

8 May 2024

**To Mario Draghi, former Italian Prime Minister
To Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the European Commission**

Re: Draghi report lacks transparency and risks capture by big business

Dear Mr. Draghi,
Dear Commission President Von der Leyen,

As civil society organisations in Europe, we are following closely the debate on the upcoming report on the future of European competitiveness. We got a glimpse of its content via Mr. Draghi's speech in La Hulpe on April 16th, during the High-Level Conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The report will have a huge impact on the next European Commission's mandate, and the future of the EU.

We are therefore deeply worried about the lack of transparency and access to the process of writing this report. Mr. Draghi has been meeting with industry representatives, such as the European Round Table for Industry¹ and BusinessEurope.² While one meeting with trade unions is known, many civil society groups have not been consulted. We have also heard member state government officials complain about lack of access. A report of this importance, however, must be developed on a much more transparent and accessible basis if it is to be perceived as legitimate and supported by European society at large.

We are also concerned about the overall philosophy that Mr. Draghi set out in La Hulpe. For several sectors, such as defence, energy and telecoms, he proposed allowing market consolidation to help Europe become more competitive on world markets. The result of this would be to allow market concentration to rise even further in Europe, harming European consumers, workers and small businesses, while actually undermining our competitiveness. As civil society organisations, we think attempting to improve global competitiveness by restricting local competition is misguided. It will lead to a situation where large so-called "European Champions" are subsidised unproductively with public money, while important social, economic and environmental objectives are sacrificed to benefit the shareholders of these dominant firms. Prioritising the narrow interests of giant corporations over the public interest is not an acceptable or workable economic development strategy.

We therefore call on you to give civil society a bigger say over the content and recommendations of the report and to disclose all meetings you have held with interest groups. We also wish to highlight the risks of adopting a narrow policy agenda driven by the interests of dominant corporate giants.

1 <https://ert.eu/documents/ert-delegation-meets-professor-mario-draghi-to-discuss-measures-to-revive-europes-competitiveness/>

2 <https://www.bussinesseurope.eu/publications/eu-industry-has-high-expectations-upcoming-eu-competitiveness-report>

We believe that the pathway to a prosperous, resilient, dynamic, innovative and democratic social European economy lies in pursuing economic balance and diversity, not monopoly.

Thank you very much for taking our considerations into account.

Kind regards,

Balanced Economy Project

Corporate Europe Observatory

Cyber Rights Organisation (CR)

Defend Democracy

Foxglove

The Good Lobby

LobbyControl

Open Markets Institute

Rebalance Now

Rinascimento Green

Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)

tax me now – initiative for tax justice

Transnational Institute (TNI)