



# Viability of Lobby Groups in Romania

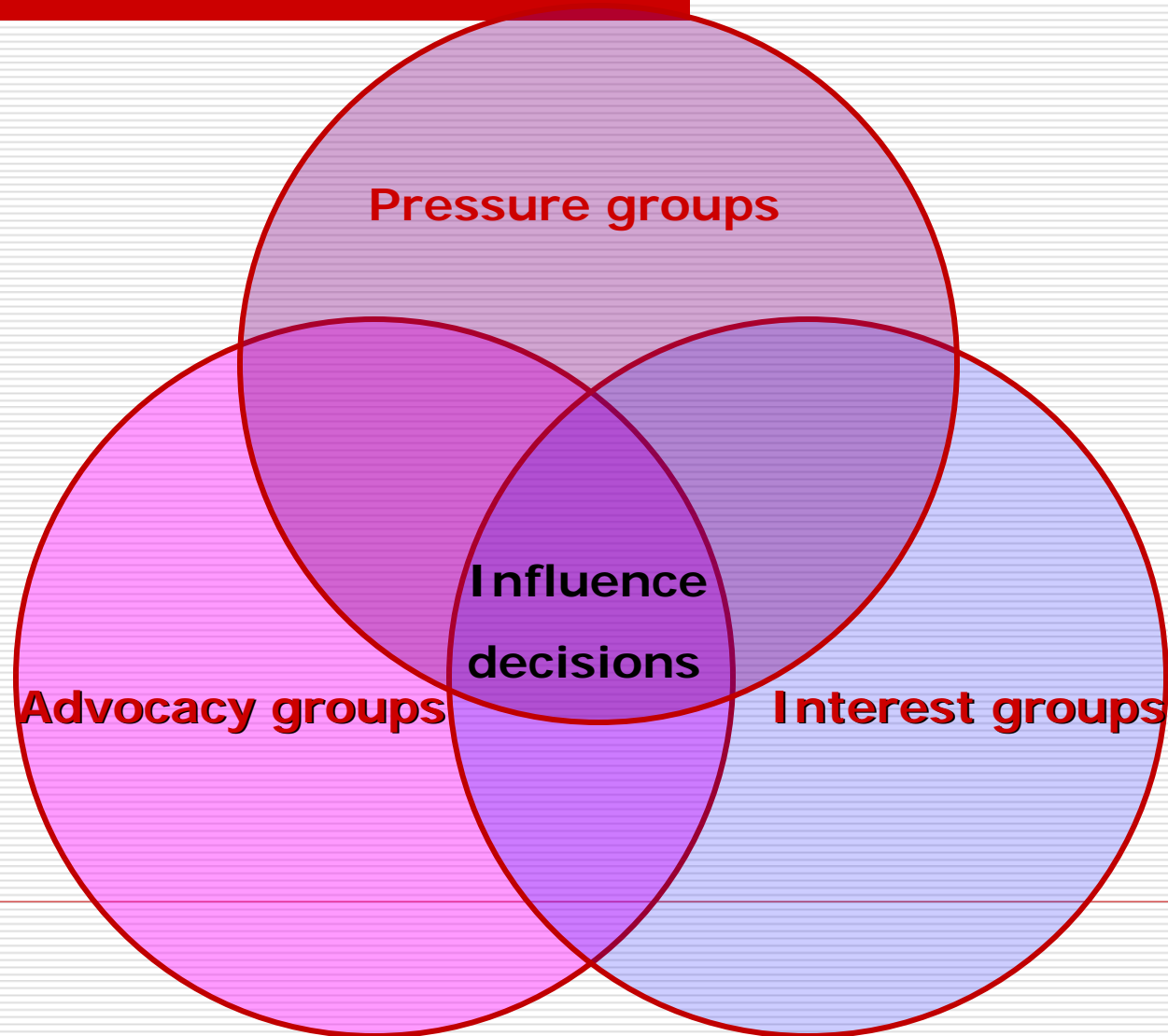
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# What are the lobby groups?

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# Lobby groups in the United States

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“Lobbying is the practice of trying to persuade legislators to propose, pass, or defeat legislation or to change existing laws. A lobbyist may work for a group, organization, or industry, and presents information on legislative proposals to support his or her clients' interests.”

U.S.Senate definition

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- Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995
  
  - Laws adopted in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress
    - S. 1
    - H.Res 6
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# Lobby groups in Europe

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- 1970s – 400 lobby groups in Brussels
- Today – more than 15,000 lobbyists from 2,500 organizations in Brussels

(Alexander Stubb – Finn member of the European Parliament and the rapporteur on lobbying in the EU)

- Lobbying regulated in parliament bills in:
    - Georgia – 1998
    - Lithuania – 2001
    - Poland – 2005
    - Hungary – 2006
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# Towards a lobby law in Romania

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- Attempts to influence political decisions already made by
    - Non-governmental organizations
    - Business associations
      - Foreign Investors Council
      - American Chamber of Commerce
      - Businessmen's Association of Romania
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# New electoral law – March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008

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- 231 votes “for”, 11 “against” and 18 “abstains”
  - An uninominal system of election
    - Deputy - 70.000 people
    - Senator - 160.000 people
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# Public consultations

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- Advocacy Academy
  - Pro Democracy Association
  - Professional Journalists' Society
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# Arguments in favor of a lobby law:

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- ❑ A lobby law would create a clear distinction between lobbying and corruption and would help stopping the later.
  - ❑ A lobby law would support the active participation of citizens to the political process that would increase their trust in the governance sector and would create a more transparent political system.
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# Arguments against a lobby law:

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- ❑ Citizens lack of knowledge of the political mechanisms' that could be used to influence the decision processes.
  - ❑ Fear that the only "winners" of a lobby law would be the interest groups that already know the legislative process and the people that influence it and only look for their own interest and not citizens' one.
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# Cont...

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- Fear that citizens would understand by a lobby law a legalized way of fostering corruption, if we think that the word “lobby” has a negative connotation in many societies.
  
  - The existence of two laws that already could be used to regulate the lobbying activity:
    - Law of Free Access to Public Information (L544/2002)
    - Transparency Law (L52/2003)
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Thank you