

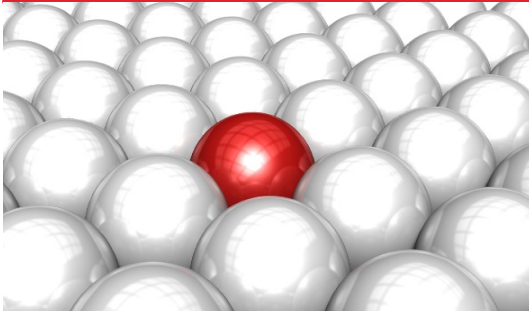


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# About Public Matters

## WHO WE ARE



As a public affairs agency based in The Hague, we advise clients that are in the centre of the public and political arena, want to manage reputation, assess political risks, and/or influence policy making.

## OUR BACKGROUND



Our 19 consultants have a background in politics, public affairs, media, and/or in-house companies, using their network of connections to support clients' interests.

## BAS BATELAAN (PARTNER)



- Bas is an all-round public affairs consultant and public relations professional, with extensive experience in both The Hague and Brussels.
- Bas was an advisor to several members of the Dutch House of Representatives and was involved in multiple election campaigns.
- He worked in the European Commission, as Head of European Affairs of a British energy company and for several (inter)national public affairs agencies.

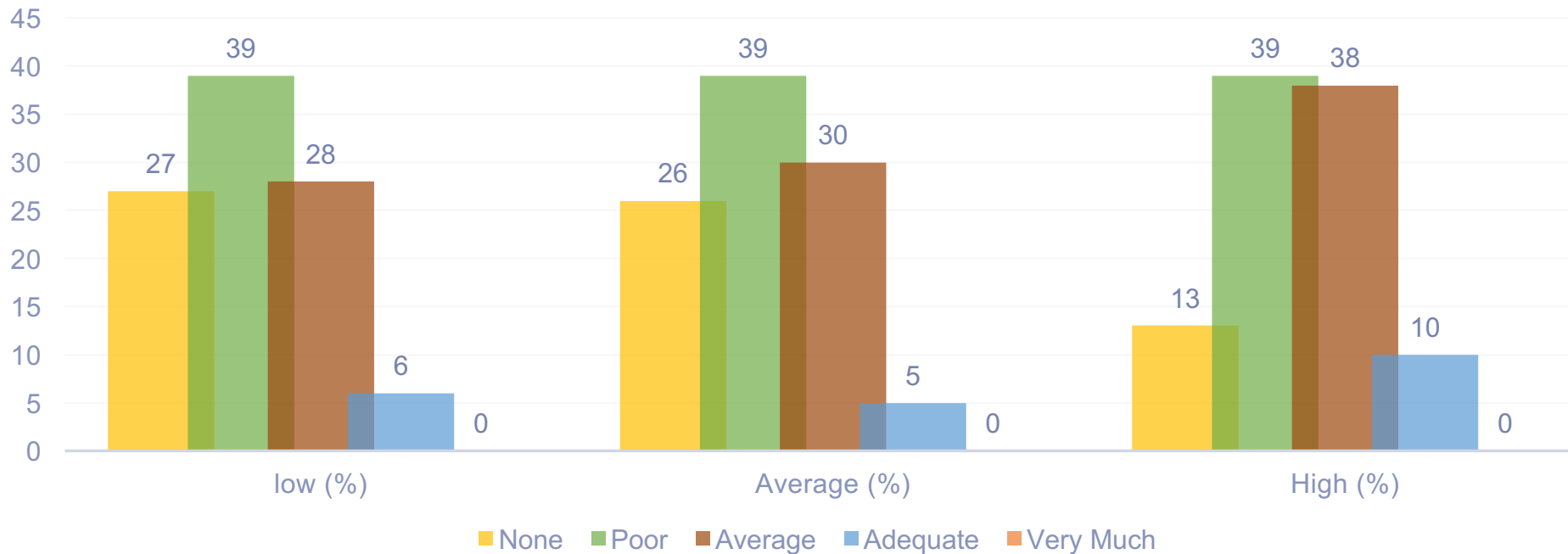
# About BVPA (Dutch Association for Public affairs)

- 'Beroepsvereniging voor Public Affairs' (BVPA)
- Founded 2002
- > 600 members
- Objectives: development pa profession, professionalisation sector, knowledge sharing, representation, advocacy
- Code of conduct
- Professor Public Affairs



# Trust in lobbyists is very low....

How much trust do you have in lobbyists (per education level)?



Source: Public Matters poll, performed by TNS NIPO (base: 643 Dutch adults), April 2015

# Issues dominating public affairs landscape



# The Vertex / Orkamby - case

LOBBY

- Vertex wanted Orkamby (an expensive medicine) to be covered by health insurers (in basic package)

LOBBYIST

- Lobby consultant presented false information to MPs about profit figures (too low)

OUTRAGE

- Politicians and general public outraged

BVPA

- Complaints Committee of BVPA concluded lobbyist is not to blame

To which extend is a lobby consultant to blame for presenting false information – as provided by client?

# The scrapping of dividend tax - case

## DECISION

- New government scrapped dividend withholding tax - rewarding foreign companies with tax savings of 1.4 billion euros

## OUTRAGE

- Opposition and general public was outraged (PM and Finance Minister only just survived a debate)

## LOBBY

- Companies (Shell and Unilever) have lobbied fiercely for the measure

## TRANSPARANCY

- According to many lobbying needs to be more transparent

Could rules to make lobbying more transparent contribute to its (long term) effectiveness?



# Trends in politics and public affairs

Parliament very fragmented – MPs rely more on input lobbyists

Increasing influence of the Senate

Increasing demand for transparency in public affairs

Lobby & PR by (local) governments

Focus on flexible coalitions on individual issues

Growing demand for public affairs (consultancy) support in all sectors

Growing demand for broader pa/pr support: multidisciplinary instruments & focus of stakeholders (*all-service*)

# Public affairs policies in the Netherlands

- No clear regulation / definition of lobbying
- Lobbyist Register of the House of Representatives

- Focus on self-regulation / professionalization: scientific chair, voluntary code of conduct

- Public push for new initiatives - focus on transparency of decision-making process (lobby paragraphe, etc.) and mandatory register

There has been a lot of talking – but stricter rules seem more likely then ever -

# Vision of the BVPA – public affairs policies

Taking into account that

There are no real boundaries for interest groups to influence

There are social and democratic checks and balances

Incidents impact the public reputation of public affairs

The pa-professional benefits from more transparency and integrity

Therefore the BVPA

Supports efforts to create an open access and a level playing field

Supports a lobby paragraph(legislative footprint), lobby register and a transparent consultation process

Suggestions & remarks

Transparency measures should also apply to MPs

Benchmark current regulations in foreign countries to map the best practices

Define clearly what lobbying and a lobbyist is - to make a lobby register meaningful

What real problem does this initiative address and what are the priorities?

Some proposals create a false sense of transparency and checks

# Thank you for your time and attention.

## Any questions?

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