

A Guide to Effective Lobbying in the Czech Republic

(Final report from a survey of Czech politicians)

Donath-Burson-Marsteller
Factum Invenio

Prepared by
Jiri J. Sebek

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Thanks to our colleagues at our parent company, Burson-Marsteller and at BKSH Brussels for their inspiration and assistance in the preparation of this study. The same thanks go to our partner agency Factum Invenio for expert guidance of this study and the study evaluation. Our primary gratitude, however, goes to the respondents, without whose willingness to disclose their personal opinions we would have been unable to share so many interesting facts and viewpoints with you.

Author's note:

This report contains a number of positive and negative statements from respondents on lobbying and about lobbyists. The statements quoted herein do not represent the viewpoints or opinions of the study's author. Nor do they reflect the viewpoint of any political party whose members participated in the study.

Contents

Contents.....	iii
Lobbying, a Legitimate Way to Communicate.....	iv
Political Research, Transparency Needed.....	v
Methodology.....	vi
Ethics and Politics.....	1
In Ourselves We Trust.....	2
Devil’s Advocate.....	3
No Hard Feelings.....	4
EU in the Czech Republic?.....	5
Praise Be to Lobbyists.....	6
Goal-Oriented.....	7
Disgrace Be to Lobbyist.....	8
Pushy and Tiresome.....	9
Greed above All.....	10
Lobbyists by Industry.....	11
NGO – Dead End?.....	12
The Art of the Possible.....	13
Common Lobbyist.....	14
Czech Odyssey 2005.....	15
Local Is Tangible.....	16
Take Them Alive.....	17
Politics and <i>Economia</i>	18
State of Lobbying in the Czech Republic.....	19
List of References.....	20
Companies Behind the Study.....	21
Contact.....	21
Copyright Information.....	21
Appendix: Demographics.....	22

Lobbying, a Legitimate Way to Communicate



Michal Donath
Donath-Burson-Marsteller

“The fundamental values that each civil servant should respect, so as to build and maintain the public trust, are the rule of law in decision-making and an equal treatment for all physical and legal persons.”

*The Code of Ethics for Civil Service,
Czech Republic Cabinet resolution of March 21, 2001*

You have in your hands the final report from yet another research study by Donath-Burson-Marsteller. This time we have joined with the Factum Invenio agency to examine the political elite's position towards lobbying. Certainly no one doubts the need for an effective symbiosis between elected public officials and private enterprise. Political decisions can thwart commercial aims, but they can also help create business opportunities. And, on the other hand, private entities can serve as significant contributors to political campaigns. For precisely this reason, comprehensible and transparent communication between the private sector and the political sphere is important and legitimately at the heart of the public interest.

In preparing our questionnaires we considered how to characterize the communications discipline that exists in the Czech Republic under the heading of ‘lobbying.’ From the Czech linguistic perspective we are dealing with a “foreign word,” and indeed the public tends to perceive lobbying as something alien or foreign. In the absence of tradition, in the absence of transparent guidelines, with a profession shrouded in doubt over its methods and over the people who work in the field – what emerges is mistrust. And this is the case despite the fact that from the communications standpoint lobbying is an integral part of the Czech political system, as it is in any other modern democracy. Adding to the doubts, few people in the Czech Republic are familiar with how the word lobbying is written, and how, for example, it differs from the word “lobbing” (in Czech: lobing) in tennis. The Institute for the Czech Language in the Academy of Sciences says the following about lobbying:

“A lobby is a pressure group attempting to push its interests. The noun is of feminine gender and has no declension in Czech. Derivative words keep the double ‘b’ in the linguistic root: *lobbování, lobbovat*. Suffixes *-ista* (for person), *-ismus* are not appended mechanically to the entire root of the English *lobbying*; but out of the two identically pronounced vowels *y* – *i* remains only one, the *i*. It is written, therefore, as *lobbista* (the same, for example, as *rugbista*), *lobbisticky, lobbismus, lobbing*.” (Source: Language bureau, <http://www.ujc.cas.cz/poradna/odpo.html>, 2005)

Whether we call it lobbying, government relations or public affairs, we're talking about a legitimate communications discipline that has its place in the political and economic sphere so long as it maintains ethical rules and principles. But only so long as lobbying does not become a tool of unacceptable influence-peddling, as long as lobbying does not transform into corruption.

The study demonstrated that modern, transparent lobbying has its legitimate place in modern Czech society. The necessary condition, however, is the existence of ethical principles guiding the activities of lobbyists and the will from all sides concerned to strictly uphold these principles. This study seeks to advocate ethical lobbying as a legitimate tool for societal development.

Political Research, Transparency Needed



Jan Herzmann
Factum Invenio

“Research conducted according to the principles of transparency, confidentiality and secure handling of personal data has achieved growing recognition as a form of ‘statistical or scientific research’.”

*Notes on how to apply the ICC/ESOMAR
International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice, June 2001*

The modern history of independent political research on the opinions and attitudes of citizens and the political elite began in the former Czechoslovakia on November 20, 1989. On that day a group of employees from what was then called the Institute for Public Opinion Research (today CVVM) opposed “control from above” and organized a series of surveys that described the evolution of political attitudes over the course of the Velvet Revolution. It was then, albeit rather unwittingly, that the basic principles of trustworthy political research were applied:

- The correct identification of social problems worthy of attention;
- Independence in research subjects and in the formulation of questionnaires for actors in the political process;
- A statistically justified selection of respondents as a representative sample of the group being researched;
- The transparency and conclusiveness of the overall research process.

In the more than fifteen years that have passed since then, dozens if not hundreds of studies on political opinion have been conducted. Some have been classic public opinion polls, dealing with the general public’s opinions on questions related to politics in the broadest sense of the word; others have focused on electoral processes and more or less precisely predicted election results. Projects concerning the political elite and highly placed government officials were carried out somewhat on the sidelines and without much media attention. We have the international research community to thank for some of these studies (for example, for the studies mapping the processes involved in the formation of a parliamentary democracy that were initiated by Leyden University in Belgium); for others, we can thank “European money.” Let us recall the analysis of the attitudes of the Czech administrative elite to the Czech Republic’s entry into the European Union. There were even projects carried out by various Czech companies at their own initiative and expense, with the goal of contributing to the cultivation of a general political climate in our society.

Research pertaining to the political elite’s positions on lobbying belongs to that group. The authors sought to transparently describe the state of affairs and to offer up material for thought, with the understanding that all four of the aforementioned principles were faithfully observed in preparing this study. I believe that for precisely this reason the conclusions we reached will contribute towards lobbying being carried out openly and ethically and in a socially acceptable way so that it will be viewed as a legitimate tool in the development of Czech society.

Methodology

Objectives:

- To obtain information about the attitudes of Czech politicians towards lobbying and to identify the sources of information Czech politicians base their decisions on;
- To advance the meaning of the term “lobbying” in the Czech Republic and to gauge awareness of general lobbying principles as a form of communication and as a condition for the development of civic society;
- To compare domestic and foreign opinions on lobbying in the area of corporate communications and public affairs.

Survey in an international context

This is the first study on the attitudes of the political elite towards lobbying, completed by the Donath-Burson-Marsteller agency jointly with partner company, Factum Invenio. The inspiration for the study was research among politicians and government officials in the USA and EU performed by parent company Burson-Marsteller and its subsidiary company BKSH. This study is based on regulations for lobbying stated in the European Parliament’s Rules of Procedure. For more on sources, see “List of References” on page 20.

Questionnaire system

The study was conducted by Donath-Burson-Marsteller’s own internet-based query system, which enables the instant creation of questionnaires and the distribution of personalized requests concerning participation in the study. The survey data was processed on the MS SQL Server platform, Lotus Notes and MS Access, and was analyzed in SPSS Base.

Sample

A total of 1,669 politicians at the highest state and local levels were involved in the study. We approached senators and deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Czech members of the European Parliament, Czech cabinet ministers, regional governors and deputies, mayors of the largest Czech cities, city council deputies, and mayors and representatives from municipal districts of the largest Czech cities. The questionnaire portion of the study took place from January 18 to February 3, 2005. Over three hundred and sixty respondents (362 respondents, i.e. 23 percent of those approached) took part in the study. Over the course of the data collection period the respondents jointly held 390 political offices—some of them held multiple mandates.

Political affiliation

The political affiliations of the respondents span the entire Czech political spectrum. The largest segment of respondents (35 percent) were from the Civic Democratic Party (ODS). More than 16 percent were from the CSSD; 13 percent were without political affiliation; 12 percent were from the KSCM and about 8 percent of the respondents were from the KDU-CSL, and from US-DEU plus ODA. The remaining respondents were affiliated with one of thirteen other regional political groupings. For more on political affiliation, including an overview of political parties and other demographic indicators, see the chapter entitled “Appendix: Demographics” on page 22.

Ethics and Politics

“Where does lobbying end and bribery begin?” (ODA member)

Et tu, Catiline?

Battles over the morals of politicians’ have been waged in the public arena at the very least since the times of ancient Rome. Much as in the Roman Forum, the Czech media provides the public with the latest news and confirmed reports about politicians and their activities or about the flavor of the month: premature elections. More than one pundit or commentator has sounded the alarm and pointed the finger at corrupt practices connected with the exercising of political power. They publish criticisms and opinions, they mock and they threaten. Ultimately, as was the case in primitive societies, ridiculing one’s opponent is one of the cruelest punishments. Modern Cicero would not have been satisfied simply to prove Catiline’s guilt and eject him from Rome. And what is Catiline guilty of in the eyes of the public? Of allying himself with a lobbyist. If in fact we study the complex political process, we discover that every other individual could have been called a Catiline, both here and throughout the world. Where is that line of political culture behind which the greatest punishment lies in wait – being ostracized, excluded from respectable society?

We turned to Czech politicians with similar questions and more than 360 politically active individuals shared their opinion with us. Here are some of the interesting results.

About lobbying

- The most important sources of information for politicians are their own research, the opinions of their colleagues and documents from their assistants and office staff.
- The public does not have sufficient information about the methods and usefulness of lobbying.
- Ethical lobbying does exist.

Evaluating lobbying

- The most important principle in lobbying is transparency.
- Lobbyists can provide qualified, detailed, expert and substantiated information.
- Information provided by lobbyists is oftentimes biased and distorted.

Use of lobbying

- Politicians have a high opinion of lobbyists working in the IT industry
- Companies make better lobbyists than do industry/trade and non-governmental organizations.
- Lobbying is important for the functioning of multiple offices and political bodies.

Instruments of lobbying

- Regional impact studies are very influential in political decision-making.
- Politicians prefer personal face-to-face meetings.
- The most influential medium is *Hospodarske noviny* (economic newspaper).

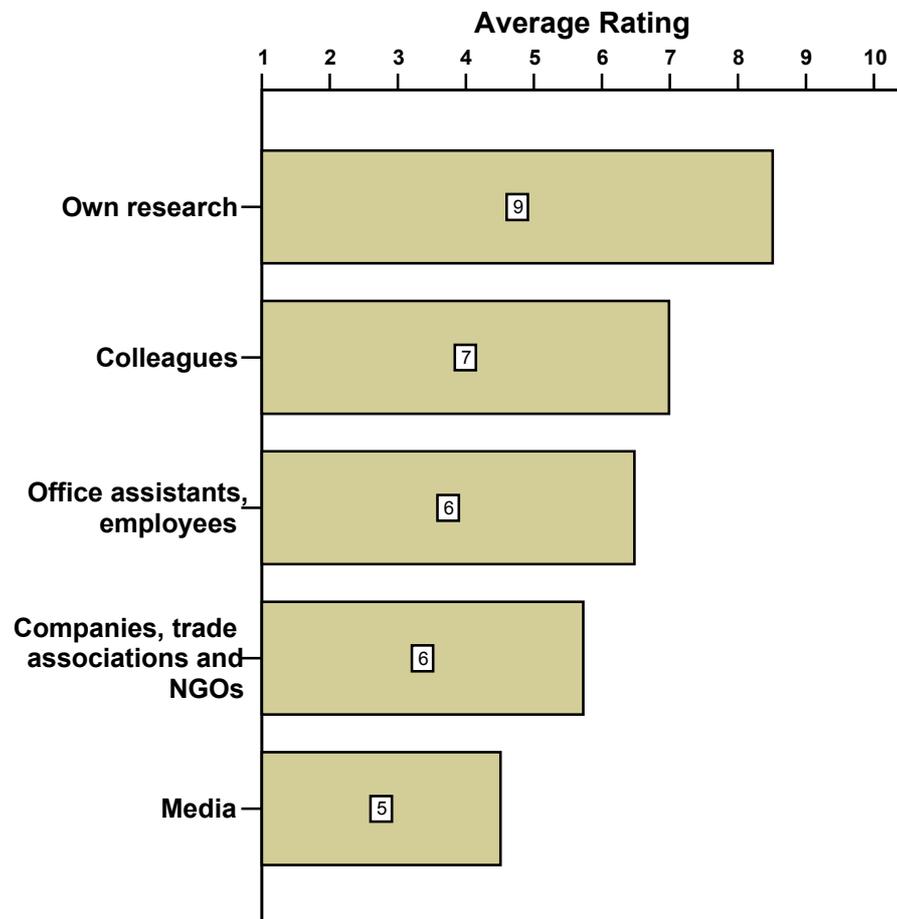
In Ourselves We Trust

Information Sources at Work

On a scale of 1 to 10, respondents indicated the degree of importance they place on various sources of information that help them create qualified opinions and make decisions. (1=entirely unimportant and 10=very important)

„In certain instances lobbyists can provide not only important information, but beyond that can also offer necessary contacts. That said, I do not overestimate their influence.“

ODS member



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 1: For the vast majority of respondents, their own individual research (77% gave a rating of 8 to 10), colleagues (43%) and office employees (38%) were the most important source of information. Following were private companies and the media.

The Invisible Party Whip

Emerging from the research is that Czech politicians give the greatest weight to their own personal research or the opinions of their colleagues. In this they differ from their European colleagues. Deputies in Brussels (B-M/BKSH 2001) consider the employees in their office to be the most important source of information. In Brussels, individual research and the media were behind in importance. Deputy colleagues in the European Parliament were in last place as an important source of information—in contrast to Czech politicians. For the Czech politician even the media represent a relevant source of information (61% rated it from 4 to 10). More on media in the chapter entitled “Politics and *Economia*” on page 18.

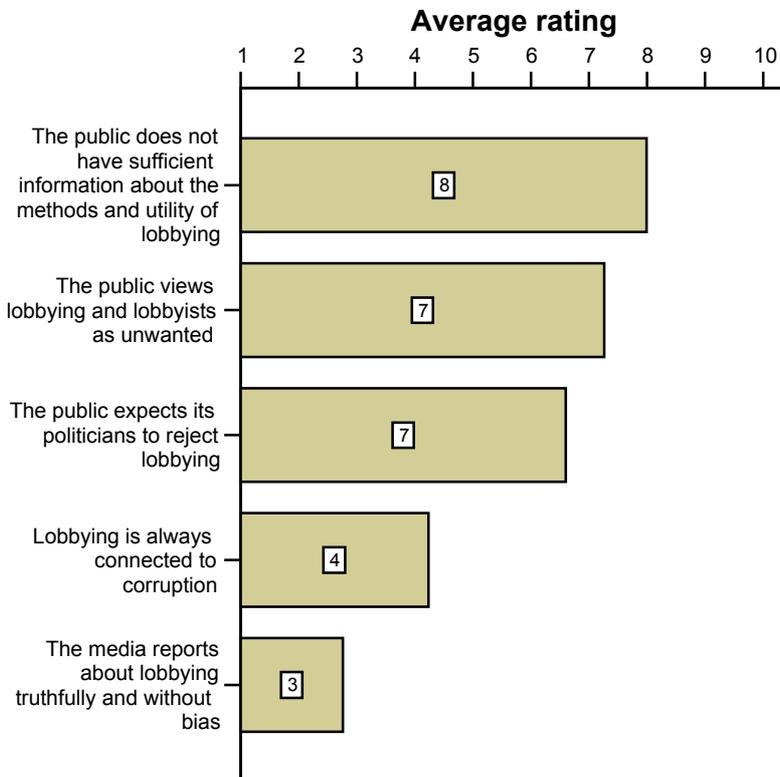
Devil's Advocate

Vox Populi

Respondents assessed to what degree they agreed with statements about lobbying for private companies and professional organizations.

„Career-wise and economically, lobbyists are motivated towards professionalism. They work with information that has relevant value once it's been filtered. Unlike, for example, the media.“

SOS member



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 2: Nearly all respondents agreed that the public does not have sufficient information about the methods and utility of lobbying. For the most part, respondents also agreed that media refer to lobbying untruthfully and with bias.

Media and Lobbying

According to politicians, lobbying is negatively perceived by the public and the media. Politicians are convinced the media refer to lobbying in a biased and untruthful manner, despite the fact that respondents said in their experience lobbying is not connected with corruption (the average rating was 4= "I somewhat disagree with the statement"). The devil's advocate of lobbying is the media; the same media that influence politicians as we described in the preceding chapter.

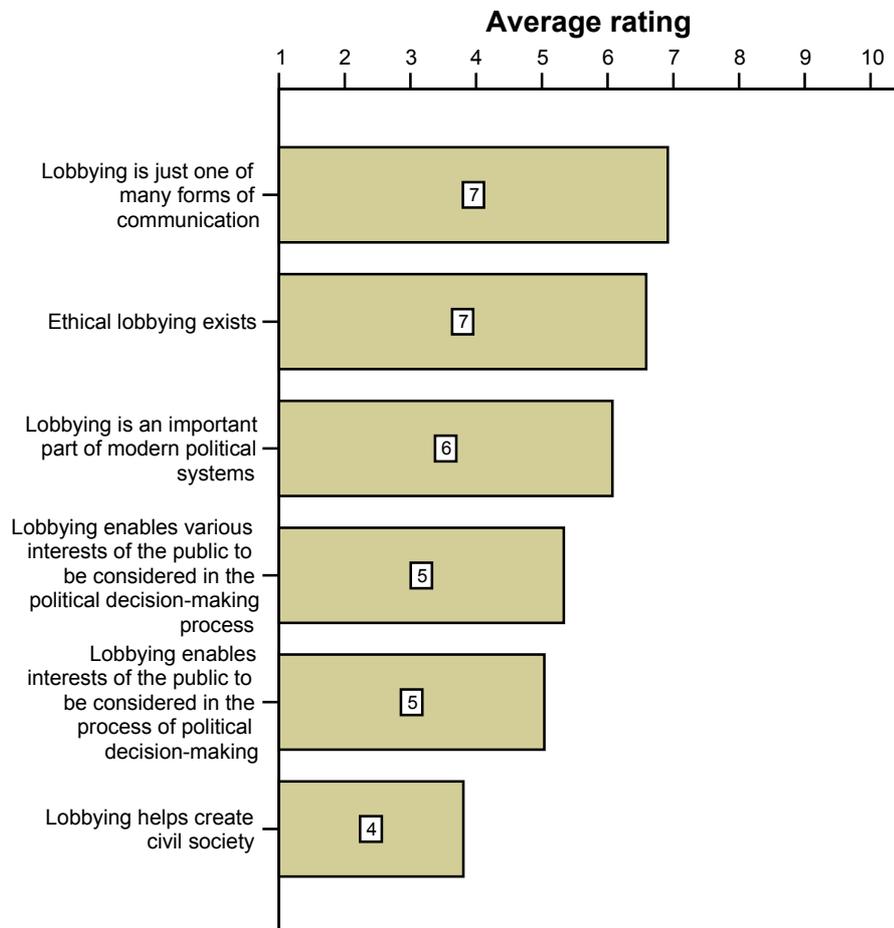
No Hard Feelings

Vox Dei

Respondents assessed to what degree they agreed with a set of statements on lobbying for private companies and professional organisations.

„Lobbyists are useful because a politician cannot have experience in all areas related to his decision-making. [...] It is necessary, however, to point out that special interest groups should not be the sole source of information drawn upon in forming a final opinion.“

ODS member



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 3: Respondents generally agreed with the statement that lobbying is just one form of communication, and also that ethical lobbying exists. The majority of respondents disagreed with the statement that lobbying should help create civil society.

Uncivil Communication

Politicians agreed that lobbying is an important part of modern political systems. They agreed that lobbying could be ethical; that it was essentially one of many forms of communication. Nevertheless, they perceived lobbying as playing an insignificant role in the creation of civil society. Participants indicated they had very strong opinions towards lobbying by private companies, but, for example, they welcomed lobbying by certain citizens' interest groups. They said it was precisely here that they saw lobbying as a tool for strengthening civil society. Civil society is based on the opportunity for individuals to form groups according to any kind of interest—even those that do not pertain solely to publicly beneficial activities.

EU in the Czech Republic?

Lobbying Rules

Which of the following rules for lobbyists' behavior and lobbying did respondents say were important for the operation of an office in which they work, or bodies of which they are members?

About lobbyists: "As long as I'm dealing with a professional, I'll save a great deal of time."

KSCM member

Principle	Yes in %	No in %	Don't know in %
When contacting members of parliament, regional deputies, their staff and officials, lobbyists must state the interest they represent.	89	6	5
Lobbyists must refrain from any action designed to obtain information dishonestly.	88	2	9
Lobbyists must respect that members of parliament and regional deputies are responsible for recording any kind of financial, personal or material support provided to them by a third party in connection with their political activities.	87	2	11
Lobbyists must comply with the provisions of the Staff Regulations when recruiting former officials of the institutions.	85	4	10
In order to avoid possible conflicts of interest, lobbyists must obtain prior consent of the member of parliament or regional deputies concerned as regards any contractual relationship with or employment of their assistant.	83	4	14
Lobbyists must respect internal directives and orders meant to ensure that the financial interests of members of parliament, senators or representatives are transparent.	82	6	12
Lobbyists must not circulate copies of documents obtained from the institutions for a profit to third parties.	81	11	9
Lobbyists must observe any rules laid down by the institutions on the rights and responsibilities of former members or deputies.	79	7	15
Lobbyists must not claim any formal relationship with Parliament in any dealings with third parties.	71	13	15
Lobbyists should be registered in a publicly accessible registry.	52	24	24
Individuals who want to frequently access official premises in order to provide information to politicians, members of parliament and regional deputies must be visibly identified, for example by an identification card.	44	38	18

Table 1: The majority of respondents agreed with the statement: "When associating with members of parliament, senators or representatives, civil servants and other employees, lobbyists are always responsible for clearly identifying whose interests they're representing."

A Call For Transparency

In the study, we presented politicians with a list of principles concerning relations between lobbyists and European Parliament members and employees. What we did not tell them was that these principles are specified in the European Parliament Rules of Procedure (EP, 2004). Less than half the politicians (44%) supported the request that individuals seeking frequent access to offices for the purpose of providing information to politicians, members of parliament, senators or representatives, should be visibly identified, for example with an identification card. A quarter of the politicians (24%) said it was not important that lobbyists be held responsible for registering in a publicly accessible registry. Despite this, politicians demonstrated significant agreement: their call for transparency belongs in Europe!

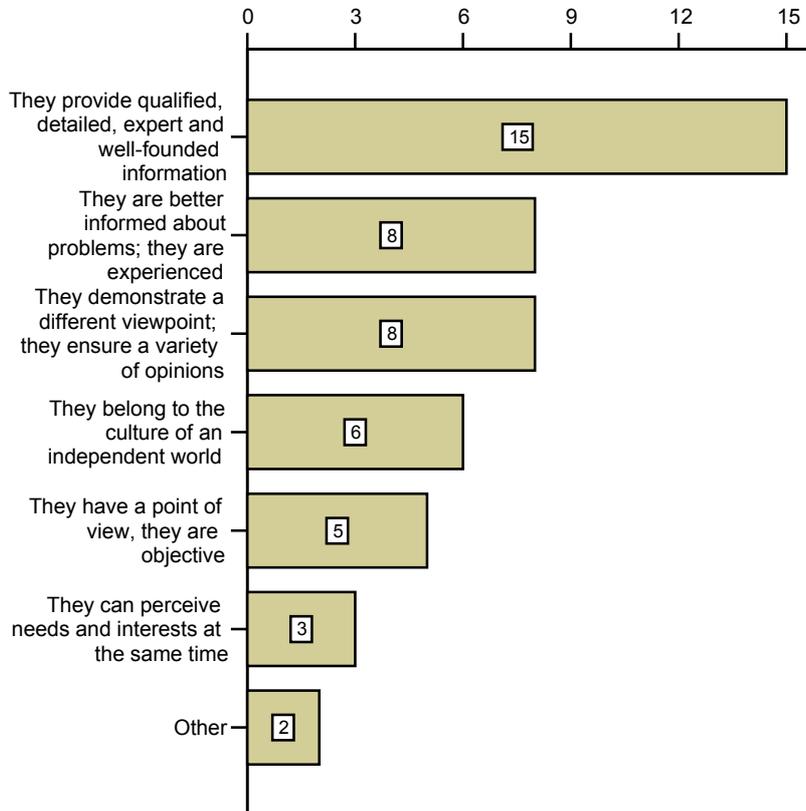
Praise Be to Lobbyists

The Value of Lobbying

Some respondents highly value lobbyists. We asked them why.

A positive assessment of the utility of lobbyists: "I have in mind non-governmental organizations in the area of social services. Their knowledge of needs is very authoritative for me."

ED member



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 4: The highest number of respondents (15 of a total 44 who assessed lobbying very positively) agreed that lobbyists are important because they provide qualified, detailed, expert and well-founded information.

A Known Enemy

Certain politicians see lobbying for what it is: They are aware of the fact that lobbyists, in short, promote specific interests. They say lobbyists can provide detailed information and they are better versed in certain issues. Surely some politicians are aware that lobbyists offer a different viewpoint and attempt to present issues in specific contexts. What the politician's decision will be and what other sources of information they utilize is then up to the politician.

Goal-Oriented

Genuine Statements about Lobbying (Positive)

“...in my judgment it is not right to put private companies and professional organizations alongside one another and present them as being directly connected. There is a large group of professional organizations, for example professional chambers and associations (medical, legal, paralegal, trade, employment unions) that do not lobby for the interests of a narrow group. The majority have issues that genuinely trouble them in their professions, an extremely important and useful source of information for a politician, especially because their knowledge is not sufficient to encompass the entire span of social problems. This information is especially useful in making practical political decisions. Of course I exclude private companies from this assessment, i.e. where political decisions are useful for only one company, and if that decision doesn't have a positive impact on entire industries.” (CSSD member)

“Because they are goal-oriented, they constantly come up with new ideas that an individual, sometimes closed in his own world, would not think of on his own.” (CSSD member)

“They interpret the viewpoint of the interest group they represent. Certainly the right to share ones' opinions with the elected representatives belongs to the culture of the democratic, free world.” (ODS member)

“Lobbyists always promote issues about which there is a strong interest, an approach that has more benefits than negatives. What they promote becomes more viable than that which is presented in the form of a non-conflictuous discussion.” (ODS member)

“First and foremost we're talking about individuals who are immersed in and pay attention to a certain issue. It's possible then to draw upon their expertise. One can prepare analytic studies according to their estimation, for example a plan for submitting requests according to the difficulty of the preparation and subsequent successes and others.” (KDU-CSL member)

“Generally I consider lobbying to be beneficial, its activities to be logical and justified, so long of course as ethical and legal norms are maintained.” (KSCM member)

“The information this group provides is as a rule on a high professional level. What is meaningful for my decision-making process is always a combination of opposing standpoints of these interest groups.” (without political affiliation)

Disgrace Be to Lobbyist

What Is Wrong?

We discovered that a majority of respondents did not value lobbyists very highly. We asked them why.

“Lobbying is currently among the standard methods for promoting private and public interests, so long as the promoting is done in an ethical manner.”

Political affiliation of the respondent unknown.

Why did you give lobbyists such a low mark?	%
The information they provide is biased, distorted and is not objective.	26
Lobbyists are overwhelmingly concerned with their own benefit and with the benefit of the group they represent.	25
The information provided by lobbyists is not complete, it's just filler.	12
Information acquired from lobbyists must be verified and checked against other sources.	11
Lobbyists are untrustworthy and unethical.	8
I have very little or no experience with lobbyists.	7
I prefer my own judgment – my own opinion is more objective.	6
They have no greater significance and they are unnecessary.	5
Lobbyists are in it for the money; they're connected with corruption.	5
Their work has not been professional so far; the information they provide is not always useful.	5
They act against the interests of the public or the whole.	4
Lobbying borders on manipulation and is often on the fringes of ethics and morality.	2
I generally dislike lobbyists; I do not have a good opinion of them.	2
<i>Other reasons.</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Did not answer or doesn't know.</i>	<i>12</i>

Table 2: More than 300 respondents rated the need for lobbyists as lower than 8 on a scale of 1 to 10. The most frequent respondents claimed that information provided by lobbyists is biased, distorted and not objective (26%). Furthermore, respondents were bothered by the fact that lobbyists are overwhelmingly concerned with their own benefit or the benefit of the group they represent (25%). Respondents were permitted to give more than one statement, hence the total exceeds 100%.

Money and Personal Integrity

Politicians' objections towards lobbying can be divided into two categories. The first concerns the specific expectations politicians have towards lobbyists. They expect that lobbyists will provide objective information, that they will not be concerned about the success of the group they represent, and that they will not lobby for money. The other category concerns the personal integrity of lobbyists. Politicians often believe that lobbyists are untrustworthy, unethical, redundant, corrupt, that they provide amateurish information and that they are manipulative. Is lobbying really the domain of such sorry individuals about whom nothing good can be said?

Pushy and Tiresome

Genuine Statements about Lobbying (Negative)

“Because in one group you have lobbyists for trade associations and in the other you have lobbyists for private companies, you’re talking about the mean between two otherwise distinct assessments. I give relatively greater weight to trade associations. I applied my responses to lobbying by trade associations. I consider lobbying by representatives of trade associations, who are generally elected, to be useful and a fundamental civic tool. The line between lobbying by private companies and trade associations and corruption, somewhat eludes me.” (CSSD member)

“Lobbyists are often very tiresome; they do not speak to the merits of an issue, they try to persuade through words, not facts. They delay. Sometimes it’s very clear that behind them is merely the financial interest of a certain group.” (CSSD member)

“The authority of the information they provide is not always guaranteed, and they are guided by particular interests, while I represent the public interest.” (CSSD member)

“Some of them have yet to understand what lobbying in the real sense of the word is; they simply push their own interests. A politician must filter out the substantive and important information obtained from a lobbyist, so that any decisions they might make be based on information that is objective.” (ODS member)

“...because in our still insufficiently developed democracy there are not tangible lines marking the proper divide between the public and private, which is a necessary condition for multi-source financing and comprehensive investments and operations.” (ODS member)

“I’m fundamentally a liberal and I generally dislike limiting markets and competition. Lobbyists, as far as I’m concerned, sweeten the conditions for certain players on the market who do not meet, however, the quality or other similar objective yardsticks.” (ODS member)

“Lobbyists for private companies seem suspicious. Lobbyists for nonprofit organizations, cities and towns, are acceptable.” (KSCM member)

“There are no rules to the lobbying game yet, which is why this activity is, as a rule, borderline criminal.” (KSCM member)

“Lobbyists profit from their success. Their success does not necessarily mean an optimal resolution of an issue—it does not need to serve the public interest. So I’m careful, which doesn’t mean I *a priori* disbelieve them.” (KDU-CSL member)

Greed above All

Genuine Statements about Lobbying (Negative)

“Lobbying is undoubtedly necessary, but it must be done completely transparently so that it is clear whose interests and what motives the lobbyist fights for.” (KDU-CSL member)

“What seems most necessary to me is lobbying in the so-called nonprofit sector: education in the broadest meaning of the word, culture, research, public institutions, etc. This type of lobbying does not have the kind of financial support that would give it sufficient access to PR tools, marketing and advertising. It is thereby significantly less effective. On the other hand, lobbying in purely financially strong spheres has substantially greater opportunities and utilizes them namely to benefit narrow interest groups. Their main tool is apparently media manipulation and corruption, rather than presenting relevant information and persuasive conclusive arguments.” (US-DEU member)

“Where does lobbying end and bribery begin? (Deputies are already lost here; that is why they know nothing and never encountered any kind of bribery). Are deputies and representatives representing people or private companies? If lobbying is to be at least a little useful, it must be made more transparent.” (ODA member)

“Quality lobbyists have an important place in the formation of legislation, directives, rules, etc. A number of organizations perform this work well, namely quality nonprofit and trade associations, but still the Czech Republic has no regulations for lobbying as does Western Europe. Among the so-called lobbyists are also so-called middlemen who try to bribe politicians.” (ED member)

“I basically eliminate the possibility that they’re concerned with presenting objective and socially important information because they generally represent ONLY money. For example, the cultural arena is, as a whole, entirely uninteresting to lobbyists – there is no big MONEY in it.” (without political affiliation)

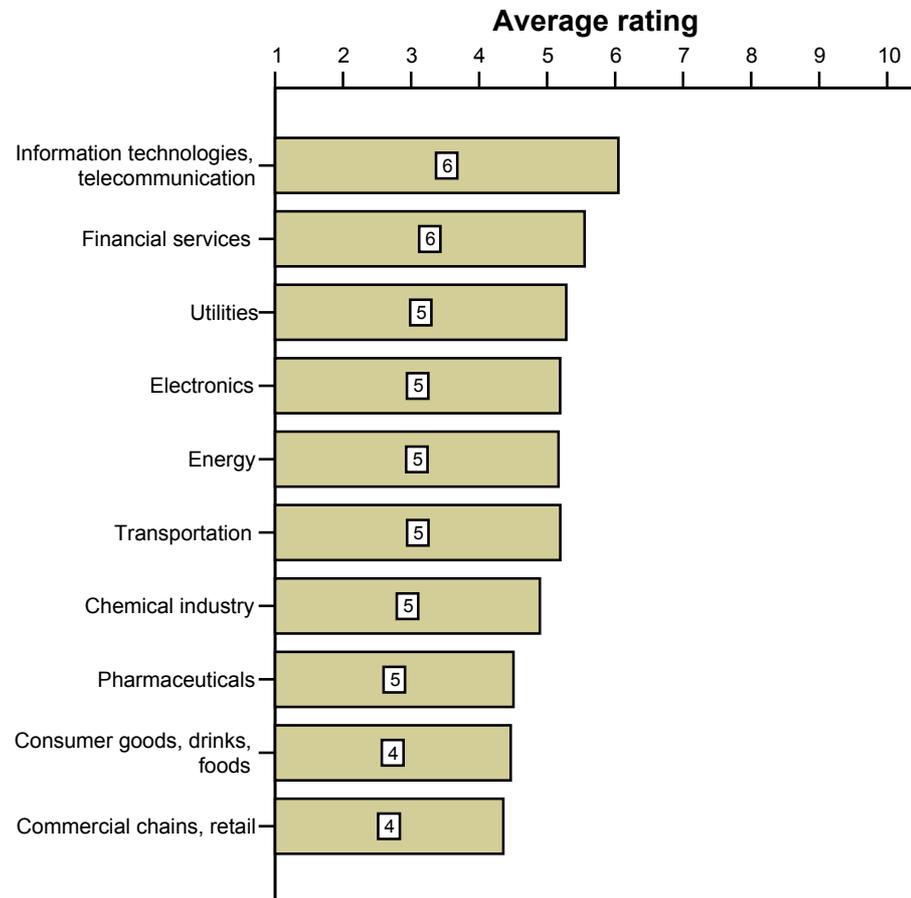
“I don’t believe them. I try to form my own opinion, shutting out outside influences.” (No political affiliation)

Lobbyists by Industry

Creme de la Creme

Respondents rated lobbyists by the industry in which they work on a scale of 1 to 10. (1= very low opinion, 10= very high opinion).

"I myself lobby and I know how important it is."
ODS member



Pramen: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 5: The polled political representatives held the highest opinion of lobbyists in the area of information technology and telecom industry (ranked 6) and financing (ranked 5.6). They held a lower opinion of lobbyists in the area of commercial chains/retail and pharmaceuticals. The fewest of the polled had personal experience with lobbyists working for the chemical industry (54% said they do not know).

Czech Retail Lobbyist, No Class

Just like politicians in the Czech Republic, members of European Parliament (B-M/BKSH 2001) have a low opinion of lobbyists representing commercial chains and retail (ranked 5.5 in EP, 4 in CR). Members of the European Parliament had the highest opinion of chemical industry lobbyists (ranked 6.9) and energy lobbyists (ranked 6.8); in the Czech Republic these lobbyists fell in the middle of the group of the ranked industries.

NGO – Dead End?

Effectiveness by Industry

Respondents compared lobbying by private companies, lobbying by trade associations, and lobbying by non-governmental organizations (NGO). They answered the question of who lobbies better.

Industry	Private Companies in %	Trade Associations in %	NGOs in %	Don't know in %
Financial Services	43	15	3	39
Pharmaceuticals	36	13	2	49
Consumer goods, drinks, food	42	13	3	42
Transportation	30	25	11	33
Energy	36	19	7	38
Chemical Industry	25	10	6	59
Electronics	44	6	2	48
Commercial chains, retail	53	9	4	34
Information technology, telecom	46	18	3	33
Utilities	39	20	10	31

Table 3: In comparing lobbying by private companies, trade associations and non-governmental organizations, private firms won by far in these industries: commercial chains, IT/telecom, electronics and financing. Within their own raking, trade associations lobby best in transportation, public service and the energy industry, and NGOs lobby best in the areas of transportation and public services. Overall, however, private firms lobby best in all areas.

Daily Trade

If the issue concerns the environment—for example the transportation industry, public services or energy—non-governmental organizations are certainly already active in these areas. Nevertheless, in the eyes of politicians these organizations evidently have a weak reputation in comparison with other entities interested in influencing political decisions in the Czech Republic in these areas.

Members of the European Parliament (B-M/BKSH 2001) held a much better opinion of non-governmental organizations than did their Czech political colleagues. For example, one-fourth of the members of the European Parliament (24%) believed that non-governmental organizations are most effective in lobbying related to living conditions and environment. In our survey, non-governmental organizations were ranked first in each of the rated categories by only one in nine respondents.

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ED Member

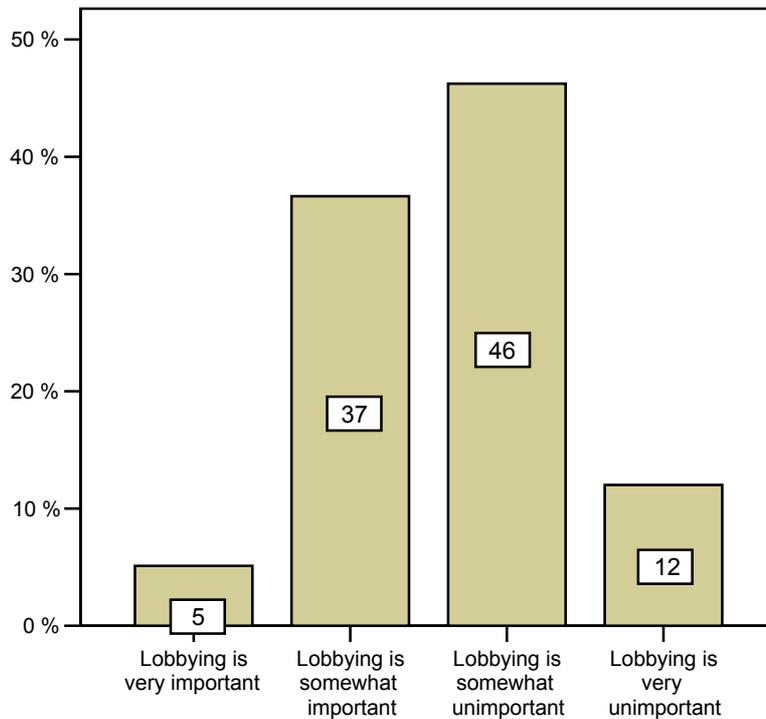
The Art of the Possible

The Importance of Lobbying

Respondents indicated to what degree lobbying is important to the workings of their office or political body.

“Information often fails to respond to the needs of members of the European Parliament. Lobbyists do not focus on the key area: the indication on how to vote.”

Member of the European Parliament



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 6: Five percent of respondents believe lobbying is very important to the work of the institution in which the respondent holds an office. More than a third (37 percent) believes lobbying is at least somewhat important to the functioning of their office. Their negative opinions, however, outweigh the positives.

Beloved and Hated

Respondents were split 3:2 into two groups with different viewpoints on the utility of lobbying when it comes to the functioning of political bodies and offices. Among Czech politicians the notion that lobbying is a legitimate tool for fostering civic society is not the prevailing one (see chapter “No Hard Feelings” on page 4). According to the majority of politicians, lobbying is not a wholly legitimate form of public communication. Despite this, a significant number of politicians acknowledge that the information provided by lobbyists is necessary. So it’s “back and forth,” quite within the art of the possible *à la République Tchèque*.

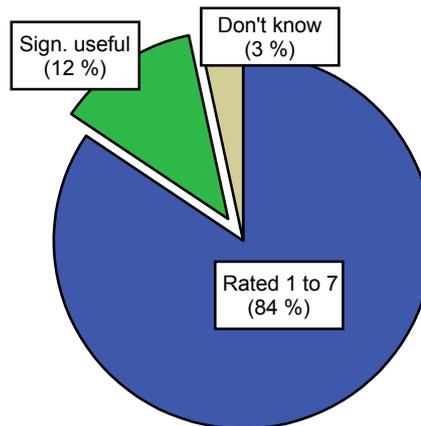
Common Lobbyist

The Right to Exist

We asked respondents to rate the usefulness of lobbyists who lobby for private companies and trade organizations on a scale of 1 to 10. (1=lobbyist provides entirely useless information, 10=lobbyists provide very useful information and are important for the work of a politician)

“Lobbyists are useful because they often call attention to a problem I might not otherwise have noticed. If it concerns a profession with which I’m at least somewhat familiar, it’s a benefit. On the other hand—namely if there’s some debate as to whether their motivation is to promote something contradictory to the common interest—I take them with reserve.”

KSCM member



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 7: Only one respondent in eight (12%) admits that lobbyists are very useful (rated 8 to 10). Four out of five respondents (84%) gave lobbying lower marks. The most positive rating given to lobbyists was by politicians from CSSD (18% gave them a rating of 8 to 10) and by politicians without any political affiliation (6% gave a rating of 8 to 10).

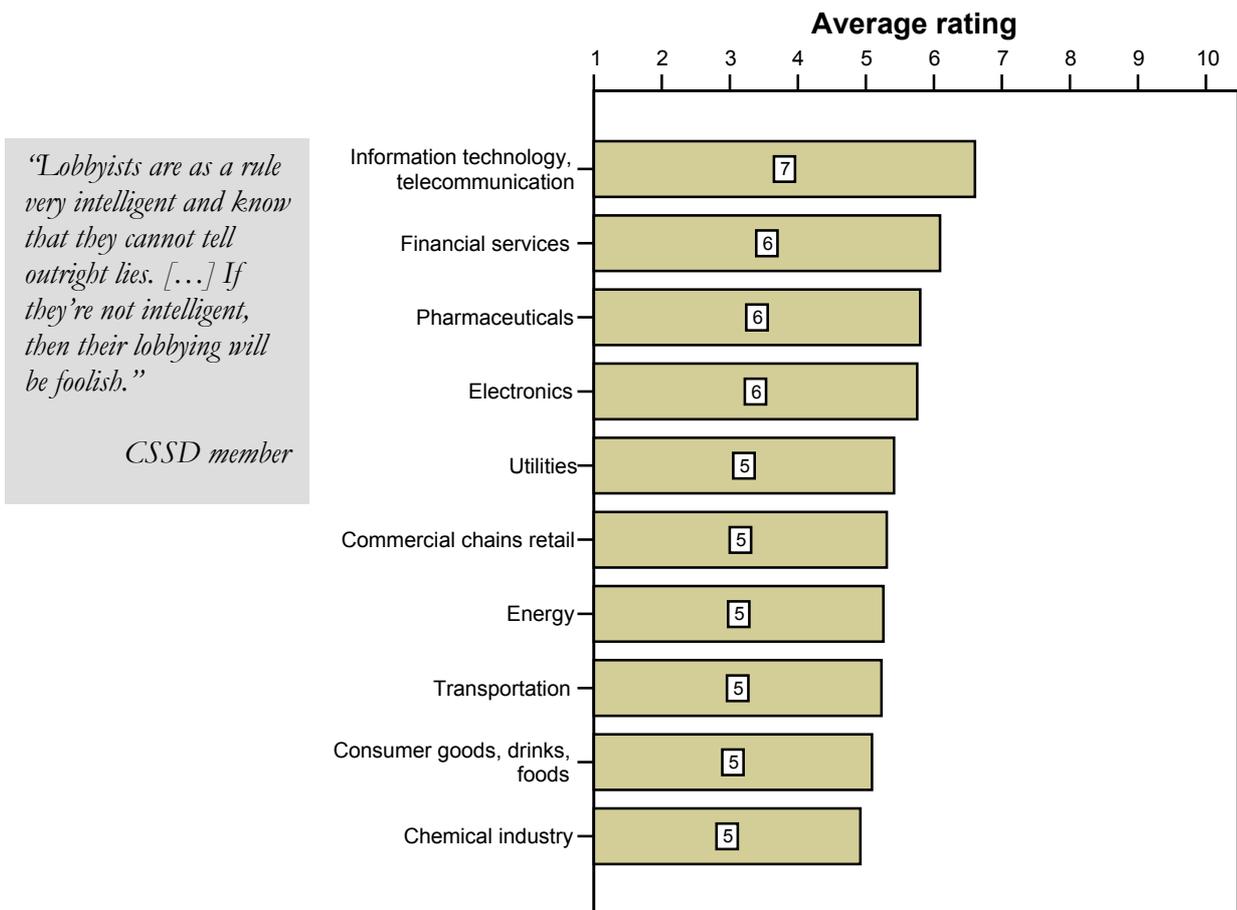
The State of the Lobbying Report

At the beginning of our polling, we inquired into the necessity of lobbyists who lobby on behalf of private companies and trade associations. Most Czech politicians claim lobbyists are not useful for the kind of work that they do. Despite this, the work of lobbyists cannot be deemed entirely useless. In the chapter “The Art of the Possible” on page 13 we in fact discovered that nearly half the respondents (42%) confirmed that lobbying is important for the operation of their office or political body. It is precisely the conclusions of this study that should help Czech lobbyists improve their reputation. Certainly it’s clear they have their place in the political world which is a stage, be it in the Gods or the Stalls.

Czech Odyssey 2005

Benchmark of Creativity

According to the respondents, to what degree are lobbyists for private companies sufficiently resourceful or creative, and to what degree do they respect the needs of the modern politician? (1=lobbying in the selected industry is totally unsatisfactory, 10=lobbying is entirely satisfactory or resourceful)



Pramen: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 8: The respondents believe that the most resourceful lobbying occurs in the field of information technology and telecommunication (28% gave it rating of 8 to 10) and financing (19%). The last in terms of creativity is the chemical industry lobby (6%).

IT Leads

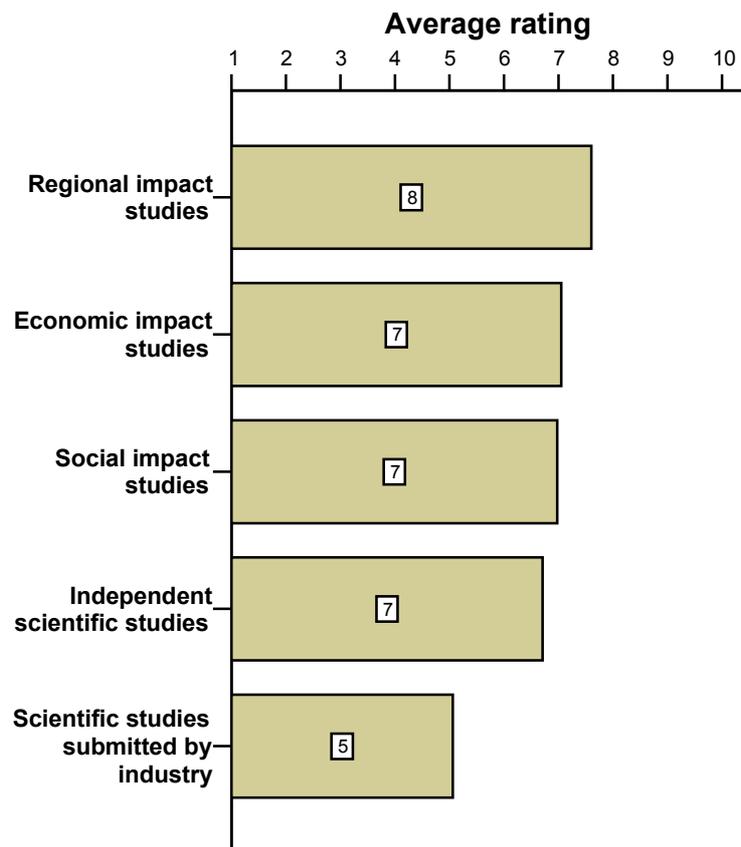
Among the European commission officials (B-M/BKSH 2003), the energy and chemical industry industry received the highest marks for creativity. The chemical industry received the lowest marks in the Czech Republic. The highest in the Czech Republic was the information technology industry. What does IT know better about handling information?

Local Is Tangible

Scientific Studies on the Scale

How much influence do different types of research have on the decision-making of a political body of which the respondent is a member? (1=type of information has no impact on decision-making, 10=type of information has a substantial impact)

A professional lobbyist provides qualified information that is substantiated by numbers and arguments, “without political affiliation”



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 9: Regional impact studies had the greatest impact on the decisions made by the surveyed respondents (62% rated them 8 to 10), followed by economic impact studies (48%). Studies submitted by industry groups had a significantly lower impact (14%).

Regional Weighs More

Since a large share of the surveyed politicians represent regions and large cities, it is unsurprising that regional impact studies would be most influential on their decision-making. Among high level officials in the European commission (B-M/BKSH 2003) independent scientific studies were considered most important, followed closely by economic impact studies. Regional impact studies also received high marks (6.2) but in the given group were ranked in last place.

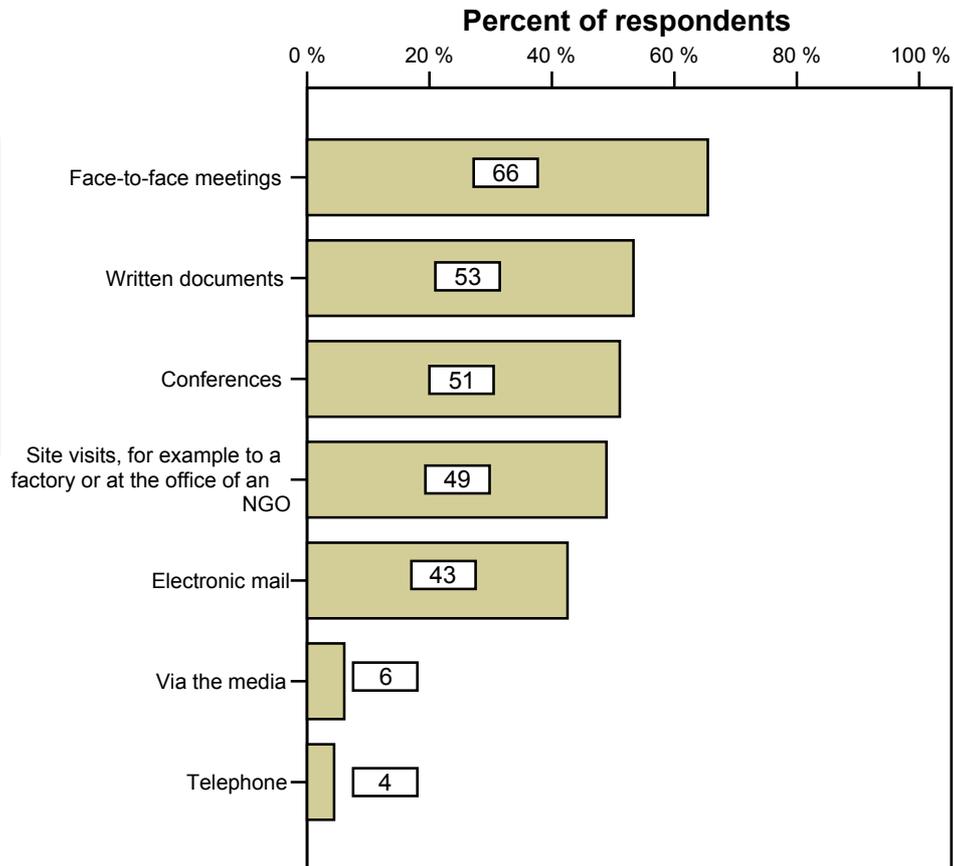
Take Them Alive

Render to All Their Dues

What modes of communication do respondents prefer when dealing with individuals lobbying for private companies or industry and trade associations?

“Lobbyists are part of the political process, although their influence is sometimes overestimated.”

ODS member



Pramen: DBM & al., 2005

Graf 10: On average, two-thirds of the respondents preferred face-to-face meetings with lobbyists. We discovered that this preference differs with political affiliation, for example, only a third (32%) of the respondents from KDU-CSL indicated that they prefer such meetings. The least preferred mode of communication is by phone and through the media.

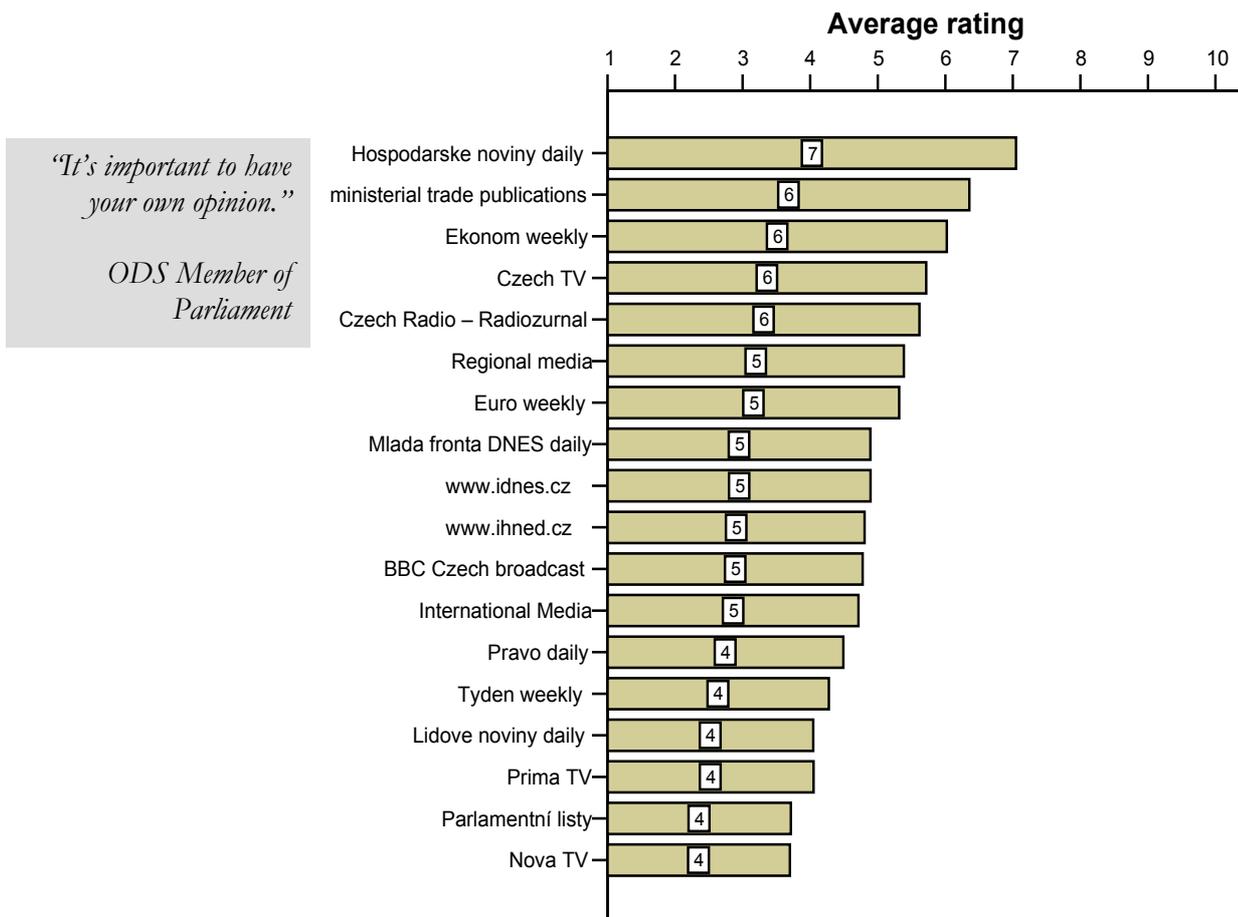
Don't Call! Knock!

Just like European Commission officials (B-M/BKSH 2003), Czech politicians welcome face-to-face meetings with lobbyists. Phone calls are on the lowest rung, the same as among Czech respondents. In short, phone calls are just not “in” this season.

Politics and *Economia*

I came, I read...

Which public sources of information are the most important, according to respondents? From which media sources do they get information about various industries? (1=source is entirely unimportant for decision-making, 10=source is very important)



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 11: Respondents consider the daily *Hospodarske noviny* (47% rated it 8 to 10), ministerial trade publications (33%), *Ekonom* weekly (29%), and Czech TV (30%) to be the media sources with the greatest influence over their decision-making. The fifth most influential media source is regional media (25%) and sixth is the economic weekly, *Euro weekly* (20%).

...I decided

Even despite the fact that politicians often base their decisions on their own research, it appears that publications from Handelsblatt-owned publisher *Economia* (publishing *Hospodarske noviny* daily and the weekly *Ekonom*) are the primary external sources of information. It’s simple: politicians like to read *Hospodarske noviny* and they like to appear on *TV Nova*, which attains the highest share with the population. It’s also interesting that certain online media (*ihned.cz* and *idnes.cz*) ranked higher than, for example, *Pravo* daily and *Lidove noviny* daily or *Tyden* weekly, *TV Prima* and the Czech Parliament’s *Parlamentni listy*.

State of Lobbying in the Czech Republic

The following conclusions emerge from the aggregate majority opinion of the politicians participating in our study.

- Politicians rely primarily on their own research and on the opinions of their colleagues.
- The public does not have sufficient information about the methods and utility of lobbying. The media do not refer to lobbying truthfully and without bias.
- Lobbying is just one of many forms of communication. Ethical lobbying does exist.
- In their dealings with parliament's deputies, senators or representatives, lobbyists are responsible for always disclosing the identity of the parties whose interests they represent.
- Politicians expect that lobbyists will behave transparently and will respect the needs of politicians.
- Information from lobbyists is often distorted and biased. Despite this, lobbyists apparently provide qualified, detailed and professionally substantiated information.
- The information technology lobby is of a high quality. It is also the most creative. The lobby for commercial chains is of a low quality.
- The lobby for individual companies is considered better than the trade lobby and the NGOs' lobby.
- The majority of respondents (58%) believe that lobbying is not important in the operation of their office. But one-tenth of the respondents (12%) indicated that lobbyists are very important for the work of politicians and provide very useful information.
- Regional impact studies have a major influence over politicians' decisions.
- The preferred forms of communication with lobbyists are face-to-face meetings, written materials, conferences, on-site visits to factories, and e-mail.
- *Hospodarske noviny* is the medium with the greatest influence on the decision-making of politicians.

The opinions of politicians cannot be generalized; each politician is an individual with her or his own personal approach to the surveyed issues.

List of References

Support Documents

In designing the methodology and the questionnaires, we worked with numerous publicly available information in the area of public affairs and government relations. Namely, this study directly refers to Burson-Marsteller/BKSH studies, documents from the European Parliament and from the Parliament of the Czech Republic, documents of the the Cabinet of the Czech Republic and the laws of the Czech Republic.

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Companies Behind the Study

Donath-Burson-Marsteller

The company has been providing public relations and public affairs services in the Czech Republic since 1991. Information about DBM can be found online at <http://www.dbm.cz/>.

Factum Invenio

The company has been providing market research and public opinion surveys in the Czech Republic since 1991, when the Factum brand was created. Information about this company can be found at online at <http://www.factum.cz>.

BKSH

This subsidiary of Burson-Marsteller operates in the USA and EU, and provides Government Relations. Information about this company can be found online at <http://www.bksh.com/>.

Contact

For further information about this study or the services offered by DBM and Factum Invenio, please contact:

- DBM: Michal Donath, GSM +420 602 222 128, michal_donath@cz.bm.com
- Factum Invenio: Jan Herzmann, GSM +420 602 218 243, herzmann@factum.cz

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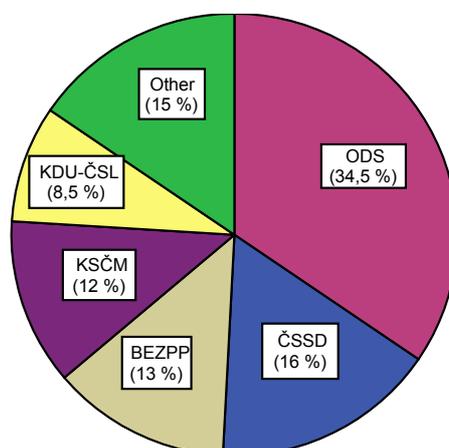
Appendix: Demographics

Political Affiliation of the Respondents

The respondents' affiliation to a political party or movement was ascertained based on information from the Czech Statistical Bureau which is publicly accessible online at <http://www.volby.cz/>. Four respondents were not politically active at the time of conducting the polling. Despite that, they were included in the overall analysis because one of them was a former politician (US-DEU) and three were highly placed regional administration officials.

Abbrev.	Full Name in Czech	No. of respondents	%
ODS	Obcanska demokraticka strana	125	34,5
CSSD	Ceska strana socialnedemokraticka	59	16,3
BEZPP	without political affiliation	47	13,0
KSCM	Komunisticka strana Cech a Moravy	44	12,2
KDU-CSL	Krestanska a demokraticka unie- Ceskoslovenska strana lidova	31	8,6
US-DEU	Unie svobody-Demokraticka unie	16	4,4
ODA	Obcanska demokraticka aliance	12	3,3
ED	Evropsti demokrate	9	2,5
SOS	Strana pro otevrenou spolecnost	5	1,4
CZ	Cesta zmeny	1	,3
DL	Demokraticka liga	1	,3
DRS	Demokraticka regionalni strana	1	,3
NEZ	Nezavisli	1	,3
PVP	Prava volba pro Plzen	1	,3
SDS	Strana demokratickeho socialismu	1	,3
SNK	SNK sdruzeni nezavislych	1	,3
SZSP	Sdruzeni pro zdravi, sport a prosperitu	1	,3
USZ	Unie pro sport a zdravi	1	,3
VPM	Volba pro mesto	1	,3
ZHN	Zlinske hnuti nezavislych	1	,3
unknown		3	,8
Total		362	100,0

Source: DBM & al., 2005



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Mandates

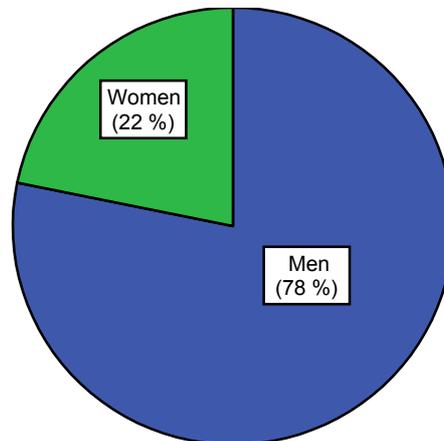
A total of 359 respondents from the ranks of politicians held a total of 390 political seats at the time the study was undertaken

Political Office	No. of Mandates	% of Respondents
Senate (Parliament)	16	4
Chamber of Deputies (Parliament)	22	6
European Parliament	7	2
Major City Magistrates	67	19
Major City Deputies	39	11
Cabinet Ministers	2	1
Regional Deputies	87	24
Primates	4	1
Regional Governors	3	1
High-level Administration Officials	3	1
Prague Deputies excluding Magistrates	118	33
Magistrates of Prague Capital City	22	6

Source: DBM & al., 2005

Sex

The majority of respondents were men (78 percent), and 22 percent were women. Of the 1,669 politicians who we approached in the polling only 302 were women (18 percent). This is due to the low number of women holding political office in the Czech Republic. For example, of 281 members of the Czech Republic Parliament, only 43 are women (15 percent)



Source: DBM & al., 2005

Graph 12: In among the respondents, 22 percent were women and 78 percent were men.