# Few European lobbying firms continue to work for major fossil fuel companies despite sustainability claims



An exclusive analysis conducted by the nonprofit organisation Good Lobby has revealed that a small number of European public affairs and law firms are actively lobbying on behalf of major fossil fuel companies, with many of the sector’s largest firms working for at least one client in the oil and gas industry. The findings come from a comprehensive review of lobbying activities listed on the EU Transparency Register before January 2024, providing a unique insight into the financial relationships between lobbying firms and fossil fuel interests.

The report highlights that while fossil fuel clients represent only around 1% of the revenue for these public affairs firms, several of the highest spenders on EU policy influence are directly paid by major oil and gas companies. Notably, firms such as Burson, Cohn & Wolfe, FTI Consulting, and Nove have disclosed substantial payments from energy giants including ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Equinor, ENI, TotalEnergies, and SNAM. For instance, Burson, Cohn & Wolfe reported revenues of between €600,000 and €699,999 from ExxonMobil Petroleum and Chemical in 2024, covering lobbying on multiple environmental policy matters.

Despite their involvement with oil and gas clients, many of these firms maintain public sustainability commitments. Burson’s website states: “We help energy clients navigate the transition toward sustainable progress,” while FTI Consulting’s latest sustainability report asserts the company supports a sustainable economy through its client engagements and internal initiatives. Nove’s case studies describe successfully lobbying against regulatory proposals that could have limited the use of certain chemicals related to reducing climate-harming emissions.

Alberto Alemanno, founder of Good Lobby and co-author of the analysis, told The Guardian that these lobbying activities often go unnoticed. He said, “They can afford to keep [these clients] – even though they bring in very little – because they have basically not been subject to any form of accountability.” The research aimed to expose these “enablers of pollution” who provide crucial services to fossil fuel corporations yet escape widespread public scrutiny.

Duncan Meisel, executive director of the advocacy group Clean Creatives, emphasised that public affairs firms could sever ties with fossil fuel clients without significant financial consequences. He argued that doing so could enhance these firms’ ability to represent other clients impacted by climate change, help attract talent prioritising environmental sustainability, and reduce regulatory risks. Meisel also noted the strategic challenge for fossil fuel companies if lobbyists disengage: “Even if fossil fuel companies completely in-house their lobbying, they’ll have to pull from a dwindling pool of talent that is not interested in devoting their whole careers to polluters.”

The report also acknowledges the complexity of the lobbying landscape in Brussels, where fossil fuel companies frequently maintain sizeable internal lobbying teams or work through powerful industry associations. Consequently, a campaign targeting public affairs firms may have limited influence on the broader climate policy debate.

Some firms named in the report responded to the characterisation of their clients. Aula Europe, which received between €100,000 and €199,999 from Neste, a company it says has transitioned “from a local oil refiner into a global leader in renewable and circular solutions,” stated that their work focused on supporting renewable energy and decarbonisation policies. Must and Partners, working with Italian energy company A2A, pointed out that in 2024, renewables comprised about 50% of A2A’s electricity production, indicating progress toward cleaner energy.

Other firms mentioned, including Hill and Knowlton, Weber Shandwick, Rud Pedersen, FleishmanHillard, and Eupportunity, did not respond to requests for comment.

Dieter Zinnbauer, a researcher with Good Lobby, criticised the focus of many firms’ sustainability efforts on reducing their direct carbon footprints rather than addressing their role in enabling fossil fuel interests. “It’s one thing to recycle toner cartridges in your office, that’s great,” he said. “But if your main business line is about helping put the world on the wrong track towards the energy transition, this is more consequential in terms of what you’re doing than the recycling you do on the side.”

This analysis sheds light on an overlooked aspect of environmental policymaking, revealing how select public affairs firms continue to serve fossil fuel clients, balancing low financial dependence with ongoing engagement in shaping policies relevant to climate and energy.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thegoodlobby.eu/fueling-the-flame-fossil-fuel-lobbying-in-the-heart-of-the-eu/> - This resource supports claims about the significant influence of fossil fuel lobbying on EU energy policy, highlighting parallels with other industries and the role of regulatory bodies.
2. <https://www.thegoodlobby.eu/initiatives/fossil-free-finance-step-up-your-advocacy/> - This webpage explains the Good Lobby's initiative to reduce fossil fuel finance and shift towards renewable energy in the EU, underscoring the urgent need for climate neutrality.
3. <https://www.thegoodlobby.eu/time-to-regulate-lobbied-emissions-2/> - This article discusses the need to regulate lobbying activities and their environmental impact, reflecting on how certain firms protect the fossil fuel industry and slow the clean energy transition.
4. <https://lobbymap.org/pressrelease/Building-Electrification-US-press-release-31785> - This press release highlights fossil fuel lobbying against building electrification, demonstrating similar tactics in other sectors that hinder environmental progress.
5. <https://environmentaldefence.ca/2025/03/04/new-report-exposes-big-oils-relentless-lobbying-in-2024/> - This report exposes extensive lobbying by the oil and gas industry, indicating a pattern of aggressive lobbying efforts seen in other regions such as Canada.
6. <https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/index.do?redir=false&locale=en> - The EU Transparency Register provides data on lobbying activities, serving as a foundational source for analyses on the interactions between lobbying firms and fossil fuel interests in the EU.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/apr/25/public-affairs-firms-in-europe-enable-pollution-by-lobbying-for-big-oil-says-analysis> - Please view link - unable to able to access data