



Society of European Affairs Professionals (SEAP*) Code of Conduct

RECOGNISING that European affairs professionals are a vital part of the democratic process, acting as a link between on the one hand business and civil society, and on the other, European policy makers;

RECOGNISING that European affairs professionals must observe the highest ethical standards;

RECOGNISING that the principles laid down in this code of ethical conduct provide a benchmark for all European affairs professionals;

RECOGNISING that this code of ethical conduct goes beyond and complements the EU code on transparency;

And therefore, European affairs professionals when making representations to the EU institutions shall:

Article 1 – Integrity

- (1) act with honesty and integrity at all times, conducting their business in a fair and professional manner across all channels including social media;
- (2) treat all others, including colleagues, competitors, and staff, officials or members of the EU institutions – with respect and civility at all times;
- (3) not exert improper influence on, nor offer to give, either directly or indirectly, any financial inducement to staff, officials or members of the EU institutions.

Article 2 – Transparency

- (1) maintain the highest standards of professionalism in conducting their work with the EU institutions;
- (2) be open and transparent in declaring their name, organisation or company, and the interest they represent;
- 3) neither intentionally misrepresent their status nor the nature of their inquiries to the EU institutions nor create any false impression in relation thereto;
- 4) therefore strongly consider registering on the EU Transparency Register.

Article 3 - Accuracy

- (1) take all reasonable steps to ensure the truth and accuracy of all statements made or information provided by them to the EU institutions;
- (2) not disseminate false or misleading information either knowingly or recklessly; exercise proper care to avoid doing so inadvertently and correct any such act promptly;
- (3) not obtain any information from the EU institutions by illicit or dishonest means.

Article 4 – Confidentiality

- (1) honour confidential information and embargoes and always abide by the rules and conventions for the obtaining, distribution and release of all EU documentation;
- (2) not sell for profit to third parties copies of documents obtained from the EU institutions.

Article 5 – Conflicts of interest

- (1) avoid any professional conflicts of interest whether related to own activities or to those of their clients;
- (2) disclose such conflicts when they occur to those whose interests are concerned;
- (3) take swift action in order to resolve any conflict which arises by appropriate means.

Article 6 – Former EU personnel

- (1) only employ former personnel of EU institutions and those who held any form of political responsibility subject to the published rules and confidentiality requirements of those institutions.

Moreover SEAP members shall:

Article 7 – Compliance

- (1) cooperate fully with fellow members in upholding this code and its procedures;
- (2) not engage in any practice or conduct that could be in any way detrimental to the reputation of SEAP;
- (3) in preference refer to the SEAP code of conduct when they register under the EU Transparency Register and inform the SEAP secretariat of this reference;
- (4) notify the SEAP secretariat of any challenge related to the EU Transparency Register;
- (5) accept that, on the basis of the “Procedure for dealing with non-compliance with the SEAP Code of Conduct”, SEAP can apply a range of sanctions in case of demonstrated non-compliance.

Adopted by the SEAP General Assembly in 1997, amended 20 January 2009 by written procedure, and amended by the SEAP General Assembly of 21 March 2016.

*SEAP was established in 1997 to represent all those individuals active in European affairs - trade associations; corporate representatives; consultants; lawyers; non-governmental organisations; regional representatives and others - to encourage the highest standards of professionalism for European affairs activity and promote self regulation of the profession. SEAP is open to third parties to express their views on this code.