the Fossil Free Politics campaign in meaningful ways.

You can:

- Commit to the principles in practice by limiting your engagement with the fossil fuel industry and promoting transparency in your work;



- Support and share campaign materials to help raise awareness;
- Foster debate within your political group or party, encouraging broader reflection on the need to cut fossil fuel influence in politics;
- Advocate for transparency reforms and institutional safeguards in line with the campaign's objectives.

Every step toward reducing fossil fuel influence matters. Whether through formal commitment or practical action, your support helps build momentum for a political system that puts people and the planet before polluters.

Q: Why sign if I already comply with ethics rules of the European Parliament?

A: While the existing ethics and transparency rules of the European Parliament set a baseline for conduct, they are not strong enough to fully prevent undue influence from the fossil fuel industry. This pledge goes beyond legal compliance by publicly demonstrating your leadership, integrity, and commitment to protecting climate policy from vested interests. It signals a proactive stance in support of democratic accountability and climate justice.

For more context on the current shortcomings in the EU's transparency framework, see [this briefing by Transparency International EU](#).

Q: Will this restrict informed debate?

A: No—the pledge limits undue influence, not the exchange of information; interactions should be conducted transparently, such as through public hearings, public notice of interactions, or disclosure of interaction records, ensuring debates remain open and not held behind closed doors.

Q: Can non-MEPs sign?

A: Only Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and authorised members of their staff can sign this pledge. However, national-level pledges open to a broader group of political representatives will be launched soon by some of our national member groups.

Q: Can I still attend events where fossil fuel companies might be present?

A: Yes, but we strongly advise caution. We discourage participating in events that are sponsored by fossil fuel companies or that grant them special access or legitimacy. These events are often used to greenwash their image and influence public perception.

If fossil fuel representatives are 'simply' part of the audience or on a panel, use discretion. In general, we recommend avoiding events where the industry plays a hosting, sponsoring, or other prominent role.



Q: What if my party receives fossil fuel donations?

A: This is a personal commitment. Signing the pledge is a way to take individual responsibility and set an example. You can foster discussion in your party to stop receiving donations from the fossil fuel industry.

Q: Will this hurt my visibility or networking?

A: On the contrary, it can enhance your visibility as a climate leader and reinforce public trust. By signing the pledge, you make your commitment to climate action and democratic integrity visible, showing that you stand for policymaking in the public interest, free from corporate interference.

Q: Is partial commitment possible?

A: No, the pledge is a public and full commitment. However, if you're not ready to sign yet, you're welcome to contact us to explore other ways you can support the goals of Fossil Free Politics.

Q: Are materials available to explain this publicly?

A: Yes. These will be made available. Please email info@fossilfreepolitics.org if you want to obtain them.

Q: Will I be supported after signing?

A: Yes. As a signatory, you'll join a network of supporters with access to campaign resources, visibility tools, and strategic guidance. We encourage proactive communication, signatories may be featured on our website, social media, and can opt in to Fossil Free Politics updates and mailing lists.

Q: Can I sign confidentially or delay the announcement?

A: No, the impact comes from public commitment, but coordinated announcements or private discussions can be arranged before going public.

Q: Who else has signed?

A: We're building a diverse and growing list of signatories from across the EU. If you'd like, we can share examples relevant to your political group or country. A public list of MEPs who have endorsed the pledge will also be available soon on our website once we reach the minimum threshold of signatures.

Q: What about partnerships with fossil fuel companies for renewable projects?

A: While some fossil fuel companies invest in renewables, these partnerships often serve as greenwashing tactics. Evidence shows they spend more on advertising their clean energy



investments than on actual deployment. Public money and support should be directed to energy cooperatives and clean energy initiatives without ties to the fossil fuel industry. More info on the intense entanglement of the fossil fuel industry and the renewable energy sector can be found [here](#).