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PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

P.A.C.E – Public Affairs Community of Europe

Preamble

Democracy needs the professional representation of interests. The external view and expertise enhances the political decision-making process. The role of Public Affairs professionals to build up links between civil society, economics and politics is not only legitimized as a fundamental principle of pluralist democracy. It fulfils an undeniable, important function within the political, social and democratic system.

Public Affairs professionals should commit to principles in carrying out their professional activities. There are self-committing Codes of Conduct for Public Affairs professionals in most of the European states and Codes of Conduct regarding the representation of interests towards EU institutions. These guidelines are the working basis for the PACE partners and are disseminated by them to their stakeholders.

The partners of PACE understand the following basic principles of all these codices as fundamental and indisputable for a professional Public Affairs practice on the local, regional, national and international level:

Truthfulness

- 1) Public Affairs professionals act truthfully towards clients, stakeholders and in the representation of interests by
 - using faithful and correct information,
 - making efforts to ensure the validity and accuracy of information before providing them to clients or to others on behalf of their clients or organizations,
 - safeguarding general interests.

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- 2) Public Affairs professionals are honest about their status, contacts and access possibilities to policy makers and political institutions.
- 3) Public Affairs professionals only represent an interest if they are explicitly mandated to do so.

Transparency

- 4) Public Affairs professionals are transparent towards decision makers in declaring their name, organization or company and the interest they represent.

Fairness

- 5) Public Affairs professionals avoid and condemn any illicit or dishonest behavior or methods in performing their activities and in trying to obtain information. They respect the autonomy of decision makers and attempt to influence decision-making processes with arguments and facts, never by implying or offering direct or indirect granting of advantages, especially financial incentives.
- 6) Public Affairs professionals will encourage to avoid any kind of illegal, unethical or unprofessional practices which would interfere with the principles of Public Affairs professionals and with the Codes of Conduct of the national Public Affairs associations.
- 7) Public Affairs professionals treat stakeholders with respect and will not make any efforts to undermine their professional and personal reputation. This implies avoiding any racist, sexist, religious or other inhumane discrimination.

Incompatibility

- 8) Public Affairs professionals separate their professional activities from any personal involvement in politics, which includes political positions, mandates, and functions.
- 9) Public Affairs professionals shall
 - avoid conflicts of interest,
 - disclose it to their clients if a possible conflict of interest arises,
 - immediately take action to tackle the conflict.



Confidentiality

- 10) Public Affairs professionals commit to discretion by not passing on any confidential information of current or previous clients or employers as well as of parliamentary and governmental institutions without their explicit consent.
- 11) Public Affairs professionals who have worked previously in a governmental or parliamentary institution shall act in accordance with the rules and confidentiality requirements of those institutions.

Loyalty

- 12) Public Affairs professionals are aware that a violation of these principles could damage not only their own reputation, but also have a negative impact on other Public Affairs professionals and businesses as well as the public image of the professional representation of interests as a whole.