



Thematic Guide on Commerce

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CHAPTER 1: Structure and functioning of the EU - The role of Local and Regional Authorities



The Pro-I3T project is co-financed by the European Union, through the "Europe for Citizens" programme.

BACKGROUND – ESTABLISHMENT AND AMENDMENTS

The idea of the unification of the European continent was formulated for the first time by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Schuman, on 9 May 1950, a date celebrated annually as [Europe Day](#). However, the European Union as we know it today was established on 25 March 1957 in Rome and originally named the European Economic Community (EEC). Initially, the Community consisted of six Member States: France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The Community was then enlarged with new Member States: the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark in 1973, Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, Sweden, Finland and Austria in 1995, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia in 2004 and Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. Finally, as it is known, a further enlargement is foreseen to include Croatia (in 2013) and possibly Turkey and FYROM.

The founding Treaty signed in Rome in 1957 has subsequently been amended several times, firstly with the [Single European Act](#) in 1987 and then with the [Maastricht Treaty on the European Union](#) in 1992, the [Treaty of Amsterdam](#) in 1997, the [Treaty of Nice](#) in 2001 and the [Lisbon Treaty](#) in 2007. Therefore, whenever the word “[Treaty](#)” is mentioned, it refers to the founding Treaty of Rome in force after the amendments brought about by the aforementioned Treaties. All the texts of the Treaties [are available here](#).

The Maastricht Treaty on the European Union

The Treaty on the European Union (Treaty of Maastricht) came into force in November 1993, after being ratified by the Parliaments of all Member States, and represented the most important step towards European integration after the Single European Act of 1987¹. Based on the European Communities (i.e. the European Economic Community, the European Coal and Steel Community² and the European Atomic Energy Community), the Treaty of Maastricht founded the European Union, with the following main goals:

- to set up an economic and monetary union (EMU), which would be concluded by the introduction of a single currency (euro),
- to promote European citizenship, providing the citizens of Europe with the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in the European and local elections in their country of residence,
- to shape a common foreign and security policy (CFSP), which will seek to achieve the security of Europe and defend the common values and ideals, such as democracy and human rights, and
- to develop cooperation in matters of justice and home affairs, in order to ensure the internal security of the Union.

The same Treaty also anticipated the new areas in which the Union acquired a jurisdiction of action, such as education, culture, public health, consumer protection, trans-European networks and industry. Furthermore, the Treaty confirmed the principles of *subsidiarity*³, *proportionality*⁴, *transparency and open management* and *economic and social cohesion*⁵.

¹ The main goal of the Single European Act was to pave the way for the integration of the Single Market. It also expanded the field of jurisdiction of the EC and the powers of the European Parliament.

² The ECSC Treaty anticipated being in force for a period of 50 years, and taking into account that it came into force in 1951, it came to an end in 2002. Its activities and its goals were taken over by the European Community.

³ The principle of subsidiarity anticipates that the actions of the Union shall be limited only to matters which cannot be better and more efficiently regulated at Member States' level.

⁴ The principle of proportionality anticipates that the means used by the Community during its action must correspond to the goal it aims for.

The Treaty of Amsterdam

The Treaty of Amsterdam introduced further amendments to the founding Treaties, on a political, as well as institutional level. The basic goal of the Treaty was to prepare the Union for the challenges of the 21st century, such as enlargement and the EMU, and to render it more accessible to its citizens. From an institutional point of view, it brought about important changes in the decision-making processes in the framework of all three pillars of the EU and granted greater powers to the European Parliament.

However, despite its amendments, it was considered necessary to organise a new Intergovernmental Conference in 2000 (which ended with the signing of the Treaty of Nice, which we will be looking at later on), in order to regulate certain outstanding issues, such as voting rights of every Member State in the Council, the expansion of decision-making with a special majority, etc.

To analyse matters further, as far as the first pillar is concerned, the European citizenship was established with the Treaty of Amsterdam (Articles 17-22 of the EU Treaty) and the jurisdictions concerning the free movement of persons were transferred from intergovernmental level to the first pillar. This means that from May 2002 the Commission is the only institution with jurisdiction to take initiative in order to adopt legislation concerning the matters in question.

Changes were also made concerning the number of procedures for decision-making within the Council. Of the four procedures which were foreseen (codecision, cooperation, assent and consultations), the cooperation procedure was abolished in all policy sectors, except in economic and monetary affairs, and the use of the codecision procedure was expanded from 15 to 38 policy sectors.

Finally, as far as the first pillar of jurisdiction is concerned, economic and monetary union was established among the 12 countries participating in the euro zone, their economic policies are now regulated by the independent [European Central Bank](#) and the single currency (euro) was introduced on 1 January 2002.

The Treaty of Nice

As mentioned above, the amendatory Treaty of Amsterdam left several outstanding matters concerning issues of an institutional nature. Their regulation, as well as the then present need to prepare the Union for the accession of twelve new countries (including Romania and Bulgaria) made the convergence of a new Intergovernmental Conference in Nice on 7-9 December 2000 necessary, which ended with the signing of the homonymous Treaty. The new Treaty was ratified by the national parliament and came into force on 1 February 2003. With regard to the first pillar of the EU⁶, the Treaty of Nice includes provisions concerning the number of members of the European Commission and the European Parliament after the accession of the new Member States, the calculation of votes on the Council, the consequent extension of decision-making with a special majority in certain policy areas and a respective extension of the codecision procedure for the voting of legal acts by the Council and the Parliament. Under this institutional reform, amendments are also predicted in the jurisdictions

⁵ Social and economic cohesion basically concerns the transfer of economic resources from the more prosperous regions of the Union to the less prosperous ones.

⁶ An individual analysis of the amendments brought about by the Treaty of Nice takes place in the following pages, when presenting the institutions and the decision-making procedure.

of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of First Instance, and certain other changes for the European Central Bank, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, which will be analysed later on.

With regard to the procedure of *enhanced cooperation*, as defined by the Treaty of Amsterdam, which allows all Member States that wish to establish an enhanced cooperation amongst them in the framework of the Union to do so, the basic prerequisites (mainly the respect of the *acquis communautaire* and the jurisdictions of the Union) remain unchanged. On the contrary, the number of the participation required for the establishment of an enhanced cooperation has been reduced by the Treaty of Nice to **eight** Member States, in comparison with the majority of Member States required before (in EU-27 this percentage will represent less than 1/3 of Member States). Furthermore, the Treaty of Nice abolishes the possibility for a Member State to veto the decision for enhanced cooperation of other Member States in the framework of the first pillar. The Member State can, however, present the issue before the European Council (Heads of State and Government of the EU), which decides with a special majority. If the enhanced cooperation concerns a sector that falls under the codecision procedure (see below), the assent of the European Parliament is *also* required.

The Lisbon Treaty

The [Lisbon Treaty](#) was signed on 13 December 2007. On 1 December 2009, the Treaty entered into force, thus ending several years of negotiation about institutional issues.

The Treaty of Lisbon amends the current EU and EC treaties, without replacing them. It provides the Union with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet future challenges and to respond to citizens' demands.

1. **A more democratic and transparent Europe**, with a strengthened role for the European Parliament and national parliaments, more opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard and a clearer sense of who does what at European and national level.
 - o A strengthened role for the European Parliament: the European Parliament, directly elected by EU citizens, is provided with important new powers regarding EU legislation, the EU budget and international agreements. In particular, the increase of co-decision procedure in policy-making ensures that the European Parliament is placed on an equal footing with the Council, representing Member States, for the vast bulk of EU legislation.
 - o A greater involvement of national parliaments: national parliaments have greater opportunities to be involved in the work of the EU, in particular thanks to a new mechanism to monitor that the Union only acts where results can be better attained at EU level (subsidiarity). Together with the strengthened role for the European Parliament, it will enhance democracy and increase legitimacy in the functioning of the Union.
 - o A stronger voice for citizens: thanks to the Citizens' Initiative, one million citizens from a number of Member States have the possibility to call on the Commission to bring forward new policy proposals.
 - o Who does what: the relationship between the Member States and the European Union become clearer with the categorisation of competences.
 - o Withdrawal from the Union: the Treaty of Lisbon explicitly recognises for the first time the possibility for a Member State to withdraw from the Union.

2. **A more efficient Europe**, with simplified working methods and voting rules, streamlined and modern institutions for a EU of 27 members and an improved ability to act in areas of major priority for today's Union.
 - Effective and efficient decision-making: qualified majority voting in the Council is extended to new policy areas to make decision-making faster and more efficient. From 2014 on, the calculation of qualified majority will be based on the double majority of Member States and people, thus representing the dual legitimacy of the Union. A double majority will be achieved when a decision is taken by 55% of the Member States representing at least 65% of the Union's population.
 - A more stable and streamlined institutional framework: the Treaty of Lisbon creates the function of President of the European Council elected for two and a half years, introduces a direct link between the election of the Commission President and the results of the European elections, provides for new arrangements for the future composition of the European Parliament, and includes clearer rules on enhanced cooperation and financial provisions.
 - Improving the life of Europeans: the Treaty of Lisbon improves the EU's ability to act in several policy areas of major priority for today's Union and its citizens. This is the case in particular for the policy areas of freedom, security and justice, such as combating terrorism or tackling crime. It also concerns to some extent other areas including energy policy, public health, civil protection, climate change, services of general interest, research, space, territorial cohesion, commercial policy, humanitarian aid, sport, tourism and administrative cooperation.

3. **A Europe of rights and values, freedom, solidarity and security**, promoting the Union's values, introducing the Charter of Fundamental Rights into European primary law, providing for new solidarity mechanisms and ensuring better protection of European citizens.
 - Democratic values: the Treaty of Lisbon details and reinforces the values and objectives on which the Union is built. These values aim to serve as a reference point for European citizens and to demonstrate what Europe has to offer its partners worldwide.
 - Citizens' rights and Charter of Fundamental Rights: the Treaty of Lisbon preserves existing rights while introducing new ones. In particular, it guarantees the freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and gives its provisions a binding legal force. It concerns civil, political, economic and social rights.
 - Freedom of European citizens: the Treaty of Lisbon preserves and reinforces the "four freedoms" and the political, economic and social freedom of European citizens.
 - Solidarity between Member States: the Treaty of Lisbon provides that the Union and its Member States act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the subject of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. Solidarity in the area of energy is also emphasised.
 - Increased security for all: the Union gets an extended capacity to act on freedom, security and justice, which brings direct benefits in terms of the Union's ability to fight crime and terrorism. New provisions on civil protection, humanitarian aid and public health also aim at boosting the Union's ability to respond to threats to the security of European citizens.

4. **Europe as an actor on the global stage** will be achieved by bringing together Europe's external policy tools, both when developing and deciding new policies. The Treaty of Lisbon gives Europe a clear voice in relations with its partners worldwide. It harnesses Europe's economic, humanitarian, political and diplomatic strengths to promote European interests and values worldwide, while respecting the particular interests of the Member States in Foreign Affairs.
- A new High Representative for the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, also Vice-President of the Commission, will increase the impact, the coherence and the visibility of the EU's external action.
 - A new European External Action Service will provide back up and support to the High Representative.
 - A single legal personality for the Union will strengthen the Union's negotiating power, making it more effective on the world stage and a more visible partner for third countries and international organisations.
 - Progress in European Security and Defence Policy will preserve special decision-making arrangements but also pave the way towards reinforced cooperation amongst a smaller group of Member States.

EU INSTITUTIONS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES

The European Community is considered to be the only example of a transition of decisive jurisdictions of independent states to a supranational institution. Since there is no previous institutional framework for comparison, in order to gain a clear impression of the operation of the EU, we must examine the institutions around which the policy development, decision-making and the control of the Community action are structured.

In this Thematic Guide you will come across terms like “institutions”, “draft legislative acts”, “decision-making with unanimity or special majority”, etc. Although, if necessary, the specific term will be explained again, it would be important to have a complete schematic idea of the structure and operation of the EU from the beginning. Therefore, we will present the institutions in brief next, beginning with the main “institutional triangle” which forms the nucleus of the EU.

The Council

First of all, the European Union has a **Council** which is the main competent institution for making political decisions in the jurisdiction areas of the EU as provided for by the Treaty, the coordination of the economic policy of the Member States, the conclusion of international treaties and voting of the EU budget, jointly with the European Parliament. This institution *represents the Member States within the EU* and does not have a permanent composition, but is made up of the ministers of the Member States who convene each time in Brussels⁷ on certain issues of Community policy (*Council of Ministers*). The Council of Ministers of Agriculture, for example, assembles the 27 Ministers of Agriculture of the Member States; the Council of Ministers of Transport assembles the 27 Ministers of Transport, etc. Generally, the Council meets in ten different **configurations**:

- [The Council](#)
- [General Affairs](#)
- [Foreign Affairs](#)
- [Economic and Financial Affairs](#)
- [Justice and Home Affairs \(JHA\)](#)
- [Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs](#)
- [Competitiveness \(internal market, industry, research and space\)](#)
- [Transport, Telecommunications and Energy](#)
- [Agriculture and Fisheries](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Education, youth, culture and sport](#)

At least twice a year (i.e. at least once during the six-month Presidency of the Council by a Member State) the **European Council** is convened, which does not consist of Ministers only, but also of Heads of State and Government of the 27 Member States and the President of the Commission. The Heads of State and Government are assisted in this Summit by their Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

⁷ Except the sessions of April, June and October, which take place in Luxembourg.

The work of the Council is prepared by the so-called Permanent Representatives Committee (**COREPER**)⁸, which is composed of ambassadors of the Member States, accredited to the European Community. When one of the ministers is unable to attend a meeting of the Council in Brussels, the respective member of COREPER takes his / her place. The Council is also assisted by its General Secretariat.

The main responsibilities of the Council are:

- It adopts legislative acts (Regulations, Directives, etc.), in many cases in "co-decision" with the European Parliament;
- It helps coordinate Member States' policies, for example, in the economic field;
- It develops the common foreign and security policy, on the basis of strategic guidelines set by the European Council;
- It concludes international agreements on behalf of the Union;
- It adopts the Union's budget, together with the European Parliament.

The EU's laws are made by the Council, together with the European Parliament. In most cases, the Council can only legislate on the basis of proposals submitted to it by the European Commission. It can ask the Commission to submit any proposals it may deem appropriate. Since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, a million citizens may also sign a petition inviting the Commission to submit a proposal. This is the citizens' right of initiative. The number of votes each Member State can cast is set by the Treaties. The Treaties also define the cases in which a simple majority, qualified majority or unanimity are required. The Council sits in public when it is discussing and voting on a proposal for a legislative act or when there is a general debate. You can follow these discussions in real time on the Council's Internet site (video.consilium.europa.eu) and see, for example, how your minister is putting your country's point of view. The written documentation available to the ministers is also accessible to everyone.

Conversely, discussions on matters which do not involve legislation, for example foreign affairs, are not public.

However, Council meetings are always followed by a press conference and a press release explaining what decisions have been taken.

A qualified majority will be reached if the following two conditions are met:

- if a majority of Member States approve (in some cases a two-thirds majority);
- a minimum of 255 votes is cast in favour of the proposal, out of a total of 345 votes.

In addition, a Member State may ask for confirmation that the votes in favour represent at least 62 % of the total population of the Union. If this is found not to be the case, the decision will not be adopted.

⁸ Except agricultural issues, which are prepared by the Special Committee on Agriculture.

Distribution of votes for each Member State	
Germany, France, Italy, United Kingdom	29
Spain, Poland	27
Romania	14
Netherlands	13
Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Portugal	12
Austria, Bulgaria, Sweden	10
Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Finland	7
Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovenia	4
Malta	3
TOTAL	345

[Use a Voting Calculator to simulate various voting patterns and work out results.](#)

The Presidency of the Council

The EU's 27 Member States take it in turn to chair the Council for a period of six months each. During this six-month period, the Presidency chairs meetings at every level, proposes guidelines and draws up the compromises needed for the Council to take decisions.

In the interests of continuity of Council business, the six-monthly presidencies work together closely in groups of three. These three-Presidency teams draw up a joint programme of Council work over an 18-month period.

A Council decision of 1 January 2007 determined that the order in which the office of President of the Council shall be held, is as follows:

Cyprus	July-December 2012
Ireland	January-June 2013
Lithuania	July-December 2013
Greece	January-June 2014
Italy	July-December 2014
Latvia	January-June 2015
Luxembourg	July-December 2015
Netherlands	January-June 2016
Slovakia	July-December 2016
Malta	January-June 2017
United Kingdom	July-December 2017
Estonia	January-June 2018
Bulgaria	July-December 2018
Austria	January-June 2019
Romania	July-December 2019
Finland	January-June 2020

Only one Council configuration is not chaired by the six-monthly presidency: the Foreign Affairs Council, which, since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, has been chaired by the [High Representative](#) of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Since 1 December 2009 this post has been held by Ms Catherine Ashton. Roughly twenty working parties in the foreign affairs field also have a permanent chairman appointed by the High Representative.

The European Council

The [European Council](#) defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union. With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, it became an institution. Its President is Herman Van Rompuy.

The European Council provides the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and defines the general political directions and priorities thereof. It does not exercise legislative functions.

The European Council consists of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, together with its President and the President of the Commission. The [High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy](#) takes part in its work.

When the agenda so requires, the members of the European Council may decide each to be assisted by a minister and, in the case of the President of the Commission, by a member of the Commission.

The European Council meets twice every six months, convened by its President. When the situation so requires, the President will convene a special meeting of the European Council.

Except where the Treaties provide otherwise, decisions of the European Council are taken by consensus. In some cases, it adopts decisions by unanimity or by qualified majority, depending on what the Treaty provides for.

The European Council elects its President by qualified majority. The President's term of office is two and a half years, renewable once.

The European Council usually meets in Brussels, in the Justus Lipsius building. It is assisted by the General Secretariat of the Council.

The European Parliament

The second main competent institution of the Community is the [European Parliament](#). This institution consists of Members of Parliament (MPs) who are elected in the Member States every 5 years, with a direct universal suffrage (since 1979) and is responsible –jointly with the Council- for the adoption of Community policy (with the [codecision](#) procedure), the voting of the Community budget, the democratic supervision of the European Commission (possibility to vote on a motion of censure, which forces it to resign) and the political control of the institutions of the EU.



Each Member State has a certain number of MPs, according to its population. The [754 Members of Parliament](#) are organised within the Parliament not according to their Member State, but in [political groups](#). The seat of the Parliament is in Strasbourg (plenary sittings) – but it also convenes in Brussels (mainly the [parliamentary committees](#))- and its Secretariat is in Luxembourg.

The Parliament also participates, jointly with the Council, in the processing and adoption of legislative texts proposed by the Commission based on the procedures of codecision, consultation or assent⁹.

The most common legislative procedure of the three is the procedure of [codecision](#). The role of the European Parliament *equals* that of the Council and in the end, the Council legislates jointly with the Parliament. In case of a disagreement between the two institutions, the **Conciliation Committee** is convened, in order to reach a compromise. The procedure of codecision is mainly applied to the free movement of employees, the establishment of the Internal Market, technological research and development, the environment, consumer protection, education, cultural issues and health¹⁰.

During the procedure of **consultation** with the Parliament, the Council is, on the one hand, obliged to request the opinion of the Parliament before the adoption of a legislative instrument, but, on the other hand, it is not obliged to accept it (simple opinion).

The **assent** of the Parliament is required for certain important political or institutional issues, such as the accession of new Member States, the association agreements with third countries, the conclusion of international agreements, the electoral procedure of the European Parliament, the residence permit of the citizens of the Union, as well as the duties and the powers of the European Central Bank.

As we shall see next, the legislative *initiative* lies with the Commission, the third competent institution to be examined. The Parliament, however, grants the Commission a significant *political uplift*, mainly with the examination of the annual work programme, as well as the possibility to request that the Commission submits the appropriate *proposal*.

As mentioned above, the adoption of the annual Community **budget** mainly depends on the Parliament and the Council. Each year the Commission processes a preliminary draft budget¹¹, which is submitted to the Council¹² for adoption. Afterwards, with two continuous readings, the Parliament negotiates the amendment of certain expenditures with the Council and ensures the rational distribution of the budget resources. The final decision lies with the Parliament and the budget is in force only after it is signed by the President of the Parliament.

⁹ The procedure of **cooperation** which was anticipated by the Treaty is not applied anymore, except for the institution of measures in the sector of economic and financial affairs (see above, concerning the Treaty of Amsterdam).

¹⁰ The Treaty of Nice expanded the scope of codecision to those provisions that also changed from unanimity to a special majority, as far as the voting process of the Council is concerned.

¹¹ Based on the multiannual framework of the financial prospects.

¹² The expenditure of the budget is divided into compulsory (CE) and non-compulsory expenditure (NCE). The Parliament can bring about amendments only on the latter.

Thus, to summarize, we could say that the most important powers of the European Parliament fall into 4 categories:

- examination and adoption of the European legislation,
- adoption of the EU budget,
- democratic control of all institutions of the EU, possibly with the formation of Committees of Inquiry, and
- ratification of significant international agreements, such as the treaties for the accession of new Member States and the trade or association agreements between the EU and other countries.

The European Commission

The third part of the main “institutional triangle” which we will examine is the [European Commission](#). It is a 27-member body of [Commissioners](#) with a 5-year term of office, assisted by an extensive administrative structure that consists of [Directorates-General](#) (structured in approximately the same way as the national ministries) and [Services](#) (legal, translation, statistical, etc.). Each Commissioner has specific jurisdiction areas. The decisions within the Commission are made with a *simple majority* of the members of the body.

The very important role of the Commission as an institution derives from the duties for which it is responsible: it proposes legislative texts to the Parliament and the Council, manages and realises Community policies, upholds Community law (jointly with the Court of Justice of the EC), constitutes the most important voice expressing the positions of the European Union and negotiates the international agreements made by the Community. Let us look into these four important jurisdictions.

First of all, the Commission has the **legislative initiative**; i.e. it is the only competent body to submit proposals of legislative acts (regulations, directives, decisions, see below) to be voted upon by the Council and the Parliament. Its role is not limited to the submission of these proposals, but it participates actively during the whole process of the establishment of the relevant legislation. The Commission is competent to propose legislative measures in the areas defined by the Treaty, taking solely into account the *interests of the European Union* and not national or sectorial interests, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity (for definition see footnote 3 above). Moreover, the Commission adopts and directs towards the other institutions and the Member States a number of other, not legally binding policy acts, such as recommendations, announcements, reports, white and green papers, etc.

After the establishment of the Community legislation, the issue of its entry into force arises. In this area, the Commission plays the important role of the **custodian of the Treaties**. Thus, in case of violation of the Community legislation by a Member State, the Commission is responsible to put a procedure in motion and possibly refer this State to the Court of Justice. In addition, the Commission has the authority to take action against enterprises based in the Community and possibly enforce economic penalties in case of violation by them of the competition rules of the Community.

The third jurisdiction of the Commission is executive. The Commission is the **executive body** of the European Union, i.e. it is responsible for the management and realisation of the Community policies. This role extends to all the EU sectors of intervention, but is especially important in specific areas such as competition (control of agreements and mergers, abolition or control of privileged state grants), agriculture (daily management of the Common

Agricultural Policy) and research and technological development (promotion and coordination through each respective Community framework programme). For the adoption of the numerous executive measures it is assisted by **committees** made up of representatives of the Member States.

The jurisdiction of the Commission also includes the **management of the community budget**, under the control of the Court of Auditors. The common goal of the two institutions is to ensure appropriate financial management.

Finally, the Commission represents the Community on the international stage and is competent to conduct **international negotiations** in order to conclude international treaties, after the relevant authorisation provided by the Council (e.g. negotiation directives).

The Court of Justice of the European Union

Since the establishment of the [Court of Justice of the European Union](#) in 1952, its mission has been to ensure that "the law is observed" "in the interpretation and application" of the Treaties.

As part of that mission, the Court of Justice of the European Union:

- reviews the legality of the acts of the institutions of the European Union,
- ensures that the Member States comply with obligations under the Treaties, and
- interprets European Union law at the request of the national courts and tribunals.

The Court thus constitutes the judicial authority of the European Union and, in cooperation with the courts and tribunals of the Member States, it ensures the uniform application and interpretation of European Union law.

The Court of Justice of the European Union, which has its seat in Luxembourg, consists of three courts: the [Court of Justice](#), the [General Court](#) (created in 1988) and the [Civil Service Tribunal](#) (created in 2004).

The Court of Justice has one judge per EU country.

The Court is helped by eight 'advocates-general' whose job is to present opinions on the cases brought before the Court. They must do so publicly and impartially.

Each judge and advocate-general is appointed for a term of six years, which can be renewed. The governments of EU countries agree on whom they want to appoint.

To help the Court of Justice cope with the large number of cases brought before it, and to offer citizens better legal protection, a '[General Court](#)' deals with cases brought forward by private individuals, companies and some organisations, and cases relating to competition law.

The '[EU Civil Service Tribunal](#)' rules on disputes between the European Union and its staff.
Types of cases

The Court gives rulings on the cases brought before it. The five most common types of cases are:



1. [requests for a preliminary ruling](#) – when national courts ask the Court of Justice to interpret a point of EU law
2. [actions for failure to fulfill an obligation](#) – brought against EU governments for not applying EU law
3. [actions for annulment](#) – against EU laws thought to violate the EU treaties or fundamental rights
4. [actions for failure to act](#) – against EU institutions for failing to make decisions required of them
5. [direct actions](#) – brought by individuals, companies or organisations against EU decisions or actions

The European Court of Auditors

The Court has 27 members, appointed by the Council for a term of six years; it is based in Luxembourg and assisted by a staff of around 550 experts. The [Court of Auditors'](#) task is to *examine whether all revenue has been received and all expenditure incurred in a lawful and regular manner and whether financial management has been sound*. To carry out its tasks, the Court conducts investigations, draws up an annual report after the close of each financial year, delivers opinions when the EU's financial regulations are adopted or on specific issues, at the request of the EU institutions and it may also, independently, submit observations on any issue, if necessary.

The Court of Auditors' Audit mainly involves the Commission that, as already mentioned, has the jurisdiction to implement the budget. Thus, the Court of Auditors' staff carry out audits in the headquarters of the other institutions, in the Member States of the Union and in third countries which are beneficiaries of Community grants. It should be noted that the Court of Auditors has no legal powers of its own; thus, it is beyond its jurisdiction to prosecute or impose sanctions on those responsible for irregularities or fraud to the detriment of the Community budget. If auditors discover fraud or irregularities they pass the information as soon as possible to the EU bodies responsible, so that they can take the appropriate action. One of the Court's most important jobs is to present the European Parliament and the Council with an annual report on the previous financial year (the 'annual discharge'). Parliament examines the Court's report thoroughly before deciding whether or not to approve the way in which the Commission has handled the budget.

The Court also has to give its opinion on EU financial legislation and how to help the EU fight fraud.

Auditors frequently carry out inspections in EU institutions, member countries and countries receiving EU aid. While the Court's work mainly concerns money for which the Commission is responsible, in practice 80% of the income and expenditure is managed by national authorities.

Composition:

To do its job properly, the Court of Auditors must stay completely independent of the other institutions but remain in constant touch with them.

The Court has [one member from each EU country](#) appointed by the Council for a six-year term (renewable). The members elect one of their number as President for a term of three years (also renewable). Vítor Manuel da Silva Caldeira, from Portugal, was elected President in January 2008.

Organisation:

The Court of Auditors has approximately 800 staff, including translators and administrators as well as auditors. The auditors are divided into 'audit groups'. They prepare draft reports on which the Court takes decisions.



ADVISORY BODIES

Economic and Social Committee: the ESC is a 344 member advisory body, based in Brussels, that represents before the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament, the views and interests of the organised civil society and can present their views on matters it considers important. Consultations with it are compulsory on issues of economic and social policy.

Representatives of Europe's employers, workers and other interest groups can express their views on EU issues through the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). It is a consultative assembly, issuing opinions to the larger institutions – in particular the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament.

The European Economic and Social Committee was established in 1957 as a forum to discuss issues regarding the single market. The EESC gives Europe's interest groups – trade unionists, employers, farmers – a formal say on EU legislative proposals.

On average the EESC delivers 170 advisory documents and opinions a year. All opinions are forwarded to the EU decision-making bodies and then published in the EU's Official Journal. The European Economic and Social Committee has 344 members drawn from economic and social interest groups across Europe. Members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable 5-year term. Members of the EESC are unpaid but receive allowances to cover their travel expenses and accommodation when attending meetings.

Members belong to one of **three groups**:

1. [Employers](#)
2. [Employees](#)
3. [Various Interests](#) (e.g. farmers, consumer groups)

Committee of the Regions: this Committee is also a 344 member advisory body, based in Brussels, that has as a mission to put forward the local and regional points of view on EU legislation. Under the Treaty of Nice, its members “must be representatives of regional and local bodies who either hold a regional or local authority electoral mandate or are politically accountable to an elected assembly”. The Committee's main task is to issue opinions on Commission proposals.

The role of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) is to put forward local and regional points of view on EU legislation. It does so by issuing reports ('opinions') on Commission proposals. The Commission, the Council and the Parliament must consult the Committee of the Regions before EU decisions are taken on matters concerning local and regional government (for example on employment policy, the environment, education or public health).

The Committee of the Regions currently has 344 members (and as many alternate members) from all 27 EU countries.

Further expansion of the EU could take the number of members (and alternates) to a maximum of 350.

Members and alternates are appointed for a five-year term by the Council, acting on proposals from the EU countries. Each country chooses its members in its own way, but the delegations all reflect the political, geographical and regional/local balance in their country.



The members are elected members of or key players in local or regional authorities in their home region.

The CoR holds five plenary sessions each year, to define general policy and adopt opinions. There are six 'commissions' to consider different policy areas and prepare the opinions to be debated in the plenary sessions:

- Territorial cohesion
- Economic and social policy
- Education, youth and research
- Environment, climate change and energy
- Citizenship, governance, institutional and external affairs
- Natural resources

The Committee also adopts resolutions on topical political issues.

Four political groups are represented in the CoR, reflecting the main European political families:

- European People's Party (EPP)
- Party of European Socialists (PES)
- Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)
- Union for Europe of the Nations - European Alliance (UEN-EA).

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Commission now has to consult with local and regional authorities and their associations across the EU as early as in the pre-legislative phase. The CoR, as the voice of local and regional authorities, is deeply involved in this procedure.

Once the Commission has made a legislative proposal, it has to consult the Committee of the Regions again if the proposal concerns one of the many policy areas that directly affect local and regional authorities.

FINANCIAL BODIES

Apart from the five main institutions, the Treaty provides for another five advisory bodies: the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Ombudsman. Let us briefly examine their role and their function.

The European Central Bank: is an independent institution, based in Frankfurt, Germany, that continued to perform the tasks of the European Monetary Institute (EMI) and constitutes the core of the Eurosystem, i.e. the entity comprising the ECB and the national central banks of those countries that have adopted the euro. The primary objective of the ECB will be to maintain price stability and its main tasks include defining and implementing the monetary policy in the euro zone, conducting foreign exchange operations, holding and managing the official foreign reserves of the euro area countries, issuing banknotes within the euro zone, and promoting the smooth operation of payment systems.

The European Central Bank (ECB, based in Frankfurt, Germany) manages the euro – the EU's single currency – and safeguards price stability in the EU.

The ECB is also responsible for framing and implementing the EU's economic and monetary policy.

The European Central Bank (ECB) is one of the EU institutions. Its main purpose is to:

- keep **prices stable** (keep inflation under control), especially in countries that use the euro.
- keep the **financial system stable** – by making sure financial markets and institutions are properly supervised.

The Bank works with the central banks **in all 27 EU countries**. Together they form the European System of Central Banks (ESCB).

It also leads the close cooperation between central banks in the [euro area](#) – the 17 EU countries that have adopted the euro, also known as the eurozone. The cooperation between this smaller, tighter group of banks is referred to as the 'Eurosystem'.

The ECB's role includes:

- setting **key interest rates** for the eurozone and controlling the **money supply**
- managing the eurozone's **foreign-currency reserves** and buying or selling currencies when necessary to keep **exchange rates** in balance
- helping to ensure **financial markets and institutions** are adequately **supervised** by national authorities, and that **payment systems** function smoothly
- authorising central banks in eurozone countries to **issue euro banknotes**
- **monitoring price trends** and assessing the risk they pose to price stability.

The **European Investment Bank** the EIB is at the same time a bank and an institution– the Treaty of Rome already provided for its establishment – it is based in Luxembourg and its shareholders are the EU Member States¹⁸. The EIB is a non-profit organisation and its mission is to finance public and private investments contributing to the pursuit of European integration. Although almost 90% of EIB activities take place within the European Union, a

¹⁸ The capital of the EIB is subscribed to the Member States depending on their economic importance in the context of the European Union.

significant proportion of the funding goes to the future Member States while it also supports sustainable development in the Mediterranean countries, ACP (Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) countries, as well as projects in Latin America and Asia. The EIB is the majority shareholder in the **European Investment Fund (EIF)** and it presides over its Audit Board. The EIF, based in Luxembourg, was set up in 1994 and its main objective is to finance investment, using its own funds, in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The European Investment Bank is owned by the 27 EU countries. It borrows money on the capital markets and lends it at a low interest rate to projects that improve infrastructure, energy supply or environmental standards both inside the EU and in neighbouring or developing countries.

The European Investment Bank supports projects in the EU countries, and invests in future member and partner countries.

It borrows money on the capital markets rather than drawing on the EU budget. The money is lent on favourable terms to projects in line with EU policy objectives.

In 2008, the EIB raised nearly €60 bn. The EIB works on a non-profit basis and lends at a rate close to the cost of borrowing.

EIB services include:

- **Loans:** granted to viable capital spending programmes or projects in both the public and private sectors. Recipients range from large corporations to municipalities and small businesses.
- **Technical assistance:** provided by a team of expert economists, engineers and specialists to complement EIB financing facilities.
- **Guarantees:** available to a wide range of bodies, e.g. banks, leasing companies, guarantee institutions, mutual guarantee funds, special purpose vehicles and others.
- **Venture capital:** requests for venture capital should be addressed directly to an intermediary.

The **European Investment Fund** was set up in 1994 to help small businesses. Its majority shareholder is the European Investment Bank, with which it forms the 'EIB Group'.

The EIF provides venture capital for small firms (SMEs), particularly new firms and technology-oriented businesses. It also provides guarantees to financial institutions (such as banks) to cover their loans to SMEs.

The EIF is not a lending institution: it does not grant loans or subsidies to businesses, nor does it invest directly in any firms. Instead, it works through banks and other financial intermediaries. It uses either its own funds or those entrusted to it by the EIB or the European Union.

The Fund is active in the member states of the European Union, in Croatia, Turkey and three EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).



OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The [European Ombudsman](#): The Ombudsman is an EU institution appointed by the European Parliament for a term of five years and has its headquarters in Strasbourg. He is entitled to receive and investigate complaints from EU natural or legal persons, who reside or have their legal domicile in an EU Member State, that involve maladministration in the European institutions and other EU bodies, except for the Court and the CFI when performing their legal tasks.

Apart from the main and advisory bodies of the EU, whose establishment and function is provided for in the Treaty, there are also 15 European decentralized agencies (governed by European public law), with their own legal personality; they are set up by an act of secondary legislation (it is not provided for in the Treaty). These bodies are to accomplish a very specific technical, scientific, or managerial task, which is specified in their founding act. At present, the European Community agencies are:

The European Ombudsman investigates complaints against EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies.

The Ombudsman responds to complaints from EU citizens, businesses and organisations, helping to uncover cases of 'maladministration' – where EU institutions, bodies, offices or agencies have broken the law, failed to respect the principles of sound administration or violated human rights. Examples include:

- unfairness
- discrimination
- abuse of power
- lack of or refusal to provide information
- unnecessary delay
- incorrect procedures.

The Ombudsman's office launches investigations after receiving a complaint or on its own initiative. It is completely independent and does not take orders from any government or organisation. Once a year, it presents the European Parliament with an activity report.

Parliament elects the Ombudsman for a renewable five-year term. P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, the former national ombudsman of Greece, was re-elected in January 2010 for a five-year term.

The position of European Data Protection Supervisor [European Data Protection Supervisor](#) (EDPS) was created in 2001. The responsibility of the EDPS is to make sure that all EU institutions and bodies respect people's right to privacy when processing their personal data.

When EU institutions or bodies process personal data about an identifiable person, they must respect that person's right to privacy. The EDPS makes sure they do so, and advises them on all aspects of personal data processing.

'Processing' covers activities such as collecting information, recording and storing it, retrieving it for consultation, sending it or making it available to other people, and also blocking, erasing or destroying data.

There are strict privacy rules governing these activities. For example, EU institutions and bodies are not allowed to process personal data that reveals your racial or ethnic origin,



political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs or trade-union membership. Nor may they process data on your health or sexual orientation, unless the data is needed for health care purposes. Even then, the data must be processed by a health professional or other person who is sworn to professional secrecy.

The EDPS works with the Data Protection Officers in each EU institution or body to ensure that the data privacy rules are applied.

In 2009, Mr Peter Hustinx was reappointed as European Data Protection Supervisor and Mr Giovanni Buttarelli nominated as the Assistant Supervisor. Their mandate will run until January 2014.

If you have reason to believe that your right to privacy has been infringed by an EU institution or body, you should firstly address the people responsible for the processing. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should contact the relevant data protection officer (the names can be found on the EDPS website). You can also complain to the European Data Protection Supervisor, who will investigate your complaint and let you know as soon as possible whether he agrees with it and, if, so, how the situation is being put right. For example, he can order the institution or body concerned to correct, block, erase or destroy any of your personal data that has been unlawfully processed.

If you disagree with his decision, you may take the matter to the Court of Justice.



INTERINSTITUTIONAL BODIES

The [Computer Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#) was set up on 1 June 2011 and its remit is to help manage threats to EU institutions' computer systems – supporting IT security teams in each EU Institution and liaising with public-sector CERT counterparts in EU countries. After a pilot phase of one year and a successful assessment by its constituency and its peers, the EU Institutions have decided to set up a permanent Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-EU) for the EU institutions, agencies and bodies on September 11th 2012. The team is made up of IT security experts from the main EU Institutions (European Commission, General Secretariat of the Council, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, Economic and Social Committee). It cooperates closely with other CERTs in the Member States and beyond as well as with specialised IT security companies.

The [European School of Administration](#) was set up on 10 February 2005. Its task is to provide training in specific areas for members of EU staff. Its courses are open to staff of all the EU institutions, thereby helping spread common values, promoting better understanding among EU staff and achieving economies of scale. It works in close cooperation with the training departments of all the institutions to avoid any duplication of effort.

The [European Personnel Selection Office](#) (EPSO) became operational in January 2003. Its task is to set competitive examinations for recruiting staff to work in all the EU institutions. This is more efficient than having each institution organise its own recruitment competitions. EPSO's annual budget of roughly €21 million is 11% less than what the EU institutions used to spend on recruitment.

The [Publications Office](#) of the European Union acts as the publishing house for the EU institutions, producing and distributing all official European Union publications, on paper and in digital form.



SERVICES

[Bureau of European Policy Advisers \(BEPA\)](#): Connecting Commission policy-makers with those parts of society that can fruitfully contribute to the development of policies is the first and foremost priority of the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA). The Bureau forges links between the European Commission and think tanks, academia, civil society, churches and communities of conviction.

[Central Library](#): The European Commission Central Library is one of the main sources of information on European Union policies. ECLAS, the Commission libraries union catalogue, is freely available to anybody. Access to the physical library holdings is restricted to Commission staff, trainees (stagiaires), staff of the other institutions and bodies, as well as to registered external visitors. The Central Library is open to specialists and researchers (lawyers, diplomats, civil servants from EU Member States, teachers, university students, etc.) who wish to consult its works on European integration.

[European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#): The European Union budget finances a wide range of programmes and projects which improve the lives of citizens across the EU and beyond. Improper use of funds provided by the Union budget or the evasion of the taxes, duties and levies, which fund the Union budget directly harms European citizens and prejudices the entire European project. The mission of the European Anti-Fraud Office is threefold:

- it protects the financial interests of the European Union by combating fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities;
- it protects the reputation of the European Institutions by investigating serious misconduct by their Members and staff that could result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings;
- it supports the European Commission in the development and implementation of fraud prevention and detection policies.

[European Commission Data Protection Officer](#): The Regulation 45/2001 provides the appointment of a Data Protection Officer (DPO) for every EU Institution and Body. EU Commission has also appointed a DPO since 2001. The Data Protection Officer is required to keep a register of all the processing operations on personal data carried out by the Institution which has appointed him/her. The Register, which must contain information explaining the purpose and conditions of all processing operations, is accessible to any interested person.

[Historical archives](#): The mission of the Historical Archives Service is to conserve, manage and make available for further use the Commission historical archives. The mission of the Historical Archives Services is twofold: a) assisting the Commission services in the management of their archives and b) ensuring the opening to public access of the archives older than 30 years.

[Infrastructures and Logistics - Brussels \(OIB\)](#): OIB's aim is to ensure a functional, safe and comfortable workplace for all those working for the Commission, and to provide good quality support and well-being services, based on a client-oriented approach, in an environmentally-friendly and cost-effective way.



[Infrastructures and Logistics - Luxembourg \(OIL\)](#): OIL is responsible for the following services for all Commission departments in Luxembourg:

- The housing of staff
- The provision and management of social welfare infrastructure
- Logistics
- Compliance with health and safety requirements in the buildings.

[Internal Audit Service \(IAS\)](#): The Internal Audit Service is a core part of the internal audit system for the European Commission and EU agencies. Our mission is to provide independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve the operations of the Commission.

[Legal Service \(SJ\)](#): The Legal Service is an internal department of the Commission reporting directly to the President of the Commission. The role of the Legal Service is twofold:

- to provide legal advice to the Commission and its services, and
- to represent the Commission in all court cases.

[Office For Administration And Payment Of Individual Entitlements \(PMO\)](#): The PMO administers, calculates and pays the financial entitlements of the staff of the European Commission and certain other Community institutions and bodies. These individual entitlements are: salaries and allowances; reimbursement of experts and mission expenses; health insurance and accident cover; pensions and unemployment.

[Publications Office \(OP\)](#): The Publications Office of the European Union is an interinstitutional office whose task is to publish the publications of the institutions of the European Union. The Publications Office publishes the daily Official Journal of the European Union in 22 languages (23 when Irish is required) and produces (or co-produces) publicity for EU initiatives and activities. It also publishes or co-publishes the publications in the context of the communication activities of the institutions. Moreover, the Publications Office offers a number of online services giving free access to information on EU law ([EUR-Lex](#)), EU publications ([EU Bookshop](#)), public procurement ([TED](#)), and EU research and development ([CORDIS](#)).

DECENTRALISED AGENCIES

A number of specialised and decentralised EU agencies have been established to support the EU Member States and their citizens. These agencies are an answer to a desire for geographical devolution and the need to cope with new tasks of a legal, technical and/or scientific nature.

They are bodies governed by European public law; they are distinct from the EU Institutions (Council, Parliament, Commission, etc.) and have their own legal personality.

At present, these agencies are:

[Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators \(ACER\)](#): ACER helps ensure the single European market in gas and electricity functions properly. It assists national regulatory authorities in performing their regulatory function at European level and, where necessary, coordinates their work. More specifically, ACER:

- complements and coordinates the work of national regulatory authorities
- helps formulate European network rules
- where appropriate, takes binding individual decisions on terms and conditions for access and operational security for cross border infrastructure
- advises European institutions on issues relating to electricity and natural gas
- monitors the internal markets in electricity and natural gas and reports on its findings
- monitors wholesale energy markets to detect and deter market abuse, in close collaboration with national regulatory authorities.

[Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications \(BEREC\)](#): BEREC contributes to the development and better functioning of the internal market for electronic communications networks and services. It does so, by aiming to ensure a consistent application of the EU regulatory framework and by aiming to promote an effective internal market in telecoms sector, in order to bring even greater benefits to consumers and businesses alike. Furthermore, BEREC assists the Commission and the national regulatory authorities (NRAs) in implementing the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications, to give advice on request and on its own initiative to the European institutions and to complement at European level the regulatory tasks performed at national level by the regulatory authorities. NRAs and the Commission have to take utmost account of any opinion, recommendation, guidelines, advice or regulatory best practice adopted by BEREC. In particular BEREC is requested to:

- develop and disseminate among NRAs regulatory best practices, such as common approaches, methodologies or guidelines on the implementation of the EU regulatory framework;
- on request, provide assistance to NRAs on regulatory issues;
- deliver opinions on the draft decisions, recommendations and guidelines of the Commission as specified in the regulatory framework;
- issue reports and provide advice, upon a reasoned request of the Commission or on its own initiative, and deliver opinions to the European Parliament and the Council, when needed, on any matter within its competence;
- on request, assist the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the NRAs in relations, discussions and exchanges of views with third parties; and assist the Commission and NRAs in the dissemination of regulatory best practices to third parties.



[Community Plant Variety Office \(CPVO\)](#): In 1994, the EU established a system of Community plant variety rights as the sole and exclusive form of Community industrial property rights for new plant varieties. The system is administered by the CPVO. The CPVO is a self-financing Community body with legal personality which came into being on 27 April 1995. Since August 1997, the CPVO has been based in Angers (France). The CPVO decides on applications for Community plant variety rights on the basis of a formal examination and a technical examination of the candidate variety. A Community plant variety right is valid for 25 or 30 years, depending on the species. The rights are valid in all 27 Member States of the EU.

[European Agency for Safety and Health at Work \(EU-OSHA\)](#): The continuous improvement of safety and health at work is a key objective of European social and employment policy. However, the range and diversity of the occupational safety and health (OSH) issues that face Europe are beyond the resources and expertise of a single Member State or institution. This is why the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work was formed: to bring together and share the region's vast pool of knowledge and information on OSH-related issues, particularly good prevention practices. The Agency acts as a catalyst for developing, analysing and disseminating information that improves occupational safety and health in Europe. As well as developing a comprehensive network of safety and health websites, the Agency also runs campaigns and an active publications programme producing everything from specialist information reports to factsheets and covering a wide variety of OSH problems. National focal points, typically the lead OSH organisation in their respective countries, coordinate and disseminate information from the Agency within their individual countries. In addition, the Agency cooperates with a wide range of partners including the European Commission, other European institutions and the European social partners, as well as international organisations and safety and health organisations worldwide.

[European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders \(FRONTEX\)](#): FRONTEX coordinates operational cooperation between Member States in the field of management of external borders; assists Member States in the training of national border guards, including the establishment of common training standards; carries out risk analyses; follows up the development of research relevant for the control and surveillance of external borders; assists Member States in circumstances requiring increased technical and operational assistance at external borders; and provides Member States with the necessary support in organising joint return operations. FRONTEX liaises closely with other Community and EU partners responsible for the security of the external borders, such as [EUROPOL](#), [CEPOL](#), [OLAF](#), the customs cooperation and the cooperation on phyto-sanitary and veterinary controls, in order to promote overall coherency. FRONTEX strengthens border security by ensuring the coordination of Member States' actions in the implementation of Community measures relating to the management of the external borders.

[European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice \(IT Agency\)](#): The Agency, which started operations on December 1, 2012, is to provide a viable, long-term solution for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of Home Affairs. Initially, this agency will manage [EURODAC](#), the [Visa Information System \(VIS\)](#) and the second-generation [Schengen Information System \(SIS II\)](#), which are all essential instruments in the implementation of EU asylum, migration and border management policies. At a later stage, after gradually building up its expertise, the Agency will develop into a centre of excellence for the development and operational management of other future systems in this policy area. The Agency is set up in the form of an independent European body (Regulatory Agency). The core task of the Agency is to keep the IT systems under its responsibility functioning 24 hours a day, seven



days a week, ensuring the continuous, uninterrupted exchange of data between national authorities. The Agency is also responsible for adopting and implementing security measures, organising training for IT experts on the systems under its management, reporting, publishing statistics and monitoring research activities. The Agency needs to maintain the complete separation of data in the three systems and ensure that security and data protection requirements are fully met.

[European Asylum Support Office \(EASO\)](#): EASO plays a key role in the concrete development of the Common European Asylum System. It was established with the aim of enhancing practical cooperation on asylum matters and helping Member States fulfill their European and international obligations to give protection to people in need. EASO acts as a centre of expertise on asylum. It also provides support to Member States whose asylum and reception systems are under particular pressure. EASO's objectives are threefold:

- to develop practical cooperation among EU States on asylum by facilitating exchanges of information on countries of origin, providing EU States with support for translation and interpretation and for training of asylum officials and assisting in the relocation of beneficiaries of international protection
- to support EU States under particular pressure, in particular through the establishment of an early warning system, the coordination of teams of experts to assist in managing asylum applications and the putting in place of appropriate reception facilities
- to contribute to the implementation of the Common European Asylum System by collecting and exchanging information on best practices, drawing up an annual report on the asylum situation in the EU and defining technical orientations on the implementation of the Union's asylum instruments.

[European Aviation Safety Agency \(EASA\)](#): The European Aviation Safety Agency is an agency of the European Union which has been given specific regulatory and executive tasks in the field of aviation safety. The Agency constitutes a key part of the European Union's strategy to establish and maintain a high uniform level of civil aviation safety in Europe. The Agency's mission is twofold. It shall provide technical expertise to the European Commission by assisting in the drafting of rules for aviation safety in various areas and providing technical input to the conclusion of the relevant international agreements. In addition, the Agency has been given the power to carry out certain executive tasks related to aviation safety, such as the certification of aeronautical products and organisations involved in their design, production and maintenance. These certification activities help to ensure compliance with airworthiness and environmental protection standards. The European Aviation Safety Agency certifies products from civil aviation altogether, including general and business aviation. It is important to note that its remit does not cover aviation security (prevention of illegal actions against civil aviation like hijacking, for instance). This comes under the remit of the Community law applied by the Member States.

[European Banking Authority \(EBA\)](#): The EBA has officially come into being as of 1 January 2011 and has taken over all existing and ongoing tasks and responsibilities from the Committee of European Banking Supervisors (CEBS). The EBA acts as a hub and spoke network of EU and national bodies safeguarding public values such as the stability of the financial system, the transparency of markets and financial products and the protection of depositors and investors. The EBA has some quite broad competences, including preventing regulatory arbitrage, guaranteeing a level playing field, strengthening international supervisory coordination, promoting supervisory convergence and providing advice to the EU institutions in the areas of banking, payments and e-money regulation as well as on issues related to corporate governance, auditing and financial reporting.



[European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#): Its mission is to help strengthen Europe's defences against infectious diseases, such as influenza, SARS and HIV/AIDS. It has a small core staff but an extended network of partners across the EU and the EEA/EFTA Member States. The ECDC works in partnership with national health protection bodies to strengthen and develop continent-wide disease surveillance and early warning systems. Through such collaboration the ECDC pools Europe's health knowledge, in order to develop authoritative scientific opinions on risks posed by new and emerging infectious diseases. The centre's tasks include:

- Enhancing the capacity of the Community and the Member States individually to protect human health through the prevention and control of human disease;
- acting on its own initiative when outbreaks of contagious illnesses of unknown origin are threatening the Community;
- Ensuring complementary and coherent action in the field of public health by bridging together the tasks and the responsibilities of the Member States, the EU Institutions and the relevant International Organisations.

[European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training \(Cedefop\)](#): 1 in 3 working Europeans – 75 million people – have few or no educational qualifications, making them 3 times more likely to be unemployed than those with advanced qualifications. Around half of all Europeans acquire their first job-related skills through vocational education and training (VET). Many more go on to develop those skills and learn new ones through training or experience in the workplace. Cedefop works closely with the Commission, national governments, employer & trade union representatives, researchers and practitioners – providing up-to-date information on developments in VET and creating opportunities to debate policy. Cedefop's added value is the high quality of its comparative analyses and expertise gathered through research and networking, which are used to:

- provide technical advice and propose policies
- fill knowledge gaps and identify trends and challenges
- increase awareness of VET's importance
- bring together policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners to identify ways to improve policies
- support joint European approaches, principles and tools to improve VET.

[European Chemicals Agency \(ECHA\)](#): The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) is working to improve the quality of life by ensuring the safe use of chemicals across Europe. ECHA is at the core of implementing the EU's groundbreaking chemicals legislation for the benefit of human health and the environment, innovation and competitiveness. It is the driving force among regulatory authorities in implementing the EU's groundbreaking chemicals legislation for the benefit of human health and the environment, as well as for innovation and competitiveness. ECHA helps companies to comply with the legislation, advances the safe use of chemicals and provides information on chemicals and addresses chemicals of concern.



[European Environment Agency \(EEA\)](#): The EEA provides independent information on the environment, to feed into EU and national policymaking. It currently has 32 members - 27 EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. With a permanent staff of around 130 and an annual budget of €40m, it provides a wide range of information and assessments on:

- the state of the environment
- environmental trends, including assessments of economic and social factors putting pressure on the environment
- policies and their effectiveness
- possible future trends and problems.

[European Fisheries Control Agency \(EFCA\)](#): The European Fisheries Control Agency, based in Vigo, Spain, was set up to promote the highest common standards for control, inspection and surveillance under the [Common Fisheries Policy \(CFP\)](#). EFCA brokers operational cooperation between EU countries, and assists them and the Commission. It organises and coordinates cooperation between national control and inspection activities and trains national inspectors and trainers, to ensure that CFP rules are respected and applied effectively and consistently. The Agency helps to ensure there is a level playing field for the fishing industry so that obligations are observed and everyone in the sector is treated equally, wherever they operate. It also contributes towards sustainable fisheries by improving compliance with existing conservation and management measures for the benefit of present and future generations.

[European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\)](#): The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was created as part of a comprehensive programme to improve EU food safety, ensure a high level of consumer protection and restore and maintain confidence in the EU food supply. EFSA provides independent scientific advice on all matters with a direct or indirect impact on food safety. EFSA's remit covers food and feed safety, nutrition, animal health and welfare, plant protection and plant health. The Authority communicates on risks in an open and transparent way. EFSA's risk assessments provide a sound foundation for European policies and legislation and support the European Commission, European Parliament and EU Member States in taking effective and timely risk management decisions. Collection and analysis of scientific data, identification of emerging risks and scientific support to the Commission, particularly in case of a food crisis, are also part of EFSA's mandate.

[European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions \(EUROFOUND\)](#): The Foundation is a European Union body set up in 1975 to contribute to the planning and establishment of better living and working conditions in Europe. It provides findings, knowledge and advice from independent and comparative research, to governments, employers, trade unions and the European Commission. The Foundation organises its work around three core areas of expertise, with a focus on the following issues:

- working conditions: including work organisation, time issues in the workplace, flexibility, monitoring of changes in working conditions;
- living conditions: issues that affect the everyday lives of Europe's citizens, including the balance between work and family life, the provision of social public services and promoting integration into employment;
- industrial relations: industrial change and corporate restructuring, employee participation in decision-making, the Europeanisation of industrial relations

The Foundation recently set up the [European Monitoring Centre on Change \(EMCC\)](#) to analyse and anticipate industrial and company change to support socioeconomic progress.



[European GNSS Agency \(GSA\)](#): This body, established in 2004, manages a range of activities relating to Europe's satellite positioning and navigation programmes (including Galileo and EGNOS):

- preparing for the successful commercialisation and exploitation of the systems, aiming at smooth functioning, seamless service provision and high market penetration
- ensuring the security accreditation of the system & establishment and operation of the Galileo Security Monitoring Centres
- managing satellite navigation research under the EU research programme
- promoting sat nav applications and services
- certifying system components.

Due to its knowledge, competence and expertise the agency is in a unique position to ensure Europe fully reaps the benefits of EGNOS and Galileo, which has the potential to become a cornerstone of the global radio navigation and positioning system and to contribute in a unique manner to the creation of jobs and economic growth.

[European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#): EIGE is a European agency which supports the EU and its Member States in their efforts to promote gender equality, to fight discrimination based on sex and to raise awareness about gender equality issues. Its tasks are to collect and analyse comparable data on gender issues, to develop methodological tools, in particular for the integration of the gender dimension in all policy areas, to facilitate the exchange of best practices and dialogue among stakeholders, and to raise awareness among EU citizens.

[European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority \(EIOPA\)](#): EIOPA is part of the European System of Financial Supervision consisting of three European Supervisory Authorities and the European Systemic Risk Board. It is an independent advisory body to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. EIOPA's core responsibilities are to support the stability of the financial system, transparency of markets and financial products as well as the protection of insurance policyholders, pension scheme members and beneficiaries.

[European Maritime Safety Agency \(EMSA\)](#): Based in Lisbon, the EMSA provides technical assistance and support to the EU and member countries in developing and implementing EU laws on maritime safety, pollution from shipping and maritime security. It also has responsibilities in the areas of preventing and responding to oil spills, vessel monitoring and long-range identification and tracking of vessels. EMSA's activities include:

- Inspecting the inspectors in technical areas, enabling the EU to ensure compliance with the rules and fair and equal conditions for shipping across the EU and beyond.
- Providing software and expert services for maritime safety tasks in EU countries.
- Combating marine pollution in the event of a major oil spill. EMSA contracts oil recovery ships which are on standby to provide at-sea oil recovery services, within a matter of hours, to any EU country threatened by large oil spills.

[European Medicines Agency \(EMA\)](#): The European Medicines Agency is a decentralised body of the European Union with headquarters in London. Its main responsibility is the protection and promotion of public and animal health, through the evaluation and supervision of medicines for human and veterinary use. The EMA is responsible for the scientific evaluation of applications for European marketing authorisation for medicinal products (centralised procedure). Under the centralised procedure, companies submit one single marketing authorisation application to the EMA.



[European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction \(EMCDDA\)](#): The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is the hub of drug-related information in the European Union. Its role is to gather, analyse and disseminate 'factual, objective, reliable and comparable information' on drugs and drug addiction and, in so doing, provide its audiences with a sound and evidence-based picture of the drug phenomenon at European level. Among the Centre's target groups are policy-makers, who use this information to help formulate coherent national and Community drug strategies. Also served are professionals and researchers working in the drugs field and, more broadly, the European media and general public. At the heart of the Centre's work is the task of improving the comparability of drug information across Europe and devising the methods and tools required to achieve this.

[European Network and Information Security Agency \(ENISA\)](#): Given their vital role in modern lives and economies, computers, mobile phones, banks and the internet must work together properly. Together with the EU institutions and national authorities, ENISA seeks to develop a culture of security for information networks across the EU. ENISA's role is to ensure the high level of network and information security necessary in the EU by:

- giving expert advice on network and information security to national authorities and EU institutions
- acting as a forum for sharing best practice
- facilitating contacts between EU institutions, national authorities and businesses.

[European Police College \(CEPOL\)](#): CEPOL brings together senior police officers across Europe with the aim to encourage cross-border cooperation in the fight against crime, maintenance of public security and law and order. CEPOL organises between 60-100 courses, seminars and conferences per year. The implementation of the activities takes place at the National Police Training colleges of the Member States and the activities cover a wide-range of topics.

[European Police Office \(EUROPOL\)](#): Europol is the European Union law enforcement agency that handles the exchange and analysis of criminal intelligence. Its mission is to improve the effectiveness and cooperation between EU law enforcement authorities in preventing and combating serious international crime and terrorism, with the aim of achieving a safer Europe for all EU citizens.

[European Railway Agency – promoting safe and compatible rail systems \(ERA\)](#): The construction of a safe, modern integrated railway network is one of the EU's major priorities. Railways must become more competitive and offer high-quality, end-to-end services without being restricted by national borders. The European Railway Agency was set up to help create this integrated railway area by reinforcing safety and interoperability. The Agency also acts as the system authority for the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) project, which has been set up to create unique signalling standards throughout Europe.

[European Securities and Markets Authority \(ESMA\)](#): ESMA's mission is to enhance the protection of investors and reinforce stable and well functioning financial markets in the European Union. As an independent institution ESMA achieves this mission by building the single rule book for EU financial markets and ensuring its consistent application and supervision across the EU. ESMA contributes to the supervision of financial services firms with a pan-European reach, either through direct supervision or through the active co-ordination of national supervisory activity.



[European Training Foundation \(ETF\)](#): The ETF helps transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems. It works with the countries surrounding the EU in the context of the EU's external cooperation programmes: The Enlargement process (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, and the occupied Palestinian Territories. A similar partnership exists for Russia). It also works with countries in Central Asia, specifically Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It helps these countries modernise their education and training systems - equipping their people with the knowledge, skills and wider competences to take part in dynamic economies and societies.

[European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#): FRA's goal is to provide relevant institutions and authorities of the Community and its Member States with assistance and expertise on fundamental rights when implementing community law, and to support them in taking measures and formulating appropriate courses of action. The Agency has the following main tasks:

- Collect, analyse and disseminate objective, reliable and comparable information related to the situation of fundamental rights in the EU;
- Develop comparability and reliability of data through new methods and standards;
- Carry out and / or promote research and studies in the fundamental rights field;
- Formulate and publish conclusions and opinions on specific topics, on its own initiative or at the request of the European Parliament, the Council or the Commission;
- Promote dialogue with civil society in order to raise public awareness of fundamental rights.

[Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market \(Trade Marks and Designs\) \(OHIM\)](#): The OHIM is the official authority carrying out the procedures for the Community trade marks since 1996 and for the Community registered design from 2003. These intellectual property rights are valid in all the countries of the EU. Trade marks and designs belong to the world of private company law. The OHIM is both an agency of the European Community and an industrial property office with its technical function: the registration of industrial property rights.

[The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit \(EUROJUST\)](#): Eurojust is a European Union body established in 2002 to stimulate and improve the co-ordination of investigations and prosecutions among the competent judicial authorities of the European Union Member States when they deal with serious cross-border and organised crime. In the context of investigations and prosecutions concerning two or more Member States, Eurojust's goal is to stimulate and improve the co-ordination between the national authorities, taking into account any request emanating from a competent authority of a Member State and any information provided by any body competent by virtue of provisions adopted within the framework of the Treaties (European Judicial Network, Europol, and OLAF). Another of Eurojust's objectives is to improve co-operation between the competent authorities, in particular by facilitating the execution of international mutual legal assistance and the implementation of European Arrest Warrants.



[Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union \(CdT\)](#): The Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union was set up in 1994 to provide the translation services required by the specialised decentralised agencies of the European Union. The Centre also provides services to the Community institutions and bodies which have their own translation service in order to absorb any peaks in their workload. The Centre's mission also has an interinstitutional dimension. Above all, it is closely involved in the work of the Interinstitutional Committee for Translation and Interpreting, the purpose of which is to help achieve economies of scale in the Community translation system by rationalising and pooling working methods and tools. Such cooperation also contributes to the undertaking of large-scale projects, such as the creation of [IATE \(InterActive Terminology for Europe\)](#), a terminology database for the European Union.

[European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#): The EIT is a body of the European Union established in March 2008. Our mission is to increase European sustainable growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the EU. This translates into developing a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. To do so, the EIT has created integrated structures ([Knowledge and Innovation Communities](#)), which link the higher education, research and business sectors to one another thereby boosting innovation and entrepreneurship. The KICs focus on priority topics with high societal impact, currently: Climate change mitigation ([Climate-KIC](#)), Information and Communication Technologies ([EIT ICT Labs](#)), Sustainable Energies ([KIC InnoEnergy](#)).

Three agencies operate within the framework of European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy:

[European Defence Agency \(EDA\)](#): The European Defence Agency is the place to go for European defence cooperation. The Agency supports the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve the European Union's defence capabilities - a critical task in these challenging times. It works on the basis of a new approach that draws together the whole defence spectrum, tailoring its work to the military needs of tomorrow, providing different and often innovative solutions.

[European Union Institute for Security Studies \(EUISS\)](#): The European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) is an agency of the European Union. It operates under the Union's [Common Foreign and Security Policy](#) (CFSP). The EUISS researches security issues of relevance for the EU and provides a forum for debate. It also offers analyses and forecasting to the [High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy](#).

[European Union Satellite Centre \(EUSC\)](#): The European Union Satellite Centre is an Agency of the Council of the European Union dedicated to the exploitation and production of information deriving from the analysis of earth observation space imagery. It aims at supporting EU's decision-making in the field of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP).



EXECUTIVE AGENCIES

Executive agencies are organisations entrusted with certain tasks relating to the management of one or more Community programmes. These agencies are set up for a fixed period. Their location has to be at the seat of the European Commission (Brussels or Luxembourg).

At present, these agencies are:

Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture

The [Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency \(EACEA\)](#), located in Brussels, has been operational since 1st January 2006.

Its mission is to implement a number of strands of more than 15 Community funded programmes and actions in the fields of education and training, active citizenship, youth, audiovisual and culture.

Bringing these programmes under a single banner allows to coordinate management and provide programme beneficiaries with a fully comprehensive service.

While the agency has its own legal identity, it reports to three Directorates-General of the European Commission : [Education and Culture \(EAC\)](#), [Communication \(COMM\)](#) and [EuropeAid Cooperation Office](#), which remain responsible for programming, evaluating, and issuing policies.

The agency is in charge of most management aspects of the programmes, including drawing up calls for proposals, selecting projects and signing project agreements, financial management, monitoring of projects (intermediate reports, final reports); communication with beneficiaries; and on the spot controls.

The programme strands managed by the Agency are all centralised and support technical projects, which do not imply making political decisions.

European Research Council

The [European Research Council](#) (ERC) is part of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7). It is set up by the European Commission to support investigator-driven frontier research and was established in February 2007 on the basis of the FP7 IDEAS specific programme, with a total budget of 7.5 billion Euro (2007-2013).

Its main aim is to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by supporting and encouraging the very best, truly creative scientists, scholars and engineers, who are invited to submit their individual proposals in any field of research.

The ERC consists of an independent Scientific Council and an Executive Agency acting on behalf of the European Commission. The ERC Scientific Council defines the scientific strategy and methodologies, whereas the ERC Executive Agency implements and applies these strategies and methodologies in the management and operations of the ERC funding activities in the legal context of FP7.



The ERC Executive Agency was formally established in December 2007 and gained administrative autonomy on 15 July 2009.

The ERC operates transparently with autonomy and integrity which is guaranteed by the European Commission, to which it is accountable. The European Commission assumes final responsibility for the execution of FP7 and its budget.

The ERC Executive Agency manages the following tasks:

- Execute the annual work programme, as defined by the ERC Scientific Council and adopted by the Commission
- Implement calls for proposals, in accordance with the work programme
- Provide information and support to applicants
- Organise peer review evaluation
- Establish and manage grant agreements, in accordance with the EU's financial regulation
- Provide assistance to the ERC Scientific Council.

Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation

Energy, transport, environment, competitiveness, innovation - Europe today is up against extraordinary challenges but also great opportunities.

To deliver efficiently high-quality European funding schemes and initiatives in these areas, the European Commission has set up the [Executive Agency for Competitiveness & Innovation \(EACI\)](#) to manage on its behalf:

- [Intelligent Energy – Europe](#)
- [Marco Polo](#)
- [Enterprise Europe Network](#)
- [Eco-innovation](#)
- [IPEuropAware Project](#)

It is an international team of specialists on energy, the environment, business support, multi-modal transport, communication and finance. It includes both European Commission officials and professionals coming from the private sector. They all share a commitment to the European way of linking competitiveness and innovation with environmental protection and a cleaner energy future.

The EACI reports back to the following four Directorates-General of the European Commission: [Energy \(ENER\)](#), [Mobility and Transport \(MOVE\)](#), [Enterprise and Industry \(ENTR\)](#) and [Environment \(ENV\)](#).



Executive Agency for Health and Consumers

The [Executive Agency for Health and Consumers – EAHC](#) (formerly the Public Health Executive Agency) was created on 1 January 2005 to support implementation of EU Public Health Programme.

In 2008, the Agency's lifetime was prolonged till 31 December 2015, and the tasks expanded to include actions in the field of consumer protection and training for safer food. The EAHC new mandate includes implementation of [EU Health Programme](#), [Consumer Programme](#) and [Better Training for Safer Food initiative](#).

The Agency provides professional service in performing the tasks entrusted to it by the European Commission, and it works closely with [Directorate General for Health and Consumers](#). The EAHC manages relations with some 2200 beneficiaries involved in more than 200 projects in the field of health

Research Executive Agency

The [Research Executive Agency \(REA\)](#), located in Brussels, was created in December 2007. Managing over €6.5 billion funds under the 7th Framework Programme for Research, it started its work in June 2009. The REA reports to the Directorates General for [Research and Innovation](#), [Enterprise and Industry](#), and [Education and Culture](#).

The evaluation of proposals and the management of projects are at the heart of research support. The REA is carrying out these evaluation and management processes for a large part of the current research framework programme – FP7. With increasing research budgets, dedicating facilities and services to these tasks is at the core of the framework programme. These dedicated facilities and services are enabling REA to improve the delivery of support to the research community.

The REA is managing the following tasks:

- the Marie-Curie fellowships and related awards;
- specific research grant agreements for the benefit of small and medium sized enterprises;
- multi-partner projects in the field of space research;
- multi-partner projects in the field of security research;
- the proposal reception and evaluation facility in the Covent Garden building in central Brussels;
- "one-stop shop" helpdesk for enquiries about FP7;
- the unique registration facility for project partners to reduce the amount of paperwork involved in project management.



Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency

The [Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency \(TEN-T EA\)](#) assures the technical and financial implementation and management of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) programme.

Created in 2006, the Agency has a mandate until 31 December 2015. Its work of managing key transport infrastructure projects from the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 financial perspectives is done in close collaboration with its "parent", the Directorate-General [Mobility & Transport](#) of the European Commission. DG MOVE remains responsible for the overall policy, programming and evaluation of the TEN-T programme.

The Agency has a multinational team composed of specialists experienced in finance, project management, engineering and legal affairs, and is based in Brussels.

EURATOM AGENCIES AND BODIES

These bodies are created to support the aims of the European Atomic Energy Community Treaty (EURATOM). The purpose of the Treaty is to coordinate the Member States' research programmes for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, to provide knowledge, infrastructure and funding of nuclear energy and to ensure sufficiency and security of atomic energy supply. At present, these agencies are:

[EURATOM Supply Agency \(ESA\)](#): A common nuclear market in the EU was created by [the Euratom Treaty](#). Article 2(d) and 52 of the Treaty established the Euratom Supply Agency (ESA) to ensure a regular and equitable supply of nuclear fuels to EU users. To perform this task, ESA applies a supply policy based on the principle of equal access to sources of supply. In this context, ESA focuses on enhancing the security of supply of users located in the European Union and shares responsibility for the viability of the EU nuclear industry. In particular, it recommends that EU utilities operating nuclear power plants maintain stocks of nuclear materials, cover their requirements by entering into long-term contracts and diversify their sources of supply. ESA's mandate is, therefore, to exercise its powers and, as required by its statutes, to monitor the market to make sure that the market activities of individual users reflect the values set out above.

[European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy \(Fusion for Energy\)](#): Fusion for Energy (F4E) was established in April 2007 for a period of 35 years. It primarily manages Europe's contribution to ITER, the international fusion energy project. One of its main tasks is to work together with European industry and research organisations to develop and provide a wide range of high technology components for the ITER project. Drawing on F4E's pool of collective expertise, Europe can become a world leader in the construction of demonstration fusion reactors. The members of the F4E are the 27 EU countries, Euratom (represented by the European Commission) and Switzerland.



COMMUNITY LEGISLATIVE ACTS

Another characteristic of the uniqueness of the European edifice is the Community jurisdiction to adopt legislative acts¹³¹⁹, the validity of which actually overrides national law (Community law primacy), even over national constitutional law.

Below, we will briefly examine the legislative acts adopted by the Community, as well as non-binding acts issued for the implementation and drawing up of Community policy.

Binding acts

Regulations

Regulations are proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Council (as part of the co-decision procedure, by the Council and the Parliament) or are issued by the Commission where the Treaty gives the Commission jurisdiction in the relevant field, and are addressed to the governments of the Member States. A Regulation adopts binding legislative provisions that enter into force at the same time in all Member States at the specified date – usually a few days following their publication in the [Official Journal of the European Communities](#) (hereinafter referred to as OJEC).

Except for the Regulations issued by the Commission in the context of the Common Agricultural Policy²⁰, Regulations are initially issued as **COM** documents, then they are published as proposals in the OJEC, **C** series and after being adopted, they are published in the OJEC, **L** series. Their publication in the OJEC L series is a *prerequisite for their entry into force*.

Directives

Directives are proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Council (or the Council and the Parliament jointly, as part of the codecision procedure) and are addressed to the Member States. While Regulations are directly applicable and binding in all EU Member States, Directives bind Member States as to the **objectives** to be achieved, leaving the choice of form and means to be used, to the Member States, which have at their disposal a certain **timeframe** (usually ranging from one to three years).

Thus, contrary to Regulations, for a Directive to be applied, national legislative, regulatory or administrative measures “transposing a Directive into domestic law” need to be taken. By virtue of this particularity, Directives are considered the appropriate legislative tool for the harmonisation or the approximation of national laws or for meeting a Community policy goal (e.g. the harmonisation of national laws on the integration of the Internal Market, Directives providing for minimum requirements in the social sector, etc.).

As we have already seen, Member States must take the necessary measures to comply with the provisions of each Directive at the latest by the end of the specified timeframe. Moreover, during the period allowed for transposition, Member States are not to take measures that are in conflict with the spirit of the Directive. Citizens can invoke the provisions of the Directive

¹⁹ Community law comprises **primary** legislation (Treaties) and **secondary** legislation (legislative acts based on the Treaties).

²⁰ It concerns Regulations on CAP routine management, published directly in the OJEC L series.

only after the period allowed for transposition into domestic law has expired. Like Regulations, Directives are first published as **COM** documents, and then they are published as proposals in the OJEC, **C** series, and after being adopted, in the OJEC, **L** series. For a Directive to enter into force, it is a prerequisite to be published in the OJEC, **L** series, when it comes to Council and Parliament Directives (codecision) or Council or Commission Directives addressed to *all* Member States. All other Directives enter into force upon notification to the addressee Member State.

Decisions

Decisions are proposed by the Commission and issued by the Council (in areas where the co-decision procedure applies, by the Council and the Parliament) or the Commission and *bind those to whom they are addressed*, that is to say, any or all Member States, enterprises or even individuals (for instance, a Commission Decision imposing a penalty on an enterprise that infringed Community law on competition, a Council and Parliament Decision adopting a Community Agenda in the sector of education, etc.). As a rule, they are a means for the administrative application of Community law. Decisions are usually published in the OJEC and enter into force from the moment they are notified to their addressee²¹.

Non-binding acts

Recommendations and Opinions

They are issued by the Council, the Parliament, the Commission, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and express the views of the Community on specific issues, mainly to encourage Member States or other financial stakeholders to adopt best practices (that it is not possible nor advisable to impose through Community measures). Usually, they are published initially as a COM document and then in the OJEC, C series.

Resolutions

They are issued by the Parliament and/or the Council and are declarations of political will or established principles governing Community action. Usually, they are published in the form of COM documents.

White and Green Papers

White and Green Papers are prepared and issued by the Commission, and published in the form of **COM** documents.

Green Papers focus on a particular policy area, where the Community has not yet passed any legislation, and are primarily consultation papers addressed to interested parties who within a defined timeframe are called to present their views on legislative measures that may eventually be adopted. Usually, a Green Paper is followed by a relevant Communication by the Commission that may result in a proposal to adopt specific legislative measures.

²¹ Council and Parliament Decisions (codecision) where the publication in the OJEC is a prerequisite for their entry into force are exempted.

White Papers are used in a similar way to Green Papers for policy development in areas not yet regulated by Community legislation. Their fundamental difference is that White Papers deal with wider sectors, for instance, the White Paper on development, competitiveness, and employment. The issuance of a White Paper may be followed by specific proposals on legislative measures by the Commission.

Communications

Communications are prepared and issued by the Commission, usually following a consultation process with the interested parties in the context of a Green Paper. On certain occasions, they provide an overview of legislation that the Commission intends to propose and are followed by relevant proposals. The Commission has also issued Communications on the interpretation of Community law provisions by the Court or of other major Community issues. Communications are published in the form of COM documents and then they are published in the OJEC, C series.

The Commission also publishes notices of a strictly informative nature, providing guidelines on Community policy issues, and particularly on competition law.

Studies

Studies are entrusted by the Commission to external experts and present the status of a specific issue in the Community. Sometimes they may result in putting forward proposals by the Commission for legal steps to be taken by the Community. An official publication is not required, but they can be found in the websites of the relevant Directorates-General and Agencies of the Commission, under the heading «Publications».

THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

The EU not relevant to the daily work of Local and Regional Authorities?

The implementation of approximately 60 per cent of all mandatory European-law based regulations has to be carried out by local governments. It is therefore non-realistic to say that the EU does not concern us, or that it is far away and outside the scope of our daily work. Furthermore, all EU legislation is adopted through procedures to which even the smallest municipality can actively participate.

Cities/Regions have to implement EU legislation incorporated into national law and in some well-defined cases (“direct effect” of primary and secondary legislation) need to adhere to EU law even if it is not – or not properly transposed – into national law. Local and regional authorities not only have to implement a major part of the *acquis communautaire* but may even be held responsible for failure to do so (“direct effect”). They therefore have to cope on a daily basis with the social, economic and ecological challenges of being part of the European Union.

Unfortunately, in many policy areas, the EU does not have the means for implementing the decisions it takes. It is customary to say that the Union's decisions are implemented by the Member States. Nevertheless, closer examination reveals that, since the scope of its decision-making powers has expanded to include virtually all sectors of economic and social policy, the Union's decisions are now in practical terms increasingly implemented by local and regional authorities even if the legal responsibility lies with the Member States. Moreover, the role of local and regional authorities is not confined solely to implementing legislation; rather, they often play a key role in initiating and maintaining a desired course of development.

Field of play for the LRAs

In areas such as in the field of social inclusion, integration of minorities or employment, cities and regions play a major role in helping to attain EU standards and in contributing to the “process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe”. The EU related activity of cities and regions goes far beyond the purely legalistic implementation of EU law which in many cases does in itself not provide the desired impact on the living conditions and quality of life of EU citizens.

It is also important to note that cities and regions provide the level of government the closest to the citizens and local businesses. Accordingly cities and regions have a task/responsibility as information provider to the general public about the impact of EU membership and the legal, economic and social changes going with it.

With what resources?

Due to its peculiar structure and evolution, the EU system does not only operate on the basis of legally binding primary and secondary legislation and case law, but is also based on providing certain incentives (programmes and other funding opportunities) to actors of civil society in order to better attain the European model of society as outlined in the common provisions of the EU Treaty. A detailed description of EU funding opportunities for Local and Regional Authorities can be found in Units 2 and 3 of this Thematic Guide.



The presence of LRAs in Brussels

Historical background

It is not always easy for an LRA, particularly a small municipality, to affect national legislation or the legislation of the European Union without having a permanent point of contact with Brussels. As a result, cooperation with national and European institutions becomes of a crucial importance for LRAs. This role usually undertaken by LRA representation offices in Brussels.

The first liaison offices emerged in the mid-1980s, about 30 years after the foundation of the European Community. The establishment of the Committee of the Regions (Treaty of Maastricht, 1992) was the first step in formally recognising the role of local/regional players in the development of the Union. This provided a framework for their work, enhanced the status of the liaison offices and helped to promote them.

Liaison offices grew in importance through the increasing complexity of the decision-making mechanisms, through the flood of laws and the widely discussed “transparency deficit” in the European Community. Though they may differ in their size, structure and function, the work and presence of these offices is crucial for the sub-national level they represent and for the European integration process as a whole.

General features

A “typical” base in Brussels is centrally located (i.e. close to EU institutions), has one representative, officially appointed by its respective sub-national entity or grouping and supported by one or two additional staff members for administrative tasks as well as other functions. The ideal liaison office should have a modern PC with a fast internet connection, as much of the work depends on communications and the ability to access information quickly and easily. Additionally, standard equipment such as telephone, copy and fax machines are essential. A meeting room should allow officials from “home” properly to follow up their work in Brussels, especially between conferences, committee meetings etc. It is often shared with other liaison offices.

[Brussels offices](#) generally pursue a function, which is related to the legislative and the policy process of the EU and less to funding activities.

Role

Well organized LRAs do not simply wish to obey EU legislation passively: It is important for them to influence the development of EU activities as early as possible. As a result, many have offices in Brussels, which pay an important role in accessing information and building networks. In general, these national associations have considerably upgraded their cooperation with EU institutions and with their European representative bodies such as CLRAE at the Council of Europe, CEMR and AER.

It is absolutely essential for the local/regional and national governments to have a close working relationship. This is particularly important when examining the application of Community legislation at the sub-national level or checking the opportunities for local and regional government to influence the development of national and EU legislation. It is the state’s representatives who have regular, official contacts with the “movers and shakers” of the European Union.



Having an impact on new legislative initiatives requires a working relationship especially with officials of the European Parliament (regular contacts with at least the members from one's own geographic or linguistic circle are essential; regardless where it takes place), the European Commission (necessary if one wishes to obtain information at an early stage on future EU legislation) and the Committee of the Regions (as the official channel by which regional and local governments influences the Union's decision-making, COR has the opportunity to express its views on all legislative initiatives that have an impact on municipalities and regions).

The Brussels Office represents the interests of the sub-national unit, ensuring that it gains maximum benefit from its participation in the European Union. Principal roles are monitoring, lobbying, networking and promoting.

The "monitoring" Role means observing the developments in upcoming EU legislation, particularly in relation to the European Commission (sole right of initiating EU legislation) and the European Parliament particularly in areas where it has co-decision making powers with Council. Thus the office should feedback this information, and with like-minded offices seek, if necessary to its use influence to have the proposal modified to the city's/region's benefit. For legal monitoring good knowledge about the EU institutions is essential. To know the principal players in a specific area of work is also essential. This might be quite time consuming as changes of personal (especially in the Commission) are frequent. Knowledge about which Directorate Generals (DGs) are linked to a specific work area, when a legal proposal is due, and who in the DGs is working on it, is necessary. It is important to find out if the selected DGs have (formalised) relations with local authorities. If not, helping to establish them might be useful. It is important to the offices to make a name for themselves especially in areas of importance to them so they will be contacted by EU officials and involved in developments. Informal relationships with key people in the Commission helps. These officials might rarely be on the highest levels, but will tell you what is going on inside the Commission.

Function

Communication and Information form the basis of the service delivery mechanism in Brussels all the offices are in the business of information provision. The Brussels office should keep the home base informed about ongoing or upcoming issues in Brussels. However, it is important that the home base should communicate to the Brussels office information of which they might have knowledge, and which the Brussels office might not have. There are a number of ways in which information is exchanged:

- Attending or organising briefings, conferences, meetings, seminars and other events (gathering "hard information");
- Sending out EU-Information reporting back from specific briefings or events;
- Responding to inquiries;
- Informal networking i.e. permanent personal contacts, which often turn into long-term relationships with EU officials, journalists and other delegates, which pave the way for representatives obtaining tip-offs about EU policy development (gathering "soft information").



LOBBYING

The word lobbying has its roots in the British parliamentary tradition. The “Lobby” is in front of the debating chamber of the House of Commons, which is the place where Members meet the public who try to explain to, persuade or entreat parliamentarians to support or oppose a cause. Lobbying still remains a way of influencing the political decision-making process for special interest or pressure groups. It has a negative image and is often suspected of putting democracy in danger because it is more accessible to the financially powerful institutions and multi-national companies than to the socially excluded, the unemployed, or local governments. However, democracy is safe as long as there are political parties, NGOs, local governments and other non-state actors who take up the interests of weaker members of the community. The more competition between different interests, the better for EU democracy, as long as the competition remains open to newcomers. Lobbying from governments and civil society contribute to the peaceful integration of Europe.

Necessity of lobbying at EU level

The EU helps form, design, implement and/or influence approximately 80% of all economic and 50% of all political decisions taken in the Community today. Therefore not only private companies but also all civil society including local governments and their associations need a direct link to Brussels and the EU institutions. Due to its position close to the citizens, local governments have earned a special place in the EU decision-making process.

A presence in Brussels is vital for local governments to influence policymaking and implementation effectively, and react appropriately to a rapidly changing environment. Indeed there are thousands of national and international pressure groups in Brussels. At the last count there were 2.600 interest groups and 850 accredited journalists in Brussels – far more than Washington DC. They all know that contacts and good timing are the keys to influencing the EU decision-making process.

These lobbying offices differ from each other in the quality of their work: good lobbying takes time and expertise. Information must be gathered, prioritised, analysed, condensed, disseminated and acted upon in a timely manner. Lobbying is complex and requires the art of relationship – building as much as the science of communications.

Methods of lobbying

Whatever methods you will use, the most critical component is timing (“How to get the right information to the right person at the right time”). It is essential to understand the legislative process and the key points at which your organisation can best make its voice and viewpoint heard and acted upon.

On a more personal level, you should appreciate the value of the contact person’s time by providing only concise and specific information pointing to the conclusion you are seeking to achieve.

Lobbying campaigns require a cohesive political strategy. Alliance building should be as wide as possible, even co-operating with those normally opposed to you; to quote Winston Churchill “My enemy’s enemy is my friend”. Building ties with other local and regional representations or with other National associations is as important as belonging to a European organization (i.e. AER). The advantage lies not only with the bigger influence exercised through the number of represented local and regional authorities but also through their personnel, their experience, and with the possibility of their obtaining early information



about future policy developments. This gives you the chance to start early with lobbying activities. However, it cannot replace the work of the individual offices. Networking also helps when searching for partners and alliances in order to submit trans-regional proposal and projects for funding.

Informal and formal contacts

Personal contact based on mutual trust and respect is essential. Don't contact the relevant official until you are thoroughly prepared to deal with the issues likely to trouble them. Do acknowledge the other sides strength, and/or your association's/local government's weakness on the way to rebut opposing argument. The many personal contacts you have in your own country, you must develop in Brussels as well. The better you are connected, the more successful you are ("It's not always what you know, but who you know"). Even if you do have an office there, a trip to Brussels should be as normal as a trip to your country's capital. The administration in Brussels is YOUR administration. Except that the civil servants in Brussels are much more open and approachable and interested in detailed information than you would ever expect from your own national civil servants.

To do your job effectively, and to make those personal contacts and discussions count, you need to be up-to-speed on EU policymaking and implementation. The basic information you need be acquainted with is published by the Commission in the EU Official Journal and its supplement, (which can easily amount to around 40.000 documents a year). In addition to these sources, the regular reports about specific policy areas (competition, single market, public procurement etc.) by the European Commission, the reports of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the Social and Economic Committee are all useful sources of information.

Additional important sources of information include:

- Green Papers: These reports, published by the Commission, address specific policyareas of significant importance. Green Papers provide an overview of the status quo and encourage discussion amongst the civil society on possible changes. Green Papers had been published on transport, energy, public procurement for example.
- White Papers: These reports already include precise legal proposals from the Commission. White Papers exist on unemployment in Europe, competition, for example.

These reports are especially important for local governments, as they are able to submit opinion papers directly to the Commission without the national government as a go between. Finally, the annual legislative programme of the Commission is a valuable tool to get updated on the EU work agenda.

Participation in Commission working groups

A good way to get one's position heard is in official working groups. In the Commission alone there are thousands of working groups dealing with all kinds of topics. Wherever possible and appropriate you should try to be included in these working groups, either individually or as part of a broader coalition or alliance.

Invitations to participate are sent by the Commission to the Permanent Representatives to the EU. They then forward the invitations to the ministries in their respective countries. Who then participates is largely up to the national level.

If your working relationship with the national government is not very good, you may have difficulties placing experts on the national delegation to these Commission working groups.



Therefore, another possibility is to send an expert on the delegation of a European organization (i.e. AER), to working groups where local and regional governments are concerned (waste management, good governance etc). These organisations have reserved seats on the working groups. However, national governments and industry are the predominant participants.

The role of LRAs in European lobbying

Not all lobby groups, special interests, and civil society actors that seek to win friends and influence policymaking in the EU institutions are equally effective in their goals, whether those are to secure a license to operate or to bolster a balance sheet. No lobby group has its affairs in a perfectly organised state at home, but some simply understand the EU process better than others.

Local government has a somewhat weaker impetus for EU action, much fewer resources and skills, and a more local/regional than European interest orientation. Few have their own Brussels office but many are represented through their National local government associations in Brussels.

Regional government offices are reasonably resourced, have their own Brussels office, lobby for subsidies and are invited to participate in semi-formal and formal EU meetings. Cooperating with other regions in Europe, they succeed in presenting a European face. But most are poorly organised at home. Their government background, with elected politicians and mass publicity on the home front, often makes it difficult to determine a short list of priorities with clear targets beforehand and critical evaluations afterwards. Their EU performance is frequently that of their small team in Brussels acting autonomously.

The “Lobbying” Role means being able to explain the local/regional position to EU decisionmakers with a view to the local/regional position being understood and adopted at an early stage. But if the same LRA have no positions on policy issues, no lobbying can of course take place. Brussels Offices often send to LRAs questionnaires, requests and reports for comments. The LRAs should reply to these requests and participate in the process. It's the only way to influence future European legislation.

LRAs' must submit their positions through Position papers, which should be clear, short and to the point. These papers need to be written in easy accessible languages, at least in English and French. Follow up to the papers is very important. Papers should be preceded by discussions with the appropriate officials to ascertain their initial position. They should also be followed up with meetings to offer to explain the submission or ascertain whether, and if so where, its incorporation would cause problems. At the same time it may be appropriate to circulate your paper and meet with some or all of the following: other DGs, officials from other EU-institutions, the media, embassies and NGOs. A Brussels Office can fulfill this role. But the position papers themselves cannot be drafted without the participation of the LRAs.

Next to the European Commission the European Parliament is a very good tool for putting pressure in specific areas and raising issues. Just as with the Commission, knowledge about the EP Committees and which of them are relevant for a specific area of work is essential. Important is also to know the rules of procedure of the Parliament, as well as to find out which MEP sits in the co-ordinators' group of a specific Committee. To find an MEP who is willing to pass on information about decisions taken at co-ordinators' meetings is a big plus. This information could be about upcoming reports, the future rapporteurs and their political



groups or about planned public hearings and the possibility of experts being invited. The office must try to influence these decisions. Maybe representatives from home could be invited to speak at hearings. Alternatively you could ensure that they are included in the platform of a specially convened meeting. Ideas for hearings can easily be put forward to MEPs. The office has to try to influence the reports the MEPs are writing. MEPs are also helpful in formulating written or oral questions to the Council and the Commission on specific issues. Good relationships with individual MEPs and their assistants are always helpful. A good assistant might be as important as the MEP.

Officials in the EP are often as important – if not more so – than MEPs. This observation applies equally to those working in political groups as well as those working in specific Committees. If they know the office has something to say and is well prepared – they will contact the office for further input.

The Council of the European Union is not so easy to work with since it represents national interests only. It has a rather distant relationship with local and regional governments. Council decisions must be lobbied for/against in the respective Member States. Once a topic has reached the Brussels platform in the Council, influence is very limited. The Council secretariat (the administrative body of the Council) will almost always refer lobbyists to the Permanent Representations of the respective countries for any question regarding meetings, agendas or other issues. Nevertheless, it is important to be on the Secretariat's mailing list for relevant meetings.

It is also useful to find out who in the Permanent Representation is dealing with which area of interest and to set up a regular meeting with that person. There is a possibility of finding out which issues will be high on the next Presidency's agenda. If one's own country holds the next presidency then lobbying for specific topics to be put on the agenda presents a possibility. The future presidency will almost certainly set up special sections for this, representing and co-ordinating the work of all relevant ministries. Sometimes this work starts as long as 18 months before the presidency commences. It is best for lobbying to be carried out "at home" rather than in Brussels, although the Permanent Representation will also be making an input, which could perhaps be influenced.

Networking

The "Networking" Role means to build ties with other regional and local representatives and with officials of the EU Institutions via social, as well as formal personal contacts. Common hobbies, tastes, interests are worth exploring and building upon.

The "Promotional" Role

Some offices organise activities such as receptions, art exhibitions, book presentations and musical events, which provide bridges or contact points for intercultural relations. Usually these activities are quite expensive and therefore tend to be organised by the larger offices. Offices also promote their EU knowledge in the respective municipality/region. Training courses, conferences and round tables are organised, regular newsletters are published and traineeships for officials from "home" are encouraged. Study visits to the EU institutions are also popular. Visits of this kind are most successful when clear objectives have been set out. The importance of preparatory work in advance of these visits needs to be highlighted. Key contacts in Brussels are more likely to remember well-organised, informed, and engaged delegations.



Relations with the media

The media should be made aware that the office has something to say. It is always useful to find out which journalists work in what areas.

Results

Effectiveness is difficult to determine. It is often related to influence, which again is seen as a by-product of access and being able to provide information to EU actors. But access does not automatically mean influence. Some offices might be assessed on the basis of a “funding focused remit”, others are assessed on a much broader European strategy and hence the criteria used to measure their outcomes differ.

As a rule one can say, if there are no precise objectives defined in the home city/region/association a Brussels office will only have limited success. The question always remains: Is the home base really interested in having a strong office representing them in Brussels and is it willing to support it. Is it willing to react on requests from the Brussels office to give input to reports, special questions from the Commission or MEPs? Is it willing to be used as a referral point by the Brussels office (to answer questions from the media, from MEPs, from EU officials etc)? Naturally, the Brussels office needs to be informed if and when meetings with EU decision makers are taking place.

How effective the office has been in securing objectives in relation to certain policy fields or funding depends on objectives, which have been set by the home office for the Brussels office. A Brussels office is only as good as the home base wants it to be.



CHAPTER 2: EU funding through thematic networking



The Pro-I3T project is co-financed by the European Union, through the "Europe for Citizens" programme.

General Introduction

Local authorities are regularly confronted with new issues and are involved in the implementation of a variety of policies, which are often linked to policy developments at European level. Networking municipalities on issues of common interest is an important tool to carry out timely discussions and exchange best practices. Twinning is a strong link that binds two municipalities; therefore, the potential of the networks created by a series of town twinning links can be used for developing thematic cooperation between twinned towns. The Commission supports the development of such networks through the programme "Europe for Citizens" (Action 1, Measure 1.2: Networks of Twinned Towns - http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/action1_measure1_en.php).

The multi-annual projects for networks of twinned towns provide an opportunity for networks of twinned towns to present an action plan that incorporates a variety of activities and to focus on the themes that have an impact at local and European level and are distinguished by intercultural dynamism and creativity of local authorities.

How does it work in practice?

Town twinning originally concerns two twinned towns, which are linked to each other through a bilateral twinning agreement. Each town often develops several town twinning partnerships. A frequent development consists in bringing together, in multilateral events, all those different partners. This multilateral cooperation can be either project or event oriented. An interesting development in the field of town twinning however consists in the formalisation of such cooperation through the establishment of a network. An agreement is signed between a number of towns, all twinned –either directly or indirectly- to each other, setting long term objectives to this cooperation. A light administrative structure can be set up to ensure the coordination of the network.

Multi-annual projects for networks of twinned towns are designed to provide established networks of towns with twinning links, an opportunity to embark on more sustainable, substantial, strategic and structured co-operation, allowing them to focus on important thematic issues which are relevant both in the local and European context, and thus bringing a certain degree of new intellectual dynamism and creativity to the town twinning field.

What is town-twinning?

The definition that has prevailed for town-twinning is that "A twinning is the coming together of two communities seeking, in this way, to take action with a European perspective and with the aim of facing their problems and developing between themselves closer and closer ties of friendship". Today, however, (and we will see in more detail here below), town twinings often involve more than two partners. Therefore practically, twinings constitute "cooperation agreements" between two or more towns from different countries, based on which, the "Contracting Parties" carry out joint activities with a European dimension, in order to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between citizens and between cultures.



What purpose does town-twinning serve?

When knowing the purpose that town-twinning is supposed to serve, one is able to submit funding proposals for activities, which are within the objectives of the Europe for Citizens programme, and are thus eligible for funding.

It is therefore important to know that what the EU wishes to achieve through the funding of town-twinning activities, is bringing together a wide range of citizens from twinned towns, in order for them to take benefit of the partnership between their towns. The ultimate goals are for the citizens a) to experience an active civic participation at local level; b) to be encouraged to become more involved at European level, thus contributing to the development of an active European citizenship and c) to reinforce their commitment to European integration. (For more information see the programme guide, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/programme_guide_en.php, unit IV.1.1 Specific features).

As it is understood, there are two principal axes in the objectives of the EU: the citizenship and the European dimension¹⁴. If your municipality requests funding for an action that is not based on these two axes, the chances are that you will not receive the requested funding.

What are the networks of twinned towns?

Let's consider the hypothetical example of two groups of towns. In the first group we have Town A, Town B and Town C, which are twinned with each other. In the second group we have Town 1, Town 2, and Town 3, which are also twinned with each other. If we now assume that Town A signs a new Twinning agreement with Town 1, we see that a common link is created between the two groups. All six towns A, B, C, 1, 2 and 3 could now create a network of twinned towns, in order to exchange views and best practices on a subject of common interest. In short, the creation of a network of twinned towns, is a process in which two twinned towns present their "acquaintances" to each other, thus creating a larger group with common interests.

ATTENTION: It is important to note that in a network of twinned towns, not necessarily all the members of the network need to be twinned with each other. It is sufficient if each member has at least one twinning link with at least another member of the network. As a matter of fact, even the stated intention of a town to be twinned with another town, is sufficient in order for a town to join a thematic network, even before the signing of the actual twinning agreement.

¹⁴ It is very important to understand how we can incorporate the "European dimension" in our activities. A very simple example will help us understand: A cultural event (e.g. a dance festival) does not have a European dimension. If in the same event we bring a Member of the European Parliament to talk about the importance of culture at the European level or a teacher to talk about the history of European music, then automatically our event at no additional cost, can be considered to cover the "European Dimension" axe and therefore be more eligible for European funding than a simple dance festival would be.

Is it necessary that all the members of a network come from an EU Member State?

A twinning agreement can be signed with any town around the world. By extension, towns from outside the EU can participate in a thematic network. It should however be noted that the European Union can ONLY finance twinning and networking activities of towns from the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In order for a Network to be eligible for funding, it must involve towns from at least 4 of the above countries, of which at least one is an EU Member State. Once these conditions are met, then additional towns from other countries may also participate to the network.

Is it obligatory that all the members of a thematic network are towns?

Not necessarily. All the following types of organizations are eligible participants for thematic networking:

- Towns/municipalities or their twinning committees or networks;
- Other levels of local/regional authorities;
- Federations/associations of local authorities.
- Non-profit organisations representing local authorities.

How can the activities of the network be financed?

Like any other public action, every twinning activity must, of course, be funded. Often, your town or local/regional authority will provide at least some financial support to its twinning activities, and it is good if this can be included in the town's budget as a permanent budget line. Many twinings are also financed thanks to the actions of dedicated supporters, through the organisation of a wide range of local fund-raising events. For some types of partnership, there may even be some funding available from national government programmes, or from various foundations. However, this is unlikely to cover all of what is required.

For this reason, the European Commission launched the "Europe for Citizens" programme, which aims to promote active European citizenship. The programme aims to give citizens the opportunity to share experiences and opinions and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, united in its cultural diversity, and develop in this way the concept of EU citizenship and a sense European identity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue. The programme also supports thematic networking of twinned towns (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/action1_measure1_en.php).



Please also note that the European Commission support is normally a “co-financing”, i.e. the applicant has also to finance a specified proportion of the expenses of the activities foreseen. This is the normal case for most projects funded by the European Commission, and will apply to all actions other than town twinning citizens’ meetings. More information about the programme is available through the website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php.

In order for the activities of a network to be financed, the Network is expected to:

- Integrate a range of activities around the subject(s) of common interest to be addressed in the context of the Programme’s priorities and having relevance for European integration;
- Produce communication tools in the context of these events with the aim of promoting structured and sustainable thematic networking and disseminating the results of the actions;
- Have defined target groups for which the selected themes are particularly relevant and involve community members active in the subject area (i.e. experts, local associations, citizens and citizens’ groups directly affected by the theme, etc.);
- Serve as a basis for future initiatives and actions between the towns involved, on the issues addressed or possibly on further issues of common interest.

A project must foresee the following:

- A project must involve municipalities from at least 4 participating countries of which at least one is an EU Member State.
- A project must involve a minimum of 30 invited participants. "Invited participants" are international participants sent by the eligible partner/s.
- At least 30% of the participants of each event must come from eligible countries other than the country that hosts the event.

The maximum duration of a project is 24 months. The maximum duration of each event is 21 days. The activities must take place in any of the eligible programme countries participating to the project. At least 3 events per project have to be foreseen.

Financing

The minimum eligible grant for a Thematic Networking project is 10 000 EUR and the maximum eligible grant is 150 000 EUR. The actual funding is calculated on the basis of flat-rate financing. Taking into account the results of statistical analysis of 2008 and 2009 projects, the flat rate system was simplified. The daily rates for different countries previously used for calculation of the grant, are cancelled. The new flat rate system is based on number of total participants (local and international) - fixed per "tranches" - and number of days. The same parameters are valid for all the countries participating to the programme. The calculation of the total grant requested is obtained by combining:



- the total amounts requested for each event;
- the amount requested for communication tools, if any;
- the amount requested for coordination costs, if any.

Please also note that for Networking projects, a pre-financing of 50% of the total grant is applicable.

What kinds of activities can be financed?

We should keep in mind that twinning is a very versatile tool, that can be focused on an extremely wide range of topics. Twinning brings together people from different parts of Europe, giving them the opportunity to jointly address common problems and exchange views and perceptions on any topic, for which there is a mutual interest or concern. It can for example help young people to work with partners from other countries and to regain their confidence. It can also help everyone better understand what Europe is and what its relevance is today, and where it can lead us to the future.

Twinning partnerships nowadays may lead to specific projects on subjects like water management, economic development or improving social services. There has also been an increase in twinning between several partners, each from a different European country. In these and other ways, the development of European partnerships enables citizens and municipalities to share expertise and experience.

Today, town-twinning helps create a sense of a common European identity – something that can never be imposed from above. Moreover, getting citizens together to discuss and tackle difficult subjects in a friendly atmosphere is also an expression of a very active European citizenship.

There are many examples of good twinning practices, covering a wide range of subjects - art and culture, youth, citizenship, sustainable development, local public services, local economic development, social inclusion, solidarity, etc. Here below we present some of these examples:

- **Bringing the People of Europe Together: Language courses for adults.** The cities of Cardiff (United Kingdom) and Heilbronn (Germany) undertook an ambitious project, combining English classes with learning about different European cultures. Additional partners from Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, and Spain, gave this project a fully European dimension. The participants wrote up stories about their areas of origin, in collaboration with language professors. All the stories were then shared with the other groups, thus creating an exchange of the participants' different customs and ways of life. The different groups and their professors met on multiple occasions to share their stories and practice the language in which they worked. This project and the stories were presented at an international reading festival at St Donat's Art Centre in Cardiff.



- **Art and culture: Cultural exchange through art.** The cities of Tata (Hungary), Svodin (Slovakia) and Sovata (Romania) organise an arts camp every year. The camp, which takes place in Tata, gathers over 20 youth from the three cities for the first week in August. With a new theme every day, participants work on different artistic techniques, exchanging their views and methods. On the last day, a public exhibition allows the budding artists to present their work to the inhabitants of Tata. This arts camp strengthens the sense of European belonging for the participants and provides them with a chance to learn more about their common cultural heritage. Some children from Sovata live in particularly difficult social conditions. Some have participated in the camp since its opening in 2003. These annual gatherings allow the children to have a better sense of the progress they have made, which leads to a great sense of satisfaction.
- **Youth: Schools for solidarity.** The cities of Kuusankoski (Finland) and Vologda (Russia) organised student exchanges. During one of these exchanges in June 2005, the Finnish students participated in renovating a Russian school. The mornings were devoted to construction work, and the afternoons left for visits to other schools or cultural activities. During the exchange, the Finnish students were placed in Russian host families. Thanks to this project, the school's playing fields were completely renovated and new sports equipment installed. Living with their host families, the Finnish students were able to learn about Russian culture. Many prejudices were dispelled, with lasting friendships forged in their place.
- **Citizenship: A local youth parliament.** The twinned cities of Alsomocsolad (Hungary) and Marefalva (Romania) decided to develop their partnership. For several years, a local youth government had already existed in Alsomocsolad. Its partner decided to adopt this system at home, by taking on its own local issues. This project also aimed to develop tolerance in the young people of the Hungarian city. In 2002, young people from Alsomocsolad travelled to Marefalva to present the workings of their local government. For one week, young people from the two cities worked together on how to set up a similar structure in the Romanian city.
- **Social inclusion: Getting to know better migrant workers.** The cities of Carrickmacross (Ireland) and Carhaix-Plouguer (France) regularly organise cultural exchanges. In August 2005, they involved workers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in their festivities. In addition to the traditional Celtic performances, the participants from the Baltics performed dances and songs from their countries. A small bookshop and photo exhibition were dedicated to the Baltic partners during the four day visit of the French partners to Carrickmacross. Several meetings were organized, where the Baltic participants could express their views and experiences on life in their new community to elected representatives and employers.
- **Sustainable development: Raising youth awareness on sustainable development.** The twinned cities of Sint-Truiden (Belgium) and Duras (France) organise student exchanges. The French students' stay with their Belgian hosts in April 2006 was devoted to learning about sustainable development. The students from the two cities held debates on the environment, development cooperation, fair trade, organic farming, and employment of persons with disabilities. Several members of the European Parliament participated in the debates. The young people visited different sites by bicycle, such as organic farms, waste treatment plants, and a technical high school where industrial

packaging and organic production is taught. They also carried out surveys on sustainable development and created a game around these issues.

- **Improving the provision of local services: Building an ambitious social policy together.** The twinned cities of Zutphen and Deventer (Netherlands) and Tartu (Estonia) have developed together a policy to address the social and health needs of the older population in Tartu. This project brought together civil servants from the three cities and the meetings included visits to institutes, as well as presentations and debates. Training sessions were also proposed for Estonian health care professionals.
- **Local economic development: Annual visits to stimulate innovation in agriculture.** Twinned for over 10 years, the cities of Ede (Netherlands) and Chrudim (Czech Republic) set up a common working group on agriculture early on in the partnership. This has resulted in a number of initiatives involving farmers, chambers of agriculture and farming schools. Since 2001, these exchanges have become more ambitious. Every year 8 farmers from Ede travel to Chrudim and 8 farmers from Chrudim then make the return journey. The exchange visits allow each partner to learn about the new methods being used in each country. A wide range of themes are covered: the organisation of farms and agricultural cooperatives, community policy, education in the area of agriculture.
- **Solidarity: Renovating a new centre for older people.** The city of Vlist (Netherlands) participates in a project of reconstruction in its twin city Bac (Serbia). The aim is to fix up what was once an old school building in order to create a new retirement community for older people. Civil servants of Vlist travelled to Bac to lend their technical expertise to this project to support and improve the quality of life for older people, particularly in the struggle against poverty, improving conditions, and providing adequate access to employment and/or volunteering possibilities. Volunteers played a key role in the project. A media campaign, by radio, website and leaflets, helped recruit many volunteers. The project also had the goal of allowing young unemployed people to get involved in an activity that would help them gain new skills and feel more involved in their own community.

All thematic networks of twinned towns that have been funded in recent years, are recorded in the [EVE database](#), where you can find many such examples.

When should I submit a proposal for the financing of a Thematic Network?

The deadlines for applications for funding activities in the framework of the "Europe for Citizens" programme, are published well in advance in the website of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The deadlines for 2013 are published here: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/funding/2013/index_en.php.



How do I submit an application for the financing of a Thematic Network?

The European Commission only accepts applications that are submitted using an electronic form, available online: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eforms/index_en.php. After selecting the electronic form that corresponds to the programme and action for which you want to apply, (for thematic networking: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eforms/documents/citizenship/Europe_For_Citizens_2013_V2.1_P ROD_EN_Unlocked.pdf), you can save it on your computer and start to fill it in. The electronic form guides you step by step and does not need to be filled-in at once. You can save your work and continue another day. Please note that once you start filling-in the form it would be better not to transfer it to another computer, because some data may be lost or altered.

Part A of the application form (Identification of the applicant and the other organisation (s) participating in the project) and the Part B (Organisation and activities) must be completed separately for each partner. Your application should therefore include as many Parts A and Parts B as the partners of the project. The rest of the application (Parts C, D and E) should only be completed once. The form will not let you submit it if it is not completed correctly and if all the necessary documents (Declaration of Honour and Budget) have not been attached.

If you encounter problems using the form, you can search for solutions to the user guide of the electronic form: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eforms/documents/citizenship/Europe_for_Citizens_eForm_2013_User_Guide_Version%201.pdf. If you do cannot find the solution in the user guide, you can contact the EACEA Technical Helpdesk (telephone: 003222990705) or send your question by e-mail: EACEA-HELPDESK@EC.EUROPA.EU. You can also see the “Who can help me” section, here below.

Can I fill-in the application in my own language?

Yes. The electronic form can be filled-in all the official languages of the EU -except for those parts of the application, which explicitly state that they must be completed in another language (Part C.4 of the application form for example explicitly states that it should be completed in English, French or German). You should however note that if you complete your application in your own language, evaluators will have to have your application translated (usually in English), in order for them to be able to read and evaluate it. During the translation, some of the ideas that you present in your application might be misinterpreted. Moreover, you should take into consideration that the evaluators usually appreciate the effort of those who complete the application in either English or French, which they all speak. Therefore, although it is possible and it is your right to fill-in an application in your own language, it would be preferable -when possible- for the application to be completed in English or French.



What are the tips and tricks for a successful application?

The European Commission receives many applications requesting financial support, whilst the budget available is limited: for this reason the application must not only respect all the rules and conditions, but should also be of very good quality. To do that, the tips and tricks should be followed:

- **In accordance with EU priorities:** Your application should explain how it contributes to bring Europe closer to citizens (and vice-versa) and should relate to issues which are on the EU's agenda. The European programme sets out its longer-term priorities (for more information see the programme guide: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/programme_guide_en.php); but there are also annual priorities which are equally set out in the programme guide, which is regularly updated.
- **Citizen participation:** There can be no twinning and no thematic networking without the active participation of the citizens. Elected representatives and civil servants can often be the driving force behind projects, but they should not be the only people involved in them. Schools, sport clubs, leisure groups, senior citizens organizations, and other local community associations should all be involved.
- **Dissemination:** Your activity needs to be visible for every citizen to feel involved. For instance, signs can be posted at the entry of the town hall, and your local newsletter and website can feature news about the project. It is important to communicate the impact and benefits of the project to the wider public, and in particular to the media, to create an accurate image of your Network and its activities.
- **European dimension:** In the European Union, a good twinning link should help to strengthen active European citizenship, by creating links between citizens, by aiding the promotion of European unity, and helping to forge a European identity. By allowing people to experience the daily life of others, to debate and discuss important issues of the day, and to discover new cultures and the languages of their partners, twinning helps citizens to understand that they belong to one community of values. It is very important to understand how we can incorporate the "European dimension" in our activities. A very simple example will help us understand: A cultural event (e.g. a dance festival) does not have a European dimension. If in the same event we bring a Member of the European Parliament to talk about the importance of culture at the European level or a teacher to talk about the history of European music, then automatically our event at no additional cost, can be considered to cover the "European Dimension" axe and therefore be more eligible for European funding than a simple dance festival would be.
- **Clear and common objectives:** What do we want from this project? This should be the first question when establishing a twinning link or a Network. You and your partners should define together clear objectives and types of activities, and where possible agree from the outset on dates by which an assessment of the project can be established. It is useful to reassess the objectives and actions from time to time, to make sure you are all committed to the same priorities for the twinning. If this is not done, the project may well fail, due to misunderstandings or misperceptions. And evaluators know this better than anyone.

- **Methodology:** Why do we choose to do this activity instead of another one? Why do we choose to do it that way? How will this action help us to better achieve our goal? You will need to reply to all of these questions in your application, in order to convince the evaluators that you know exactly what, why and how you want to do, and that it is worth to be funded.
- **Equal participation for all citizens and all ages:** Young people, old people, women, people with disabilities, immigrants. The involvement of all these categories in your activities gives you extra points in the evaluation and helps finance your activities. You should therefore explain in your application how any or all of these groups will be involved in your activities.
- **Current European agenda:** Activities developed through twinning links can help citizens to be aware of European current issues; this is particularly true for young people. These issues can be about the environment, the future of Europe, human rights, peace, or social inclusion.... or even football or other sports! In your application, you should be able to demonstrate that your activities will promote discussion around issues of the European agenda among citizens.
- **Sustainability:** A good Network of twinned towns must be able to withstand the test of time, and not merely reflect the prevailing mood of the day in the city councils. How do we ensure this? The activities for which you request funding should not just be one-off actions. They should be integrated into a long-term plan. A Thematic Network can create an ideal environment in which new forms of cooperation can be developed in the future. The exchange of experiences and joint discussion on particular issues can lead to common solutions or improvements. And this should be clearly evident in our application.
- **Budget and finances:** Last but not least, look after the finances! The budget should reflect the actual costs and be drafted with great care, according to the instructions given in the programme guide: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/programme_guide_en.php).

Can I submit my application by post/fax/e-mail?

No. It is MANDATORY that all applicants submit their applications using the above mentioned electronic form. Applications submitted on paper by post, fax or e-mail will not be accepted for further evaluation. The [Legal Entity form](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm) and the [Financial Identification form](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm) are available in PDF format. They must be filled-in electronically, then printed, signed, stamped and submitted by post.

How can I be sure that my application has been submitted?

As soon as you submit the online application form, you will automatically receive a “submission number”, which is a confirmation of submission of your application. Later on - once your application is recorded along with the accompanying documents- you will receive an official letter with the protocol number for your project. You should keep in mind that the evaluators receive hundreds of applications and hence the recording process may take some time. Patience is needed. During the recording process, the European Union is not answering questions about whether a particular application has been correctly submitted and/or received.

Can I submit multiple applications?

A municipality or region may submit several project proposals provided that the projects are really different from each other. Double financing for the same activity is strictly prohibited by the EU Financial Regulation.

What are the most common reasons for rejecting an application?

In the past, the most common reason for rejecting an application was the incorrect or incomplete filling-in of the application form. Now, with the electronic form, the number of such errors has dropped sharply, since the form does not let you submit it if it is not completed correctly and/or if all the necessary documents (Declaration of Honour and Budget) have not been attached to it. Currently, the most common reasons for rejecting an application are:

- submission of the application after the specified deadline,
- incorrect or incomplete filling-in of the accompanying documents “Legal Entity form” and “Financial Identification form”, or their submission after the specified deadline,
- non-compliance of the application with one or more of the qualitative rules we mentioned above (see: “What are the tips and tricks for a successful application?”),
- participation of ineligible partners in the application.

Why do we need all this bureaucracy?

It is quite logical that from the moment you request FINANCING for your activities, some kind of bureaucracy will have to be tolerated. The European Commission receives hundreds of applications requesting financial support, but can only finance a few dozens of them. It makes sense for the European Commission to want to ensure that it only finances those activities that better serve the goals of the programme and that the financed projects are implemented in the best possible way. The only way to ensure this is by asking to receive beforehand as many details as possible concerning the activities to be financed and the organizations that will receive the actual funding.

Having said that, we should mention that the EU is well aware of the fact that a large number of the applications received, are drafted by non-professionals or non-experienced professionals. Therefore, the European Commission and the EACEA try to continuously simplify the application process, as well as to be as flexible as possible during the evaluation process of the received applications.

Who can help me?

We mentioned before who can help you if you have any technical problems with the filling-in of the electronic application form. But who can actually help you and advise you for the editing of your application? In order of priority, should contact the following:

1. **Europe for Citizens Points:** The [Europe for Citizens Points](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/ecp_en.php) (ECP: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/ecp_en.php) are your gateway to the Europe for Citizens programme. Their main role is to promote European initiatives in the field of citizenship and facilitate participation in the above mentioned programme. ECPs provide:
a) free information and guidance on how to access European Citizenship funding opportunities, b) regular updates on all Citizenship related issues at European level and c) networking support, facilitating contact between citizenship operators in different countries and partner finding opportunities.
2. **National Associations of Local and Regional Authorities:** Every European country has one, or sometimes more national association(s) of local and regional authorities. These associations have their own members, which are the towns, provinces, counties or regions of your country. In differing ways, they provide assistance in the area of twinning to their members. They can often help you find partners in other countries. Your national association can also provide information about funding opportunities. The large majority of national associations of local and regional authorities have a [twinning officer](http://www.ccre.org/docs/twinning_officers.pdf) (http://www.ccre.org/docs/twinning_officers.pdf) who may be able to provide helpful information or advice in relation to twinning activities and events.
3. **Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA):** If none of the above is able to reply to your questions or guide you, then you can contact the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Its contact details are available in the website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/contacts_en.php

How can I find out if my application is successful?

The results of applications for funding activities under the "Europe for Citizens" programme are published in the website of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), right next to the deadlines for submission of applications. For example, the results for 2012 are published on the webpage: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/funding/2012/index_en.php. The EACEA will also send you a formal letter with the outcome of your application.



When are the results made available?

It takes about two months from the closing date, for your application's results to be made known. As noted above the results of applications for funding activities under the "Europe for Citizens" programme are published in the website of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), right next to the deadlines for submission of applications. So if you visit the relevant website on a regular basis, you can be updated directly upon the publication of the outcome of your application.

My application has been rejected. What can I do?

After receiving the official letter of rejection of your application, you should take your initial application and the letter and show them to either someone from your national Europe for Citizens Point, or to the Twinning Officer of your National Association (see above). They will be able to tell you what you did wrong and what should be corrected if you want to resubmit your application in one of the next deadlines of the programme.

My application has been granted a fund. What's next?

Along with the results of the evaluation process, the EACEA publishes on its website http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/about_citizenship_en.php an indicative timetable with the steps to be followed for the projects that have been selected for funding. The timetable usually includes three steps:

- Official notification of results sent to applicants.
- Contractualisation of approved projects.
- Beginning of the projects.

In any case, as soon as you are informed that your project proposal has been granted a fund, you should immediately start preparing for the implementation of your project, in a way that will allow you to be prepared to implement all your contractual obligations without any problems, according to your project's timetable.

What should I take care of, in order for the implementation of my project to be successful?

The most important rule that you should follow is to respect all the commitments you made when drafting your application. The number and dates of meetings, travels, number of participants, timetable, deliverables and costs should all be implemented according to your application, as accurately as possible. If during their implementation you want to make any changes (dates, number of participants, costs, etc.), you should notify in writing the project officer of the EACEA that he signed the official letter of approval of your project, in order to get BEFOREHAND his approval for your change. Otherwise, the change can be considered not to be in compliance with your contractual obligations and you may lose a part of the financing for your project.



What should I do in order to receive the final payment?

In order to receive the final payment for your project, you must submit to the EACEA all the final reports, a list of which you will find in the initial contract you signed with the Agency. The documents that you need to submit are also available in the website of the EACEA (under the 'Beneficiaries space'): (see for example for the beneficiaries of 2011: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/beneficiaries/2011/payment_action1_12_2011_en.php).

ATTENTION: In order to avoid unpleasant surprises, you should make sure to gather - during the implementation of your project or activity- all the necessary documents, that confirm that your activities actually took place (photos, receipts, tickets, boarding passes, lists of participants with the signatures of all the participants, etc.).

CHAPTER 3: EU funding through other programmes



The Pro-I3T project is co-financed by the European Union, through the "Europe for Citizens" programme.

Introduction

A few words on...

The purpose: The *Guide to EU funding through other programmes in the thematic area of Commerce* has been edited in order to meet one basic need: to be able to indicate to its users the simplest and fastest way from a project idea to the most suitable funding instrument of the European Union that could finance the implementation of this idea. The content, the methodology and the logic of the Guide have all been based on the need to meet this basic need.

Thematic networking: Local and regional authorities are involved in the implementation of a variety of policies. The networking between local and regional authorities on issues of common interest is an important means for enabling informed discussions and exchange of good practices. For this purpose the EU is financing the creation of thematic networks through the Europe for Citizens programme, Action 1 – Measure 1.2 (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/action1_measure1_en.php) Networks of Twinned Towns. A Network of Twinned Towns could focus on Commerce issues. A detailed presentation of the Europe for Citizens programme and how a project idea could be formulated and financed from the programme is available in the previous chapter of this Guide. The text is also available online at: http://www.european-grants.eu/ThematicTopics-EU_funding_through_thematic_networking.EN.THEMATIC.02.02.EN. Therefore, in this chapter of the Guide, we will not include a description of the Europe for Citizens programme.

The content: We have tried to include to the Guide, an exhaustive list of all EU funding instruments (grants, programmes, facilities etc). We have excluded those Funds who allocate the money directly to the EU member states (Structural Funds, European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Common Agricultural Policy etc), but even from these, we have included to the Guide those sub-programmes that have a transnational aspect.

The methodology: During the drafting of the Guide, we have not always followed the most 'politically correct' way of categorizing the funding instruments. Following the basic idea of the Pro-I3T project, we have identified 15 thematic areas. The funding instruments have then been categorized not according to their legal basis, but according to the most intuitive way that can lead the Guide user from his/her project idea to the to the most suitable funding instrument of the European Union that could finance the implementation of his/her idea. This is why a lot of funding instruments are included in several categories. Knowing that the end users of this Guide will often be inexperienced, our main purpose has always been to facilitate their quest, instead of sticking to a scientific methodology that would complicate their task.

N.B. Currently the EU does not have a programme dedicated to the financing of commercial activities. Nevertheless, a number of other EU programmes can be used to enhance the quality and the potential widespread distribution of traditional food products, promote knowledge and know-how in the light of new technologies for the benefit of consumers, producers and processors, promote green commerce etc. These programmes are presented here below:



Leonardo da Vinci

Part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme, this programme funds many different types of activities of varying scales. These include 'mobility' initiatives enabling people to train in another country, co-operation projects to transfer or develop innovative practices, and networks focusing on topical themes in the sector.

The people able to benefit from the programme range from trainees in initial vocational training, to people who have already graduated, as well as VET professionals and anyone from organisations active in this field.

Leonardo da Vinci enables organisations in the vocational education sector to work with partners from across Europe, exchange best practices, and increase their staff's expertise. It should make vocational education more attractive to young people and, by helping people to gain new skills, knowledge and qualifications, the programme also boosts the overall competitiveness of the European labour market.

Innovation projects are key to the programme. They aim to improve the quality of training systems by developing and transferring innovative policies, courses, teaching methods, materials and procedures.

The Leonardo da Vinci Programme funds several types of projects ("actions") related to vocational education and training:

- [People in Initial Vocational Training](#) ("IVT") can do work-related training abroad. Participants can still be at school or college or in alternative VET schemes (apprentices).
- ["People in the labour market"](#) ("PLM") actions enable people after graduation in vocational training or higher education to have a work-related training abroad in order to improve their employment potential.
- [Professionals in vocational education and training](#) ("VETPRO") can exchange experiences abroad to improve their skills and knowledge.
- [Mobility certificates](#) are given to organisations that have shown a particular quality in carrying out Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects (knowledge, experience and resources) and have developed an internationalisation strategy.
- [Preparatory visits](#) enable people working in the vocational education and training sector to travel abroad to visit partners and plan a project under the programme.
- Organisations working in the vocational education and training sector from different European countries can work together in various types of small-scale [partnerships](#). Partnerships should involve the business side.
- ["Development of innovation"](#) projects improve training systems by producing innovative approaches to vocational education and training such as teaching materials, courses and methodologies;
- ["Transfer of innovation"](#) projects help to spread the most promising new developments;
- [Thematic networks](#) work on priority areas;
- [Accompanying measures](#) promote the results of other projects funded by the programme.

For more information, you can visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/leonardo/index_en.html

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/leonardo/leonardo_da_vinci_en.php

You can also contact one of the Lifelong learning National Agencies:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/national-agencies_en.htm



Pro-I3T Thematic Guide on Commerce

Or the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_contacts_en.php

The calls for proposals are published in the websites:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/lfp/funding/2013/index_en.php

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/calls/grants_en.html



The Pro-I3T project is co-financed by the European Union, through the "Europe for Citizens" programme.

Grundtvig

The Grundtvig programme focuses on the teaching and study needs of learners taking adult education and 'alternative' education courses, as well as the organisations delivering these services. It aims to help develop the adult education sector, as well as enable more people to undertake learning experiences, notably in other European countries.

Grundtvig aims to provide adults with more ways to improve their knowledge and skills, facilitate their personal development and boost their employment prospects. It also helps to tackle problems associated with Europe's ageing population.

It covers not only teachers, trainers, staff and organisations working in the sector, but also learners in adult education. These include relevant associations, counselling organisations, information services, policy-making bodies and others such as NGOs, enterprises, voluntary groups and research centres.

The programme funds a range of activities, including particularly those supporting adult learning staff to travel abroad for learning experiences, through exchanges and various other professional experiences. Other larger scale initiatives involve, for instance, networking and partnerships between organisations in different countries.

The specific aims of the Grundtvig programme are to:

- increase the number of people in adult education to 25 000 by 2013, and improve the quality of their experience, whether at home or abroad
- improve conditions for mobility so that at least 7 000 people per year by 2013 can benefit from adult education abroad;
- improve the quality and amount of co-operation between adult education organisations;
- develop innovative adult education and management practices, and encourage widespread implementation;
- ensure that people on the margins of society have access to adult education, especially older people and those who left education without basic qualifications;
- support innovative ICT-based educational content, services and practices.

For more information, you can visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/grundtvig/index_en.html

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/grundtvig/grundtvig_en.php

You can also contact one of the Lifelong learning National Agencies:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/national-agencies_en.htm

Or the:

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_contacts_en.php

The calls for proposals are published in the websites:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2013/index_en.php

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/calls/grants_en.html



Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs helps provide aspiring European entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to start and/or successfully run a small business in Europe. New entrepreneurs gather and exchange knowledge and business ideas with an experienced entrepreneur, with whom they stay and collaborate for a period of 1 to 6 months. The stay is partly financed by the European Commission.

The programme encourages the participation of both:

- [Aspiring or new entrepreneurs](#)
- [Experienced entrepreneurs](#)

For more information, you can visit:

<http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/index.php>
<http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=18>

You can also contact one of the local contact points of the programme:

<http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=05>

Or the:

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Support Office
<http://www.firstelements.com.cy/web/quest/home>

Information on how you can participate, are available here::

<http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=4>

LIFE+

The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental policy and legislation by co-financing pilot or demonstration projects with European added value. The programme has three components:

- **LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity:** The Nature & Biodiversity component continues and extends the former LIFE Nature programme. It co-finances best practice or demonstration projects that contribute to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Natura 2000 network. In addition, it co-finances innovative or demonstration projects that contribute to the implementation of the objectives of Commission Communication (COM (2006) 216 final) on "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond". At least 50percent of the LIFE+ budget for project co-financing must be dedicated to LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity projects.
- **LIFE+ Environment Policy & Governance:** The Environment Policy & Governance component continues and extends the former LIFE Environment programme. It co-finances innovative or pilot projects that contribute to the implementation of European environmental policy and the development of innovative policy ideas, technologies, methods and instruments. It also helps monitor pressures (including the long-term monitoring of forests and environmental interactions) on our environment.
- **LIFE+ Information & Communication:** This component will co-finances projects relating to communication and awareness raising campaigns on environmental, nature protection or biodiversity conservation issues, as well as projects related to forest fire prevention (awareness raising, special training).

LIFE+ can co-finance projects on themes such as Green Commerce. A best practice example is available on the website: <http://www.lifeplusgreencommerce.eu/>

For more information, you can visit:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/index.htm>

You can also contact one of the national contact points of the programme:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/index.htm>

Or the European Commission Life Unit:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/lifeunit.htm>

The calls for proposals are published in the websites:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifeplus.htm>



Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development - 7th FP

The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) bundles all research-related EU initiatives together under a common roof playing a crucial role in reaching the goals of growth, competitiveness and employment. It is also a key pillar for the European Research Area (ERA). The broad objectives of FP7 have been grouped into four categories: Cooperation, Ideas, People and Capacities. For each type of objective, there is a specific programme corresponding to the main areas of EU research policy. All specific programmes work together to promote and encourage the creation of European poles of (scientific) excellence. The programme has a total budget of over € 50 billion. FP7 is a key tool to respond to Europe's needs in terms of jobs and competitiveness, and to maintain leadership in the global knowledge economy. This money is (for the most part) spent on grants to research actors all over Europe and beyond, in order to co-finance research, technological development and demonstration projects. Grants are determined on the basis of calls for proposals and a peer review process, which are highly competitive. In order to complement national research programmes, activities funded from FP7 must have a "European added value". One key aspect of the European added value is the transnationality of many actions: research projects are carried out by consortia which include participants from different European (and other) countries; fellowships in FP7 require mobility over national borders. Indeed, many research challenges (e.g. fusion research, etc), are so complex that they can only be addressed at European level. But in FP7 there is also a new action for "individual teams" with no obligation for transnational cooperation. In this case, the "European added value" lies in raising the competition between scientists in fundamental "frontier" research from the national to the European level. The Framework Programmes for Research has two main strategic objectives:

- to strengthen the scientific and technological base of European industry;
- to encourage its international competitiveness, while promoting research that supports EU policies.

Participation in FP7 is open to a wide range of organisations and individuals:

- research groups at universities or research institutes
- companies intending to innovate
- small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- SME associations or groupings
- public or governmental administration (local, regional or national)
- early-stage researchers (postgraduate students)
- experienced researchers
- institutions running research infrastructures of transnational interest
- organisations and researchers from third countries
- international organisations
- civil society organisations

FP7 is implemented through the use of different "Funding schemes". They are the following:

- **Collaborative projects** are focused research projects with clearly defined scientific and technological objectives and specific expected results (such as developing new knowledge or technology to improve European competitiveness). They are carried out by consortia made up of participants from different countries, and from industry and academia.



- The **Networks of Excellence** are designed for research institutions willing to combine and functionally integrate a substantial part of their activities and capacities in a given field, in order to create a European “virtual research centre” in this field. This is achieved through a “Joint Programme of Activities” based on the integrated and complementary use of resources from entire research units, departments, laboratories or large teams. The implementation of this Joint Programme of Activities will require a formal commitment from the organisations integrating part of their resources and their activities.
- **Coordination and support actions:** These are actions that cover not the research itself, but the coordination and networking of projects, programmes and policies. This includes, for example:
 - coordination and networking activities, dissemination and use of knowledge
 - studies or expert groups assisting the implementation of the FP
 - support for transnational access to major research infrastructures
 - actions to stimulate the participation of SMEs, civil society and their networks
 - support for cooperation with other European research schemes (e.g. “frontier research”).
- **Individual projects:** Projects carried out by individual national or multinational research teams, lead by a “principal investigator”, funded by the European Research Council (ERC).
- **Support for training and career development of researchers:** Training and career development for researchers from across the European Union and its research partners, through a range of support actions named after Marie Curie.
- **Research for the benefit of specific groups – in particular SMEs** Research and technological development projects where the bulk of the research is carried out by actors such as universities, research centres or other legal entities, for the benefit of specific groups, in particular SMEs, or for civil society organisations and their networks.

For more information, you can visit:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/home_en.html

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=understanding

You can also contact one of the FP7 National contact points:

http://www.cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html

Or one of the other FP7 support services:

www.cordis.europa.eu/fp7/get-support_en.html

You should also visit: CORDIS - Community Research and Development Information Service, an information space devoted to European research and development (R&D) activities and technology transfer: http://cordis.europa.eu/guidance/welcome_en.html

The calls for proposals are published in the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/fp7_calls;efp7_SESSION_ID=cmZyQG LCGIjMzpKlRBr1JqFM15zP6NSnFmQPxnRygTqvgGJLYdlb!2017552818



CHAPTER 4: Methodology for submitting a project proposal



The Pro-I3T project is co-financed by the European Union, through the "Europe for Citizens" programme.

General Introduction

One of the first questions every Local and Regional Authority (LRA) poses on European issues is how “Brussels” can finance the development of their basic infrastructure. We should however make clear, that most of the funding provided by the EU for the development of basic infrastructure is not “paid” directly by the European Commission to the LRAs, but via the national authorities of Member States. This is the case for most of the funding provided under the financial instruments of the EU structural policy, which -moneywise- constitutes the biggest part of EU funding consecrated to the development of LRAs.

However, the Commission also provides funds and grants directly to LRAs, for the implementation of other policies, such as culture, education, training, environment, consumer protection, etc., via the so-called competitive programmes. Through these programmes the development of basic infrastructure can also be funded, according to the methodology provided in this Unit of the Thematic Guide.

A complete listing of EU funding available for LRAs, can be found in Units 2 and 3 of this Thematic Guide.



Introduction to the calls for proposals

The European Commission has a yearly fixed budget for the funding of projects that contribute to the fulfillment of its policies. These funds are distributed by the Directorates General, services and agencies of the Commission, depending on the issues handled (eg, research and technology, environment, etc.). Periodically, all these bodies publish in their websites and in the Official Journal of the European Communities, calls for proposals and expression of interest.

The calls for proposals aim at achieving the objectives of existing European programmes, initiatives or Community financial instruments. The body or agency that will carry out the evaluation of the proposals, takes therefore into account its available budget and decides in advance the approximate number of projects that will be financed. This naturally affects the funding that each project will receive.

Important criteria for the financing of a project is its innovative character, its European added value, the participation of entities from several Member States, the use of new technologies, the level of promotion of the objectives of the Community programme or initiative (eg employment, sustainable development, sustainable energy consumption, cultural heritage, etc.) and the idea of European integration, the planned dissemination, the transferability of the results and the promotion the idea of inclusion and equal opportunities.

In most cases, the Commission co-finances the eligible costs and the partners of the project are invited to contribute on their own a percentage of the costs incurred under the project (EU funding is never 100%).

The process begins with the publication of the call for proposals. It is therefore crucial for all LRAs that are interested in applying for EU funding under a programme, to monitor all the relevant websites as well as the Official Journal and to be informed in advance for eventual upcoming calls. This way LRAs will have sufficient time to prepare the project proposal (see below), find partners, etc.

Interested LRAs need to consult as soon as possible all the documents of the call, in order to have a clear picture of its scope, the eligibility criteria, the proposed duration and other terms of the contract to be signed, the maximum amount of funding, the deadlines, etc. All the necessary documents are available online and can be consulted immediately after the call is published.



Introduction to project proposals

A project proposal is a detailed description of a series of activities aimed at solving a certain problem. The proposal should contain a detailed explanation of the:

- justification of the project;
- activities and implementation timeline;
- methodology; and
- human, material and financial resources required.

The project proposal should be a detailed and directed manifestation of the project design. It is a means of presenting the project to the outside world, in a format that is immediately recognised and accepted.

In order for someone to be able to write a project proposal, he should have a thorough understanding of:

- the role of the project proposal and the activities related to each stage;
- how to deal with projects and project proposals from an organisational perspective;
- how project proposals fit into project management; and
- how to structure a good project proposal.

The aim of this Unit of the Thematic Guide is to enable its users to:

- improve their skills in developing quality project proposals;
- learn how to manage projects within an organisation; and
- understand a project's value as a tool to achieve and further the organisation's mission.

The challenges that come out of these problem areas can be classified into three groups:

1) Enhancing skills and organisational procedures

- Learning proposal-writing techniques, as well as developing skills in designing and writing successful project proposals
- Establishing systems and standards related to developing projects.

2) Understanding the role of project proposals in project management

- The project proposal is a tool — not a goal. It should be followed as closely as possible, and deviations should occur only when necessary.
- Proposal writing is only one of the phases of project management. It is one of the numerous actions that form a logical sequence of events usually referred to as the project cycle.

3) Conducting preparatory work prior to proposal writing

- A quality project proposal is the final product of a participatory process that involves considerable study, discussion and learning from past experiences.

Introduction to projects

A project is a series of activities aimed at solving a certain problem. From the perspective of project management, projects are any series of activities that go through the project cycle. Please note the following: LRAs also perform activities that do not fall into the category of projects. It is very important to recognise that a **project is not (and therefore will not be financed by the EU as such)**:

- past activities that are repeated in exactly the same way on a periodic basis;
- activities with no clearly defined goals;
- activities which can be repeated or transplanted anywhere at any moment; or
- ongoing (regular) organisational activities (e.g. city council or board meetings).

Any given project cycle can be divided into the six following phases:

- **Phase 1:** Assessing one's needs and opportunities
- **Phase 2:** Identifying a project idea
- **Phase 3:** Designing the project
- **Phase 4:** Financing the project
- **Phase 5:** Implementing the activities
- **Phase 6:** Evaluating the results

All Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) should have a well-defined organisational strategy, according to which they can assess relevant needs and opportunities (Phase 1 of the project cycle). Several project ideas will then come to light, from which an LRA may choose one that it would like to implement (Phase 2 of the project cycle). The project phases then follow logically through design, financing, implementation and evaluation stages.

The project design (Phase 3 of the project cycle) consists of two elements:

- project planning (formulation of project elements); and
- project proposal writing (converting the plan into a project document).

Project design is a result of both project planning and the project proposal. Both steps are essential to forming a solid project design.

Project Planning — Formulation of Project Elements

Before the project is written, its individual elements need to be developed. Addressing the **planning considerations** helps develop the project elements, as shown below:

Planning Considerations		
Step	Element	Considerations
1	Identifying the goal, objectives, results expected and target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background of the project • Defined goal and objectives • The societal vision of the organisation • Expected short-term and long-term results • Beneficiaries of the project • Problems solved by the project
2	Content of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme and main issues to be covered • Methods chosen to realise the goal and objectives • Activities to be implemented • Further needs to continue the project
3	Project location(s) and time schedule of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of different activities • Duration of the project • Starting and ending dates of the project • Schedule for individual activities • Summarised timeline of the project
4	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources • Financial resources • Infrastructure
5	Cost/income sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget of the project • Detailed budget by activities and cost types • Rate and form of own contribution • Potential funders and sources of income
6	Description of the implementing organisation and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the implementing organisation • Analysis of capacity and capability • Description of cooperative partners • Analysis of partners' capacity and capability
7	Project team and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project coordinator • Communication method of the project team • Communication strategy and practice with the external environment
8	Monitoring, evaluation and follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success criteria of the project • Methods and timing of monitoring and evaluation • Further plans and follow up

Another way to break down planning questions is to take into consideration the **project design stage** at which these questions are asked. On the basis of these criteria the project planning questions could be classified as to whether they are made during project planning or proposal writing, as shown below:

Planning Considerations	
Issues to be considered at the beginning of project planning	Issues to be considered during the writing of the project proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries of the project • Project team and cooperative partners • Success criteria • Goal and objectives • Methods chosen to achieve project goal • Costs and expenditures • Own contribution • Potential funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project title • Goals and objectives of the project • Description of project activities • Description of expected project results • Project implementation plan • Beginning of operations • Resource allocation • Project personnel • Detailed project budget (fixed costs, equipment needed) • Other technical means (e.g. vehicles) • Division of financial sources (own contribution and other resources)

Regardless of which of the two methodologies you will choose, it needs to be clear that quality proposal writing is not possible without proper planning.

How to Write a Project Proposal

Before writing the actual proposal

As soon as we have identified a project idea and before starting with the actual writing of the proposal, a thorough preparatory work should be conducted. Another LRA might have implemented a similar project before us. Their results could simply be available for implementation by us, so there is actually no need for us to design and implement our own project! We should also keep in mind that the EU will not finance a project that has the same purposes or activities as a project that has already received EU funding. It would therefore be useful, before writing our own proposal, to:

- 1) **Interview past and prospective beneficiaries.** Though feedback was likely received when the previous project ended, new benefits and conditions may have arisen since that time. Speak to prospective beneficiaries to ensure that what you are planning to offer is desired and needed.
- 2) **Review past project proposals.** Avoid repeating mistakes and offering to reproduce results that have already been achieved. The EU will not provide more funding for something that should already have been done.
- 3) **Review past project evaluation reports.** Don't count on project members to remember all the mistakes and areas for improvement from previous efforts.
- 4) **Organise focus groups.** Make sure that the people you need are willing and able to contribute.
- 5) **Check statistical data.** Don't let others discover gaps and inaccuracies in the data you are relying on.
- 6) **Consult experts.** Outside opinions will give you ideas and credibility.
- 7) **Conduct surveys, etc.** Gather as much preliminary information as possible to demonstrate commitment to the project and to refine the objectives.
- 8) **Hold community meetings or forums.** When the public feels that they have been consulted on an issue, they will be much more likely to cooperate and support the project.

Writing the proposal

Once the groundwork has been completed, proposal writing can commence. The key decision to be made at this stage is the structure of the project proposal (including the content and length). The structure is determined by the nature of the project as well as by the funding agency's requirements. In most of the cases, the EU offers application forms that just need to be filled in. But in the variety of formats, application forms, project design outlines, and grant application guidelines, it is possible to detect some common elements.

Title page

A title page should appear on proposals longer than three to four pages. The title page should indicate the project title, the name of the lead organisation (and potential partners, if any), the place and date of project preparation and the name of the EU agency to whom the proposal is addressed.

Project title

The project title should be short, concise, and preferably refer to a certain key project result or the leading project activity. Project titles that are too long or too general fail to give the reader an effective snapshot of what is inside.

Contents page

If the total project proposal is longer than 10 pages it is helpful to include a table of contents at the start or end of the document. The contents page enables readers to quickly find relevant parts of the document. It should contain the title and beginning page number of each section of the proposal.

Abstract

Many readers lack the time needed to read the whole project proposal. It is therefore useful to insert a short project summary — an abstract. The abstract should include:

- the problem statement;
- the project's objectives;
- implementing organisations;
- key project activities; and
- the total project budget.

Theoretically, the abstract should be compiled after the relevant items already exist in their long form. For a small project the abstract may not be longer than 10 lines. Bigger projects often provide abstracts as long as two pages.

Context

This part of the project describes the social, economic, political and cultural background from which the project is initiated. It should contain relevant data from research carried out in the project planning phase or collected from other sources. The writer should take into consideration the need for a balance between the length of this item and the size of the overall project proposal. Large amounts of relevant data should be placed in an annex.



Project justification

Rationale should be provided for the project. Due to its importance usually this section is divided into four or more sub-sections.

Problem statement

The problem statement provides a description of the specific problem(s) the project is trying to solve, in order to “make a case” for the project. Furthermore, the project proposal should point out why a certain issue is a problem for the community or society as a whole, i.e. what negative implications affect the target group. There should also be an explanation of the needs of the target group that appear as a direct consequence of the described problem.

Priority needs

The needs of the target group that have arisen as a direct negative impact of the problem should be prioritised. An explanation as to how this decision was reached (i.e. what criteria was used) must also be included. For example, if the problem is stated as “... poor infrastructure in the community” the list of **needs** associated with this problem may be:

- improved water supply in quality and quantity;
- better roads; and
- improved solid waste collection.

These three needs would then be given higher or lower priority according to the level of importance for the community, and a description would be given of how that decision was reached (e.g. a poll taken from the local population, costs associated with project intervention, etc.). This procedure provides credibility to the selected intervention.

The proposed approach (type of intervention)

The project proposal should describe the strategy chosen for solving the problem and precisely how it will lead to improvement. One way to describe the approach related to the need previously stated as improved water supply could be: “intervention to provide basic water supply facilities in the community,” with some description of the specific features of the solution proposed.

The implementing organisation

This section should describe the capabilities of your organisation by referring to its capacity and previous project record. Describe why exactly your organisation is the most appropriate to run the project, its connection to the local community, the constituency behind the organisation and what kind of expertise the organisation can provide. If other partners are involved in implementation, provide information on their capacity as well. In order to successfully present you organization:

- Never use language that could be perceived as an attack towards any other organisation or institution.
- Carry out an analysis of your organisation’s strengths prior to preparing the proposal and then showcase these strengths.
- Show that your planning process is participatory and takes into consideration the opinions of the target group.
- Prepare a short document that presents your past experience (organizational record) and attach it to the project proposal.



Project aims

The first issue to deal with is naming the objectives. Several other English terms may be used including “project goal/aim,” “project purpose,” etc. Often one major “goal” is declared and then broken down into various objectives.

Once this issue has been dealt with, the **hierarchy** between objectives needs to be established, as well as how many levels the hierarchy should present. In reality, an organisation should have already resolved this issue in the project planning phase.

Project goal (or overall objective)

This is a general aim that should explain what the core problem is and why the project is important, i.e. what the long-term benefits to the target group are.

Some examples of a project goal might be:

- raising awareness;
- improving the quality of life in a city/region; and
- saving resources.

Some basic rules for setting a project goal are the following:

1. There should be only one goal per project.
2. The goal should be connected to the vision for of the LRA.
3. Even if it is difficult or impossible to measure the accomplishment of the goal using measurable indicators¹⁵, it should be possible to prove its merit and contribution to the LRA’s vision.

If it is difficult to follow these rules, then the project itself may have to be redefined or reconsidered!

Project objectives

The objectives should address the core problem in terms of the benefits to be received by the project beneficiaries or target group as a direct result of the project. Project objectives provide a more detailed breakdown of the project goal. A project will likely have multiple objectives, but they are all supposed to contribute to the accomplishment of the -one and only- goal of the project.

Project results/deliverables

Results describe the services or products to be delivered to the intended beneficiaries. This is what the project management is promising to deliver. The results are more detailed than the objectives and the goal, and should be possible to measure through the use of objective indicators. Special consideration should therefore be paid to this area.

The results should address the main causes of the problem that the target group faces. To ensure relevant results, project management should have correctly identified the group’s needs.

¹⁵ **Indicators** — those elements of the project plan, that translate the project’s purpose and results into measurable units (quantity or quality), and thus provide the basis for measuring the impact

Indicators provide the project team with a quantifiable basis on which to judge the project's success in reaching its objectives. The specification of indicators acts as a check on the viability of the results and project objectives. It forms the basis for a project monitoring system. Once the indicators are defined they should be developed to provide details of quantity, quality and time.

Target group

Define the target group and show how it will benefit from the project. The project should provide a detailed description of the size and characteristics of the target groups, and especially of direct project beneficiaries.

The criteria for target group analysis may be ethnic composition, gender, age, etc. When these analyses are more elaborate, they may be attached as an appendix.

Project implementation

The implementation plan should describe activities and resource allocation in as much detail as possible. It is exceptionally important to provide a good overview of who is going to implement the project's activities, as well as when and where. The implementation plan may be divided into two key elements: the **activity plan** and the **resource plan**.

Activity plan (schedule)

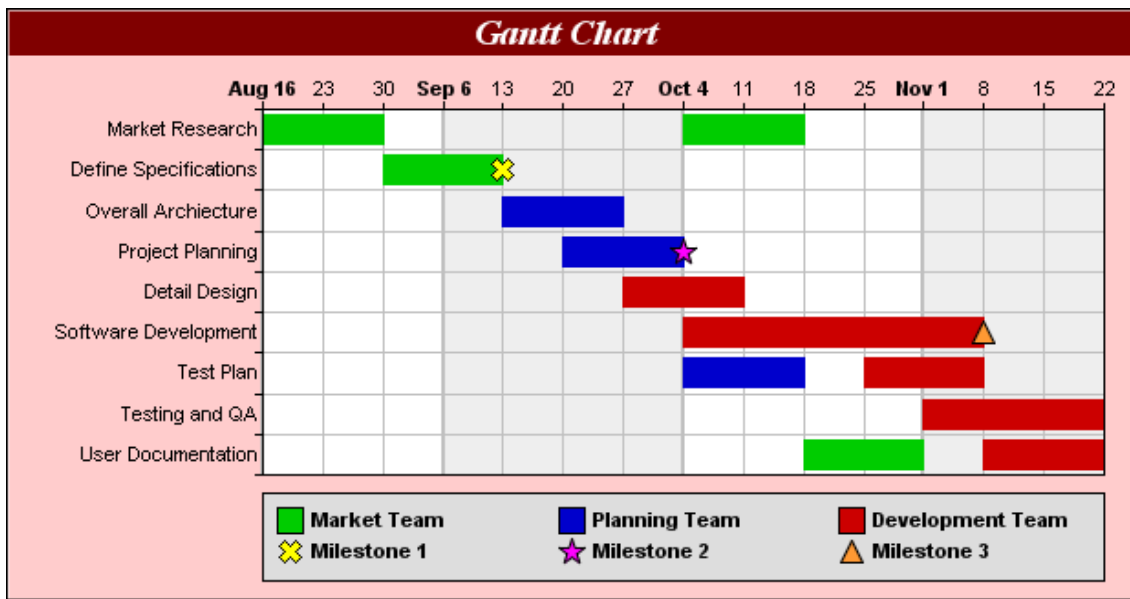
The activity plan should include specific information and explanations of each of the planned project activities. The duration of the project should be clearly stated, with considerable detail on the beginning and the end of the project. The table here below breaks down the various steps involved in preparing an activity plan.



Preparing an Activity Plan		
Step	Activity	Considerations
1	List all project activities	Develop a single list of all activities planned.
2	Break activities into manageable tasks and sub-activities	Break activities first into sub-activities and then into tasks. Each task is assigned to an individual who assumes it as a short-term goal. The main consideration is getting the level of detail right. The most common mistake is to break activities into too many details. Planners should stop breaking the activities down any further as soon as they have sufficient detail to estimate the resources required.
3	Clarify sequence and dependence	Relate activities to each other in order to determine their sequence and dependence. Is the activity dependent on the start-up or completion of any other activity? For example, building a house consists of a number of separate, but inter-related actions: first comes digging and laying the foundation, then the walls are erected, etc.
4	Draw up a timeline for each task	Each task should be given a start-up date, a duration and a completion date. The schedule should then be followed as closely as possible.
5	Summarise the scheduling of main activities	Having specified the timing of the individual tasks, the next step is to plan (summarise) the timing of the entire main activity.
6	Use milestones	Milestones are key events that provide a measure of project progress and targets for the project team to aim for.
7	Define expertise	The level and type of expertise needed should be decided for each task separately.
8	Allocate tasks among the team	Distribute responsibilities in consultation with the members of the team.

In general, two main formats are used to express the activity plan: a simple table and the Gantt chart. A simple table with columns, for activities, sub-activities, tasks, timing and responsibility, is a clear, readily understandable format for the activity plan.

The Gantt Chart, a universal format for presenting activities in certain times frames, shows the dependence and sequence for each activity. A sample Gantt Chart can be seen below:



Resource plan

The resource plan should provide information on the means necessary to undertake the project. Cost categories are established at this stage in order to aggregate and summarise the cost information for budgeting.

As an example, example, the activity of establishing a staff training programme could require **equipment** and **allowances**. These are the cost categories related to the activity. The next step is to identify **units, quantity per period** and **estimated unit cost**. On the basis of these figures, it will be easy to calculate **costs per period** and **total project costs**.

Budget

In simple terms, a budget is an itemised summary of an organisation’s expected income and expenses over a specified period of time.

Budgeting forms and financial planning procedures vary widely, especially in the non-profit sector. It is nevertheless essential that financial officers comply clearly and punctually with a funding organisation’s budgeting and reporting requirements.

The two main elements of any budget are income and expenditures.

Income (sometimes referred to as revenue) is the amount of financial assets and in-kind contribution used as **sources** of support for the project. If the funding source is unique, the income side of the budget may not be shown. However, all EU funded projects have more than one source of support, since the EU only co-finances this kind of activities. The income side should show the share of contribution of each of these sources.



Expenditures (also called expenses or costs) are all the costs that are anticipated to occur during the project's implementation. Regardless of the calculation and classification criteria used, the project costs should present a reasonable reflection of the activities presented in the project proposal.

A projection of the specific amounts of time needed at different phases of project implementation, represents a basis for calculating the spending dynamics at different periods of the project.

Budget categories classify expenditures into smaller groups according to a certain criteria. This is to monitor spending and ensure compliance with the plan.

The two main costs are direct costs and operational costs. **Direct costs** are associated with a certain activity (e.g. organising a workshop). **Operational costs** are related to internal activities of an organisation and are considered fixed costs in the short term (e.g. staff salaries, rent, utilities, etc).

Units, quantity per period and **estimated unit costs** are the three elements that are needed to calculate costs associated with any of these categories.

Monitoring and evaluation

The basis for monitoring is set when the **indicators** for results are set. The project proposal should indicate:

- how and when the project management team will conduct activities to monitor the project's progress;
- which methods will be used to monitor and evaluate; and
- who will do the evaluation.

Reporting

The schedule of project progress and financial report could be set in the project proposal. Often these obligations are determined by the standard requirements of the donor agency. The project report may be compiled in different versions, with regard to the audience they are targeting.

Management and personnel

A brief description should be given of the project personnel, the individual roles each one has assumed, and the communication mechanisms that exist between them. All the additional information (such as CVs) should be attached to the annexes.

Annexes

The annexes should include all the information that is important, but is too large to be included in the text of the proposal. This information can be created in the identification or planning phase of the project, but often it is produced separately. The usual documentation to be annexed to the project proposal is:

- analysis related to the general context (e.g. a civil society sector assessment);
- policy documents and strategic papers (e.g. a local environmental action plan);
- information on the implementing organisations (e.g. annual reports, success stories, brochures and other publications)



- additional information on the project management structure and personnel (curriculum vitae for the members of the project team);
- maps of the location of the target area; and
- project management procedures and forms (organisational charts, forms, etc).

General tips

Some general tips that you might need to keep in mind:

1. Read the terms of reference as soon and as carefully as possible, in order to find out all the necessary conditions for participating in the call. Some documents that often need to be attached to the proposal file (such as certificates issued by public services and institutions, CVs of research assistants, etc). may take a lot of time to collect. Moreover, if you intend to submit a project proposal jointly with other partners, you will need to get in touch with them (if of course you have already identified your potential partners - if not you should take into consideration the time that you will need in order to find them and agree with them on the terms of a possible cooperation). This may again require some time, especially if the partners are located in another country (keep in mind that public holidays differ from country to country!). You should also keep in mind that if you are the coordinator of the proposed project, you will need to receive from the other partners all their contributions and documents that are necessary for the submission of the project, then integrate them into the proposal file and submit the proposal on time.
2. Read very carefully the terms of the call and make sure you understand its purpose, in order to prepare your proposal accordingly. A good idea would also be to consult the website of the agency or service that issued the call, to make sure that you cover as many aspects of the EU policy governing the relevant programme. If, for example, the website states that the programme puts particular emphasis on the dissemination of project results in the candidate countries, or on the participation of women and people with disabilities, or on the use of new technologies and the sustainability of the project after the end of the EU funding period, try to see the way in which your project intends to cover all these elements and integrate it into the methodology.
3. Keep in mind that the proper preparation of a project proposal, besides the time and effort that you will invest to it, implies some costs which will not be refunded. But if you want your proposal to be accepted, take some time and invest some money in having a well structured and elegant presentation that will positively predispose the evaluators. Keep in mind that the evaluators are also employees that will not appreciate it if you oblige them to put in the correct order and evaluate 500 unbound pages of miscellaneous documents. After the cover letter, attach a table of contents (which will also help you to check that you have not forgotten any documents) and, if possible, tie the documents together (unless the call clearly prohibits you to do so). Think of your project proposal as a gift: the more precious it is, the more elegant the packaging should be, in order for those who receive it to appreciate it.
4. Pay special attention in the language in which you are writing the proposal. Unless otherwise stated expressly in the call, you can write the proposal in any of the official EU languages. It would be nice however, if you write the proposal in your own language to include at least a summary of the proposed project in one of the European Commission's working languages (English or French). This should preferably be done by someone who has one of these languages as their mother tongue. Since most of the projects funded



by the EU should have a European dimension and be applicable different countries, if either the proposal or the resume have serious spelling and syntax errors, the confidence of assessors in your ability to actually carry out the project might be undermined.

5. Feel free to promote the image of your municipality or region. Apart from the obligatory reference to previous experience that is relevant to the one needed to carry out the project, try to include in the application the experience your organisation has gained in project management in general, eventual prizes or distinctions awarded to your organization in the past, or even proof of quality of service such as European standards of quality, safety at work and environmental management (ISO, EMAS, etc.). If you already have a brochure presentation of your organisation (company profile), include it in the application folder along with the CVs of the participating experts/personnel.
6. Invest some time in drafting the financial part of your proposal (budget). The more detailed and consistent with the work schedule your budget is, the more confidence you inspire to the evaluator as concerns your experience and professionalism. Carefully read the part of the call that is referring to the eligible costs (eg. VAT). As for the total amount of funding requested, you should weigh the following things: First of all, the total budget that is available to the Commission in order to finance projects within the specific call (if for example the EU has a total budget of 2 million euros to fund approximately 20 projects and you ask for 1 million, your proposal will most likely be rejected, unless you propose something really impressive). Secondly, think that if your budget is disproportionately low, evaluators might doubt about whether you can actually carry out what you promise in your proposal with such a low budget. Finally, you should keep in mind that the careful preparation of the budget of your proposal mainly protects you, because if you sign a contract with the Commission to carry out the agreed work with a specific budget, you are obliged to do so. If, for example, you undertake to organize a seminar with participants from different Member States and forget to include to your budget the travel expenses of the speakers, the Commission will not retrospectively adjust the amount of the grant approved and eventually you will have to pay for these expenses on your own.
7. If you have any questions while writing the proposal, do not hesitate to contact either the European Commission or specific Agency or National Contact Point for clarifications. Even after submitting your application, you might contact the responsible body and ask about the status of your application. We will not expand on lobbying activities that you can undertake in order to support your application, as they mainly rely on interpersonal relations that develop amongst stakeholders and on the professional reputation put forward by the applicant organization. Having said that, it is a fact that when someone has the ability to support his proposal through lobbying, he might have an advantage. More information on the subject of lobbying can be found in Unit 1 of this Thematic Guide (Structure and Functioning of the EU: The Role of Local and Regional Authorities).

Points that need special attention

During the preparation of a project proposal, special attention should be paid to the following points:

1. Deadlines (especially when they refer to the time that the application must be received by the EU - not just shipped). In any case, if the deadline is not respected the application will simply be rejected. Sending a fax or email instead of the actual proposal will not be accepted unless this possibility is provided by the call for proposals.
2. Exclusion criteria (e.g. cases where one partner is from a non-eligible country).
3. Eligibility criteria (e.g. a situation requiring the involvement of partners from at least X Member States or calls that refer only to a specific kind of entities, etc.).
4. Required documentation to be attached to the proposal (balance sheets, statements of fulfillment of social contributions, CVs, etc.). It is advisable to prepare a check list and make sure that you have included all the required documents before submitting the proposal. Pay special attention to cases where documents need to be stamped or signed!
5. Contents. Make sure that you have submitted the correct number of signed originals of the application / proposal and the correct number of copies (photocopies) as requested in the call.
6. Sealing/packaging. Make sure that you comply with the instructions for sealing the proposal. Sometimes you might submit your proposal in accordance with the “double envelope system”: The outer envelope or parcel should be sealed with adhesive tape and signed across the seal and carry the following information: The reference number of the call, the name of the organisation making the offer or proposal, the indication “Offer – not to be opened by the internal mail service” and the address for submission of offers. The date of posting should be legible on the outer envelope. The inner envelope should contain the actual proposal (signed original + X copies).
7. Submitting. Make sure you have correctly submitted your application. In most of the cases this has to be done by registered letter or parcel (do not forget to keep the receipt!). If the delivery is made in person to the responsible official, do not forget to ask for a receipt stating the name of the employee who received it, as well as the time and date of submission. In case a specially designed form (electronic form) is requested for the submission of the proposal, make sure that you have used the forms.

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