
Good lobbying principles



We support
good lobbying



Federation of Danish Professional Service Firms



Public Relations Branchen
Dansk Erhverv

Good lobbying principles

The aim

High levels of ethical conduct are a prerequisite to justify the raison d'être of political lobbyists and to maintain the quality of the political and democratic decision-making processes. It is this prerequisite that public relations and public affairs companies (the PR/PA industry) in Denmark wish to make clear and support with the industry's *Good Lobbying Principles*.

In these principles, public relations and public affairs companies have defined what the industry means by good lobbying. The purpose is to set up a framework for the dialogue lobbyists have with politicians and government authorities.

The purpose of the principles is also to set out clearly the meaning of lobbying and explain the role that lobbying plays in the complex democratic decision-making process.

These principles are the industry's own code of conduct which supplements the legislation and regulations governing this area. The principles act as the industry's principles for good lobbying for which public relations companies are able to sign up. Individual businesses may supplement these principles with their own ethical rules.

Lobbying and democracy

Democracy, free speech and a free press are all essential to the activities of professional lobbyists.

Democratic and political processes are characterised by decision-makers being in continuous dialogue with stakeholders in the areas concerned. This dialogue contributes to decisions being made on a qualified and informed basis.

Lobbying is an integral part of the political and democratic processes. With this involvement comes a responsibility to maintain orderliness, dignity and integrity to maintain and strengthen trust in the legitimate role of lobbyists in the democratic decision-making process.

In their conduct, lobbyists must ensure that their work is characterised by transparency. This applies in terms of their clients, decision-makers and society at large.

1. Application area

The principles apply at all levels where democratic and political decision-making processes take place: at international, European, national, regional and municipal level.

Many different operators lobby. *Good Lobbying Principles* are based on the activities associated with the public affairs/public relations industry. All these companies safeguard their clients' interests and help them to influence political decision-making processes by entering into a dialogue with politicians and government authorities.

The principles have, however, been worded in such a way as to allow all operators working to influence certain political frameworks, whether on their own behalf or on behalf of clients, members or a collection of interests, to sign up to them.

2. Definitions

Lobbyist: operator safeguarding his own, his clients', his members' or other clients' interests and helping to influence political decision-making processes by entering into dialogue with politicians and government authorities.

Decision-makers: politicians and government authorities at international, European, national, regional and local level.

Political decision-maker: person who is a member of or seeking election to the European Parliament, a regional council, a municipal council etc. The description also covers employees in political secretariats.

Government authorities: persons employed in/on a ministry, board, directorate, municipality or other public authority.

Dialogue: dialogue means all form of verbal and written communication used by the lobbyist vis-a-vis the decision-maker.

3. Legislation and rule compliance

The principles are based on the basic premise that lobbyists comply with all legislation and regulations.

In their work for a client, lobbyists should possess knowledge of the rules or agreements regulating the client's activities. If the lobbyist is aware that certain rules in the client's industry are not being complied with, the lobbyist must notify the client of this fact.

4. Financial independence

Lobbyists are not permitted directly or indirectly to make use of financial incentives or services for the decision-makers with whom they wish to enter into dialogue.

5. Clear sender

In their activities, lobbyists must be transparent about who they are and who they represent.

They must at a minimum state their name, activity and the interests they represent in their dialogue with politicians, civil servants and other applicable societal operators.

6. Information requirements

In their dialogue with decision-makers, lobbyists are not permitted knowingly to communicate incorrect or misleading information.

Information must be up to date and comprehensive.

Lobbyists are not permitted to obtain confidential information dishonestly.

7. Client confidentiality

Information supplied by the client to the professional lobbyist which is not in the public domain or of a general nature may not without the client's permission be disclosed to other parties.

Client confidentiality also applies after the completion of the work concerned.

8. Qualified client representative

Lobbyists solely take on work for which they are qualified – in partnership with one or more other operators, if applicable.

9. Loyalty to the interests of the client

Lobbyists must not take on work for mutually competitive interests in strategic and/or potentially conflicting areas without informing both stakeholders of this and obtaining their acceptance in advance.

Lobbyists are under obligation on their own initiative to inform clients of circumstances that in the specific case may raise doubts about the lobbyist's competence to act – for example, collaboration, financial interests or the lobbyist's existing or previous political commitments that may affect such competence.

These principles have been drawn up on the basis of the ICCO Stockholm Charter and the Code of Conduct for the European Transparency Register.