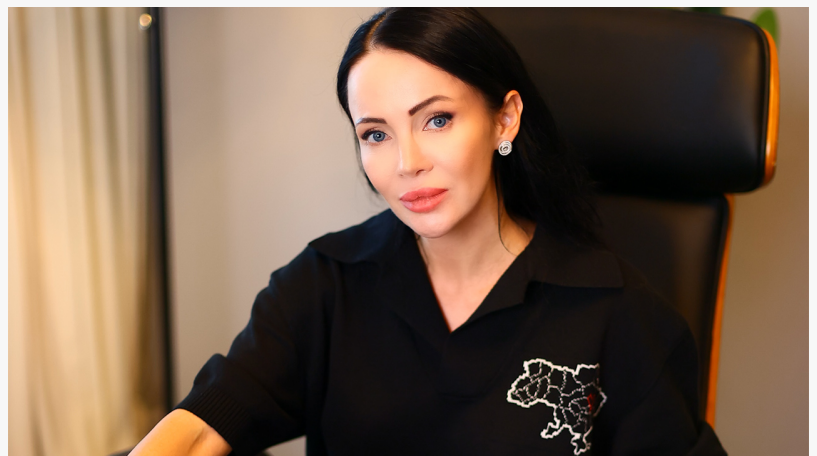


# Alona Lebedieva: On the Risks of the Transparency Register for Business and Experts

KYIV, UKRAINE, October 29, 2024

[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- On October 15, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the regulation for the Transparency Register, established in accordance with the "Law on Fair Lobbying." This law is part of a package of reforms aimed at strengthening democratic processes, transparency, and integration with the European Union. This step is intended to meet the European Union's requirements for openness and to combat behind-the-scenes agreements. At the same time, it raises serious questions about the practical implications, which could significantly impact the activities of businesses and public organizations.



Alona Lebedieva

Adoption of this law should make it easier for foreign companies to officially engage experts to represent their interests in Ukraine. "However, in practice, registration and reporting requirements may present a new challenge for business associations and expert groups active in the public space. The requirement to register in the Register and report on all contacts with officials can be used as a tool of pressure on those who criticize government decisions or express advisory remarks," says Alona Lebedieva, owner of the Ukrainian multi-sector industrial and investment group Aurum Group.

For example, criticizing the increase in tariffs for electricity transmission or commenting on economic policy can be considered lobbying, even if such activity does not have a corrupt basis. "The law obliges registered lobbyists to submit detailed reports on all contracts, terms of cooperation, as well as information about clients and the lobbying entity. This creates a risk that any active business activity and independent expert policy analysis may be recognized as a violation," she continues.

In addition, the law limits the expert pool of public organizations and business associations,

introducing a ban on lobbying for former officials within a year of leaving office. "This can negatively affect the ability of associations to respond quickly to legislative initiatives and participate in policy formation by attracting qualified professionals with experience in the public sector. Although logical, given their network of contacts, if a former official intends to promote his own business interests, who use these connections, no law on lobbying will prevent them from doing so, but we may lose the knowledge of a specialist with practical experience," Lebedieva suggests.

The Helsinki Union and other experts have already expressed concern about the possibility of manipulative application of this law. If the provisions of the Register are used to limit freedom of expression and criticism of government decisions, public and business associations may face obstacles that hinder their activities.

"The implementation of the Transparency Register should be a balanced and transparent process aimed at strengthening democratic institutions and not suppressing critical voices. Ensuring transparency and integrity in the interaction between business and government is the basis of European democratic values. It is extremely important that the New Rules promote greater openness and justice, rather than creating additional barriers for economic activity and civic activity," Lebedieva asserts.

This reform requires international attention and support for Ukraine to implement principles of openness and integrity that meet the high standards of the European Union. Only if these standards are met honestly and objectively can business and society trust the reform.

Alona Lebedieva  
Aurum Group  
[email us here](#)

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