

# Fossil fuel big five 'spent €251m lobbying EU' since 2010

Report comes amid calls for set up of firewall to protect politics from industry influence

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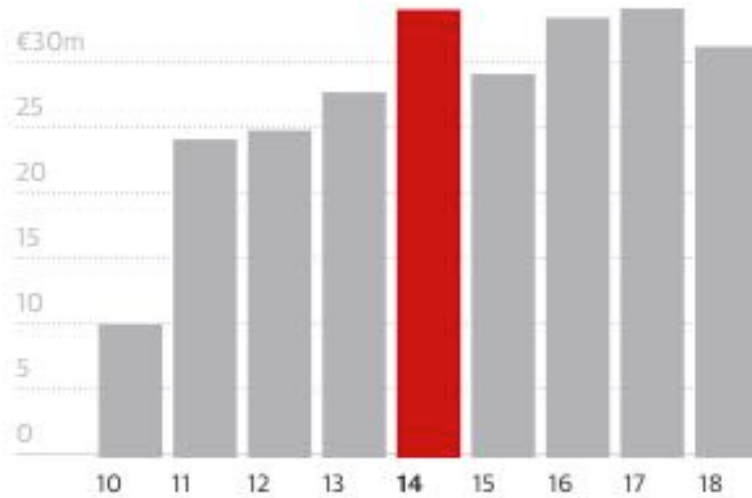


Analysis of the European commission's record of meetings shows gas and oil industry lobbyists held 327 meetings with top EC officials since 2014. Photograph: F1 Online/REX

The five biggest oil and gas companies, and their industry groups, have spent at least €251m (£217m) lobbying the **European Union** over climate policies since 2010, research has revealed.

The data on the scale of lobbying by oil companies and their representatives comes as 200 organisations demand the setting up of a firewall around democratic politics to protect it from the influence of the fossil fuel industry.

## The oil and gas companies and their industry groups spent €34.3 million on lobbying the EU institutions in 2014



Guardian graphic | Source: Corporate Europe Observatory, Food&Water Europe, Friends of the Earth Europe and Greenpeace.

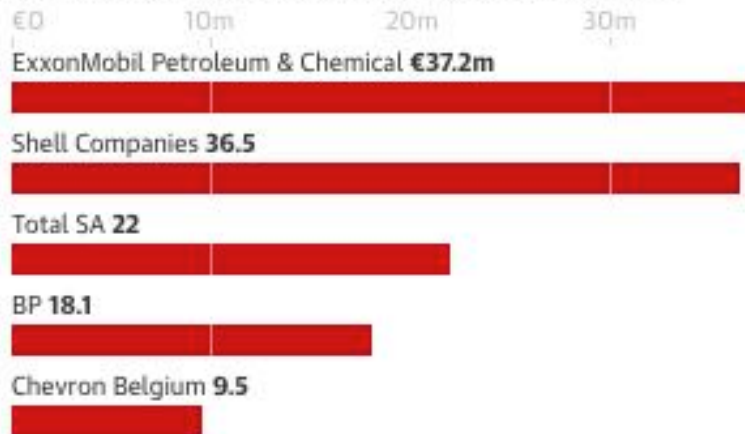
Declarations from the EU's [transparency register](#) reveal BP, Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil and Total have registered spending €123m between 2010 and 2018 on lobbying EU institutions, the report by a coalition of NGOs reveals. Their 13 industry groups declared spending a further €128m in the same period.

In total, between 2010 and 2018 the companies and their lobbying industry bodies have spent at least €251.3m on lobbying activities within EU institutions, according to the report by Corporate Europe Observatory, Food & Water Europe, Friends of the Earth [Europe](#) and Greenpeace.

The researchers say the figure represents the tip of the iceberg, as in some years companies made no declarations of spending in the voluntary register. The report also does not examine lobbying spending by each company relating to national parliaments and institutions.

Analysis of the European commission's public record of meetings shows the oil firms and their industry groups employ 200 lobbyists in Brussels, who have held 327 meetings with top EC officials since 2014, when Jean-Claude Juncker took office – the equivalent of more than one meeting per week.

## The five biggest oil and gas companies have spent €123m lobbying the EU since 2010



Guardian graphic | Source: Corporate Europe Observatory, Food&Water Europe, Friends of the Earth Europe and Greenpeace.

At the same time, the profits of the big five have continued to rise to more than \$82bn (£62m) in 2018.

Pascoe Sabido, researcher at Corporate Europe Observatory, said: “Big polluters like Shell, BP and their lobby groups have delayed, weakened and sabotaged EU action on the climate emergency thanks to their hefty lobby spending. A cool quarter of a billion over the last decade buys a lot of access and influence in Brussels.”

The report comes after [the Guardian’s Polluters series](#), which revealed that 20 oil and gas companies – including BP, Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil and Total – [can be directly linked](#) to a third of greenhouse gas emissions since 1965. The companies – which include multinationals and state-owned firms – are continuing to expand their operations and driving the climate emergency, despite having been aware for decades of their industry’s devastating impact on the planet.

The report says the lobbying has succeeded in watering down EU climate legislation. [Lobbying](#), it says, peaks at times when legislation is being drawn up. The oil and gas companies, and their industry groups had high spending in 2014 during the discussions over the EU’s 2030 climate targets, when they spent €34.3m on lobbying the EU institutions.

The report says the climate targets were weakened as a result; they included no binding energy savings target and included a “woefully inadequate” renewable

energy target.

**The Guardian recently revealed how** the car industry and big oil companies are the most negative influencers on climate policy of all the top 250 biggest investor-owned industry and their trading associations.

The NGOs behind the report are demanding that politics be freed from fossil fuel influence. In a call, supported by 200 civil society organisations, they said they wanted to see an end to the fossil fuel industry accessing decision making. They are calling for:

an end to lobbying meetings with fossil fuel and their representatives

no revolving door between public office and the oil and gas industry

the end of fossil fuel subsidies

no sponsorships or partnerships with industry representatives

The call to set up a firewall between the fossil fuel industry and democratic politics comes as pressure is growing on the oil and gas industry. The US Congress **held a hearing on Wednesday** examining the oil industry's efforts to suppress the truth about the climate emergency.

In New York, **a supreme court trial opened this week** examining allegations that ExxonMobil misled its investors about climate change.

In the UK, BP and Shell have faced a growing backlash. This month the Royal Shakespeare Company **announced it was ending its sponsorship deal with BP** and the **National Theatre said it would end its Shell sponsorship in the new year.**

Sebastian Mang, climate policy adviser for Greenpeace Europe, said: "Big oil and gas are causing death and destruction in exchange for eye-watering profits. But millions of people are calling them out, as they face trial for their role in fuelling the climate emergency ... It's time our governments hold them to account."

A spokesperson for Chevron said: "We lobby ethically, constructively and in a nonpartisan manner. We lobby in accordance with all laws. **Chevron** brings expertise on many issues that can be valuable to elected public officials and their staffs. Our goal is to contribute to economic prosperity through sound policy."

Shell said: "We firmly reject the premise of this report. We are crystal clear

about our support for **the Paris agreement**, the European commission's vision to achieve EU climate neutrality by 2050 and the steps we are taking to help meet society's need for more and cleaner energy.

**ExxonMobil** said: "ExxonMobil, like many companies, non-governmental organisations and other entities, engages with the European institutions. We have a responsibility to our customers, employees, communities and shareholders to engage in a public policy dialogue that impacts our business." The company said it complied with the requirements of the EU transparency register.

Total said national and international trade groups had an important role in discussions on how the Paris climate agreement goals could be met – for example through carbon pricing, which Total supported.

BP did not respond to a request for comment.