



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Public Affairs Consultancies strengthen commitment to transparency**

The European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA) today further strengthened its regulatory and disciplinary mechanisms when it announced the formation of an independent Professional Practices Panel. The creation of the Panel, with its powers to police EPACA's code of conduct represents a further step in the public affairs profession's efforts to ensure the highest ethical standards within the industry.

The panel will adjudicate upon complaints EPACA receives concerning alleged breaches of EPACA's code of conduct. The panel will have the power to recommend sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion from EPACA, for a member company found guilty of a breach of the code.

The members of the panel are fully independent and are mandated to act in the public interest. Members of the panel are:

- Sir Ken Collins, Chairman, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency;
- Erik Jonnaert, General Manager for External Relations, Procter and Gamble;
- Professor P.S.R.F. Mathijssen, Mathijssen Advocaatenkantoor
- Stanley Crossick, Founding Chairman, European Policy Centre
- François d'Anethan, Dean, United Business Institutes; and
- Professor Peter Balazs, Director, CEU Centre for EU Enlargement Studies.

EPACA Chairman, John Houston said "The EPACA code of conduct is identical to the one used by the European Parliament and we believe that it is a good starting point for the common code for all public affairs practitioners in Brussels that we are keen to see put in place as soon as possible. To further strengthen the workings of the EPACA code we have established an independent panel to investigate any alleged breaches of the code by our members. We have sought panel members who are independent of public affairs consultancies but knowledgeable about the EU institutions as well as lobbying."

Panel member Sir Ken Collins said "I am pleased that EPACA has taken this initiative. Independent oversight will be vital in giving its code of conduct



credibility. As a former Member of the European Parliament I applaud any effort to increase transparency and accountability in the European policy-making process". He added "EPACA's initiative helps to promote the high ethical standards that are necessary to ensure European politics remains untainted by scandal."

*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).

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