



Public Affairs Community of Europe – P.A.C.E. at the OECD Forum on Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying

Paris, June 27, 2013 – *P.A.C.E. General Secretariat* participated in the **Forum on “Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying. How to Win Back Trust?”** sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), held on June 27th-28th, 2013, at the OECD Conference Centre in Paris.

P.A.C.E. took part during the second session of the Forum: “*Open Government in the 21st century: What level of transparency on lobbying practices?*” The panel discussed which mechanisms are able to provide transparent decision-making processes and accessible information in lobbying; these are all crucial issues for the development of an “open government” that can strengthen citizens’ confidence in public decision-making.

The same session, was attended by Mr. Thomas Schoditsch (Ministry of Justice, Austria), Mr. Peter Köppl (Vice-President, Austrian Public Affairs Association – OePAV) and Ms. Mary Thiele (European Parliament Secretariat General).

Ms. **Micol Bertoni**, on behalf of *P.A.C.E. Secretariat*, commented: “We warmly thank OECD for giving us the opportunity to attend such a high-level Forum. We are proud to take part in a debate so important for the future of many lobbyists.”

P.A.C.E. gives a voice to and represents the EU lobbying national associations and their public affairs professionals, and believes that lobbying is an important activity that contributes to the correct functioning of democracy, while helping to implement better regulations.

Following the recommendations by OECD regarding the possibility of ensuring a democratic access to the activity of lobbying to all entities, *P.A.C.E.* believes that a fundamental aspect of the discussion should focus on the definition of “lobbyist.” *P.A.C.E.* has always emphasized, as a



matter of fact, the importance of identifying the role of those representing interests in a broader way, as: “anyone who enters a decision-making institution with the aim of influencing policy, in spite of considering or defining himself professionally as a lobbyist.”

Taking into account the great differences still existing within the legal framework of EU countries, *P.A.C.E.* believes that “to date a co-existence of mandatory and voluntary regulations could be considered. Hence, we suggest that the self-regulation of the profession could constitute an important public sign, which is necessary to demonstrate that our work is carried out by professionals, who provide useful and truthful information to policymakers in a transparent way.”

With regard to a Register of Lobbyists, “It is clear that a lobby registration might be mandatory only if it is comprehensive and coherent throughout Europe. That means that a mandatory register could be considered a viable solution only if it includes all persons/institutions that carry on any lobbying activity.”

P.A.C.E., during its 3rd Conference in May, hosted by **AFCL** – the French Association of Consultancies and Lobbyists – already adopted principles and standards of acceptable behaviors, for example, to avoid misuse of confidential information or conflict of interest, and to prevent revolving door practices.

P.A.C.E. Secretariat concluded: “Transparency should be a two-way process: public affairs professionals should be transparent and facilitate public scrutiny. In exchange, ethical and compliant Public Affairs professionals should be allowed access to the information they need to deliver its services and to policy makers and their offices.”

The Forum was inspired by the strong and urgent need of a comparison between public and private partners about how governments can rebuild the trust towards its citizens.

The need for transparency and integrity in lobbying, which is a crucial activity in modern democracy, was at the center of the debate organized by the OECD. Participants were representatives from the private sector and civil society who discussed the lessons learned from firsthand experiences in designing and implementing rules and **guidelines on lobbying**.

Lobbying is a component of modern democracies and a growing business. Lobbying can improve the quality of public decisions by providing technical information.

The forum started with a high-level political debate at the presence of Ángel Gurría, OECD Secretary General, and Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission, European Commissioner for Inter-institutional Relations and Administration, and then continued in four additional sessions: “Creating rules and guidelines on lobbying: How to balance comprehensiveness with feasibility”; “Open Government in the 21st century: What level of transparency on lobbying



practices”; “Integrity in public decision-making: What safeguards could influence behavior?”; “Compliance and Enforcement: How to make transparency and integrity in lobbying reality?”.

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