



Invitation to comment on the Ombudsman's draft 'Practical guidelines for public officials' interaction with interest representatives'.

Public consultation - 01/12/2016

To do their job well, public officials need to interact with many individuals and organisations representing a range of interests. This allows them to inform themselves of the real world consequences of the policy and legislation they draw up and help implement. But public officials must take care to ensure that welcome input from interest groups does not become undue influence.

In an effort to assist with this, the European Ombudsman has drawn up practical guidelines for public officials to consult if and when they are interacting with interest representatives. They seek to identify, in a succinct and easily understandable form, the key elements that should guide public officials in their contacts with interest representatives. We have drawn on material produced by the European Commission, for example the 'Practical Guide to Staff Ethics and Conduct' and specific guidelines issued by DG Competition and DG Trade, as well as other government sources. While we currently use the term 'practical guidelines', we are open to other terms (such as 'practical guidance' or 'top tips') if they are considered more suitable.

While the guidelines contain some EU specific terminology, they have been drafted in such a way that they might easily be tailored for public officials in the Member States. This is to respond to the need expressed during the European Ombudsman's consultation of members of the European Network of Ombudsmen (ENO) on this topic.

With a view to drawing on other's experience and knowledge in this area, the Ombudsman is now inviting comments from the EU institutions, from members of the European Network of Ombudsmen, from the Council of Europe, and from interested third parties on these draft guidelines. A final version of the practical guidelines will be adopted in the first half of 2017 and made available online in all EU official languages.

Should you require any further information, please contact Mr Koen Roovers, Case Handler at the Ombudsman (tel: +32 2 28 41141).

How to comment:

Comments should be sent to the Ombudsman **by 28 February 2017** .



By letter: European Ombudsman, 1 avenue du Président Robert Schuman, CS 30403, F - 67001 Strasbourg Cedex, France;

By e-mail: EO-GuidelinesComments@ombudsman.europa.eu

The draft guidelines are currently available in English, French and German. Comments can be submitted in any of the 24 official languages of the EU and the final version of the guidelines will be produced in all 24 official languages.

The Ombudsman may decide to publish the comments received online. Contributors who consider that their name should not be published and/or that their comments should not be made publicly available, should state so and explain the reasons why. In the latter case, contributors are invited to submit a non-confidential summary which may be published on the Ombudsman's website.