

PRESS RELEASE

Most think tanks fail to disclose who funds them, new study shows

Transparify, Tbilisi, Georgia, 16 February 2015

www.transparify.org

More than two thirds of think tanks worldwide do not disclose where their money comes from, a study due to be published tomorrow shows. Out of 169 policy research institutions in 47 countries assessed by the Transparify initiative, only 49 provide comprehensive financial information about their funding. More than a hundred institutions disclose little or no information on who funds them.

“Think tanks that accept funding behind closed doors undermine the reputation of the sector as a whole,” warned Dr Hans Gutbrod, the executive director of Transparify, which advocates for greater research integrity. “Luckily, more and more think tanks are realizing that financial transparency is a great way of bolstering the credibility of their research and policy advice. This year’s results from the United States are especially encouraging in this regard.”

As part of its global survey, Transparify assessed 35 American think tanks. It found that 14 of them have posted additional financial data online over the past year. Over half of U.S. policy research institutions are now transparent. In contrast, despite substantial improvements, most think tanks in Europe, Latin America, South Asia and Oceania remain opaque.

“Compared to last year’s results, this is a vast improvement. The gains in the U.S. are the most dramatic, but the trend towards greater transparency is global,” explained Gutbrod, whose team surveyed think tank websites in search of financial information.

“Think tanks can play a positive role producing independent, in-depth policy research to inform politicians, media and the public,” he concluded. “As key players in democratic politics, they have a responsibility to be transparent about their operations. Encouragingly, our survey shows that think tanks themselves are increasingly sharing this view.”

US media enquiries:

Jennifer Lappin (based in D.C.)

jennifer@transparify.org

Phone 617-nine.zero.two.-8946

Enquiries from non-US media:

Till Bruckner (based in Morocco)

tillbruckner@gmail.com

Skype till.bruckner

Phone +212 (0)697 776045

Note to editors: The report will be posted on www.transparify.org at 02:01 EST on Tuesday, 17 February 2015. Embargoed advance copies are available.

Background info: <http://www.transparify.org/publications-main/>