



European Code of Professional Conduct in Public Relations (Code of Lisbon)

Officially adopted at the General Assembly of CERP in Lisbon, April 16th 1978, and adopted by all the 18 National Associations (from 15 European Countries) who are institutional members of CERP.

Section 1 - Criteria and standards of professional qualification of practitioners bound by this Code

Clause 1

Every professional member of (national association) duly admitted as such in accordance with the rules of (national association) is deemed for the purpose of this Code to be a public relations practitioner, and to be bound by the Code.

Section 2 - General professional obligations

Clause 2

In the practice of his profession the public relations practitioner undertakes to respect the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in particular the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press which give effect to the right of the individual to receive information, within the limits of professional confidence. He likewise undertakes to act in accordance with the public interest and not to harm the dignity or integrity of the individual.

Clause 3

In his professional conduct, the pr practitioner must show honesty, intellectual integrity and loyalty. In particular, he undertakes not to make use of comment which is misleading or information which is false or misleading. In the same spirit he must be watchful to avoid the use, even by accident, of practices or methods incompatible with this Code.

Clause 4

PR activities must be carried out openly: they must be readily identifiable, bear a clear indication of their origin, and must not tend to mislead third parties.

Clause 5

In his relations with other professions and with other branches of social communications, the pr practitioner must respect the rules and practices appropriate to those professions or occupations, so far as these are compatible with the ethics of his own profession.

Section 3 - Specific professional obligations:

Towards clients or employers

Clause 6

A public relations practitioner shall not represent conflicting or competing interests without the express consent of the clients or employers concerned.

Clause 7

In the practice of his profession, a public relations practitioner must observe complete discretion. He must scrupulously respect professional confidence, and in particular must not reveal any confidential information received from his clients or employers, past, present or potential, or make use of such information, without express authorization.

Clause 8

A pr practitioner who has an interest which may conflict with that of his client or employer must disclose it as soon as possible.

Clause 9

A pr practitioner must not recommend to his client or employer the services of any business or organisation in which he has a financial, commercial or other interest without first disclosing that interest.

Clause 10

A pr practitioner shall not enter a contract with his client or employer under which the practitioner guarantees quantified results.

Clause 11

A pr practitioner may accept remuneration for his services only in the form of salary or fees, and on no account may he accept payment or other material rewards contingent upon quantitative results.

Clause 12

A pr practitioner shall not accept for his services to a client or an employer any remuneration from a third party, such as discounts, commissions or payments in kind, except with the agreement of the client or employer.

Clause 13

When the execution of a pr assignment would be likely to entail serious professional misconduct and imply behaviour contrary to the principles of this Code, the pr practitioner must take steps to notify his client or employer immediately, and do everything possible to see that the latter respects the requirements of the Code. If the client or employer persists in his intentions, the practitioner must nevertheless observe the Code irrespective of the consequences to him.

Towards public opinion and the information media

Clause 14

The spirit of this Code and the rules contained in preceding clauses, notably clauses 2, 3, 4 and 5 imply a constant concern on the part of the pr practitioner with the right to information, and moreover the duty to provide information, within the limits of professional confidence. They imply also a respect for the rights, independence and initiative of the information media.

Clause 15

Any attempt to deceive public opinion or its representatives is strictly forbidden. Any form of blackmail, corruption or exertion of undue influence, especially in relation to the information media, is forbidden. News must be provided without charge and with no private understanding or hidden reward for its use or publication.

Clause 16

If it should seem necessary to maintain the initiative in, and the control of, the issue and distribution of information, within the principles of this Code, the pr practitioner may buy space or broadcasting time in conformity with the rules, practices and usages in that field.

Towards fellow-practitioners

Clause 17

The pr practitioner must refrain from unfair competition with fellow-practitioners. He must neither act or speak in a way which could tend to depreciate the reputation or business of a fellow-practitioner, subject always to his duty under Clause 19b of this Code.

Towards the profession

Clause 18

The pr practitioner must refrain from any conduct which may prejudice the reputation of his profession. In particular he must not cause harm to his national association, its efficient working, or its good name, whether by malicious attacks or by any breach of its constitution or rules.

The reputation of the profession is the responsibility of each of its members. The pr practitioner has a duty not only to respect this Code himself but also:

- a. to assist in making the Code more widely and better known and understood;
- b. to report to the competent disciplinary authorities any breach of the Code which comes to his notice, c. to take any action in his power to ensure that rulings on its application by such authorities are observed and sanctions made effective.

Any practitioner who permits a violation of the Code will be considered as having himself breached the Code.