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EU Lobbying in Brussels

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Who am I?

- ✓ Law studies in *Brussels* (EU legal adviser) – **Lawyer** (Jurist?)
- ✓ **Lobbyist** (Belgian level – FEDERAUTO + EU associations, *Secretary General*; EU level – European Road Federation (ERF), *Director of Policy and Institutional Affairs*)
- ✓ **Consultant** (LOGOS Public Affairs, *Manager* + EUreSupport; Lobbyist « for hire »?)
- ✓ Interest in *Bulgaria* (also Western Balkans)

What networks am I active in?

- ✓ European Centre for Public Affairs (ECPA, www.publicaffairs.ac)
- ✓ Ecpa2.0 « for young lobbyists » (www.ecpa2-0.eu)
- ✓ European Public Affairs Consultancies Association (EPACA, www.epaca.org)
- ✓ Society of European Affairs Professionals (SEAP, www.seap.be)
- ✓ British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium (www.britcham.be)

What exactly is « Lobbying »?

- **Representation** of a particular **interest** = part of **democratic** process (*identifiable, legitimate, representative?, transparent!*)
- “**Brussels’ definition**”: all **activities**, carried out with the **objective** of directly or indirectly **influencing** the policy formulation or implementation and decision-making processes of the **European institutions (MS?)**
- **Provide information** to policy-makers (to improve quality of decisions) & **Exercise influence** (to achieve a “selective” advantage)

Who are THE (+/-25.000) Lobbyists?

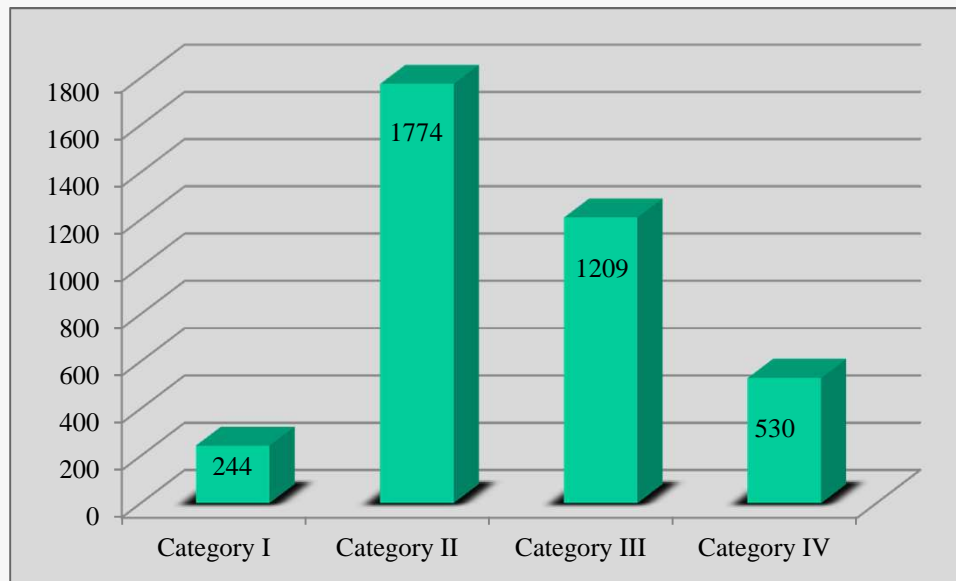
- **Professional consultancies/** Law firms/
Independent consultants & **lawyers**
- « **In-house lobbyists** »/ Trade, Business &
Professional **Associations/** Trade Unions
- **NGOs/** Platforms/ Networks
- **Think tanks/** Research & Academic Institutions
- Local, regional and municipal **authorities?**
Representation offices & Associations!

Is Lobbying regulated in the EU?

- **Diverse traditions in the 27 EU MS** => In the majority of countries there are no provisions at all for dealing with interest groups at the parliamentary or governmental level (≠ lobbying in the US is much more regulated)
- **The European Parliament** => mandatory register for lobbyists since 1996 (incl. a 10-point *Code of Conduct*)
- **The European Commission** => voluntary register since June 2008 (*Register of Interest Representatives/ Lobbyists*)
- Recent initiative to create a joint "**Transparency Register**" for all the EU institutions (by June 2011?).

How many lobbying organisations?

3757 Lobbying organisations are registered in the Commission's register in March 2011:



Category I: Professional consultancies and law firms
Category II: «In-house» lobbyists and trade associations
Category III: Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and think-tanks
Category IV: Other organisations

What activities? (I)

THE Lobbyists share recognition of the ***need to be (re)present(ed) in Brussels!***

Why?

- Contacting/ meeting Members & officials of the EU institutions (***direct lobbying!***);
- *Preparing*, circulating and communicating letters, ***information material*** or argumentation and ***position papers***.

What activities? (II)

- Organising events, **meetings** or **promotional activities** and **social events** or conferences (*invitations sent* to individual staff or Members of institutions);
- ***Voluntary*** contributions and participation in **formal consultations** on legislative or regulatory proposals and other open consultations (*<-> direct request!*).

Who is being lobbied (and how)?

- The **European Commission** – Commissioner, Chef de cabinet, Cabinet members (*political!*); D-G, Director, Heads of Section/Unit (*high-level speaker, horizontal, strategic management*); Desk Officers, Policy Analysts, Research Officers (*closest to content!*)
- The **European Parliament** – MEPs (*very political*: **Group**, party, constituency, personal background...then subject by **Committee**); MEPs Assistants & Advisers (*idem*); Group staff & Secretariat officials (*content!*)
- The **Council of Ministers** – (*National*) Ministers? Secretariat? Experts? *PermReps!*

What communication channels?

- Outsourcing (PR consultants)
- Media (new & old)
- Contracts with professional intermediaries (PA consultants)
- Think-tanks, "platforms", fora (associations)
- Campaigns and "*grassroots*" initiatives

Where can YOU fit in?

Formal consultative bodies (EU Treaty!?):

- The **Committee of the Regions** (regional & municipal authorities)
- The **Economic and Social Committee** (representatives of trade unions & employer associations)

Trade federations, associations, coalitions, networks, platforms... every sector & every issue is represented in Brussels!

ex. **BUSINESSEUROPE**, **EUROCITIES**, **CEFIC** (chemical), **CIAA** (food & drink), **EFPIA** (pharma), **ACEA** (automotive)...

How can your organisation play?

- ✓ Open an office in Brussels (?)
- ✓ Join a trade association for « Brussels presence »
- ✓ Contract a consultancy/law firm (virtual presence)
- ✓ Send staff occasionally to Brussels/
Experts can join Expert Groups (!)

Some case studies

- ❖ **ERF**: Legislative lobbying on ***Road Safety Infrastructure Management Directive*** (Draft EC text, Formal consultation, EP TRAN rejected, Plenary back to TRAN – Open Letter + campaign website, events in EP, Council?)
- ❖ **Issues**: binding measures <-> sharing best practices (new <-> old MS), definition of measures, territorial application – ERF *interest?*

euresupport

For all your business needs at EU level

Open Letter to EP – Road Safety!



European Union
Road Federation



International
Road Federation



Fédération
Internationale de
l'Automobile



Federation of
European
Motorcyclists'
Associations



Association
Européenne des
Concessionnaires
d'Autoroutes et
d'Ouvrages à Péage



Association des
Constructeurs
Européens de
Motocycles



Association des
Constructeurs
Européens
d'Automobiles



European
Asphalt
Pavement
Association



Confederation of
Organisations in
Road Transport
Enforcement



Association of
European Vehicle
Logistics



Cities and Regions
networking for
Innovative
Transport Solutions



International Road
Transport
Union



European
Transport Safety
Council



International
Federation of
Pedestrians

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Outcome

- ❖ **Directive approved** (more than 2 years), with Annexes & Timeline (+ Review, on territorial application)
- ❖ ERF obtained **EU funding** for Auditor Training Course (open result <-> business case)
- ❖ ERF organised & coordinated **EC TAIEX-workshops** (6 in 1 year, CEE & Western Balkans – ERF members as EC experts!)

Some case studies

- ❖ **MPE**: « *Mobility for Prosperity in Europe* », stakeholder platform set up by Ari Vatanen (when MEP) for undistorted, user-driven transport (answer to Rail & Green lobbies)
- ❖ Organise **Dinner Debates** in European Parliament – **Positions** on White Paper (Future of Transport)
- ❖ **Eurovignette**: external costs (congestion?), earmarking (for transport projects <-> at source?), application (TEN-T <-> all (major) roads)

Some case studies

- ❖ **ECED**: Legislative lobbying on *Services Directive* (Position Paper with positive proposals – formal consultation), *Distribution Agreements* (DG COMP – Position Paper, internal consultation & analysis, visit to EC Officials, sharing info/contracts), Visit to *Cabinet Verheugen* on crisis measures (with President & Vice-President – following letter, political courtesy call! Follow-up?)
- ❖ Current initiative on **machinery theft** (coalition of stakeholders) – RFP for EU Funding Call (DG HOME)

Some case studies

- ❖ **LOGOS/EPA**: enhance **image of « parking sector »** in Brussels (EPA Congress) – cooperation with **POLIS** (transport network of cities and regions)
- ❖ Include focus on parking policies in **Urban Mobility Action Plan** (word count « parking »?): studies, Expert Groups, follow-up Actions
- ❖ Apply for **EU-funded R&D-projects** – from project idea to consortium-building (cross-border, cross-sector, public/private), proposal-writing & project management (Administrative burden!)

Actual cases

- ❖ **Belgian RUC introduction** by 2013 – positioning of particular motorway operator « business model » towards Regional Governments (cf. EU position & discussions)
- ❖ « **e-Parliament** » – awareness-raising of particular IT-solution by sensibilising MEPs, obtain political support to start formal tender process (& guide client through it)
- ❖ **Bulgarian interests** (in Brussels)?

Lobbying: a sequence of activities



Launching a PA Strategy

▶ **Monitoring**

- Legislation (developments)/ Stakeholders (mapping)
- Intelligence gathering (personal contacts, expertise)

▶ **Positioning and profiling**

- « Make friends before you need them » (networking, events & conferences, Place Lux!)
- Stakeholder relations (Working Groups, joint positions, events & conferences...)

▶ **Lobbying/ Advocacy** (focused & follow-up!)

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Prioritise your **issues** & get their early!
- ✓ Do your **stakeholder mapping** in advance – know your allies & your opponents!
- ✓ Use logical & persuasive **arguments** rather than pressure (facts & figures!)
- ✓ Establish **trust** and **credibility** – you will be contacted next time directly!
- ✓ Remain **professional** and **transparent**, never (too) emotional or political (<-> neutral?)

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Get information from the source** (EC, EP, Council Press Releases & Newsletters – sent straight to your mailbox + Top News, Midday Express, Cordis Express, State Aid Weekly – overflow!?)
- ✓ **Get invited** to Commission (and Council?) Expert Groups/ Stakeholder Platforms (eg. on transport) and to EP (and Council?) Hearings – use your (informal) contacts to get you involved!
- ✓ Always **be prepared when going out** (elevator pitch, biz cards, deliverables...)

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ **Register** for a lot of **events/conferences** – even if you can't go in the end (mailing lists, documents...)
- ✓ **What to look out for** in EU draft law: binding or voluntary measures?, (geographical/sectoral) scope?, Annexes (comitology)?, timelines (national implementation, deadlines)?, EC reviews?
- ✓ **Try to bring an expert** to meetings – lobbyists serve to « open doors » and « translate » technical jargon to Euro-speak and vice versa

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ The **importance of networking** – use your contacts, colleagues, friends...! Also **virtual** (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook...) – « *Place Lux effect* »
- ✓ *Those people you step on on your way to the top, are the same people you'll meet on your way down –*
never underestimate a contact!
- ✓ **Always be respectful and diplomatic** – Diplomacy = *The art of telling someone to go to Hell in a way that he is actually looking forward to the trip...*

EC Code of conduct (I)

Interest representatives are expected to apply the ***principles of openness, transparency, honesty and integrity***, as legitimately expected of them by citizens and other stakeholders.

- **identify themselves** by name and by the entity they work for /represent;
- **not misrepresent themselves** as to the effect of registration to mislead third parties and/or EU staff;
- **declare the interests**, and where applicable the clients or the members, which they represent;

EC Code of conduct (II)

- ensure that, to the best of their knowledge, **information which they provide** is unbiased, complete, up-to-date and not misleading;
- not obtain or try to **obtain information, or any decision, dishonestly**;
- **not induce EU staff** to contravene rules and standards of behaviour applicable to them;
- **if employing former EU staff**, respect their obligation to abide by the rules and confidentiality requirements which apply to them.

References

- **EPACA** Code (<http://epaca.org/en/code-of-conduct/text-of-code/>)
- **ERF** – European Road Federation (www.erf.be)
- **ECED** – European Confederation of Equipment Distributors (www.eced-association.org)
- **MPE** – Mobility for Prosperity in Europe (www.mobilityeurope.eu)
- **EPA** – European Parking Association (www.europeanparking.eu, www.epacongress.eu)
- **POLIS** (www.polis-online.org)

Thank you!

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Why EUreSupport?

- High level of professionalism
- Customized and tailor-made services for the client
- In-House consultant option
- Up-to-date and real-time information
- Combined experience in Belgian and European Lobbying
- Perfect French, Dutch and English speaking
- Requested outcome guaranteed within agreed timeframe
- Building sustainable partnership
- Confidentiality (combined with Transparency)