# Press release

# EPACA 2013 essay contest

The first prize of the EPACA contest 2013 was handed over by John Bowis and Tom Spencer, members of the EPACA Professional Practices Panel, to Ariane Pond-Hubert from Sarah Biontino Consultants during EPACA's Annual General Meeting on 15 March.

The annual EPACA Contest, this year with the topic “How can Public Affairs professionals contribute to getting Europe out of the crisis?”, aims to highlight the Public Affairs profession and bring recognition to young practitioners.

The first prize of the competition is a scholarship of 2.000 euro for a training chosen by the winner.

“It is important for EPACA to highlight the vast talent we have within the consultancy community and to provide a platform for original thinking about Public Affairs”, says Karl Isaksson, EPACA Chairman. “We congratulate all participants for the excellent quality of their essays and especially Ariane whose text showed both talent and originality.”

“The idea that public affairs professionals can, and in many ways should, contribute to getting Europe out of the crisis is fundamental to understanding the impact that the profession can have”, says Ariane Pond-Hubert from Sarah Biontino Consultants. “I will use the scholarship money to attend a conference at the end of the summer and am very thankful to EPACA for this opportunity!”

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# First prize essay of Ariane Pond-Hubert: How can Public Affairs professionals contribute to getting Europe out of the crisis?

Europe's crisis is a crisis of confidence. Confidence in the banking system, in the Eurozone, in institutional policy making, and in European integration itself. Public affairs professionals can help to restore this confidence. How? By acting as the link between policy makers and the wealth and job-creators - a link which the crisis has undermined.

If the European project is to get back on its feet, then each side must better understand the aspirations of the other. Policy makers in key EU institutions need to define policies which can be effective and job creators have to implement them without damaging their ability to function.

With the knowledge amassed during more than 50 years’ experience in Europe, public affairs professionals can explain, encourage, simplify and stimulate the interface between the institutions and their clients.

They are on hand to explain to clients what EU policies aim to accomplish and how they can be put into practice. On the other hand, they also debate with the institutions about what is achievable and what isn’t.

Essentially, they form the filter between both sides with the aim of aiding the implementation of effective, non-bureaucratic solutions to the crisis. With their understanding of the arcane construction of both the institutions and their clients, they can design problem solving solutions to this often abrasive relationship.

They know people on both sides and can give them a human dimension. Some of the greatest achievements in human construction have been achieved through mutual trust and renewed confidence is what Europe needs today.

The setting up of a think tank within EPACA, bringing together public affairs professionals of all ages, could contribute to this project by providing a platform upon which views, independent of client interests, could be shared.

*EPACA – European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association – is the representative trade body for public affairs consultancies working with EU institutions. It was launched in January 2005, following a process of consultation among all signatories of a professional* [*Code of Conduct*](http://www.epaca.org/code-of-conduct/text-of-code)*. The Code had been maintained and updated since by our members, and is the basis for all such codes in the EU affairs marketplace.*

*The association establishes formal self-regulatory arrangements, including a professional practices panel for disciplinary hearings. It currently consists of* [*42 companies*](http://www.epaca.org/members/epaca-members) *with over 600 staff, and represents a high proportion of the professional EU Public Affairs services providers. EPACA members have elected a* [*Management Committee*](http://www.epaca.org/about-epaca/management-committee) *of 11 members.*