

Representation of ILPA at Stakeholder and other meetings: roles and responsibilities

Approved by the Executive Committee 25 July 2011

ILPA is asked to be present at a wide range of external meetings including government 'Stakeholder' groups, advisory groups for other organisations and one-off meetings on particular topics. Any ILPA member, with current membership, can be asked by the Secretariat or a person nominated by the Secretariat to represent ILPA at meetings, following consultation with the EC and/or subcommittee convenors where appropriate.

If a member receives a request to represent ILPA at a meeting or that ILPA provide a representative, this should be passed to the Secretariat.

1. Core responsibilities of those representing ILPA at meetings

- To familiarise themselves with the views of members on relevant matters, working with the Secretariat and Convenors of subcommittees plus representatives at other meetings, to identify agenda items and existing ILPA positions and be able to respond to matters arising.
- To put forward ILPA positions at the meetings. Where a matter arises on which ILPA does not have a position, representatives should take this back to ILPA so that the views of members can be canvassed. There is, of course, nothing to prevent people from extrapolating from existing ILPA positions to deal with matters arising, but care should be taken when the discussion strays beyond this into a brand new position. This is as true of meetings and pre-meetings with other NGOs as with the UK Border Agency.
- To report back promptly to members on the meeting. This will normally take the form of a written note from the next ILPA mailing and/or circulation to the relevant subcommittee.
- To report back to the General Secretary, convenors of the relevant subcommittee or EC members, as appropriate, matters arising at the meeting that do not form part of the general note but of which they consider ILPA should be aware. This might include plans to set up *ad hoc* meetings, or early warning of a consultation or deadline, or simply useful contacts.
- To ensure that the Secretariat has copies of all papers circulated relating to meetings. Normally the Secretariat will ensure that it is also on email lists connected to a particular meeting, so that representatives do not have to forward all documents, but sometimes documents will be circulated less widely (e.g. handed out in hard copy at the meeting). However restricted the circulation of a document, an ILPA representative should make clear that a copy will be shared with the Secretariat and kept on file there.
- To ensure that the information and discussions from meetings are not circulated more widely than ILPA members as the content of these meetings is not generally in the public domain. Should an ILPA representative wish to circulate information more widely (eg to clients or the media) the representative should obtain prior consent from ILPA, which will not be unreasonably withheld.

- To inform the Secretariat of the dates of forthcoming meetings as soon as these are known, so that these may be included on the website and/or identified to members who may wish to identify matters to be raised at the meeting.
- To let the Secretariat know if they are unable to attend a meeting and work with the Secretariat to identify and support a substitute.

2. 'Confidential' meetings

It is ILPA's policy to not attend meetings held on a confidential basis as ILPA reports back information and discussions from meetings to its members. Confidential or secret meeting are not acceptable unless, in rare circumstances, prior approval from the ILPA Executive Committee is granted.

Sometimes in a meeting comments will be made or discussions will take place which are specified as 'confidential' or 'off the record'. The ILPA representative should always make clear that 'confidential' or 'off the record' discussions at meetings will need to be shared at least with the ILPA Chair and General Secretary.

When a meeting, or part of a meeting, is held under the Chatham House Rule, that rule provides¹ that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. Experience suggests that you should clarify what the speaker/presenter at a meeting means when stating that a discussion is to be held or information provided under the Chatham House Rule as their working definition may in fact be a variation of the rule. For example, meetings are frequently held under the Rule where a list of attendees is publicly available. More problematic is that some people assume that the rule means that the meeting is off the record or confidential. Be aware that the rule does not prohibit your identifying what you said yourself at the meeting.

Any discussion or information which is to be treated as 'confidential' or 'off the record' or under 'Chatham House Rule' will not be circulated more widely than the ILPA Chair or General Secretary unless permission is expressly given to do so.

3. Working with the Secretariat (Reporting back)

Members will report back within a reasonable time and keep the Secretariat updated with any reasons for delay.

Follow up from meetings and communications with officials etc, whether by letter or email should, unless administrative, be signed off by the ILPA Chair and circulated to members via the ILPA Secretariat.

In some cases the Chair will deem it more appropriate that a communication go in another person's name (eg the General Secretary, or the ILPA representative at a meeting) but such communications are still signed off by the Chair or General Secretary.

4. Selection of representatives

Only current members can represent ILPA at meetings. Matters that will be taken into account in choosing representatives include:

¹ <http://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chathamhouserule>

- Ability and willingness to fulfil the core responsibilities set out above.
- Ability and willingness to commit the necessary time, recognising that it will generally be desirable to ensure a high degree of continuity.
- Lack of conflicts of interest/potential for confusion of role. For example, a member who represents another organisation or body may face a confusion if they appear on behalf of a where they and their organisation are well-known. Similarly that other organisation or body may have concerns about their advancing particular positions and such conflicts would make a person unsuitable to represent ILPA.
- Availability and rapid response to requests to attend.

5. Current representation at meetings

See the Representation of ILPA at meetings page of the Members section of www.ilpa.org.uk Lists are maintained in the Secretariat, in particular for the purposes of monthly reports to the EC and the Annual Report.