

Regulating lobbying: international comparative table

This comparative table provides an overview of the different approaches adopted by countries with regard to lobbying regulation.

Last update: June 2023

Geographical area	Date and amendments to the lobbying law	Organisation responsible for the register	Definition of «Lobbying activity»	Definition of «Lobbyist»	Number of registered lobbyists (30/04/2023)	Content of declarations	Frequency of declarations	Sanctions for breach of reporting or ethical obligations	Control methods	Link to the register
Austria	2013	Ministry of Justice	All activities via which a direct influence is exerted on the legislator or the government body via structured and organised contacts	All companies, institutions and associations asserting the individual interests of persons or companies, or the collective interests of several persons or companies, before public authorities	389	Purpose and value of spending on lobbying activities	Annual	Administrative penalties up to EUR 60,000 Removal from the register	Unspecified	lobbyreg.justiz.gv.at
Canada	1989, 1995, 2003, 2008	Lobbying Commission	Any communication or request for a meeting with a “public office holder” about certain public policies	Consultant lobbyist and salaried lobbyist acting in a paid capacity	5,207	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of the public officials contacted • Public institution targeted • Data on clients initiating lobbying activities • Subject and purpose of lobbying activities • Type of public decision targeted 	Re-registration every six months If contact with a public official, monthly communication report	Fine (up to CAD 200,000) Maximum prison sentence of two years Two-year lobbying ban	<p>Preliminary assessments</p> <p>Investigations: may assign and ensure the presence of an individual, and require the production of documents</p> <p>In the case of a violation of the Act or Code, notifies a competent justice official</p> <p>16 investigation reports since 2011</p>	lobbycanada.gc.ca
Catalonia	2014, 2016, 2017, 2021	Department of Justice of the Generalitat de Catalunya and General Directorate of Law and Legal Entities	All activities conducted with the aim of directly or indirectly influencing the processes of preparing or applying policies and decision-making, regardless of the means or methods used	A natural or legal person in private law who carries out active preparation work in public policies or decision-making processes in Catalonia with the aim of influencing the direction of these policies in alignment with their own interests or those of third parties, or the general interest	5,219	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of clients initiating lobbying activities • Value of expenditure, type and purpose of lobbying activities 	According to the code of conduct of each organisation	Temporary suspension from the register In the event of a serious breach, removal from the register	Validation of the registered information No investigations afterwards	governobert.gencat.cat
European Union	2011, 2014, 2021	Management Board and Secretariat of the Transparency Register	Activities carried out by interest representatives with the objective of influencing the formulation or implementation of policy or legislation, or the decision-making processes of the EU institutions	Any natural or legal person, or formal or informal group, association or network, that engages in covered activities	12,154	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information about the entity • Links to EU institutions (legislative proposals, initiatives targeted) • Financial information <p>EU institutions also publish information on the registrations, including on membership of Commission expert groups, accredited individuals at the European Parliament, list of meetings with the European Commission, and other</p>	Obligatory annual update, with an invitation to update every 6 months and a further obligation to update upon request	Temporary suspension from the register Formal warning to the registrant Removal from the register Prohibition of reregistration for a period of up to 2 years and publication of the measure on the website	<p>Monitoring is performed of new applications, or via targeted quality controls and as a follow up to complaints or as part of own-investigations</p> <p>In addition, 4 238 targeted quality checks were performed by the Secretariat in 2022. It received 65 new complaints and opened 13 own-investigation cases against registered entities</p>	ec.europa.eu

Geographical area	Date and amendments to the lobbying law	Organisation responsible for the register	Definition of «Lobbying activity»	Definition of «Lobbyist»	Number of registered lobbyists (30/04/ 2023)	Content of declarations	Frequency of declarations	Sanctions for breach of reporting or ethical obligations	Control methods	Link to the register
Finland	2023	National Audit Office	Any communication to influence a member of Parliament or Government involved in public decision-making	Legal persons and private operators who lobby or advise Parliament and ministries	Law 430/2023 will enter into force on 01/01/2024	<p>For lobbying activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The party who is being influenced by lobbying The topic(s) concerning which they were contacted The primary methods for maintaining contact Financial information <p>For consultancy activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The client's identity Information on who/what they focus their lobbying activities on Information on the type of support provided to the client Financial information 	Twice a year for the operating notification Annual for financial information	Fines	No control of the information declared in the register in advance, only an ex-post supervision	vtv.fi
France	2016	High Authority for Transparency in Public Life	Any communication initiated by the interest representative to certain public officials with regard to certain public decisions with a view to influencing such decisions	Natural person as part of a professional activity, or legal entity in which an executive manager, an employee or a member conducts interest representation work as their main or regular activity	2,584	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of public official contacted; expenses Type and purpose of interest representation Type of public decision in question Link to professional organisations 	Annual	Fine (EUR 15,000) Maximum prison sentence of one year	Power of on-site documentary control, without recourse to the defence of professional secrecy 163 controls of interest representatives launched in 2022 (77 controls of unregistered representatives and 86 controls of annual declarations)	hatvp.fr
Germany	2021	Parliament (Bundestag)	Any contact made for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the process of formulating aims or taking decisions conducted by the bodies, Members, parliamentary groups or groupings of the German Bundestag or by the Federal Government	All natural or legal persons, partnerships or other organisations, which engage in the representation of special interests themselves or commission such representation on their behalf	5,896	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity of the natural or legal person or organisation Description of activities and areas of interest Identity of clients whose interests the registrant represents Number of employees involved with the representation of interests Financial expenditure involved in the representation of interests Individual allowances and grants from the public purse 	Annual for general entries Some information relating to names, addresses, contact details etc, has to be updated no later than the end of the quarter following the occurrence of the change	Fine (up to EUR 50,000) Ban on access to the premises of the Bundestag	No control of the imported information in the register in advance, only an elaborated ex-post supervision Entries that have not been updated in time are publicly annotated as «not updated»	lobbyregister.bundestag.de

Geographical area	Date and amendments to the lobbying law	Organisation responsible for the register	Definition of «Lobbying activity»	Definition of «Lobbyist»	Number of registered lobbyists (30/04/ 2023)	Content of declarations	Frequency of declarations	Sanctions for breach of reporting or ethical obligations	Control methods	Link to the register
Greece	2021	National Transparency Authority (NTA)	Any type of direct communication between an interest representative, at its initiative, and an institutional body, which is intended to influence the decision-making process and which is carried out for remuneration	Any natural or legal person who carries out lobbying activities with remuneration through his/her contact with institutional bodies, for and on behalf of his/her client	40-50 lobbyists estimation by the end of 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institutional body to whom the lobbying activity was addressed The policy area and the type of decision they targeted The identity of the person who carried out the lobbying activity The client, the time and manner of the lobbying activity The intended result of the lobbying activity 	Annual	<p>Fines (ranging from EUR 5,000 to EUR 20,000)</p> <p>Suspension from lobbying activities and from the Register</p>	<p>NTA shall examine any possible non-compliance with the obligations of interest representatives</p> <p>Inspectors shall invite in writing the interest representative to provide explanations within one month</p>	lobbying.aead.gr
Ireland	2015, 2016, 2019, 2022 (the law is reviewed one year after its adoption and then every three years). Under the 2022 Amendment bill (not yet in law) it will be every 5 years	Standards in Public Office (SIPO) Commission	Any communication with a designated public officer that relates to a "relevant matter"	Legal entity with at least 10 employees carrying out lobbying activities; or any professional lobbyist paid to communicate on behalf of a client; or any representative or advocacy bodies with at least one employee; anyone lobbying about development or rezoning of land	2,468	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity of public officials contacted Data on clients initiating lobbying activities Type, subject and purpose of lobbying activities 	Every four months	<p>Automatic penalty (EUR 200) for sending late declarations</p> <p>Maximum fine of EUR 2,500</p> <p>Maximum prison sentence of two years</p>	<p>May require anyone to supply information and produce documents</p> <p>May enter and search premises, inspect and take copies of any document</p> <p>In 2021, 399 automatic penalties for late submission of the activity declaration were issued</p>	lobbying.ie
Lithuania	2001, 2017, 2020	Chief official ethics commission	Actions taken by a natural or legal person, in an attempt to exert influence over defined public officials to have legal acts adopted or rejected in the interests of the client or the beneficiary of lobbying activities	A natural person, a legal person, another organization or a division thereof engaged in lobbying activities. Non-profit organisations are excluded	320	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity of the lobbyist Identity of the client of lobbying activities Title of the legal act or the draft legal act being targeted Brief description of the subject matter, which the legal act aims to change Name of the authority or institution lobbied Name and position of the public official lobbied 	In the seven days following the lobbying activity	<p>Suspension from the register (and thus from rights of access to meetings and consultations that are conditional upon membership of the register)</p> <p>Fines</p>	To inspect lobbying activities and receive information from lobbyists	skaidris.vtek.lt

Geographical area	Date and amendments to the lobbying law	Organisation responsible for the register	Definition of «Lobbying activity»	Definition of «Lobbyist»	Number of registered lobbyists (30/04/ 2023)	Content of declarations	Frequency of declarations	Sanctions for breach of reporting or ethical obligations	Control methods	Link to the register
Scotland	2016	Scottish Parliament	Communication which uses the opportunity to inform or influence a member of the Scottish Parliament, a member of the Scottish Government, a subordinate Scottish minister, a special adviser or the permanent secretary	Any person or organisation that engages in face-to-face communication (including video conferences) with a defined public official, if they are discussing governmental or parliamentary functions and acting in a paid capacity	1,301	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of public officials contacted • Identity of clients initiating lobbying activities • Type and purpose of lobbying activities 	Every six months	Report to Parliament	The Registrar may issue notices to request information. Investigations can also be carried out by Scotland's Ethical Standards Commissioner, who can then report to Parliament. Very serious allegations can be passed directly to the Crown Office (Scotland's public prosecution service)	lobbying.scot
Serbia	2018	Agency for prevention of corruption (APC)	Communication in writing targeting a public official with the name of the law or regulation which is the subject of the lobbying activities	Any natural or legal person registered in the Lobbyists Registry Lobbying may also be carried out by an individual who is not registered if he or she is a legal representative or employee of an enterprise for which he or she carries out lobbying activities (unregistered lobbyist)	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of lobbyist or legal person; number and date of decision on entry in the Register of lobbyists • Identity of clients initiating lobbying activities • Subject matter and purpose of lobbying • Data on the lobbied persons and authorities 	Annual	Misdemeanor fine Removal from the register	The Registrar may issue notices to request information	publicacas.acas.rs
Slovenia	2010, 2011, 2020	Commission for the Prevention of Corruption	Any non-public contact established between a natural person and a defined public official with the aim of influencing the content or the adoption procedure of public decisions	Any person who is engaged in lobbying and who is registered in the register of lobbyists, or any person who is engaged in lobbying and is an employee of an interest group and lobbies on its behalf	82	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of registered lobbyist or interest group • Payment received from interest groups for each matter concerned • Purpose and objective of lobbying for a particular interest group • The names of state bodies and officials targeted • Types and methods of lobbying • The type and value of donations made to political parties and the organisers of electoral and referendum campaigns <p>Lobbied officials also have to declare every contact with a lobbyist within eight days (including name of lobbyist, area of lobbying, purpose, date and place of contact)</p>	Registered lobbyists or interest groups: annual Lobbied officials: within 8 days of the contact	<p>Lobbyists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative sanctions (from a ban on lobbying activities on a particular matter, to a removal from the register); • Minor-offence sanctions. <p>Lobbied officials or interest group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor-offence sanctions 	<p>Crosschecking between annual reports of registered lobbyists, interest groups, and records of the officials lobbied</p> <p>The CPC can initiate a minor-offence proceeding and reach a decision on the offence whereupon it may impose a sanction</p>	kpk-rs.si

Geographical area	Date and amendments to the lobbying law	Organisation responsible for the register	Definition of «Lobbying activity»	Definition of «Lobbyist»	Number of registered lobbyists (30/04/ 2023)	Content of declarations	Frequency of declarations	Sanctions for breach of reporting or ethical obligations	Control methods	Link to the register
United Kingdom	2014	Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists	Communications (in person, writing or digitally) made personally with Government Ministers or Permanent Secretaries (and equivalents) on behalf of a client	UK VAT registered organisations and individuals who communicate personally with Government Ministers or Permanent Secretaries (and equivalents) on behalf of a third party and in return for payment	212	Clients lobbied for, or paid to lobby for in previous quarter	Quarterly	Civil penalty (max £ 7,500) or referral for criminal prosecution for a fine (criminal route has not been used)	Review of published information (transparency data, media reports etc) to identify unregistered consultant lobbying Registrar investigations can be supported by Information Notices Civil Penalty Notices can be issued for late or inaccurate quarterly information returns and for unregistered consultant lobbying	orcl.my.site.com
United States	1946, 1995, 2007	Office of the House of Representatives Senate Office	Any oral, written or electronic communication addressed to certain defined public officials concerning a public policy	Any person employed by a client for financial gain whose services include more than one lobbying contract and whose lobbying activities account for more than 20% of their time; or any salaried lobbyist	12,644	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public institution in question; Data on clients initiating lobbying activities Type of public decision in question Value of expenditure, type and purpose of lobbying activities 	Quarterly	Fine (between \$US 50,000 \$US 200,000) Maximum prison sentence of five years	4,220 cases of potential of potential breaches of theLobbying Disclosure Act sent to the prosecutor between 2009 and 2019	disclosurespre-view.house.gov