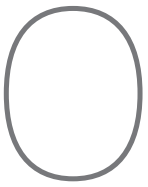




TOOLKIT

for setting a **national**
association of lobbying



The case for a national association of lobbying

5 MYTHS OR SO-CALLED EXCUSES NOT TO HAVE AN ASSOCIATION



1. We don't have a lobby law hence we can't have an association.

The truth is it is advisable to have an association set before even debates on a lobbying law start. And that is because if you have an association, you will achieve many things: you get to start the debates on the essential matters and notions regarding this activity on your own terms, you have the chance to start self-regulation, before regulation, increasing your reputation, you educate stakeholders on the matter and last, but not least you can lobby more effectively for an adequate lobbying law, in the name of an association.



2. There are no lobbyists in our country, there is no one who can join such an association.

If you live in Europe, you live in a democratic society. Wherever there is a democracy, influencing public policy will take place, whether you call it lobbying, advocacy or consultations. Therefore, stop looking for lobbyists and start searching for private stakeholders who get to discuss with public stakeholders when public policies are formulated. You will have found then your lobbyists.



3. Our country is not at the level of other countries, as such there is no need for an association

Usually this is something that someone from an Eastern European country would say in comparison to the Western European countries, or even to the United States, where lobbying is said to have been born. However, as long as there is a participative democracy, lobbying will exist, whether the country is large or small, well advanced or emerging. Countries small such as Switzerland or emerging as Serbia do have strong associations, which promote the main values of lobbying: transparency and ethics.



4. Lobbying has a bad connotation in our country, hence it's not good for us

The lobbying notion has indeed a difficult semantic burden around the world. It is either positive or negative, depending on the context and the actors of the lobbying process. However, it is important to understand that this is the situation everywhere around the world. That is why other words are used sometimes, such as advocacy, public affairs or interest representation, as EU institutions use.



5. We don't need an association; we do our lobbying very well without one

As that might be true for the time being, more and more countries around Europe are promoting lobbying laws and hard regulations. Thinking on a longer term and getting ready for this wave of change means educating stakeholders and self-regulating the market. An association is the best means to achieve this goal.



5 STRONGEST REASONS FOR AN ASSOCIATION OF LOBBYING



1. You will build trust by lobbying for benefits among stakeholders and business community.

Rightful and ethical lobbying is useful, legal and meaningful. The stakeholders and the business community will see the merits of lobbying, if they trust that lobbying is done ethically. And what way better to prove that if not by the means of soft law (self-regulation) before hard law (regulation) promoted by an association?



2. You will set grounds for ethical rules for lobbyists and lobbying.

There are many examples around the world where you can get your inspiration and knowledge when setting the ethical rules. Ethics is the lobbyists' "license to operate", so careful and early attention is necessary.



3. You will have the opportunity to lobby for the appropriate lobbying regulation, where the case may arise, in the name of an organised association.

Get prepared for the moment when a lobby law will be considered and debated by the politicians. And you can be sure that moment will come. An association is so much more credible in the eyes of the stakeholders, but you already know this, being a lobbyist.



4. You will help professionalizing the activity of lobbying

The activity of the association, the promotion of the ethical rules, the good examples you will set as members of a self-regulated association will start a wave of new professional lobbyists, whether they work in consultancies or they are in-house lobbyists. It is not a short-term achievement to be expected, but it will come with perseverance and it will pay off.



5. If you are in the consultancy business, it will help growing your business and if you are on the corporate side, you will help building a community of professionals.

When you build a lobbying association, you will start a virtuous circle. The trust will grow, the lobbying market will grow and everyone will benefit of it: consultancies will get more business, corporates will get professional services, public policy makers will get professional interlocutors.

5 CONCRETE EXAMPLES



1. THE ROMANIAN LOBBYING ASSOCIATION

(ARRL; www.registruldelobby.ro) Year of establishment: 2010

Reason why: The threat of an inadequate lobby law forced the establishment of the Association

Membership: 10 consultancies

Achievements: self-regulation (code of ethics, external ethical committee, online training course); own transparency registry; several studies; events, press appearances; a credible interlocutor for stakeholders who are constantly educated; Government transparency register; repelling several attempts of improper lobbying draft bills.



2. THE SERBIAN LOBBYING ASSOCIATION

(DLS; <http://www.drustvolobistasrbije.org/>) Year of establishment: 2008

Reason why: Professionalisation of the business practices, regulating lobbying, improving transparency of the political advocacy process, curbing corruption.

Membership: app. 350 consultancies, legal offices, individual members from public and private organisations and academics

Achievements: Advocating successfully for passing of a balanced Law on Lobbying (2018); influencing to enact the Institutional Transparency register; positioning the profession and the expertise as credible one; Code of Ethics; organized 50 Lobbying Clubs as high level debates; numerous media appearance and events, supported research, articles and publications on lobbying; supported faculties in establishing lobbying courses.



3. THE AUSTRIAN PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION

(OePAV; <https://oepav.at/en/>) Year of establishment: 2011

Reason why: lobbying for better regulation at a time, where the Austrian Federal Lobbying Registration Law was debated and enacted; service-organisation for its members

Membership: 120 individuals from companies, associations, consultancies and NGOs

Achievements: published several studies and benchmarks; 4-5 business breakfasts each year; annual conference; establishment of a widely accepted code of conduct, which is referred to by non-members also; lobbying to amend the Federal Law



4. THE SPANISH LOBBYING ASSOCIATION

(APRI; <http://relacionesinstitucionales.es>) Year of establishment: 2008

Reason why: to foster a transparent and professional lobbying culture and promote the profession.

Membership: for the most part, APRI has been an association of persons, but it opened up to companies (not only consultancies but any kind of company) in 2019.

Achievements: A Code of Ethics since 2011. The most compelling and profound proposal of lobbying regulation. Research (one study and one book), advocacy (a viral video, the 2nd twitter account after the British in number of followers), an appearance before the Congress (2012), several (unfinished) parliamentary initiatives, and extensive stakeholders engagement for the purposes of enacting the national lobbying law (they have several regional registers).



5. THE ITALIAN LOBBYING ASSOCIATION

(Il Chiostro; <http://www.ilchiostro.org/>) Year of establishment: 2007

Reason why: To fight bias against lobbying, give an identity to this profession and engage for a national regulation

Membership: 80 individuals

Achievements: Code of ethics; three annual training courses; better image on the media; intense dialogue with establishment, civil servants, senior administrative officials, politicians and scholars; regulation, even though fragmented, adopted by 10 Regions, 4 Ministries, Anticorruption Authority and Chamber of Deputies; Masters in cooperation with some Universities and tutorship for beginners; Conventions on the regulation and seminars on the issues of interests to institution, stakeholders and public affairs professionals.

02

Your options for a national association:

Each country has its own particularities and might choose the most appropriate form of setting an association, from the membership stand of view. There is no good or wrong choice.

	Explanation	Benefits	Challenges
Association of consultancies	The members are agencies and consultancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fewer members to be managed * Higher membership fees 	It misses a large part of lobbying community – companies, NGOs, trade
Association of public affairs professionals/ lobbyists associations	The members are individuals in the public affairs and lobbying profession coming from all the range of organisations	It encompasses the entire range of public affairs professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Low membership fees, which leads to potential budget issues * More difficult to be managed, having many members
Association with mixed membership	Formed of a mix of individuals and organisations	It encompasses the entire range of public affairs professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * More difficult to be managed, having many members * Difficult to keep members engaged



03

What to do with the association

We have already given you the examples of 5 national associations and their work.

We shall recap some of the activities that are advisable to be undertaken by a lobbying association.



A. CODE OF ETHICS

First and foremost, a lobbying association starts with a code of ethics, for the simple reason that ethics is our license to operate. There are many examples you can take from associations around the world, but there are other resources to be taken into consideration, such as OECD, Transparency International or Council of Europe. Language should not be a barrier any longer, as Google Translate can help us all. It is obvious that your association's members should abide by the Code, but if it's well done and promoted, other professionals and organisations can adhere to it. If you want to add credibility to it, you can develop it in cooperation with third party experts in ethics.



B. TRAININGS IN LOBBYING/ ETHICS

Trainings are a fantastic way to raise level of know-how amongst those who interact with decision makers. It is about the know-how which one can gather from professionals, in a time when lobbying is so much interconnected with the entire spectrum of communications. After all lobbying is communication. When it comes to ethics, trainings based on real life examples, is the best way to spread the positive vibe around lobbying. You can do it in live sessions or online.



C. DEBATES

Don't avoid public debates. Moreover, provoke debates on lobbying. If in your society lobbying has a bad reputation, it is important to bring on surface the voices which criticize. If you can bring credible voices to support ethical lobbying, with examples from your country or even other countries, or EU, the outcome of the debates can't be other than positive.



D. PRESS RELATIONS

The education must take place also at the level of the press. From informal meetings with the press members, to interviews, press releases and press conferences, keeping in touch with the journalists is a great way that you are on top of things, when it comes to public discussions on lobbying.



E. RESEARCH

A good way to spending your little money in the association is producing research papers. They can be focus on the state of lobbying in your country, perceptions on lobbying, how the lobbying should be regulated. They will become valuable materials when advocating for or against legislation on lobbying, as the case may arise.



F. PLUG-IN TO OTHER PLATFORMS OF DEBATE ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

Your association can become an important voice on good governance. You of all people know better how governance is conducted in your country. Every country has a variety of platforms debating on governance, whether they are private or public platforms.



G. WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA

Oh, yes, and don't forget about the website and the social media. Go there, be active, and you will see a good return on your investment of time.

04

Financing the activity of the association

Despite the general perception that lobbyists are rich, with endless financial possibilities, truth is most of the associations are almost always on survival mode. However, please be reminded that is now you can get creative. With a lot of money everyone can do (almost) everything. Those who do with little money, are those who will stand out. Apart from the inspirational speech, how can you get money for your association?



Membership fees

Yes, of course, this is the first resource. But at the end of the day, only from the membership fees you might not be able to do much, especially if you are an association of professionals with membership fees in the range of Euro 100/year. Still, it is a good place to start with. And remember, all associations are based a lot on the members' volunteer work.



Trainings

Indeed, trainings are the second used source of income for your association. Whether the members are the trainers, or you partner with professional trainers, you can get a good source of revenue



Other funding

If you can think of a good project you might maybe get European funds or gain funding from other financiers. Or organise events with sponsorships. Get creative, get entrepreneurial.

05

Managing the association

There are not many ways to do the management of an association. You either hire someone or the members of the Board work voluntarily for the benefit of the community. In any case some of the professional services will have to be employed externally, usually the lawyer and the accountant.



Employed personnel

This is the best-case situation, when your association can afford hiring a Director or a Secretary General. This doesn't happen often, but it happens, and we can only wish you have this opportunity. In this case the hired person should not only understand lobbying, but also understand the financial requirements and have administrative skills.



Self-management

It's not an easy task to manage an association, but at the end of the day it is rewarding. Although the Board and the President will never be so dedicated as a hired person, the time they allot must be sufficient to accomplish the goals and the strategy approved by the members.

06

Benefits for joining P.A.C.E.

After you have established your association, needless to say that we are expecting you in PACE with open arms. We can promise you:



Support and advice before establishment



Support and advice after the establishment



A great bunch of dedicated people, leaders in their countries, ready to share experience and knowledge, with good and bad



A network which can provide instant access to lobbying legislation in many countries



A yearly meeting of the network, when we share developments in our countries, but we also meet with representatives from Brussels, European Commission, OECD, Transparency International and other organisation and institutions.

About P.A.C.E.

PACE was established on the 7th of May 2011 in Rome as a platform of cooperation for all national organizations of European public affairs professionals and lobbyists. In 2018, PACE took a step forward and incorporated PACE as an AISBL (international non profit organization) in Brussels, set by European national public affairs and lobbying associations and individual consultancies. We all share a dream to bring a solid contribution to a more transparent process of adopting public policies across Europe within frameworks which will consolidate the participative democracy within the European states.



PACE
Public Affairs Community of Europe