

PRESS RELEASE

Several UK Think Tanks Still Take Money Behind Closed Doors, New Study Finds

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www.transparify.org

Four think tanks in Britain are taking money behind closed doors, refusing to reveal who pays for their research and advocacy, a study released today shows. According to data compiled by Transparify, a non-profit initiative based in Georgia (Caucasus) that has rated 27 UK-based institutions based on their levels of online disclosure, most British think tanks are financially transparent and publish the names of their donors and information on the amounts given by each donor on their websites. Only four think tanks keep the identities of their financial sponsors secret, researchers found.

“Clearly, most respectable think tanks see no need to conceal who pays their bills. We rated 27 British think tanks and 23 of them at a minimum publish the names of their donors,” said Dr Hans Gutbrod, the Executive Director of Transparify. “What do the remaining four – Adam Smith Institute, Centre for Policy Studies, Institute of Economic Affairs and Policy Exchange – have to hide? Think tanks can have significant political influence through their ability to shape democratic debates, for better or for worse. Transparency is a core democratic value. Taking money from hidden hands behind closed doors raises concerns about possible stealth lobbying, and is simply not acceptable in a modern democracy.”

In total, Transparify assessed 200 policy research and advocacy organizations in 47 countries worldwide. It found that a majority of think tanks in many countries, including the United States, have become transparent in recent years. “Some think tanks in Ethiopia, Pakistan and Ukraine perform better than most British institutions,” said Dr Gutbrod, whose initiative advocates for greater transparency and integrity in policy research and advocacy. “British think tanks as a group have made huge progress in the recent past, and many of them are already highly transparent, but some still have a long way to go.”

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Note to editors: The full report is posted on www.transparify.org. Background information on debates and concerns related to think tank transparency can be found on our blog, and in our bibliographies accessible at <http://www.transparify.org/publications-main/>. Transparify's previous reports have been covered by the [New York Times](#), Washington Post and [Financial Times](#), among others.