



## A letter of welcome to all MEPs elected in 2014

We are the three associations based in Brussels which represent the profession of those working in public affairs and lobbying, all with an EU remit and membership.

The purpose of this letter is to introduce ourselves, to explain what we have in common and most importantly, present some ideas on how we would like to work with you in the coming years.

### Who we are

SEAP, the Society of European Affairs Professionals, represents individuals, not organisations. SEAP is open to all public affairs professionals including those operating in trade associations, corporations, consultancies and other representative bodies.

EPACA, the European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association, represents organisations as the trade body for public affairs consultancies.

ECPA, the European Centre for Public Affairs, is a Brussels-based public affairs think-tank focused on best practice in public affairs. Its members are organisations.

SEAP and EPACA are directly involved in the process of lobbying, including such day to day issues as access badges to the Parliament building, while ECPA take a longer term view, strategising how EU Public Affairs could improve further. Consistent with this mission, ECPA is also a training organisation.

### What we have in common

In a word - Ethics.

The common thread binding each association is a code of ethical conduct or a statement of principles which drives our approach to public affairs and our relationships with MEPs and other EU stakeholders. The text of these codes of conduct can be found on our websites and is linked directly in the footnote to this letter.

SEAP and EPACA both have similarly worded codes based on a common history. The Public Affairs industry adopted its first code in 1994 on its own initiative. These codes of ethical conduct go far beyond the basic transparency of the EU Transparency Register's code.

Whereas the EU code focuses on the relationship between a lobbyist and the EU institutions, being a code of transparent relationships, the SEAP and EPACA codes are also about the ethical behaviour of a lobbyist. Articles ensure lobbyists do not misrepresent themselves and make certain their actions are not misleading. Moreover, the codes contain strong articles on the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Equally the ECPA Principles state: “The ECPA is dedicated to promoting the value of good public affairs work to business, civil society and the institutions of government”.

All three organisations are consulted by the European Commission and the European Parliament on the evolution of the Joint Transparency Register. From time to time all three organisations hold events jointly at which MEPs or EU officials are speakers.

## **How can we best work with you the MEP?**

Over the coming years you are likely to meet with numerous lobbyists. We would welcome any conversation that starts with you asking your visitor: “Are you a member of SEAP or EPACA or ECPA?” “Are you a signatory of a Code of Conduct?” “Is your organisation on the Transparency Register?”

These questions have relevance. If ever there is a transgression by a SEAP or EPACA member, you can make a direct complaint to the organisation. Your complaint will be investigated and, if upheld, meaningful action will be taken.

We hope that this letter may contribute to an on-going relationship both with our three organisations and our members.

In closing, please allow us to welcome to you as a new MEP or one returning to Brussels. We look forward to fruitful dialogue where we undertake to listen and learn as much as we attempt to inform.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Susanna Di Felicianantonio  
*President*  
*SEAP*

Maria Laptev  
*Executive Director*  
*The ECPA*

Karl Isaksson  
*Chairman*  
*EPACA*

## **About SEAP**

The Society of European Affairs Professionals was established in 1997. It is the recognised organisation of all EU public affairs professionals including those operating in trade associations, corporations, consultancies and other representative bodies. SEAP encourages the highest standards of professionalism for European affairs activity and promotes self-regulation of the profession. [www.seap.be](http://www.seap.be), [secretariat@seap.be](mailto:secretariat@seap.be)

## **About EPACA**

The European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association is the representative trade body for public affairs consultancies working with the EU institutions. Its 40 member companies employ more than 700 staff and represent approximately 75% of the European public affairs consulting market. [www.epaca.org](http://www.epaca.org) , [info@epaca.org](mailto:info@epaca.org)

## **About ECPA**

The European Centre for Public Affairs is a Brussels-based public affairs think-tank focused on best practice in public affairs. It provides a unique space for its members and guests to “stop and think“, offering reflection and insight into the political, social and economic influences impacting the practice of public affairs. It promotes the highest ethical standards in this work. [www.theecpa.eu](http://www.theecpa.eu) , [marialaptev@theecpa.eu](mailto:marialaptev@theecpa.eu)