Public Matters Code of Conduct

Public Matters' public affairs management and lobbying consultants support and advise organizations operating in the public, political and administrative domain. In doing so, PM advisors consider it their professional responsibility to observe a number of practical, moral and ethical core values, in addition to applicable laws and regulations, when working in this domain. These core values are laid down in the "Public Matters Code of Conduct." Every advisor is obliged to operate in accordance with the letter and spirit of this code. The reputation of clients, stakeholders, the agency, and the profession are paramount. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with this code can lead to consequences under employment law. Based on Public Matters' mission, advisors' core activities consist of i.) advising companies, authorities, NGOs and trade associations on public affairs, stakeholder management and lobbying strategy/activities, ii.) influencing perceptions and decision-making, and iii.) building and maintaining networks with stakeholders. Since 2006, this code of conduct has been internally safeguarded, reviewed and updated annually as needed.

1. Honest and Reliable

- Information provided to Public Matters advisors will be kept confidential. Information provided by a client will only be disclosed with his or her consent. This also applies to information provided by stakeholders.
- During contacts with stakeholders, no financial compensation, goods or services are offered or accepted for (counter) services.
- Public Matters takes care of technical and organizational measures to ensure the security and confidentiality of information flows. This includes (the use of) innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence ("AI").
- Advisors of Public Matters are aware of existing laws and regulations and developments within the field. Public Matters also contributes to these developments through courses and educational contributions in higher education.

2. Transparent and independent

- Any (appearance of) conflict of interest is avoided. Advisors do not accept assignments that conflict with the interests of existing clients. In case of reasonable doubt, this will be presented to clients.
- Public Matters advisors provide information based on sound research, knowledge and, where possible, verification. This information comes from reasonably verifiable and accessible sources of information, proprietary sources and/or from stakeholders.
- During contacts with stakeholders, the advisor reports the purpose of the contact and on whose behalf it takes place. Questions are not asked in a veiled manner; discussions take place in openness and by appointment.
- Advisors have a mediator and not a representative role in stakeholder contact on behalf of clients.

3. Diligent and quick

- Relevant information is made insightfully available to clients and stakeholders. Advisors from Public Matters work on the basis of objective and complete information, creating a realistic picture of the situation - and the goals that can be realized. This ensures the quality of advice.
- An advisor must account for actual hours spent on activities to clients so that they have a clear picture of this. This justification fits within the agreements made beforehand with a client.
- Advice is not only provided diligently, but also quickly. In order to respond to developments in the public, political and administrative arena, speed is essential. Speed and diligence must be in balance with each other and in accordance with the Public Matters quality standard. Complaints regarding this quality standard are handled with care.
- Public Matters deploys innovative technologies (including AI) purposefully and functionally to improve the quality of its services. This is done ethically and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. In this context, Public Matters advisors are trained in the ethical and technical aspects of these technologies. This training is designed to ensure the application of these technologies with integrity and reliability, while pursuing the highest standards of professionalism and responsible handling this innovative technologies.

4. Corporate Social Responsibility

- Public Matters is aware of its role in the public and social domain. Therefore, Public Matters strives for a team of advisors that is as inclusive and representative as possible.
- Public Matters works on a for-profit basis for clients with diverse backgrounds: government, business, trade associations and NGOs in the Netherlands, 'Brussels' and beyond. We work on the basis of differentiated advisory rates.
- On the basis of a zero fee, Public Matters advises a selection of organizations ('pro bono') that pursue a particular social interest. These are selected annually.

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