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## PRESS RELEASE

# Transparent and ethical lobbying high on the agenda, Europe-wide survey of policy-makers shows

**Brussels – 3 June 2013 – [Burson-Marsteller](#)**, a leading global public relations and communications consultancy, today released its fifth survey on effective lobbying in Europe, revealing interesting differences in the **attitudes of politicians and senior officials from the EU institutions and 19 European countries on such topics as who are good or bad lobbyists, the need for more regulation of lobbying and the utility of social media as a channel of influence.**

Participating in the launch of the survey in Brussels, **Vice President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič**, who also wrote the Foreword to the survey, stated that “Lobbying is part of the game. We have to make sure it is transparent and ethical. The Transparency Register set up by the European Commission and the European Parliament serves exactly this purpose. But efforts of the lobbying profession are necessary as well, and I can only welcome and encourage them”.

Nearly **9 out of 10 of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that ‘ethical and transparent lobbying helps policy development’** and most groups of lobbyists were generally perceived as being transparent, most notably trade associations, professional organisations, companies, trade unions and NGOs. These five groups were among those most commonly perceived as lobbyists; the other group generally thought of as lobbyists - public affairs agencies - were seen as less transparent.

*“It is reassuring to see that despite some high profile lobbying scandals, ethical transparent lobbying is the norm and highly valued by policy makers across Europe”* **Jeremy Galbraith, CEO of Burson-Marsteller EMEA** said at the launch of the report today in Brussels.

Nonetheless, most respondents felt that lobbying was not sufficiently regulated, while opinion was evenly divided on whether increased regulation would come in the next three years. **More than half of the respondents (53%) thought that a mandatory register for lobbyists would be useful** in their country, with less than a quarter disagreeing (22%).

*“Clearly the issue of further regulation of lobbying is on the agenda in many countries across Europe. Lobbyists must therefore not only worry about the arguments they make on their issues, but how their engagement with policy makers is perceived”* noted **Robert Mack, Chairman of Burson-Marsteller’s Public Affairs Practice EMEA.**

The findings also point out that **Trade associations were perceived as the most effective lobbyists (62%)**, followed by professional organisations and NGOs. There were, however, significant variations between countries: for example, in Germany NGOs and public affairs agencies were seen to be most effective with 78% and 71% respectively.

Specialist news, government websites, scientific websites and traditional media websites were the most helpful online media sources. Surprisingly social media were generally perceived to be unhelpful and were not frequently consulted for issues related to work. In fact, almost **half of the respondents never use Twitter for work and only**

**a fifth use Facebook daily for work.** The websites of industry associations, companies and NGOs tend to be visited at least once a week by around 40% of respondents.

Other key findings of the survey include:

- **The least transparent lobbyists** are journalists (41%) and law firms (38%)
- The majority (56%) of respondents across Europe think that lobbying is **not sufficiently regulated** in their country
- **One in four respondents** said that there is still a significant problem with ‘corporate’ lobbyists offering what are perceived to be **unethical inducements**
- **Social media (47%)** and traditional media, including media websites (both 26%), appear to be seen as **not particularly helpful**
- Policy-makers often consult **company websites (43%)** using them daily or at least once a week, **industry association websites (41%), NGO websites (37%)** and **Wikipedia (38%)**
- **Corporate lobbyists in the energy (68%) and healthcare (60%) sectors** were seen to be the most effective and the most effective **NGO lobbyists** were seen to be working in **the environment (52%) and human rights (49%) fields.**
- **Both corporate and NGO lobbyists were seen to be least effective in the retail (13%) and consumer goods (15%) areas.**
- 48% of respondents thought that **NGOs are not being sufficiently transparent** about the interest they represent and 56% also thought NGOs based their position on emotion rather than facts

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#### **To the editor:**

This is the fifth Burson-Marsteller survey to focus on lobbying, but this report expands coverage to 20 national European countries including Brussels from the EU-institutional focus. This edition gathered more responses than ever with over 600 interviews carried out by local polling agencies and analysed by Penn, Schoen & Berland (PSB) on behalf of Burson-Marsteller during the period running from January until April 2013. The interviews involved a basic series of 23 questions to identify perceptions among policy elites about lobbying and lobbyists. They were conducted either online or by phone with politicians (both Members of national Parliaments (MPs) and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)) and senior officials from national governments and the European institutions.

**Burson-Marsteller** ([www.burson-marsteller.com](http://www.burson-marsteller.com) and [www.burson-marsteller.eu](http://www.burson-marsteller.eu)), established in 1953, is a leading global public relations and communications firm. It provides clients with strategic thinking and programme execution across a full range of public relations, public affairs, advertising and web-related services. The firm’s seamless worldwide network consists of 72 offices and 58 affiliate offices, together operating in 83 countries across six continents. Burson-Marsteller is a part of Young & Rubicam Brands, a subsidiary of WPP, one of the world’s leading communications services networks.

**Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates** ([www.psbresearch.com](http://www.psbresearch.com)), a member of the WPP group and part of Burson-Marsteller, is a global research-based consultancy that specialises in messaging and communications strategy for blue-chip political, corporate and entertainment clients. PSB has over 30 years of experience specialising in bringing the lessons from the political campaign trail into the corporate boardroom to give clients the strategic insights they need to beat the competition. PSB has worked on nearly 200 political campaigns and has been personal political and strategic advisor to more than 30 heads of state or prime ministers.

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