



**CHAMBERS
IRELAND**
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

Chambers Ireland's Submission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

Chambers Ireland and the Chamber Network have been very supportive of the legislation and welcome the work of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on this. Chambers Ireland has worked to ensure that the Chamber Network were aware of the legislation and the processes for registering and submitting returns and with a total of 368 returns for the first three periods, the Chamber Network has recorded the country's largest number of returns submitted to the Lobbying Act Register.

As a business representative organisation the Chamber Network welcomed the lobbying register as an important record of the positive work being undertaken by Chambers in promoting the long term development of their locality and creating a better environment for business by engaging with the Government and other stakeholders on key policy issues.. We are pleased to have the opportunity to inform this consultation and look forward to continued work with the Department in the future. Overall Chambers Ireland is pleased with the operation of the Lobbying Regulation. We would highlight a number of recommendations for improvements to this system, outlined below.

- It would be useful if the system would allow the user to view the content of recent returns while in the process of uploading new returns. This would allow quick cross checking of returns to avoid accidental duplication of returns and consistency of information supplied.
- The European Commission recently proposed a European Transparency Register which would cover lobbying activities related to the European Parliament. In the event that such a register is developed for Members of the European Parliament, Chambers Ireland recommends that the Department avoid any duplication of obligation to record engagements with MEPs.
- Finally, Chambers Ireland recommends that the Department engage in extensive consultation before any changes are made to the levels of Designated Public Officials within the meaning of this regulation. Changes to the level of DPOs included in the register will have significant implications for organisations and careful consideration and caution should be practiced in relation to changes in this area.