



PACE Press Release – 10th annual PACE meeting

Separated yet united as an association

European Public Affairs Professionals organize PACE's 10th Annual Meeting online

Special situations require special measures. Thus, the European Federation of National Public Affairs Associations celebrated a premiere for the occasion of its 10th anniversary: the annual conference on 15 May 2020 was moved to an online format. In this way, the PACE Board members – APRI, Spain (Maria Rosa Rotondo), APAA, Czech Republic (Vaclav Nekvapil), de'ge'pol, Germany (Dominik Meier), Il Chioistro, Italy (Maria Grazia Persico), and RLRA, Romania (Laura Florea) – decided to maintain what has been a core component of the network for 10 years: the annual exchange with members and friends of the network to benefit from the different professional perspectives in Europe even in times of crisis.

Thus 21 participants of the twelve PACE member Associations as well as the associated members that are currently setting up their national associations met on May 15th 2020, first in the General Assembly, to review the activities of the last year - including the redesign of the PACE website.

PACE was also able to celebrate further enlargement in its anniversary year and welcome the British Public Affairs Association (PRCA Public Affairs Board) as a new member. As **Maria Rosa Rotondo**, acting president of PACE summarizes after the first part of the PACE meeting: "I am incredibly proud of the community that we have built over this past 10 years. For the first time, public affairs professionals from most European countries are together, and helping shape our profession in a responsible, ethical and positive manner. We will continue working to make visible the contribution of our professionals to the democratic value chain across Europe.

The General Assembly was followed by a webinar, unique in its form to date: 45 participants from all over Europe and from European lobbying associations with which PACE has long-standing ties, led the first European-wide discussion on the consequences of the current Covid pandemic for the industry. As a prospect for future activities of PACE and the cooperation between Europe and Africa in the upcoming years, also the South African association joined the meeting.

The 2020 PACE conference once again clearly shows the core idea of PACE, which has shaped the vision of the network for ten years. Even with different national contexts, Public Affairs Professionals from across Europe and beyond share a very similar perception of globalized situations and can promote by regular exchange common approaches for a strong and unified voice of the European Public Affairs industry. "PACE was build ten years ago in Rome to create a common house of national associations of public affairs professionals. Our aim is to enhance the culture and practice of transparent and regulated lobbying among all European Countries, sharing the experiences and supporting any effort to increase the right perception of lobbying as a pillar of democracy for a better quality of public decisions. Looking at the future, PACE will became also an interlocutor of pan European and international institutions with its heritage of experience and its set of values.", says **Giuseppe Mazzei**, Honorary President of PACE and one of the driving forces behind the European networking idea of PACE since the very beginning.

Ultimately, the success of the first digital PACE event reveals that digital possibilities will certainly continue to shape the cooperation of the community in the future. But, as participants also agreed, the heart of a successful community is and will remain the active input of its members - including in the analogue world.



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About PACE

PACE aisbl is the association of European national Public Affairs and lobbying associations. Yet for PACE, Europe does not end at the borders of the EU: with members from the entire European continent, PACE's aim is to create a common framework for the European public affairs industry. PACE can look back on a long common history: It was initially launched by IL Chioistro (Italy) APRI (Spain) in May 2011 as a common platform of national organizations of European public affairs professionals and lobbyists. In the following years annual meetings – the core events of the network until today – were organized in several European capitals. In 2018, PACE took a step forward and incorporated PACE as an aisbl (international non profit organization) in Brussels, to set the ground for an even clearer voice of the Public Affairs Industry in Europe. PACE aisbl currently has ten members and two associate members.

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