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)
Patrizia Heidegger, Deputy Secretary General, European Environmental Bureau
Elizabeth Gosme, Director, COFACE Families Europe
Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General, ALDA
Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director, ILGA-Europe
Ariel Brunner, Regional Director, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia
Anca Toma, Executive Director, European Patients’ Forum
Jamen Gabriela Hrabaňová, Director, European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network
Diana Dovgan, Secretary General, European Confederation of Industrial and Service Cooperatives (CECOP)
Genon K. Jensen, Executive Director, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
Neva Nahtigal, Director, RREUSE
Maciej Kucharczyk, Secretary General, AGE Platform Europe
Patrizia Bussi, Director, European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE)
Gabriella Civico, Director, Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)
Sabine Rehbichler, Managing Director, Arbeit plus
Juliana Santos Wahlgren, Director, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
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 (CEDAG)
Mikael Leyi, Secretary General, SOLIDAR
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
Mark Jones, Head of Policy, Born Free Foundation
Kim Smouter, Director General, European Network Against Racism (ENAR) aisbl
Milka Sokolovic, Director General, European Public Health Alliance
Staci McLennan, Director of Policy - Europe, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
Valentina Bottarelli, Public Affairs Director & Head of European Advocacy, EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe
Aurelie Baranger, Director, Autism-Europe
Heather Roy, Secretary General, Eurodiaconia
Max Rubisch, President, International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) Europe
Michele LeVoy, Director, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
Ken Godfrey, Executive Director, European Partnership for Democracy
Grassy Lionel, Advocacy Director, FIACAT
Leon Willems, Senior Advisor International Partnerships, Free Press Unlimited
Meena Varma, Executive Director, International Dalit Solidarity Network
Stephanie Futter-Orel, Executive Manager, Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) Network
Anita Bay, EU Director, Save the Children
Balazs Denes, Executive Director, Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties)
Bent Noerby Bonde, Secretary General, Europe's People's Forum
Piotr Sadowski, Secretary General, Volonteurope
Maria van der Heide, Head of EU Policy, ShareAction
Dominik Kirchdorfer, President, European Future Forum (EFF)
Michael Thaidigsmann, Executive Director, EU Watch
Ilaria Todde, Advocacy Director, Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)
Mae Ocampo, Executive Director, Protection International
Milosh Ristovski, Secretary General, European Youth Forum
Aura Roig, Director, Metzineres SCCL
Gianluca Coppola, President, European Digital Learning Network
Paul Sommerfeld, Chair, TB Europe Coalition
Ganna Dovbakh, Executive Director, Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)
Katrin Schiffer, Director, Correlation-European Harm Reduction Network
Sudaba Shiraliyeva, Founder and Director, Center Women and Modern World
Ines Bulic Cojocariu, Director, European Network on Independent Living - ENIL
Miran Solinc, President, SKUC
Annett Wiedermann, Director, YES Forum
Chiara Martinelli, Director, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe
Martine Pergent, President, International Patient Organisation for Primary Immunodeficiencies (IPOPI)
Sini Pasanen, Executive Director, Positiiviset HivFinland
Antoine Fobe, Head of Advocacy and Campaigning, European Blind Union (EBU)
Rohwedder Jörg, Executive Director, Foodwatch International
Colleen Daniels, Deputy Director, Harm Reduction International
Alessandro Mostaccio, Secretary General, Movimento Consumatori APS
Monica Verbeek, Executive Director, Seas At Risk
Boleslwa Witmer, Steering Committee Member, Women for Water Partnership
Matteo Vespa, President, European Students' Union (ESU)
Domen Savič, CEO, Državljan D / Citizen D
Michael Meyer-Resende, Executive Director, Democracy Reporting International
Jonathan Lee, Advocacy & Communications Director, European Roma Rights Centre
Omri Preiss, Managing Director, Alliance4Europe
Brikena Xhomaqi, Director, Lifelong Learning Platform
Sarah de Heusch, Director, Social Economy Europe
Tony Venables, Founder, ECIT foundation on European Citizenship
Lavinia Liardo, Head of EU Policy and Advocacy, Terre des Hommes International Federation
Isaline Wittorski, Regional Coordinator, EU ECPAT International
Emili Pietro, Administrateur Delégué, Maison du Peuple d'Europe MPEVH
Stefan Gies, Chief Executive, Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)
Emilie Hornus, Secretary General, Youth Express Network
Anelia Stefanova, Strategic Area Leader, CEE Bankwatch Network
Mary Lynne Van Poelgeest, President, WFIPP
Dam Philippe, EU Director, Human Rights Watch
Miklos Barabas, Director European House
Jasmine O’Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Anti-Slavery International
Céline Mias, Director and EU Representative, CARE International
Lisa Goerlitz, Head of Brussels Office, DSW
Claudia Marinetti, Director, Mental Health Europe
Thomas Lohninger, Executive Director, Epicenter.works - For Digital Rights
Daniela Vancic, European Program Manager, Democracy International
Elisa Lindinger, Managing Director, SUPERRR Lab
Cherukéi Wobo, Policy & Advocacy Officer, Plan International EU Office
Adrien Moyroud, Project Support Officer, Parkinson's Europe
Giampaolo Silvestri, Secretary General, AVSI
Fanny Hidvegi, Europe Policy and Advocacy Director, Access Now
Jorgo Riss, Executive Director, Greenpeace European Unit
Raul Sanchez, Secretary General, European Large Families Confederation (ELFAC)
Felix Sames, Policy Manager, The Good Lobby
Juan Rayon, President, Erasmus Student Network
Alice Stollmeyer, Founder & Executive Director, Defend Democracy
Anna Penfrat, EU Representative, Nonviolent Peaceforce
Catherine Woollard, Director, European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
Tsveta Andreeva, Public Policy Manager, European Cultural Foundation
Sonya Reines-Djivanides, Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
Hanna Surmatz, Head of Policy, Philea
Efthymis Antonopoulos, Senior Research and Policy Officer, Missing Children Europe
Regina Ebner, Secretary General, European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)
Ursula Pachl, Deputy Director General, BEUC
Alexandrina Najmowicz, Secretary General, European Civic Forum