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# Lobbying: Enhancing transparency and accountability

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## The BRUSSELS ARENA





## Overall approach

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**NEED**

to

**IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY**

**by providing information on the nature and activities of lobbies**

will contribute to:

**IMPROVE TRUST** in the EU institutions &  
**decision making processes**

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## Overall approach

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### Lobbying / Interest representation

- A legitimate activity
    - **Democratic dimension**
    - **Better legislation dimension**
  - **The European Commission has a duty to “consult widely before initiating legislation “**
  - **Principle of openness suffers no restriction.**
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### The process toward transparency

- **3 May 2006 : Green paper on a European transparency initiative**
    - **The need for a more structured framework for the activities of interest representatives (lobbies).**
    - **Feedback on the “Minimum standards of consultation.**
    - **Mandatory disclosure of beneficiaries of EU funds.**
  - **May to August 2006: Open public consultation**
    - **Submissions through internet.**
    - **Hearing, European Economic and Social Committee.**
    - **Series of discussion meetings in the Member states.**
  - **21 March 2007 Communication Follow up**
    - **Follow up measures.**
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## Overall approach

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# Definition of Lobbying

**“Activities carried out with the objective of influencing the policy formulation and decision making process of the European institutions”**

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### A voluntary system

- **A register of interest representatives**
  - **A code of conduct**
  - **A system of monitoring and sanctions**
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- **Main principles guiding the design of measures:**
    - **Keep the system voluntary**
    - **Avoid unnecessary administrative hurdle.**
    - **Preserve openness of consultations.**
    - **Favour self regulation.**
    - **Full compatibility with EU law.** (competition, personal data protection etc..)
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# The interest representation register



# The register

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- **A voluntary declaration (electronic register)**
    - **Whom is represented, which interest, which mission, how funded?**
    - **Link with a code of conduct**
  - **A new standard template for web consultations**
    - **Systematic request to register.**
    - **Separate publication of submissions of non registered entities.**
  - **An automatic alert system for consultations**
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# The register

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## WHO SHOULD REGISTER

- **Public affairs consultancies and law firms**
- **Corporate lobby units and trade associations**
- **NGO's and Think tanks**

## NOT COVERED BY THE REGISTER:

### **Public authorities**

But: Associations of local or regional authorities, who would choose to declare their advocacy activities, are welcome to do so



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## Financial disclosure

- **Professional consultancies and law firms**
    - **Turnover linked to lobbying**
    - **Relative weight of the clients**
  - **In house lobbyists and trade associations**
    - **Estimate of cost associated with direct lobbying of EU institutions**
  - **NGO's and Think tanks**
    - **Overall budget + breakdown per main sources**
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# **The code of conduct**

**to be prepared by the Commission**



# The code of conduct

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What it will not be

- **A code to regulate the profession**
    - **No reference to qualifications, access to the profession etc.**
    - **No interferences with national professional deontology codes**
  - **A code to regulate relations between consultancies and their clients**
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# The code of conduct

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## What it will deal with

### - Principles

- Honesty and “professional” integrity
- openness and transparency

### - Rules to respect: 4 baskets:

- Transparency (who, what interest, clients ..)
- Accuracy of data provided to Commission
- Means of obtaining information
- Questions related to the hiring of former officials

(Else.?)



# What's next

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- **Development of the register**
  - **Consultations about the code of conduct**
  - **Decision on code**  
**(Inter-institutional dimension?)**
  
  - **Operational launch: SPRING 2008**
  
  - **After one year: EVALUATION**
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