

HOW TO MAKE PAN-EUROPEAN BORROWERS DEMOCRATICALLY ACCOUNTABLE

25 January 2024, 14:00–18:00

Mundo Matongé Building (Conference room)
Rue d'Edimbourg, 26, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

From financing the European Green Deal to assistance for Ukraine, institutions with the authority to raise funds on financial markets to provide grants, loans and guarantees to public and private actors, are playing an increasingly prominent role in the European Union's response to a variety of economic, political and societal challenges. With this increased role comes a greater need for integrating a broad range of public stakeholders, including parliaments and civil society, into the decision making process. Democratic accountability is crucial to make sure that the actors and projects receiving public money prioritise environmental and social policy objectives. The European Parliament, national parliaments and civil society are in urgent need of more robust mechanisms for holding these institutions to account.

The aim of this workshop is to exchange knowledge and good practice about how the democratic accountability of the European Investment Bank, the European Commission and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development can be strengthened to ensure that these pan-European borrowers fulfil their public missions and objectives, and do no harm.

The event is co-organized by Counter Balance and Banking on Europe.

Counter Balance was launched in 2007 as a campaign aimed at reforming the European Investment Bank (EIB). While the EIB remains its main target, it has since then expanded the scope of its work to other public finance institutions.

Banking on Europe is a three-year research project on the evolution and accountability of pan-European borrowers funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council and the Luxembourg National Research Fund.

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14:00 - 14:15 Welcome

Frank Vanaerschot, Director Counter Balance and Dermot Hodson, Principal- Investigator, Banking on Europe

14:15 - 14:30 Keynote speech

Carl Dolan, Senior Advisor, European Ombudsman

14:30 - 15:30 Civil Society

- The EIB and Environmental Stakeholders - Anna Roggenbuck, EIB Policy Officer, CEE Bankwatch.
- Building Better Complaints Mechanisms - Lukas Spielberger, Postdoctoral Researcher, Banking on Europe.
- Mobilising civil society for accountability in financing just transition - Frank Vanaerschot, Counter Balance.

15:30 - 15:45 Coffee break

15:45 - 16:45 Unions and cities

- Public finance for workers' interests - Richard Pond, EPSU.
- Public finance for local governments and essential public services - Marlon Hilden, Climate and Sustainable Finance Officer at the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.
- Integrating unions and cities in public finance decision making - Alexandra Gerasimcikova, head of Policy and Advocacy, Counter Balance.

17:00 - 18:00 Parliaments

- Designing a Parliamentary Accountability Charter - Iacopo Mugnai, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Banking on Europe.
- The Recovery and Resilience Dialogues - Vanessa Aulehla, European Parliament.
- National parliaments- Bruno Dias Pinheiro, Permanent Representative of the Portuguese Parliament to the EU.

18:00 - 18:15 Closing Remarks

Frank Vanaerschot, Director Counter Balance and Dermot Hodson, Principal- Investigator, Banking on Europe.

The views expressed in this workshop do not necessarily reflect those of the ESRC or FNR.