



## **For Immediate Release**

3 May 2006

### **Public Affairs Consultancies welcome European Commission proposals**

The European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA) today welcomed the proposals aimed at maintaining the highest standards of lobbying in Brussels set out in the European Commission's Green Paper on the European Transparency Initiative.

The Green Paper sets out a number of proposals in relation to transparency on use of EU funds, rules of behaviour in EU institutions, and transparency of lobbying. These include a Commission-run register of lobbyists, with incentives to promote registration by all lobbyists, and a common code of conduct for all lobbyists.

John Houston, Chairman of EPACA, said: "We have always said that a common code of conduct for all individuals and organisations involved in lobbying the EU institutions is fundamental to ensuring the highest ethical standards. The EPACA code of conduct - which is identical to the code set out in the European Parliament rules of procedure - ensures that every time a lobbyist from one of our member consultancies has contact with the institutions the interest they represent is fully disclosed. That is what transparency is all about. Other bodies such as SEAP (Society of European Affairs Professionals) have long had similar codes. Now we can look forward to all lobbyists - lawyers, accountants, management consultants, NGOs, trade unions, corporate lobbyists, trade associations, think tanks, and professional consultancies - abiding by the same rules of transparency."

"We also welcome the Commission's proposal to set up a register of all lobbyists of the EU institutions. For this to be a credible system it will be important that it covers the full range of lobbyists. In the absence of a mandatory system we will want to discuss with the Commission whether the incentives envisaged will be effective in securing universal coverage" said Jeremy Galbraith, Vice-Chairman of EPACA. "We will also urge the Commission to consult with the Parliament and Council to get their full endorsement for this scheme."

"However, this needs to be more than just a list of lobbyists if it is to provide real benefits for transparency" said Julia Harrison, EPACA Board member.



“This is a joint responsibility: Commission officials and those from the other EU institutions will need to ask whether or not they are dealing with a registered lobbyist and we will need to continue to ensure our staff are trained appropriately and maintain the highest professional standards.”

*Notes to Editors:*

The European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA) is the representative trade body for public affairs consultancies working with the EU institutions. Its 34 member companies employ more than 700 staff and represent some 70% of the European public affairs consulting market. [www.epaca.org](http://www.epaca.org).

Contact: John Houston - 02 230 0814  
Jeremy Galbraith – 02 743 6628  
Julia Harrison - 0475 449355