



European Public Health Alliance

## *Advocating for Better Health in the EU*

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## Some (but not all) definitions of lobbying

- v Employing persons to **influence legislators** to sponsor laws that **further one's own interest** or **inhibit those of one's opponents**.
- v Stating your position on specific legislation to legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation, or urge your members to do so (**direct lobbying**).
- v Stating your position on legislation to the general public and asking the general public to contact legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation (**grassroots lobbying**).



## Why and how can NGOs lobby?

- v **Why lobby?** - because it can bring about policy changes that improve peoples' lives.
- v Lobbying is the process of trying to influence policymakers in favor of a specific cause or point of view. Lobbying includes a call to action.
- v **How ?** Using personal contacts, public pressure, or political action to persuade legislators to vote in a particular manner.
- v Advocacy is all activities undertaken to influence policy.



## What is the current landscape for lobbying in Brussels?

- v **Uncertainty.** What is happening with the Constitution...
- v Huge cuts in the budget for health. Cuts in the budgets for the different programmes. Running projects will be affected.
- v Institutional indigestion - extra time needed for recruitment, translation and for the CEE political personalities and styles to emerge.
- v What is the next big vision or idea that can drive the EU?



## Who do we lobby?

- v European **Commission** - Role in policy formulation and drafting legislation.
- v European **Parliament** - accessible, the 'people's representatives', key role in legislation.
- v European **Council** - Policy and position tracking in Brussels, lobby at the national level.
- v Other **actors** - think tanks and academics, NGOs, trade associations, UN agencies, trade unions, local and regional authorities, media, embassies.



## Roles of the NGO sector

- § **Monitor** - what is happening in the institutions? What are the new policy trends, legal proposals?
- § **Analyse** - what could this mean for your member organisations or target group? What actions are needed - passive monitoring or active lobbying?
- § **Inform** - explain the background of the issue, basic elements of the proposal, the time-frame for action
- § **Raise awareness** - ensure that your members understand the implications for them and their issues of this policy or legislation
- § **Engage** - encourage debate, exchange of ideas, brainstorm on what should be the goals of lobbying



## Roles of the NGO sector

- § **Consult** - gather viewpoints from communities and target groups - particularly those affected by the policy proposal
- § **Challenge** - the policy-makers and other stakeholders to address your concerns or provide evidence and arguments for their positions
- § **Empower** - provide the tools for NGOs to act, eg draft letters, opportunities to sign-up, attend meetings with policy-makers,
- § **Represent** - bringing forward the diversity of voices of civil society, public interest, visibility through the media  
□
- § **Follow-up** - keep up the momentum, follow the policy through to implementation, evaluation and review



## Limitations of NGO lobbying

- v **Access** - little access to the most senior policy-makers and exclusive relationships
- v **Money** - unequal resources with business interests who can mobilise significant funds and people
- v **Professionalism** - small staff, often with general policy or information skills rather than specialist qualifications. Often difficulty in accessing scientific expertise to develop an evidence base
- v **Diversity** - the NGO community tends to be very fragmented, difficult to achieve consensus
- v **Political weight** - NGO voices often carry little weight compared to large industry federations



## Communication strategies

- v **Information + context = communication**
- v **Background** - what is the issue, the processes and timeframe?
- v Define your **messages** - what do you want to say? What is unique or special about your position?
- v Identify your **targets** - who takes the decisions? Who do they listen to? What is important to them?
- v Select your **vehicles** - activities, events, information releases, meetings, conferences, media relations, demonstrations, publicity stunts
- v Check the **landscape** - who are your allies and opponents? Track their messages and respond.



## Lobbying in action



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