

Working together towards more trust and transparency in EU policymaking

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

On behalf of EPACA, the [European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association](#), we would like to share information with you about our industry, our association, and our core values and mission.

About Lobbying

Decisions taken by the EU have the potential to affect the lives of millions of European citizens and businesses, and should therefore be taken as openly and inclusively as possible. Interactions between EU institutions and a wide range of interest representatives lead to a better understanding of citizens' and businesses' concerns, more creative and innovative solutions, and ultimately, better decisions. Activities described as *lobbying* are therefore an integral and legitimate part of the democratic system.

The EU institutions define lobbying as all activities *“carried out by interest representatives with the objective of influencing the formulation or implementation of policy or legislation, or the decision-making processes”* of the EU institutions.¹

Lobbyists can assume various forms – they can be professional and self-employed consultants, in-house corporate teams, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), lawyers and law firms, trade, business and professional associations, academic institutions and think tanks, civil society groups, consumer associations and unions. In a sense, **any organisation aiming to add facts and arguments to the political debate is lobbying, although other designations can be used such as *advocacy, government relations or public affairs.***

About EPACA

EPACA is the representative trade body for public affairs consultancies working with the EU institutions, with the goal of facilitating the process of better lobbying.

We represent **44 members** employing **over 850 consultants** advising their clients (including companies, trade associations, NGOs and non-profit organisations) on a daily basis about various aspects of EU policymaking.

Our mission is to promote best lobbying practices amongst our members and in the broader EU policymaking environment. We strive to lead by example, upholding the **highest ethical and professional standards, advocating for more transparent decision-making** and being the go-to organisation for anyone who has questions about our industry's activities.

¹ [Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 on a mandatory transparency register](#), article 3, §1

Integrity and transparency are the core values of our association. They are at the heart of [EPACA's Code of Conduct](#) which binds our members to act in an honest, responsible and ethical manner at all times. The Code is recognised by the European Commission and European Parliament and is regularly updated to ensure that it reflects best practices, responding to shifting social, economic and political landscapes, as well as new communications technologies.

Since its creation in 2005, EPACA has been instrumental in pushing forward the transparency agenda. Over the years, we have been actively advocating to expand the EU Transparency Register's scope and to make it mandatory. In addition, EPACA is actively campaigning for a system which is more accessible, usable and steers away from putting up administrative obstacles for public affairs professionals.

Building trust and transparency together

Having trust-based relationships is crucial for our role as the link between businesses, MEPs, other EU policymakers, and civil society. Trust and transparency, however, are a two-way street and can only be enhanced if commitments are taken by both the interest representatives and the policymaker. For instance, we would welcome it if you were to choose to only meet with registered lobbyists and request unregistered lobbyists to sign up to the Transparency Register and its Code of Conduct. During the last term, the European Parliament already took steps in this direction. This legislative term provides new opportunities to continue on this path.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our determination to work with the MEPs to achieve great results in lobbying transparency.

For further information we invite you to get in touch with EPACA via info@epaca.org.

Yours sincerely,

Isabelle De Vinck

EPACA Chair

EPACA Members

