



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

ECB-PUBLIC

ECB CONTRIBUTION TO THE OMBUDSMAN'S CONSULTATION ON THE PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS' INTERACTION WITH INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES

1) It could be useful to define (or clarify the extent of) the notions of "*interest representative*" and "*public official*" for the purpose of applying the Practical Guidelines.

2) DO

"1. Verify that interest representatives have registered in the EU (or equivalent national) Transparency Register before meeting them or accepting an invitation to an event."

The text may lead to the interpretation that for meetings of EU public officials a registration in a transparency register (e.g. in a national register but not necessarily in the EU Transparency Register¹) is sufficient. Therefore, it might be good to clarify that a registration in the relevant transparency register is required.

3) DO

"4. Inform your hierarchy prior to meetings with interest representatives and debrief them afterwards."

"6. Err on the side of caution. If in doubt, consult as appropriate and if you decide to go ahead, add a note to the file explaining."

Advice 6 on DO suggests that public officials should "*if in doubt, consult as appropriate*" without specifying whom, whereas advice 4 on DO suggests informing ones hierarchy prior to meetings. It could be useful to harmonise the two advice items.

4) DO

10. *"Report unacceptable lobbying practices."*

Advice 10 on DO invites public officials to report "*unacceptable lobbying practices*". It would be useful to specify what such practices are. An idea might be to refer to the Code of Conduct for interest representatives² (see Annex III of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Transparency Register) that provides useful indications on what is unacceptable and what may be expected from an interest representative.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do>

² See Annex III of the Interinstitutional Agreement:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.277.01.0011.01.ENG