

Practical recommendations

for public officials' interaction with interest representatives



DO

- 1 Check whether interest representatives have to be registered in the **EU Transparency Register** before meeting them or accepting an invitation to an event.
- 2 Prepare well and conduct basic research to check what interests they represent and **who is funding them**. Ask for further information, if needed.
- 3 Ensure that they disclose, in advance, the **meeting purpose/issue** for discussion, names of participants and the organisations and/or clients on whose behalf they act, as well as any other relevant information.
- 4 Assess and avoid any **risk of conflicts** between your private interests and the public interest and think about how your interaction might be perceived.
- 5 **Stop and reflect** on how to proceed, if you are in doubt. If necessary, consult your management and if it is decided that you should go ahead, add a note to the file explaining why.
- 6 Be aware that not all interest representation takes place in a formal setting. Lobbying can also take place during casual encounters and in **social settings**. Remain professional at all times.
- 7 Maintain good **record keeping** habits, including the meeting date/location, names of participants, organisations and/or clients, and issues discussed. Use your organisation's official file management system.
- 8 Respect the applicable **disclosure requirements**, for example in the Commission, disclose details of meetings between interest representatives and Commissioners, Cabinet members and Directors-General.
- 9 Report lobbying practices considered unacceptable in particular in light of the EU Transparency Register's **Code of Conduct** for interest representatives.
- 10 Familiarise yourself, for example via **training**, with the specific rules that apply to your own organisation. When the specific rules diverge from these practical recommendations the former should normally take precedence.

DON'T

- 1 Meet interest representatives not registered in the **EU Transparency Register** if your own rules disallow or discourage this; please ask the representative to register if their activities fall within its scope.
- 2 Overlook the **motives** of those who seek meetings or invite you to events. Lobbying is done by a range of organisations, including consultancies, law firms, NGOs, think-tanks, grassroots campaigns, ...
- 3 Interact with a particular interest representative without considering offering **other groups** a similar opportunity.
- 4 Accept any invitations to meetings or events, which could put your organisation in a **compromising situation**.
- 5 Forget to **debrief** relevant colleagues and your management after meetings and events.
- 6 Accept or arrange meetings **outside office hours** and official premises. If you do, consider informing your management and involve another colleague.
- 7 Do or say anything that could be viewed as granting an interest representative **preferential treatment**.
- 8 Give the impression to an interest representative that any particular advice, idea or information could or will be **decisive** in the decision-making process.
- 9 Share information you are **not authorised** to share or misuse confidential information.
- 10 Accept **hospitality** from an interest representative without careful consideration and unless it is in line with the applicable rules. Where necessary, report information on any gifts and hospitality received.