

# **Ethics Code of the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce**

- **Introduction**

The following ethics code of the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce (hereafter referred to as the "Chamber") outlines the values to be applied when conducting business or interacting with stakeholders. It is the belief of the organisation that adhering to a common set of generally accepted values is critical for future success in all its endeavours.

- **The Mission of the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce**

The mission of the Chamber is to promote British-German trade and direct investment in both countries and to provide business services to achieve this aim.

The Chamber assists companies in their search for new business opportunities by acting as an interface, thereby freeing up management time and resources. The Chamber provides a forum for members and other interested parties where they make face to face contact and share information on an informal basis. The Chamber is in close contact with governments in both countries and makes representations on behalf of its members. The Chamber advises people undergoing vocational training and plays a major part in the running of the European College of Business and Management in London. As an active member of the global network of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber endeavours to bring the benefits of collaboration to its members and clients. By providing a high quality service, its members are encouraged to recommend the Chamber to potential new members.

The Chamber encourages its councillors, employees, honorary officers and honorary committee members to work in a team to invest time and resources to contribute to the success of the Chamber and its work. Its development of membership, events, services and other activities should be supported by all involved and suggestions, recommendations and feedback on how the Chamber can fulfil its mission are welcomed.

- **The Core Values of the German-British Chamber of industry & Commerce**

The core values of the Chamber are: freedom, honesty, integrity and impartiality. These values are derived from the Chamber's underlying belief in the market economy and free flows of international trade and capital/investment.

- **Expectations of Members and Business Partners**

The Chamber requests that its members and companies and organisations it works with respect its ethical positions. The Chamber expects from all its members and partners the same similarly high principles and standards in terms of ethics and any apparent violation will force the Chamber to reconsider its relationship with that member or partner.

- **Compliance with the Law**

The Chamber conducts its business complying with all relevant legislation and regulations and requires its councillors, employees, honorary officers and honorary committee members to do the same.

- **Respect and Protection of the Individual**

- Individuality & Equality

As a bilateral organisation, the Chamber values the diversity of its employees and promotes an environment free from prejudice. Employees will be free from discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sexual orientation, beliefs, parentage, nationality, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental disability or any further characteristics or behaviour which would compromise the well-being of the individual.

- Protection from Harassment and Abuse of Power

The Chamber undertakes responsibility for its employees and protects them from damaging influences. This includes the establishment of a safe working environment free from harassment (sexual, racial or any other kind) or abuse of power. Any incident of this nature is to be reported to the Director General and the Chamber must immediately take action to protect the individual concerned and apply official counteractive measures.

- Protection of Minors and Young People

The Chamber is committed to the protection of minors and young people under the age of 18. As a matter of principle, no minors are employed by the Chamber. The Chamber may offer structured internship programmes to young people only over the age of 16, which will develop their education.

- **Business Ethics**

- Integrity

Dishonest business practices are irreconcilable with the values and the mission statement of the Chamber. Councillors, employees, honorary officers and honorary committee members are obligated to act with integrity when dealing with the Chamber's members, clients, suppliers, partners and competition.

- Business and Professional Recommendations

If asked to give recommendations for individuals or services, the Chamber will only use objective criteria such as field of activity, specialisation, particular language abilities etc to generate a list of member companies which match the information or service requested.

- **Conflicts of Interest**

- Loyalty

Councillors, employees, honorary officers and honorary committee members are required within the context of their work to act in the interests of the Chamber and its mission.

Outside the ordinary business activities of the Chamber, financial resources, fixed assets, services and confidential information must not be used in a way to gain advantage for third parties or the employee, councillor, honorary officer or honorary committee member as an individual.

- Identity

Councillors, employees, honorary officers and honorary committee members of the Chamber are obliged to clearly indicate whether they are acting on behalf of the Chamber or on their own behalf. Employees are only entitled to conduct business on their own behalf after consulting with and obtaining agreement from the Chamber.

The Chamber logo, the Chamber brand and the Chamber stationary are to be used exclusively for official Chamber business. However, the logo may only be used to indicate membership of the Chamber.

- External Activities

A councillor, employee, honorary officer or honorary committee member should only accept an appointment or enter into any other agreement, if it will neither affect the interests of the Chamber nor the individual's ability to carry out his or her work or responsibilities at the Chamber.

- Handling Conflicts of Interest

Should a councillor, employee, honorary officer or honorary committee member be presented with a conflict of interest, he should be aware of his loyalty to the Chamber and should disclose this conflict of interest to the Chamber and actively manage it.

- **Confidentiality**

- Protection of Confidential Information

The Chamber and its councillors, employees, honorary officers or honorary committee members must not divulge confidential information of any nature to third parties. This includes all data which is covered under the relevant data protection laws. Exceptions apply where required by law to disclose such information or if consent is given by the individual concerned.

- Media Relations

Any media request related to the business or reputation of the Chamber must be forwarded to the Director General for consideration who, if necessary, consults with the Chairman of the Council or the Council as a whole.

Care must be taken when making statements to the media that information given is correct and not misleading. Enquiries from the media should be referred to the Chamber PR department and statements should only be made by designated spokespersons.

The Chamber may be required to make statements or provide reports to regulatory bodies, government agencies or other government departments. Care should be taken to ensure that such statements or reports are correct, timely and not misleading. Senior management must be made aware of any sensitive disclosure before it is made.

- **Social Responsibility**

The Chamber will conduct its business with respect and consideration for the environment. It will strive to minimise its environmental impact, amongst others through the management of waste and energy consumption. The Chamber carries a responsibility to the wider community in which it operates and will conduct its business with respect and consideration for the good of local communities, taking steps to minimise any disturbance as a result of its operations.

- **Impartiality**

The Chamber's political orientation is one of impartiality. In its work with governments, organisations and associations, it maintains its political neutrality.

- **Concluding Remarks**

- Maintenance

It is the task of the Council and the Director General to enforce, administer and, if necessary, further develop this ethics policy.

- Reporting of Violations

Generally, doubts or possible violations are to be reported in the first instance to the Director General for appropriate investigation and introduction of suitable measures. The next step would be to refer the issue to the Council. In exceptional circumstances the Council may be informed directly.

- Dissent

In cases of doubt or dispute in connection to this ethics policy, the final decision rests with the Council of the Chamber.

- Implementation

This ethics policy is adopted by the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce with immediate effect. It applies to the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce, including its councillors, employees, honorary officers and honorary committee members.