

INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY AGAINST CORRUPTION: Commencement of registration of Lobbyists in Lobbyists' Register as of 27 November 2023

14 November 2023

The **Independent Authority Against Corruption** ('IAAC') was established with Law 19(I)/2022 enacted on 4th March 2022 (the 'Law').

Amongst the various powers vested in the IAAC, the IAAC pursuant to the Law on Transparency in the Decision-making processes of public decisions and related matters, Law 20(I)/2022 (the '**Lobbying Law**') has additionally been designated as the competent authority to create and maintain a Registration Register (the 'Register').

The Register is a novel tool contained in the Lobbying Law designed to create a transparent and level-playing field for lobbyists involved in the decision-making processes of public decisions. This is to be achieved through the creation of an obligation of any special interest teams (with or without a legal personality, as defined in the said law) intending to be involved in the aforementioned public decisions, to register in the Register. Through registration their involvement becomes public knowledge and subjects them to all the corresponding obligations set down in the Lobbying Law (in addition to the rights which are borne out of registration).

Importantly, registration must be effected *prior* to the commencement of any involvement in the decision-making process.

The Lobbying Law thus aims for the first time to introduce a regulatory framework for the action of private interest groups through the use of lobbyists, in order to create the decision-making process of public decisions transparent in an effort to prevent or eliminate corrupt practices.

The disclosure of the role of various private interest groups in such processes through the publication of the registered entities, the latter's obligation to always disclose during their engagements that they are acting in the capacity of a lobbyist, as well as the reporting obligation they have towards the IAAC regarding their activity at regular intervals, are all new measures to be implemented for the first time.

The Lobbying Law provides for additional obligations on officials which are designed to complement the obligations imposed upon lobbyists. This structure is aimed at creating a balanced and comprehensive transparent framework within which discourse between public officials and representatives of private interest groups is to be monitored, regulated and confined in the interest of public good and fairness.

For the first time, as of **Monday 27th November 2023**, the IAC will start accepting applications for registration in the Register. The IAAC has declared in a recent announcement that it expects that the application of the Lobbying Law will result in 'revolutionary and ground-breaking changes in the manner in which meetings between individuals and officials were being arranged for the purposes of adopting public decisions'.

Importantly, since the provisions of the Lobbying Law will not be implemented in their totality at this stage (the obligations of officials are yet to commence), by equal measure, the obligations upon lobbyists which are borne out of registration, will not be activated at this stage upon registration but at a later stage simultaneously with the obligations of the officials. It is expected that all the provisions of the Lobbying Law shall be activated at the beginning of 2024.

Details on the application procedure, along with an Explanatory Note and the requisite forms shall be uploaded on the IAAC's website www.iaac.org.cy on **24th November 2023**.

The IAAC has expressed its readiness to respond to any inquiries addressed to it in the meantime until the full implementation of the Lobbying Law.