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## Press Release

June 26, 2020

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### **European Democracy Consulting takes Authority for European Political Parties to the European Ombudsman over implementation of transparency requirements.**

*A report by European Democracy Consulting highlights the failures of the European party watchdog to implement its transparency requirements under EU law. European Democracy Consulting lodged a complaint to the European Ombudsman on 26 June.*

**Vienna, Austria — June 26, 2020** — Today, **European Democracy Consulting** lodged an official complaint to the Office of the European Ombudsman in relation to the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations' failure to implement its transparency requirements under EU Regulation 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations.

The 2014 EU Regulation created the APPF "for the purpose of registering, controlling and imposing sanctions on European political parties and European political foundations." **It also establishes clear transparency requirements binding upon the APPF**, the European Parliament, and European parties and foundations aimed at ensuring that European citizens and media would have the means to know, engage with, and monitor European parties and their foundations.

In particular, **the Regulation requires certain information about European political parties and foundations to be provided on a single website**. This includes, among others, information about sums received, financial statements, work programmes, the name of donors and the value of their donations under certain conditions, sanctions against parties, and lists of member MEPs.

Following work on the reform of European political parties, European Democracy Consulting has come to the conclusion that **the APPF had consistently failed to meet both the letter and the spirit of these requirements**. Crucial information is missing or not up-to-date, while published information is spread over several websites and provided in an unclear and arcane fashion — falling far short of the provision of public information in "a clearly visible and user-friendly manner".

"This continued lack of public information, the incompleteness of this information, the way it is displayed, and the multiplicity of locations where it is stored are particularly damaging for citizens' understanding and knowledge of European political parties and, consequently, for their informed choice-making ahead of European elections." says Louis Drounau, founder of European Democracy Consulting. "We care about the role of the APPF because we care about European democracy. We consider political parties an essential component of representative democracy and [...] European citizens stand to gain from stronger, more affirmed, and more visible European parties."

The Office of the European Ombudsman requires plaintiffs to wait for "a reasonable time" before lodging a complaint. As a gesture of goodwill, European Democracy Consulting provided the APPF with a detailed report, including electoral data from all Member States, on March 26. Three months later, **the APPF has failed to take any remedial action to abide by its transparency requirements**.

**European Democracy Consulting hopes the European Ombudsman will ensure the respect of essential transparency criteria**, including ensuring the centralisation, completeness and regular update of required information, as well as the provision of relevant data in a clear, user-friendly and machine-readable format for the benefit of a watchful media, social scientists, and European citizens. The APPF is also encouraged to go beyond minimum disclosure requirements and ensure the true public visibility of European parties in order to strengthen the link between European citizens and their political representatives.

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European Democracy Consulting is a consulting firm set up following the 2019 European elections and born from the desire to improve our European democracy. It supports decision-makers, public institutions, and NGOs in their promotion of a more democratic, transparent and efficient Union.

More information on our website and at: [contact@eudemocracy.eu](mailto:contact@eudemocracy.eu)