

UKPAC COMMON REGISTER

Overview

A common register, published quarterly by the PAC, will be a key element in the organisation's approach to openness. The register will cover the following key pieces of information:

- a) the names of the individuals carrying out public affairs services and of any organisation employing or hiring them, whether a consultancy, law firm, corporation or campaigning organisation;
- b) in the case of organisations offering public affairs services to a range of clients, the names of their clients.

Background

Two of the founding members of the PAC, the APPC and the PRCA both currently publish a register of member companies offering public affairs activities, detailing the names of the consultants engaged in public affairs and the clients they work for. Currently the APPC register is published quarterly and the PRCA register biannually. In both cases, the APPC and PRCA registers relate to member companies. The CIPR, which is based on individual membership, does not have a comparable register.

The New Register

The proposed PAC will establish a register containing the names of those carrying public affairs services and the organisations for which they do so. For the APPC and the PRCA, this is essentially the same information as both organisations already collect. Members of the CIPR providing public affairs services will therefore need to begin to provide information on their activities. The CIPR is making changes to its Membership terms and conditions to ensure that this happens.

The PAC will have the discretion to allow individuals or organisations not to be published in a very narrow range of cases, for example where to do so would risk exposing the individual or the organisation to threats of physical violence or intimidation.

It will be a matter for member bodies affiliated to the PAC whether they wish to continue to publish their own registers covering their memberships, so long as they comply with the requirements for their members to register with the PAC.

The Register would be mandatory for all PRCA and APPC members whose agencies undertook public affairs work; and for all CIPR individuals whose work involved a significant public affairs element. The Register would therefore capture all those within the three organisations who worked in public affairs, even on an occasional basis.

The Register has been designed to be flexible, so that other organisations' members could easily complete the Register as the PAC grows. It has also been designed to allow individual CIPR members to nominate one colleague within their organisation to complete the Register, so as to reduce the administrative burden on individuals, thereby making completion as simple as possible.

Publishing the Register

In future, the register will be published on the website of the PAC. The format will allow searches of individuals, organisations and clients, to maximise transparency. As soon as the PAC is formed, it will be a requirement for member bodies to ensure that their members are required to submit an accurate record to the register on a quarterly basis and that failure to do so would be a breach of the Code of Conduct of each member body.

The PAC anticipates that the first register would be published within two to three months of the establishment of the PAC, to allow the founding members to comply with the registration requirements. The published registers of the APPC and the PRCA will of course continue to exist during this period and possible thereafter.

Member bodies joining the PAC subsequently will be required to ensure that their members complete their register returns within one month of joining.