

2010-2014



## Brussels Basics

How does the EU work?

## Legal Notice

Brussels Basics – How does the EU work?

ISBN 3-923458-75-4

**Publisher:** German League for Nature and Environment (DNR)  
EU Coordination Office, Marienstraße 19/20, 10117 Berlin,  
Germany  
Phone: +49 30/67817 75-75, Fax: +49 30/67817 75-80,  
E-mail: eu-info@dnr.de  
www.dnr.de/publikationen, www.eu-koordination.de

**Text and Editing:** Markus Steigenberger, Bjela Vossen,  
Juliane Grüning, Matthias Bauer, Antje Mensen

**English Translation:** Stefan Schade, Phyllis Anderson, Antje  
Mensen

**Co-authors of previous publications:**  
Nika Greger, Thomas Frischmuth

**Graphics/DTP:** Eric Janacek

**Layout:** Michael Chudoba

### Cover fotos:

1. The island of Samsø: an example of a self-sufficient community in renewable energy, © European Union, 2010
2. JJo Leinen, president of the environment committee of the European Parliament and Conny Hedegaard, EU Commissioner for climate protection. CreativeCommons BY-NC-ND: European Parliament  
CreativeCommons BY-NC-ND: Europäisches Parlament
3. European flags in front of the Berlaymont building, headquarters of the EC, © European Union, 2010

Contributions associated with the names of the authors do not necessarily express the opinion of the editorial office/publisher.

© Deutscher Naturschutzring e.V.

Copyright is held by the publisher. Individual articles may be reprinted if the source is indicated and third-party rights are maintained. The editors would appreciate receiving a copy of the reprinted material.

## Supporting Institutions

This project is supported by funds from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Environment Agency. The supporting institutions accept no responsibility for the truth, accuracy and completeness of the information or for compliance with third-party rights. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the sponsoring bodies

# Dear Readers,

Most of the national environmental laws originate from the European Union. The same is true for the area of agricultural policy and to a certain extent other important political areas such as transport or energy policy. So, anyone who is interested in German environmental policy should look to Brussels. This is not always easy, because for many people the EU often seems to be far away and complex. This is true in a way. Hence, anyone who does not bother to understand the basics of the EU, its institutions, competences, processes, will never really understand what is going on. But whoever makes the effort to find out will come to understand that the system of the EU is no more complicated than the German federal state and that there are possibilities for associations and individuals to get involved.

This brochure offers you an introduction to EU environmental policy. It briefly outlines the treaties, institutions, processes and actors; explains while keeping it brief and using simple certain terms; and offers many useful tips for those interested in EU environmental policy. Our aim is to encourage you to get involved and feed your experiences and opinions into the political process of the EU.

This brochure is the fourth completely revised publication and includes all institutional amendments until February 2010, also taking into account the Lisbon Treaty as well as amendments to the European Parliament and the Commission.

**The German League for Nature and Environment hopes you find this brochure a stimulating read and wishes you good luck in the Brussels jungle!**

NB: The numbering in the EU Treaties has changed several times over the course of time. In order to avoid misunderstandings all articles quoted in this brochure refer to the articles as defined in the current Lisbon Treaty. A synopsis (Table 1) compares the numberings of the current Lisbon Treaty with previous treaties.

# Contents

<b>1. The Basics of the of European Environmental Policy</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5. Judicial Institutions and Types of Actions</b>	<b>28</b>
1.1 The Structure of the European Union	5	5.1 Court of Justice	28
1.2 Environmental Protection in the EU – from Rome to Lisbon	6	5.2 General Court	29
1.3 Principles and Objectives of European Environmental Policy	7	5.3 Right of Action	29
1.4 Important Articles from the EC Treaties for Environmental Protection	8	5.4 Types of Proceedings	29
1.5 The EU Budget	8	<b>6. Other Institutions, Advisory Bodies and EU Agencies</b>	<b>31</b>
1.6 Overview of the EU Institutions	9	6.1 European Economic and Social Committee	31
<b>2. Legislative Institutions</b>	<b>10</b>	6.2 Committee of the Regions	31
2.1 European Council	10	6.3 European Court of Auditors	31
2.2 Council of the European Union – The Council of Ministers	11	6.4 European Environment Agency and other Agencies	32
2.3 High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	13	6.5 European Investment Bank	32
2.4 European Commission	13	6.6 Council of Europe	33
2.5 European Parliament	15	<b>7. How to get involved?</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3. Legislative Procedures</b>	<b>19</b>	7.1 Lodging a complaint	34
3.1 Consultation procedure	19	7.2 Access to Information and to Justice – Aarhus Convention	35
3.2 Assent Procedure	19	7.3 European Environmental Associations	35
3.3 Ordinary legislative procedure	20	7.4 Lobbying for Nature and the Environment in Brussels	35
3.4 The European Citizens’ Initiative	21	<b>Annex</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4. Legal Acts and Soft Law</b>	<b>23</b>	Annex I: What are EU documents called?	41
4.1 Legal Acts	23	Annex II: Environmental Associations in Brussels	42
4.2 Soft Law	25	Annex III: The European Union online	46
		Annex IV: The European Commission, Directorates-General and Agencies	47
		Annex V: Committees of the European Parliament	49

# 1.1. The Basics of the of European Environmental Policy

This first chapter offers an introduction to the structure of the EU and explains when and how environmental protection found its way into the European Treaties and where the objective and principles are enshrined in law.

**A**FTER THE end of the Second World War, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community (EEC) were established in quick succession by six European states. Whereas the ECSC existed for a period of 50 years beginning in 1951 and was phased out in July 2002, the other two bodies, which entered into force on 1 January 1958 with the signing of the Treaties of Rome in March, are still in existence. The EEC Treaty was first renamed as Treaty establishing the European Community (EC Treaty) and has now been renamed as “Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union” (TFEU).

systems as domestic law. The other two pillars, the “Common Foreign and Security Policy” and “Justice and Home Affairs” were regulated inter-governmentally and decisions were usually adopted unanimously by Member States in the Council of Ministers.

This three-pillar structure was abolished upon the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009. The double structure of the EU and EC was eliminated in support of a unified legal subject, the EU. In principle, this “new” EU is organised supra-nationally. However, there are special arrangements for the Foreign and Security Policy allowing this area to continue to be inter-governmental. Nevertheless, the Lisbon Treaty did not succeed in combining all primary EU law into one single treaty. Instead, the Treaty consists of three different treaties: the Treaty on European Union (TEU), where the principles and institutions of the EU are laid down; the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which corresponds in essence to the former EC Treaty and comprises the individual policy areas; and also the European Charter, which has been awarded equivalent legal status. In addition, the Euratom Treaty continues to exist, albeit outside the Lisbon Treaty.

## 1.1 The Structure of the European Union

The European Union was established on 1 November 1993 upon the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty. It was said that the EU was based on three pillars. The first pillar, the EC Treaty, differed from the other treaties in its method of integration, which is organised supra-nationally. This means that the Member States had for the most part relinquished their rights of sovereignty in these policy areas of the first pillar and had delegated powers to the European level. Thus they accepted European regulations to have the same force in their national legal

## 1.2 Environmental Protection in the EU – from Rome to Lisbon

In the early days of European integration, neither environmental protection nor sustainable development were on the agenda of the EU. This has fundamentally changed over the course of time as demonstrated in the main treaties. This section describes how environmental protection found its way into EU treaties and how it gained the significance it enjoys today.

### Rome

When the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established in 1951 and when the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were established in 1957, the main focus was on economic growth and peace. At this time the Community comprised six founding members, who in particular wanted to eliminate trade barriers and establish a common market. Even ten years later, in 1967, when the ECSC, EEC and Euratom were consolidated and a common Council of Ministers, a common Commission and the European Parliament were established, environmental protection and nature conservation were not EU objectives and functions. Not until the end of the 1960s were the first measures implemented to protect the environment, in the form of regulations, directives and environment action plans. Due to the lack of a legal basis for environmental policy, these first measures were based on the Articles on Harmonisation and the regulations for the Common Market.

### Single European Act

With the adoption of the Single European Act in 1987, a section on the environment was finally incorporated into the EEC Treaty (Article 130r–t, now Articles 191–193 TFEU) and the environment was expressly mentioned in Article 100a (now Article 114 TFEU), which pertains to the single market. However, environmental protection was not formally included in the objectives of the Community. The Single European Act formed the basis for the completion of the European single market. This act stipulated that the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital was allowed in all Member States beginning at the end of 1992.

### Maastricht

Upon entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty on 1 November 1993, environmental protection was finally incorporated into the objectives of the Community (Articles 2 and 3(k) of the EC Treaty; now: Article 3 TEU). Moreover, for the first time the Treaty introduced a qualified majority voting system which was to be used for environmental issues.

### Amsterdam

The Treaty of Amsterdam led to important changes in the area of environmental policy within the EU in 1999. First, Article 2 of the EC Treaty was amended to expressly include the promotion of a “harmonious, balanced and sustainable development” and a “high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment” as a common Community objective (now Article 3 TEU). Second, the environmental integration principle (see Section 1.3) was incorporated into Article 6 of the Treaty (now Article 11 TFEU) and was strengthened by being given equal status with the other EU “principles”. In addition, the co-decision procedure (now ordinary legislative procedure, see Section 3.3) became the rule in the adoption of environmental measures under Article 175 (now Article 192 TFEU) – except for those areas specified in Article 175(2) (now Article 192(2) TFEU) – as well as for measures based on Article 95 of the single market (now Article 115 TFEU).

### Nice

No progress was achieved in the area of environmental protection with the adoption of the Treaty of Nice in 2003. Although several environmental topics were on the agenda of the governmental conference, such as qualified majority voting for the introduction of ecotaxes, the Member States could not reach an agreement in these areas.

### Lisbon

With the Treaty of Nice, the EU Member States failed to adopt all the institutional reforms required with regards to the impending Eastern enlargement. Therefore a process was started in 2003 with the aim to establish a European Constitution. The negotiated text was signed by the heads of state and government in December 2004, however, in Spring 2005 it fell through as a result of referenda in France and the Netherlands and later also Ireland. After a pause for thought, small amendments to the treaty were made and the term constitution was no longer used. This treaty was signed by heads of state and government early 2007 in Lisbon. The treaty finally entered into force on 1 December 2009 following the “yes” vote of the Irish people in a second referendum.

The Lisbon Treaty has brought about a series of institutional reforms. It created the position of the President of the European Council, who is elected for two and a half years, and the position of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – somewhat equivalent to a foreign minister. In addition, the Lisbon Treaty expanded the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as co-decision procedure) as well as the application of qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers to a series of new policy fields. Environmental policy was certainly not a priority of this treaty reform. There are, however, a few important amendments, such as the following:

- For the first time, energy policy is laid down in a section in its own right and thus is firmly incorporated in primary law. An environment-friendly supply of energy is explicitly mentioned (Article 194 TFEU).
- The objective to combat climate change is enshrined in Article 191 TFEU.
- The Lisbon Treaty introduces the principle of participatory democracy into EU primary law for the first time: The European citizens' initiative grants EU citizens the right to call directly on the European Commission to bring forward proposals for legal instruments, provided at least a million citizens support the initiative with their signature (Article 11 TEU and Article 24 TFEU).
- The obligation to guarantee access to information will be extended to all EU bodies, institutions and other authorities. Before only the Council of Ministers, the Parliament and the Commission were subject to this obligation.
- The legislative powers of the EU Parliament are increased significantly by extending the ordinary legislative procedure (co-decision procedure) to several policy fields (such as agricultural and fisheries policy, research, trade etc.). The Parliament now has the same degree of legislative control over the budget as the Council of Ministers, including expenditures for agriculture and the cohesion funds.

## 1.3 Principles and Objectives of European Environmental Policy

European environmental policy pursues certain objectives and is based on a series of principles. The objectives are basically laid down in Article 3 TEU. According to this Article the EU is to promote sustainable development in Europe, a high level of environmental protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, as well as contribute to global sustainable development.

### Objectives of EU Environmental Policy

The objectives of European environmental policy are stipulated in detail in Article 191 TFEU:

- Preservation and protection of the environment and improvement of its quality,
- Protection of human health,
- Prudent and rational use of natural resources,
- Promotion of measures to deal with regional and global environmental problems at the international level, in particular for mitigating climate change.

Article 191 TFEU also substantiates the general objectives, as defined in Article 3 TEU and thus provides a legal basis for EU policies. One example: If the main purpose of a directive

is rationalisation of natural resource use, the legal basis will be Article 191, which in turn establishes that the ordinary legislative procedure is to be used and that the Parliament and the Council of Ministers have the same decision-making powers (see Section 3.3 Legislative Procedures).

### Principles of EU Environmental Policy

In addition to the objectives, the treaties define some principles, which must guide EU environmental policies.

#### High Level of Protection Principle

“The environmental policy of the Community shall aim (...) at a high level of protection.” This principle, which is established in Articles 3 TEU and 114 TFEU and 191 TFEU, does not make the attainment of the “highest” possible level of protection a mandatory requirement but instead prohibits the adoption of environmental policy measures with a low level of protection.

#### Precautionary Principle

The precautionary principle (Article 191 TFEU) requires that as soon as credible evidence is provided that a particular act could pollute the environment, preventative measures may be undertaken – even if the causal relationship between the act and the negative consequences is not scientifically established. This principle applies not only to environmental matters but to health issues as well.

#### Prevention Principle

The prevention principle (Article 191 TFEU) is closely associated with the precautionary principle and implies a preventative approach by the EU with respect to environmental concerns. Thus, measures which prevent environmental damage from the start are preferred over measures to restore an already damaged environment.

#### Rectification of Damage through the Principle of Correction at Source

European environmental policy measures should preferably rectify environmental damages at their source (Article 191 TFEU). This means that the EU should concentrate on problem areas in which pollution originates.

#### Polluter Pays Principle

According to the polluter pays principle (Article 191 TFEU), which has influenced European environmental policy since the early 1970s, those who are responsible for environmental pollution must bear the costs for the clean-up. In other words, government agencies, i.e. ultimately the taxpayer, should not be responsible for these costs.

### Integration Principle

The integration principle, (Article 11 TFEU) states that environmental concerns should be integrated into the definition and implementation of EU policies and measures. This principle is based on the main idea that environmental concerns cannot be

considered in isolation, since other sectors, such as agriculture, transport and energy, have a considerable impact on the environment. In practice, this does not mean that environmental policy must be given priority but that environmental protection should be on equal footing with other policy fields.

## 1.4 Important Articles from the EC Treaties for Environmental Protection

The following Articles are of particular importance from an environmental policy point of view. The table below compares the current treaty (Lisbon) with its earlier versions.

	Lisbon (TFEU)	Nice/Amsterdam (EC Treaty)	Maastricht (EC Treaty)
Principles of the EU	Article 3 TEU	Article 2	Article 2
Activities of the EU	Articles 3-6	Article 3(1)	Article 2k
Principle of Integration	Article 11	Article 6	Article 130r
European Citizens' Initiative	Article 24 +Article 11 TEU	---	---
Prohibition of Quantitative Restrictions between Member States	Articles 34-35	Articles 28-29	Articles 30-31
Agriculture and Fisheries	Articles 38-44	Articles 32-38	Articles 38-46
Transport	Articles 90-100	Articles 70-80	Articles 74-84
Harmonisation of Legislation	Article 114	Article 95	Article 100a
Social Policy	Articles 151-161	Articles 136-145	Articles 117-122
Public Health	Article 168	Article 152	Article 129
Consumer Protection	Article 169	Article 153	Article 129a
Trans-european Network for Transport and Energy Infrastructure	Articles 170-172	Articles 154-156	Article 129b-d
Structural and Cohesion Funds	Articles 174-178	Articles 158-162	Article 130a-e
Environment	Articles 191-193	Articles 174-176	Article 130r,s,t
Energy	Article 194	---	---
Tourism	Article 195	---	---
Trade	Articles 206-207	Articles 131-133	Articles 110-114

Table 1: Synopsis of Treaties of Lisbon, Nice, Amsterdam and Maastricht

## 1.5 The EU Budget

The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers share joint responsibility for the budget. The actual process of how the EU budget is put together is outlined in three steps: As a first step, the Council decides on threshold limit for the budget. In a second step, the Council lays down the multi-annual financial framework (formerly: financial perspective) for a period of five years (Article 312 TFEU). Both steps are subject to the approval of the Parliament. In a third step, Parliament and Council jointly adopt the annual budget. For this, a special procedure is used similar to the ordinary legislative procedure

(Article 314 TFEU). Here the Parliament has the same rights as the Council. The previous distinction between compulsory and non-compulsory expenditures was repealed by the Lisbon Treaty (2009). The responsible body within the Parliament is the Committee on Budgets.

The EU budget is about EUR 134 billion; this is equivalent to 1% of the EU's GDP. The money comes from three sources:

- By far the largest share comes from the Member States, which contribute a uniform percentage rate of 0,73% of their GDP (70% of overall budget).
- Traditional own resources — these mainly consist of duties

that are charged on imports. They make up approximately 15% of the budget.

- The final source of the budget is generated by value added tax (VAT) charged as a uniform percentage rate. The VAT-based resource accounts for 15% of the budget.

On the expenditure-side agriculture (with EUR 42 billion or some 32% in 2009) as well as the Structure and Cohesion Funds (EUR 48,4 billion or 32% in 2009) continue to make up the largest share. However, these posts are now called differently by the Commission. Since 2007 the Commission has completely changed its way and form of presenting the EU budget. Instead of saying expenditures for agriculture or cohesion funds, the budget is divided into five vague categories::

- Sustainable growth (45%)
- Natural resources (41%)
- Global partner (6%)
- Citizenship of the Union, freedom, security and law (2%)
- Other expenditures (6%)

A careful look is needed in order to compare the current figures with those of the previous year. The largest amount is spent on sustainable development with approximately EUR 60 billion. This is about the same as the previous costs for structural and cohesion funds. The second largest amount is spent on natural resources with roughly EUR 57 billion. This amount is in turn divided into four main subcategories:

Agriculture (direct aid and market support)	EUR 42.000 million
Rural Development	EUR 13.651 million
Fisheries Funds	EUR 631 million
LIFE (nature and environmental protection)	EUR 317 million
Other programmes	EUR 48 million

**Table 2: Expenditure 2009 for “Natural Resources“**

There have been many attempts to fundamentally reform the EU budget. The most recent attempt was undertaken by the European Council in December 2005 when the heads of state and government could not agree on a decision for a new financial framework 2007 to 2013. Especially the United Kingdom advocated a significant reduction in payments for agriculture. France on the other hand wanted to abolish the British rebate, according to which the UK pays less net contributions.

The summit eventually agreed to undertake a fundamental budget reform for the period after 2014. The go-ahead for this was given in 2008 when the Commission launched a consultation on the subject. The Council and the Parliament must agree on a reformed budget by 2013 at the latest for such a budget to enter into force in 2014 without delay. More on the budget reform under [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/index_en.htm)

## 1.6 Overview of the EU Institutions

Although we often speak of the “EU”, it is the institutions or bodies presented in the following sections which introduce measures, develop proposals and adopt legislation.

### Institutions of the European Union

The seven institutions and bodies of the EU are laid down in Article 13 of the EC Treaty:

European Parliament (EP), [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu)

European Council, [www.european-council.europa.eu](http://www.european-council.europa.eu)

Council of the EU (Council of Ministers), [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)

European Commission, [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

European Court of Justice, [www.curia.europa.eu](http://www.curia.europa.eu)

European Central Bank (ECB), [www.ecb.int](http://www.ecb.int)

European Court of Auditors, [www.eca.europa.eu](http://www.eca.europa.eu)

### Other institutions

Committee of the Regions (CoR), [www.cor.europa.eu](http://www.cor.europa.eu)

European Investment Bank (EIB), [www.eib.org](http://www.eib.org)

European Environmental Agency (EEA), [www.eea.europa.eu](http://www.eea.europa.eu)

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC),

[www.eesc.europa.eu](http://www.eesc.europa.eu)

### Who is who in the EU?

In order to find the contact person you are looking for in the respective institutions or information on specific topics, visit [www.europa.eu/whoiswho](http://www.europa.eu/whoiswho)

Free hotline: 00800/6789 10 11

## 2. Legislative Institutions

This section describes the most important EU institutions: the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the Commission and the Parliament. It illustrates their powers, their structure and how they function.

**T**HE THREE LEGISLATIVE institutions of the EU are the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The European Council has no legislative power, but the authority to instruct. The main competences of the EU institutions vis-à-vis Member States are defined in three categories:

- Shared competence between EU and Member States (majority of cases),
- Exclusive competence of the Union if Member States have irrevocably delegated their scope of action to the European Union (for example: customs union, monetary and competition policy), as well as
- Supporting competence, this means that power still lies with Member States. The Union may only intervene to support Member States (e.g. health, tourism, culture).

The Member States are the “Masters of the Treaties” (while the Commission is regarded as the “Guardian of the Treaties”). They decide according to the principle of conferral of competences (Article 5(1) TEU) which competences are to be assumed at what level. Over time, in particular following the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, an increasing number of competences have become the responsibility of the EU. Articles 3 to 6 TFEU list the relevant policy areas of EU competences in three categories. Environment, agriculture, fisheries, energy, transport, consumer protection and other relevant policy areas that take aspects of sustainability into account are categorised as shared competences. This means that Member States exercise their powers only if the EU does not exercise its competence.

The use of the competences is governed by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality (Article 5 TEU). The principle of subsidiarity is to ensure that decisions are made as close to

citizens as possible. Therefore, it is important to always check, whether something indeed needs to be regulated at European level or whether it could be regulated at local, regional or national level. The principle of proportionality stipulates that any actions by the EU shall not, in terms of content and form, go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.

### 2.1 European Council

The European Council is the supreme political body of the European Union. It is composed of the heads of state and government, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy also takes part in the meetings. For a long time the European Council was an informal meeting, but following the Lisbon Treaty it gained the status of an official EU institution (Article 15 TEU). It meets twice a year for summits in order to discuss the development of the EU and to establish general policy guidelines. In special cases, the Council also clarifies questions that cannot be resolved at ministerial level. The Council may not make legally binding decisions but does have the authority to issue directions. The results are recorded in the “Conclusions of the Presidency”, which are implemented by the other European institutions. Council meetings are not open to the public.

The Lisbon Treaty has introduced the post of the President of the European Council, who is elected by the heads of state and government for two and a half years. The president's duty is to:

- chair the meetings and drive the Council's work forward
- ensure the preparation and continuity of the work of the European Council in cooperation with the President of the Commission,
- endeavour to facilitate cohesion and consensus within the European Council
- present a report to the European Parliament after each of the meetings of the European Council.

The European Council also plays a central role in the adaptation and modification of European Treaties.

## 2.2 Council of the European Union – The Council of Ministers

The Council of the European Union, generally referred to as “Council of Ministers”, or “the Council” is composed of the departmental ministers of the EU Member States. Although the Parliament has gained power and co-decision now, the Council is the most powerful legislative decision-making body of the EU. All Ministers in the Council are authorized to make binding decisions on behalf of their governments; their signatures represent the signature of the entire government. The composition of the ten Council configurations depends on the topics to be dealt with. If environmental issues are on the agenda, as a rule the environment ministers participate in the “Environment Council”. For example, Germany's agriculture minister attends the “Fisheries Council”, since this area falls within his/her remit. In the event of a previous engagement or for reasons of content, other ministers may also attend, however.

The ten currently existing Council configurations (“the Councils”) are as follows:

- General Affairs
- Foreign Affairs
- Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN)
- Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)
- Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)
- Competitiveness (COMP)
- Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE)
- Agriculture and Fisheries (AGFISH)
- Environment (ENV)
- Education, Youth and Culture (EYC)

### Functions of the Council of Ministers

#### European Council

Rue de la Loi 175

B-1048 Brussels

Tel.: +32 2 / 281 61 11

Fax: +32 2 / 281 69 34

E-Mail: access contact form at

[www.european-council.europa.eu](http://www.european-council.europa.eu)

#### Council of the European Union

Rue de la Loi 175

B-1048 Brussels

Tel.: +32 2 / 281 6111

Fax: +32 2 / 281 6934

E-Mail: [public.info@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:public.info@consilium.europa.eu)

[www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)

The most important functions of the Council of Ministers are:

- The Council of Ministers adopts European legislation in most areas together with the European Parliament using the ordinary legislative procedure. Normally the Council of Ministers may only take action if the Commission, which has the right of initiative, submits a concrete proposal. However, the Council of Ministers may call upon the Commission to act.
- The fundamental aspects of economic policy in the Member States are coordinated in the Council for Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN).
- The Council of Ministers may negotiate international agreements between the EU and one or several states or international organisations.
- The Council of Ministers approves the EU budget together with the European Parliament following a special procedure pursuant to Article 314 TFEU.
- The Council coordinates the cooperation of the national courts and police forces.

### Decision-Making in the Council of Ministers

The Treaties establish which decisions are taken by the Council with what majority:

- by a qualified majority (in most cases)
- by unanimity (taxation or social affairs)
- by simple majority (rather seldom, e.g. procedural questions, rules of procedure).

Unanimity means that each Member State has a right to veto. Most Council decisions are reached by a qualified majority. A qualified majority is deemed to be achieved if:

- the majority of the Member States (in some cases, a two-thirds majority) approves,
- at least 255 affirmative votes of 345 possible votes are cast,
- the affirmative votes represent at least 62% of the total po-

pulation of the EU.

The votes in the Council of Ministers are distributed according to the size of a state: The larger the population of a country, the more votes it has, although the number does not increase proportionally, but is adjusted for the benefit of countries with a smaller population.

Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain	29
Spain, Poland	27
Romania	14
Netherlands	13
Czech Republic, Belgium, Hungary, Portugal, Greece	12
Austria, Sweden, Bulgaria	10
Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Finland	7
Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovenia	4
Malta	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>

**Table 3: Distribution of the votes in the Council of Ministers**

On 1 November 2014, the currently existing arrangement will be replaced by the “double majority vote”, which was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (Article 16 TEU). A qualified majority will then be deemed to be achieved if:

- at least 55% of the members of the Council (at least 15) approve and
- the affirmative votes represent at least 65% of the total population of the EU.

A blocking minority must comprise at least four members of the Council. The Treaty, however, allows for a transitional regulation until 31 March 2017. During this period a Member State may request to go back to the old decision-making procedure (before 2014).

### Council Presidency (EU Presidency)

The work of the Council of Ministers must be coordinated and organised. Therefore, one Member State always holds the EU Council presidency for six months; it is alternated according to a pre-established rotation. Individual meetings and summits are chaired by the current government representatives of the Member State, which means that all EU states are responsible in turn for the agenda of the Councils of Ministers for a term of six months each. The only exception is the Council for Foreign Affairs, which is chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Not only does the Presidency expedite legislative and political decisions and act as an intermediary between the Member States, it may also put special emphasis on their own working priorities.

In December 2004 the EU foreign ministers determined the order of the EU Council presidencies until the year 2020. It was decided that, beginning with the German Council presidency during the first six months of 2007, three consecutive presidencies would always work in close collaboration for the

entire 18 months as a “tripartite group” (or “trio presidency”). A tripartite group shall always comprise one large and one small EU country and at least one new EU Member State (accession from May 2004 onward).

2007 first six months	Germany
2007 second six months	Portugal
2008 first six months	Slovenia
2008 second six months	France
2009 first six months	Checz Republic
2009 second six months	Sweden
2010 first six months	Spain
2010 second six months	Belgium
2011 first six months	Hungary
2011 second six months	Poland
2012 first six months	Denmark
2012 second six months	Cyprus
2013 first six months	Ireland
2013 second six months	Lithuania
2014 first six months	Greece
2014 second six months	Italy
2015 first six months	Latvia
2015 second six months	Luxembourg
2016 first six months	Netherlands
2016 second six months	Slovakia
2017 first six months	Malta
2017 second six months	Great Britain
2018 first six months	Estonia
2018 second six months	Bulgaria
2019 first six months	Austria
2019 second six months	Romania
2020 first six months	Finland

**Table 4: EU Council Presidencies until 2020**

### Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER)

The work of the Council – apart from agriculture, for which the Special Committee on Agriculture is responsible – is prepared and coordinated by the Permanent Representatives Committee (French acronym COREPER, also commonly used in English). It is composed of the heads of the permanent representations of the Member States in Brussels and thus comprises 27 members. The work of this committee is in turn prepared by working groups, which consist of delegates from the Member States. The relevant topics are divided into A points and B points and placed on the Council agenda. A points may be adopted by the Council without a debate, if the COREPER has already reached an agreement. B points must be discussed and voted on by the Council. There are two types of COREPER:

#### Coreper I

Coreper I is made up of the deputy permanent representatives. They make preparations for the other six Council configurations, which generally meet once or twice during a six-month period.

## Coreper II

The EU ambassadors of the 27 Member States represent their countries in COREPER II. They prepare the sessions of the Foreign Affairs and General Affairs Council which meet once a month, as well as the ECOFIN Council of the finance ministers, and the Councils of Justice and Home Affairs, which meet three to four times during a six-month period.

## 2.3 High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

The Lisbon Treaty has created a new post in the EU, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. It is situated between the Council of Ministers and the Commission (Article 18 TEU). The High Representative is something like a foreign minister, even though he/she may not be called that. He/she is elected by the European Council with qualified majority. His/her task is to coordinate the Union's foreign and security policy. He/she chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and is also the Vice-president of the Commission. Through this double function the High Representative is to ensure consistency in EU foreign policy. Catherine Ashton of the UK was appointed as the first High Representative in 2009.

## 2.4. European Commission

The European Commission is the central executive body of the EU (Articles 17-18 TEU and Articles 244-250 TFEU). It works independently of the national governments solely in the interests of the European Community. The Commission is subject to the democratic control of the European Parliament, to which it is accountable.

### President of the European Commission

The President of the European Commission is elected by the European Parliament, acting on a proposal from the European Council. European Council's proposal for a candidate must take into account the results of the European elections. The new and old President of the Commission is José Manuel Durão Barroso of Portugal (2004–2009 and since 2009). His function and responsibility is to define the political guidelines of the Commission's actions. Moreover, he organises the work of the Commission and convenes the meetings of the College (body of Commissioners), which he chairs. In addition, the President represents the Commission at the meetings of the European

### European Commission

Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 29 91111  
[www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

Council, the Group of the 20 leading industrialized countries (G20) as well as vis-à-vis the European Parliament. The President of the Commission may reallocate the areas of responsibility of the Commissioners during the current term of office and may call for their resignation.

### Commissioners and Directorates-General

The President of the Commission appoints the Commissioners in agreement with the governments of the Member States. The entire College of Commissioners must then appear before the European Parliament and is officially appointed only after the Parliament's vote of approval. The Commission is composed of 26 members plus the President of the Commission. The administration of the Commission is made up of a Secretariat-General, which coordinates the work and 30 Directorates-General (DG), which are partially subordinate to the respective Commissioners and which also partially deliver services for the entire Commission. Such services include for example judicial or translation services. Field offices and research institutes in the Member States are under the supervision of the Commission. It employs approximately 24.000 civil servants as well as 6.000 interpreters and translators. The College of Commissioners generally meets once a week. A list of the Commissioners can be found in the Annex.

### Functions of the European Commission

The Commission is the executive body of the EU. In order to assume this function it has the following tasks and rights:

#### 1. Right of Initiative – Preparation of Decisions

The Commission holds the exclusive right of initiative in the legislative procedure. This means that it alone may submit proposals for directives and regulations to the Council of Ministers and the Parliament. It is free to choose the legal basis, form and content of its proposals. In addition, it publishes decisions, recommendations, opinions, green and white papers, reports and communications which have no mandatory, legally binding effect in order to give particular impetus to European policy.

In its annual programme the Commission sets out its priorities, defines its most important political plans and lists the legislative initiatives it seeks to launch in the future. All the plans of the Commission must be examined with regards to the impact they may have (impact assessment). In addition, they are now also subject to the principle of "better regulation". The better regulation initiative was initiated by the Commission in 2002 in response to the increasing criticism of excessive

bureaucratic burden on the European economy, caused by the rising number of legislation. The initiative aims at ensuring “efficiency”, effectiveness, coherence, responsibility and transparency of EU policy. For this purpose, the Commission has identified three working areas:

- Simplification of existing EU legislation (of the “acquis communautaire”),
- Withdrawal of some of the Commission’s proposals already negotiated by Council and Parliament,
- Stronger impact assessment when drafting new laws and regulations.

In 2006 the Commission identified 42 legal acts in 13 priority

To contact a particular staff member from the Commission or the Directorates-General, please use the following e-mail address format:  
first.name.surname@ec.europa.eu

If you experience difficulties, please contact the address information service:  
address-information@ec.europa.eu

areas, in which the administrative costs amounted to approximately EUR 115 to 130 billion. The 13 areas comprise agriculture, fisheries, transport, environment (COM(2006)691; for documents see Annex 1). On the basis of this estimate, administrative costs are to be reduced by 25% by 2012. In its third report from 18 January 2009 (COM(2009) 15) the Commission conducted an interim assessment. According to this assessment, the Commission took measures leading to a simplification and reduction of the *acquis communautaire* by almost ten percent. This would be equivalent to 1.300 legal acts or 7.800 pages of the Official Journal.

## 2. Limited Implementation Tasks

Normally primary responsibility for implementing EU laws lies with the Member States, but if uniform national conditions are required, the Council and the Parliament may confer limited powers to the Commission.

Until recently “comitology committees” assisted the Commission in exercising its implementing powers. The comitology system was, however, abolished with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and was replaced by the “implementing act” (Article 291 TFEU) and the “delegated act” (Article 290 TFEU). Given that the new regulations only apply to those provisions which have been adopted since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, both systems shall simultaneously exist in future.

The implementing acts confer powers to the Commission to guarantee “uniform conditions for implementing legally binding acts.” This includes the adoption of implementing measures, a process which each system of a nation state is familiar with.

One differentiates between the examination procedure and

the advisory procedure. The main difference is that an advisory procedure is carried out with a simple majority in the committee and the Commission only has to consider the results “to the extent possible”. The examination procedure on the other hand is stricter, as the Commission cannot simply ignore a negative vote of the committee except in cases of dangers such as “a significant disruption of the agricultural market or an endangering of the Union’s financial interests. The Commission can then either present a new proposal after a certain period of time or a conciliation procedure is carried out.

By means of the delegated act, the Commission can adopt “non-legislative acts of general application to supplement or amend certain non-essential elements of the affected legislative act.” Only “non-essential” legislative acts can be conferred; all essential elements of legislative acts shall remain within the responsibility of Parliament and Council. In a directive or regulation Parliament and Council must clearly define the objectives, content, scope and duration of the delegation of power to the Commission. The Council and the Parliament also have the right to revoke the delegation of power or raise objections to the decisions of the Commission. In spring 2011 the new regulation EU Nr. 182/2011, specifying these regulations entered into force.

In the currently applicable but expiring comitology procedure (Decision 1999/468/EC) delegates from national governments advise the Commission. The Commission serves as chair but does not have the right to vote. Member States thus have an effective control mechanism over procedures for implementing measures adopted by the Commission.

Over the course of time a series of different comitology committees has emerged: Traditionally there are three types of committees: regulatory, advisory and management committees. They differ in their competences. While the Commission needs only to listen to the opinion of the advisory committee, regulatory and management committees may force the Commission to present their proposals to the Council.

In recent times the EU Parliament has successfully managed to be included more in the comitology procedure. After it was first granted the right to express its opinion in 1999, it then pushed for a fourth type of committee with stronger powers, the regulatory committee with scrutiny (2006/512/EC). This committee gives the Parliament (and Council) the power of veto against a policy planned by the Commission, if the measure is considered to be a “quasi legislative” measure.

The respective legal act decides which procedure is to be applied, depending on the political area and the political significance of the respective negotiation object. There are currently 250 comitology committees covering all policy areas of the EU. 34 committees deal with environmental issues. Among them are:

- C10700 – Advisory Committee for the implementation of the directive on the limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in certain activities and installations;
- C10900 – Committee for the application of the regulation authorizing voluntary participation by undertakings in the

industrial sector in a Community eco-management and audit scheme;

- C11100 – Committee for the implementation of the directive on packaging and packaging waste.

Every citizen can view the Comitology Register on the Internet. All documents regarding the comitology procedure are listed there insofar as they are not identified as confidential: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regcomitology>.

### 3. Monitoring Implementation – Guardian of the Treaties

As “guardian of the Treaties” the European Commission also monitors Member States’, authorities’ and companies’ compliance with EU law.

- The Commission monitors the implementation of contractual agreements of the Member States. In the event of failure by the Member States, the Commission may take action. It first gives the affected Member State the opportunity to comment on the accusations before issuing, if necessary, a reasoned opinion (Article 258 TFEU). If such a warning remains unsuccessful, the Commission may initiate treaty infringement proceedings before the Court of Justice of the European Union (Article 260 TFEU).
- It monitors whether companies distort European competition through unlawful price-fixing or mergers. Should this be the case, the Commission may impose fines and prohibit company mergers.
- It monitors the work of the Council, Parliament and the European Central Bank (for non-jurisdiction, incompetence, disregard of formal requirements, infringement of treaty and misuse of discretionary powers).
- It monitors the budgetary situation of the Member States (stability pact).

However, the Commission does not have sufficient resources to effectively monitor compliance with EU regulations in Member States. Therefore, it relies on the information provided by national authorities as well as third parties (e.g. the civil society).

### 4. The Commission as treasurer

The Commission is responsible for all Community funds and the budget as a whole. This also includes the coordination of the structural fund and the framework and action programmes of the EU (e.g. environmental investment programmes). The Commission passes approximately 80 per cent of the budgetary resources on to the Member States, which disburse grants to regional authorities and farmers, for example.

### 5. The Commission as a negotiator

Last but not least, the Commission also has the competence to negotiate in certain political areas. For example, it negotiates with candidate countries about the respective provisions and the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, which is the accumulated body of EU legislation. The Commission also negotiates on behalf of the Member States on trade policy issues, for example within the World Trade Organisation. In these cases Member States have assigned their negotiating powers to the Commission.

## 2.5 European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) has legislative, budgetary and supervisory powers. It also elects the President of the Commission. Although, unlike the Commission, it does not have a right of initiative in the legislative process, it does have legislative decision-making power in the European Union jointly with the Council of Ministers.

Since 1979 the Parliament has been elected in general and direct elections. As there is no uniform European electoral procedure, each country votes differently. Meetings of the Parliament are open to the public. The seat of the Parliament is divided: for two weeks of every month the parliamentary committees meet in Brussels, where most Members of Parliament also have their principal offices. One week per month is reserved for meetings of the political groups. During the remaining week the plenary session is held in Strasbourg. In addition, the major part of the Secretariat-General is based in Luxembourg.

### Functions of the Parliament

The European Parliament has the following functions and powers.

#### 1. Legislation

The Parliament, together with the Council of Ministers, makes decisions on draft legislation developed by the Commission. It does not have a right of initiative except the competing right of initiative regarding the reform of the treaties in accordance with Article 48 TEU. Depending on the decision-making procedures, the Parliament has varying competences. In the ordinary legislative procedure the Parliament has the same powers as the Council (see Section 3, Legislative Procedures) At legislative level, parliamentary work is organised as follows:

- The European Parliament receives a legislative proposal (draft directive or regulation) from the EU Commission; this proposal is sent to a responsible committee and other co-consultative committees by the President of the Parliament, each of which appoint a rapporteur for the respective procedure (dossier).
- The Members of Parliament in the respective committees may introduce amendments to the report prepared by the rapporteur; these are then adopted, with amendments if necessary, by the responsible committee.
- The report is reviewed by the political groups.
- The report is debated in the plenary session. The outcome of the final vote of the plenary session is then communicated to the Council.

#### 2. Budgetary Powers

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the budgetary powers of the Parliament have significantly increased. The Parliament now has essentially the same powers as the Council (see Section 1.5 for details).

### 3. Parliamentary Supervision

The European Parliament elects the President of the Commission, acting on a proposal by the European Council. It conducts hearings of the designated commissioners and subsequently decides, whether to grant the Commission as a whole a vote of confidence (either all Commissioners or none). If the Parliament does not grant its vote of confidence, the President of the Commission in conjunction with Member States must present a new Commission. In addition the Parliament can deliver a vote of no confidence to the Commission: The Commission can be forced to resign if Members of Parliament adopt a motion of censure with an absolute majority (in this case at least two-third majority). So far the Parliament has never adopted a motion of censure, however, in the past the threat of such a motion has proven to be very effective.

The Parliament may monitor the work of the Commission through consultations by various technical committees and hearings. It may invite Commissioners to special discussion rounds or request the Commission to draft a report. Parliamentary committees, political groups and individual MEPs also direct numerous oral inquiries to the Council or the Commission. If these inquiries pertain to important political issues, they usually lead to a debate in the plenary session, which, if necessary, ends with the adoption of a parliamentary resolution. Furthermore, the Parliament may invite Council and Commission for question time to which the relevant persons have to show up. In addition, the Commission responds to over 5.000 written inquiries annually from MEPs. Moreover, the President of the European Council submits a report to the Parliament after every meeting.

### President and Bureau

The president oversees all the activities of the Parliament and its bodies. He/she chairs the meetings of the plenary sessions, the Bureau and the Conference of Presidents. He/she represents the Parliament in its external relations.

The Bureau is the administrative management organ and is responsible for the parliamentary budget as well as personnel and organisational matters. It is composed of the president, 14 vice-presidents and five quaestors in an advisory capacity.

The Conference of Presidents, which is made up of the president of the Parliament and the presidents of the political groups, is the political management institution of the Parliament. It determines the agenda for plenary sessions; it establishes the annual working calendar of the parliamentary organs and is responsible for the composition and jurisdictions of the committees, the committees of inquiry, the joint parliamentary committees, the standing delegations and the ad hoc delegations. Additionally, it resolves conflicts of competence between two committees.

In July 2009 the Bureau was newly elected. Jerzy Buzek of Poland is currently President of the European Parliament. Dagmar Roth-Behrendt (SPD), Rainer Wieland (CDU) and Silvana Koch-Mehrin (FDP) were elected as Vice-presidents from Germany.

### National Distribution of Seats

MEPs are elected for five years. The current Parliament was elected on the basis of the Treaty of Nice and has 754 members. The Lisbon Treaty limits the number of MEPs to 750 plus President (Article 14 TEU). The Treaty itself does not foresee a distribution of seats. It merely states that citizens ought to be represented in digressive proportionality, with at least six and a maximum of 96 MEPs per member state. The current distribution of seats per country is as follows:

Member state	MEPs (2009-2014)
Germany	99
France	74
United Kingdom	73
Italy	73
Spain	54
Poland	51
Rumania	33
Netherlands	26
Greece	22
Portugal	22
Belgium	22
Czech Republic	22
Hungary	22
Sweden	20
Austria	19
Bulgaria	18
Denmark	13
Slovakia	13
Finland	13
Ireland	12
Lithuania	12
Latvia	9
Slovenia	8
Estonia	6
Cyprus	6
Luxembourg	6
Malta	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>754</b>
	Votes required for absolute majority: 378

Table 6: Distribution of Seats in the European Parliament according to Member States

### Parliament Committees

The parliament committees prepare positions on legislative proposals of the Commission and may also express opinions on particular policy issues at their own initiative. The committee appoints a rapporteur for this purpose, whose draft report is debated and voted on in the committee before being discussed by the individual political groups and submitted to the plenary session.

During the 2009-2014 parliamentary term, 20 committees prepare the decisions of the plenary sessions. Each of these committees appoints a chair and several vice-chairs; the committee's work is supported by a secretariat. For example, the chairman of the Committee on the Environment is Jo Leinen of the Social Democrats. A list of the permanent committees with their chairs is included in Annex V.

The Parliament may also set up temporary committees and sub-committees of inquiry. In 2009 the Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis (CRIS) was set up.

## Political Groups

The Members of Parliament are organised in political groups. According to the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure (RoP), members must belong to a political group, which is elected in at least one quarter of the Member States. At least 25 members of parliament are needed to form a political group (Article 30 RoP).

If the number of Members of Parliament of a political group falls below the required threshold, the President, with the agreement of the presidents of the political groups may allow it to continue to exist until the next constitutive session of the parliament, provided the members continue to represent at least one-fifth of the Member States and the political group has been in existence for a period longer than one year. A secretariat is available to Members of Parliament who do not belong to a political group (Article 33 RoP). The seating arrangement in the plenary is not determined by national delegations but according to political group membership. There are seven political groups and the group of the non-attached Members of Parliament. The complete addresses of the political groups can be found on the relevant websites. The political groups are listed in a descending order by the number of their Members of Parliament:

### EPP

European People's Party  
Political Orientation: Christian Democrats, Conservatives  
President: Joseph Daul (France)  
Secretary-General: Martin Kamp  
[www.eppgroup.eu](http://www.eppgroup.eu)

### S&D

Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament  
Political Orientation: Social Democrats  
President: Martin Schulz (Germany)  
Secretary-General: Anna Colombo  
[www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu](http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu)

### ALDE

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
Political Orientation: Liberals, Centrists  
President: Guy Verhofstadt (Belgium)  
Secretary-General: Alexander Beels  
[www.alde.eu](http://www.alde.eu)

### Greens/EFA

The Greens / European Free Alliance  
Political Orientation: Green, Regional parties  
Presidents: Rebecca Harms (Germany), Daniel Cohn-Bendit (France)  
Secretary-General: Vula Tsetsi  
[www.greens-efa.org](http://www.greens-efa.org)

### ECR

European Conservatives and Reformists  
Political Orientation: Conservatives  
President: Michal Tomasz Kaminski (Poland)  
Secretary-General: Frank Barrett  
[www.ecrgroup.eu](http://www.ecrgroup.eu)

### GUE/NGL

European United Left-Nordic Green Left  
Political Orientation: Left  
President: Lothar Bisky (Germany)  
Secretary-General: Maria D'Alimonte  
[www.guengl.eu](http://www.guengl.eu)

### EFD

Europe of Freedom and Democracy  
Political Orientation: Eurosceptics  
President: Nigel Paul Farage (United Kingdom)  
Secretary-General: Emmanuel Bordez  
[www.efdgroup.eu](http://www.efdgroup.eu)



European Parliament in Brussels  
Photo: Euseson, Wikipedia

European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz 60  
B-1047 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 284 2111  
Fax: +32 2 / 230 6933  
[www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu)

#### Contact MEPs

All Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) can be reached in Brussels and Strasbourg. The postal address of all MEPs is:

European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz  
B-1047 Brussels

In general, the same postal address applies to all MEPs.

Mail arrives faster if the office number of the MEP is also indicated.

You will find this number and further information on individual MEPs on [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu) under “your MEPs”.

E-mail addresses always consist of:

first name.surname@europarl.europa.eu

Double names should be connected with (-), umlauts should be written as ae, oe and ue.

# 3. Legislative Procedures

The EU legislative institutions have several procedures to make use of. Depending on the topic, they either have to use the ordinary legislative procedure or a special legislative procedure. The most important procedures are described below:

**T**HE THREE MAIN LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES in the EU are: the ordinary legislative procedure, the consultation procedure and the assent procedure. They mainly differ with regards to the position of power assumed by the Parliament. The TFEU decides which procedure is to be applied. A previous fourth procedure, the co-operation procedure was abolished by the Lisbon Treaty. In addition, there are some special procedures used for the budget (Articles 313–319 TFEU), the European Citizens Initiative (Article 11(4) TFEU and Article 24 TFEU) or the reform of the European Treaties (Articles 48–50 and 352 TFEU).

In the early years of European integration legislation was quite easy: The European Commission drafted legislative proposals and the Council of Ministers decided on whether to adopt them. At that time the consultation procedure was the most widely used legislative procedure. Ever since then the Parliament has been granted more and more powers. Today the legislative procedure used most widely is the ordinary legislative procedure, placing the Council and the Parliament on equal footing. This procedure was steadily expanded in the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice. With the Lisbon Treaty alone the number of political areas where the ordinary legislative procedure is applied has been increased from 45 to 85. Since the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Parliament is also in a position to call upon the Commission to act. The Commission is not obliged to act upon such a demand, however, it must explain within three months, why it is not following up a proposal tabled by the Parliament or launch a legislative initiative on the subject within one year.

## 3.1 Consultation procedure

In this procedure the Parliament is only allowed to express its opinion and pose questions to the Council. The Commission sends its legislative proposal to the Council and the Parliament, and the EP may adopt it, reject it or propose amendments. The Commission may consider the opinion of the Parliament in an amended proposal; but is not obliged to do so. The Council can then adopt the Commission's final proposal or unanimously amend it. The consultation procedure is applied for rules of competition (Article 103 TFEU), taxation (Article 113 TFEU) or regulations that directly affect the functioning of the single market (Article 115 TFEU).

## 3.2 Assent Procedure

This procedure is rarely used. In this decision-making procedure the Council must obtain the approval of the Parliament before making a decision. The Parliament may not propose amendments; it either adopts proposals by an absolute majority or rejects them. The assent procedure is used for amendments to the treaty (Article 48(3) and 48(7) TFEU), withdrawals from the EU (Article 50(2) TFEU) or for international agreements (Article 218(6) TFEU).

## 3.3 Ordinary legislative procedure

The ordinary legislative procedure (formerly co-decision procedure) pursuant to Article 289, 294 and 297 TFEU is the most important legislative procedure in the European Union. Legislation proposed by the Commission is adopted or rejected jointly by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Although the Parliament does not have the right to initiate legislation, which is reserved to the Commission, in the ordinary legislative procedure a legal act may not be adopted against the wishes of the majority of the European Parliament.

This procedure may include up to three readings and comprises the following steps:

### Initiative

The Commission's proposal for legislation (directive or regulation) is sent to the Parliament and the Council.

### First Reading

The text is submitted to the competent committee by the President of the Parliament, which then deliberates on it and proposes amendments, if the Commission's draft does not reflect the ideas of the Parliament. Finally, the plenary session votes on the text with a simple majority, referring to more than 50% of the votes cast. The Parliament's decision is communicated to the Council of Ministers. The legislation is adopted if the Council approves all the amendments requested by the Parliament by a qualified majority (see Section 2.2) in its first reading, or if the Parliament has not proposed any amendments and the Council also approves the Commission's draft. If the Ministers in the Council disagree with the Commission or the EP, they combine their proposed amendments in a position (formerly common position) and give the reasons for each amendment requested. The position is sent to the Parliament for the second reading. The first reading is not subject to a time limit.

### Second Reading

The second reading in the European Parliament must take place within three months. In exceptional cases this time restriction may be extended by one month. The Parliament has three possibilities: it either accepts the position of the Council by an absolute majority of its members (the legislation is adopted), rejects it (the legislation fails) or amends it. If the latter is the case, the Commission delivers its opinion on the proposed amendments of the EP and conveys both to the Council of Ministers. If the Ministers approve the Parliament's version of the draft legislation by a qualified majority, the legislation is adopted. If the Commission rejects the Parliament's amendments, the Council must decide unanimously for the legislation to become effective. If the Council rejects the Parliament's amendments, a conciliation committee must be convened. The Council has three months for the second reading, too.

### Conciliation Committee

The conciliation committee is composed of an equal number of

representatives from the Council and the Parliament and one representative from the Commission. On the basis of the text amended by the Parliament, it endeavours to negotiate a compromise within six weeks. In most cases the two sides succeed in reaching an agreement. If they do not agree, the proposed legislation is not passed.

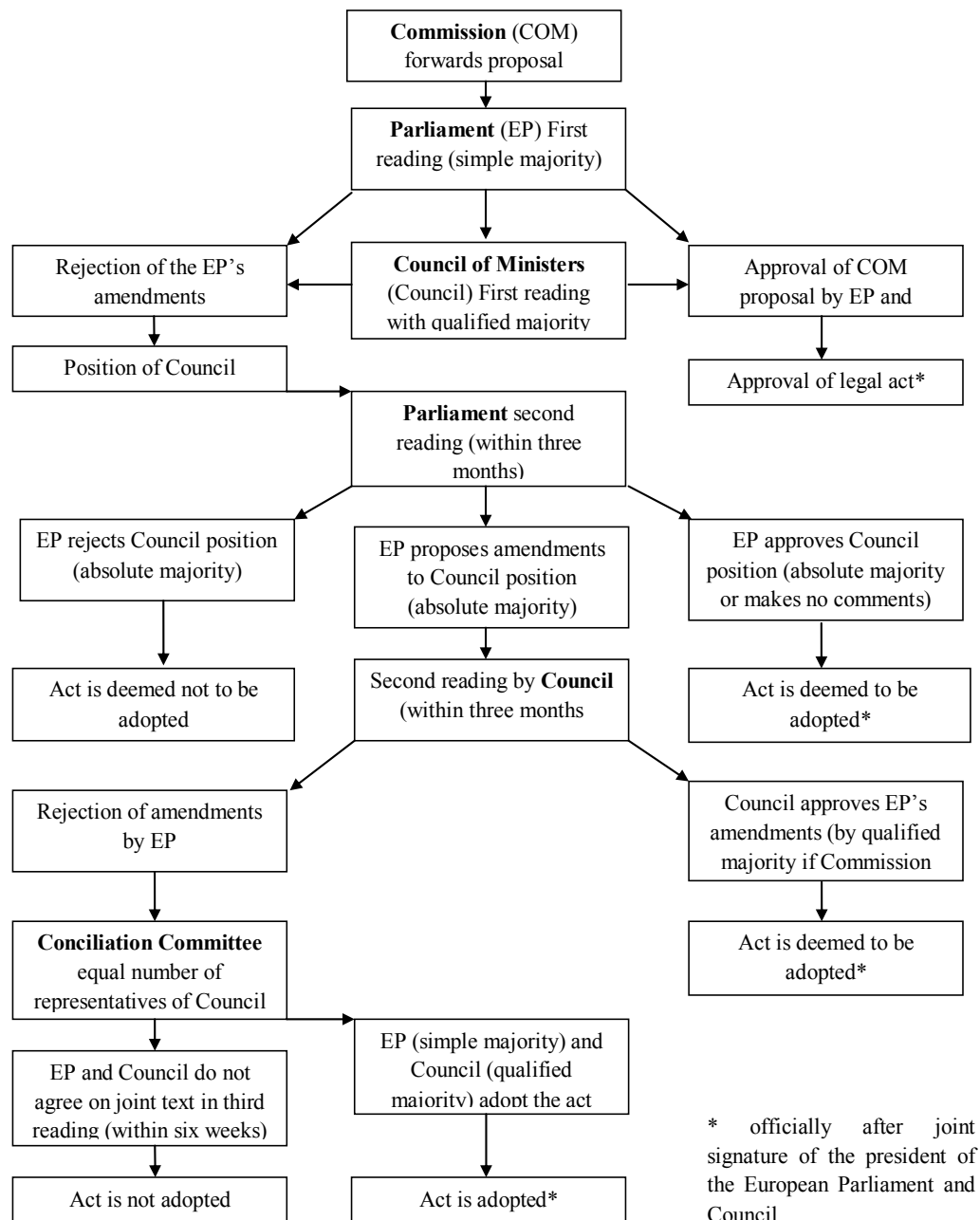
### Third Reading

If an agreement is reached in the conciliation committee, the Parliament and Council must approve it in the third reading – the Parliament by a simple majority, the Council by a qualified majority. The legislation is not passed if one of the two institutions rejects the joint text. The European Parliament and the Council both have a period of six weeks for the third reading, which by way of exception may be extended by six weeks.

This procedure was introduced by the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 and is now applied in 85 political areas. The TFEU stipulates which decision-making procedure must be applied to which subject matter: This includes the following policy areas:

- Structuring of the European Citizens' Initiative (Article 24 TFEU);
- Agriculture (Articles 42-43 TFEU);
- Judicial cooperation in civil law (Articles 81-82 TFEU);
- Transport (Article 91 TFEU);
- Harmonisation of the internal market (Article 114 TFEU);
- Social policy (Article 153 TFEU);
- Education (Articles 165-166 TFEU);
- Culture (Article 167 TFEU);
- Public health (Article 168 TFEU);
- Consumer protection (Article 169 TFEU);
- Trans-european networks (Article 172 TFEU);
- Structural and cohesion funds (Article 177 TFEU);
- Environment (Article 192 TFEU);
- Energy (Article 194 TFEU);
- Tourism (Article 195 TFEU);
- Development assistance (Article 209 TFEU)

## Ordinary legislative procedure according to Article 294 TFEU



## 3.4 The European Citizens' Initiative

The Lisbon Treaty has for the first time established a tool of direct participatory democracy that is enshrined in primary law, the European Citizens' Initiative. The Treaty (Article 11(4) TEU) provides that "not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters

where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties."

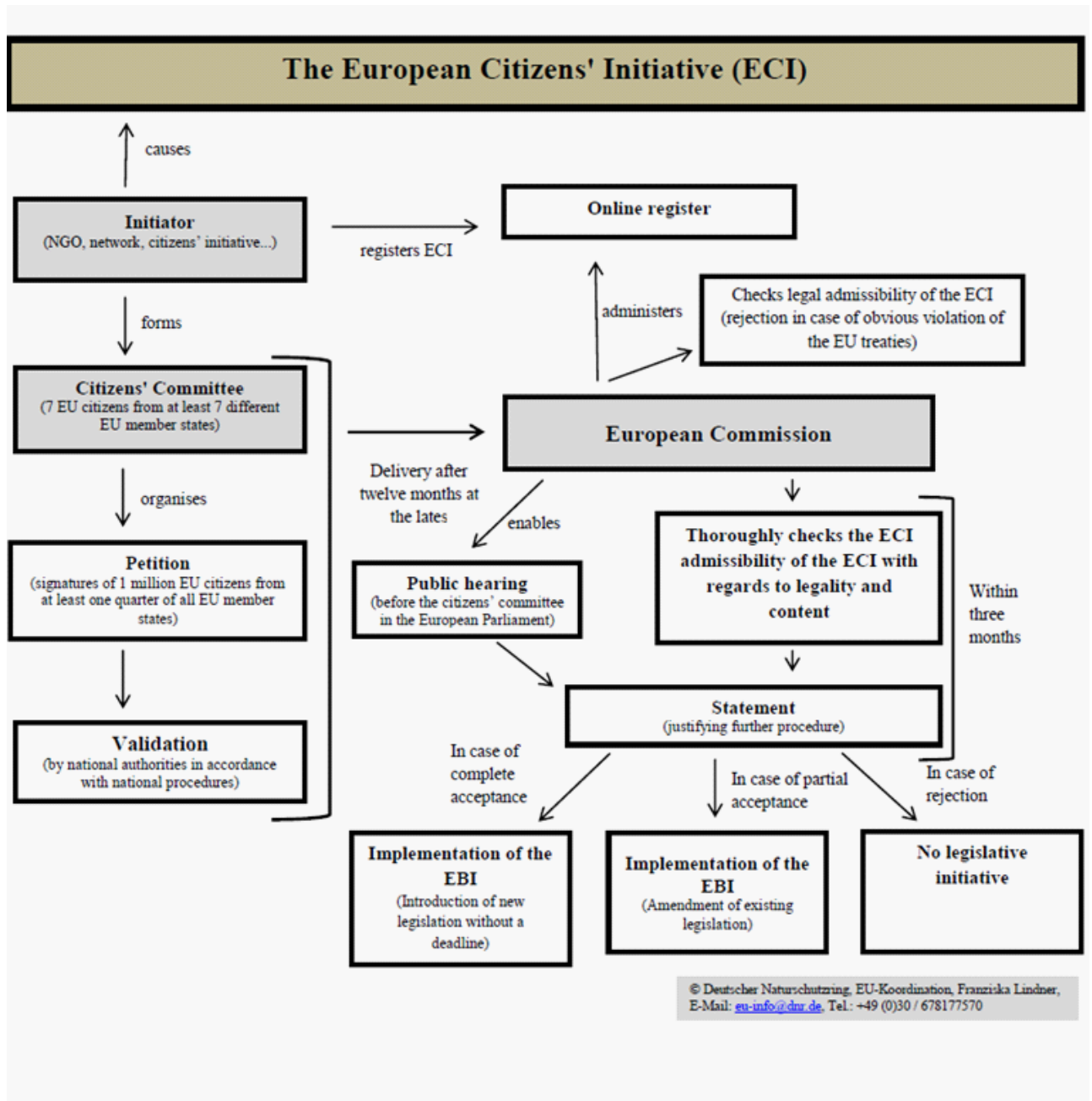
The concrete implementation of this tool is governed by the regulation on the Citizens' Initiative ((EU) Nr. 211/2011)..

From April 1st 2012 onwards European Citizens' Initiatives can be registered in an online register made available by the European Commission. Upon registration of a legislative initiative by a Citizens' committee composed of seven persons who are residents in seven different EU Member States, one million signatories coming from at least one quarter of Member States

must be collected within a time-limit of 12 months. The minimum number of signatories in the individual Member States is based on a multiple of the number of Members of the European Parliament for each Member State. The multiple chosen is 750. The competent national authorities carry out the verification of the signatories.

The Commission shall examine the initiative on admissibility and set out its conclusion on the initiative within a time limit of three months. The legislative initiative is not legally

binding. The Commission can either entirely adopt or reject it. <http://www.eu-koordination.de/PDF/factsheet-eu-citizens-initiative-en.pdf>



European Citizen's Initiative – Graphical Presentation

# 4. Legal Acts and Soft Law

This section gives an overview of the various types of legal acts available to the European Union, e.g. regulations, directives, decisions, and sheds some light onto the confusing tangle of soft instruments, such as green papers, conclusions and action programmes.

**E**U LEGAL ACTS OFTEN ARE the outcome of long negotiation processes. Normally, it takes two to three years and sometimes even much longer from the first proposal for a regulation to the final version of a legal act which is to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union. The Commission usually initiates this process with a green paper providing a basis for discussion, followed in turn by a white paper which may result in an action programme, which will eventually end in a legal act. However, the process may divert entirely from this perfect version. Legal acts may also be drafted without any prior papers, programmes or plans. On the other hand, not every green paper results in a directive or regulation and a white paper may also lead to a voluntary agreement or a negotiated commitment.

This section provides an overview of the various legal acts and the “soft” instruments (Soft Law) of the European Union

For example, the Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive) reads as follows:

“The Council of the European Communities, having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 130s thereof, [...]:

Whereas the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, are an essential objective of general interest pursued by the Community, as stated in Article 130r of the Treaty; [...]/

Has adopted this Directive: [...]”

In EU jargon, laws are referred to as legal acts. The most important types of legal acts are regulations, directives and decisions.

## Regulations

Regulations are the most powerful form of European legislation and are based on the principle of the unification of law. They take immediate and direct effect in all Member States, i.e. they do not require implementing measures by national legislative institutions and are legally effective without the approval of national parliaments. They establish the same rights and obligations for everyone. Member States, including their institutions, courts and authorities, as well as all persons covered by the personal scope of application of the regulation are directly bound by the Union’s law and must comply with it in the same manner as with national law.

Each law in turn requires provisions, which the administ-

## 4.1 Legal Acts

EU law basically comprises primary and secondary legislation. Primary legislation is stipulated in the European treaties (TEU, TFEU, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union), which form the basis for any further legal decision (secondary legislation) be it directives, regulations or decisions. Each legal act of the EU must be based on a specific article in the European Treaties.

rative authorities must adhere to when implementing it. In the EU these implementing regulations are also called regulations, which is somewhat confusing. The Council authorises the Commission to adopt such regulations but may also reserve this right for itself (see comitology procedure, Section 2.4/2.).

Examples:

- Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein (Official Journal L 61 of 3 March 1997). Amended by following measure: Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1497/2003 of 18 August 2003 (Official Journal L 215 of 27 August 2003).
- Regulation (EC) No. 2494/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 November 2000 on measures to promote the conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests and other forests in developing countries.
- Regulation (EC) No. 1830/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2003 concerning the traceability and labelling of genetically modified organisms and the traceability of food and feed products produced from genetically modified organisms and amending Directive 2001/18/EC.

## Directives

In addition to regulations, directives are the most important legal instrument of the EU. Directives are EU framework laws and are based on the principle of the approximation of laws. They are legally binding with regards to the objective to be achieved and the deadline for implementation; but they must first be incorporated into national law by the parliaments of the Member States. Thus, Member States have some latitude when transposing the directive for national implementation. The length of the deadline for implementation is determined case by case, particularly taking into account the complexity of the regulations to be implemented.

Examples:

- Habitats Directive: Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
- Emissions Trade Directive: Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC.

The term supplementary directive refers to an amendment or extension of a directive.

Example:

- Directive 2008/101/EC amending Directive 2003/87/EC so as to include aviation activities in the scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community.

In addition, there are framework directives and daughter directives that concretise framework directives. More recently, such framework directives have increasingly been used in environmental policy.

Examples:

- Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)
- Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2006/12/EC)
- Air Quality Framework Directive (Council Directive 96/62/EC of 27 September 1996 on ambient air quality assessment and management) is concretised in the three following daughter directives:
  1. Directive 1999/30/EC of 22 April 1999 relating to limit values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air.
  2. Directive 2000/69/EC of 16 November 2000 relating to limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air.
  3. Directive 2002/3/EC of 12 February 2002 relating to ozone in ambient air.

When does a legal act take the form of a directive, when that of a regulation? Except for a few specific cases when enacting legislation, EU institutions choose the type of legal act, taking into account the general principles of EU law, in particular the principle of subsidiarity (see Section 2). However, the measures may not exceed the scope necessary for achieving the objectives of the treaty. From the perspective of the Member States, the directive, as a general basic regulation which must be implemented, in principle represents a milder encroachment on sovereignty because the Member States retain some latitude in terms of the form and means of implementation. In practice, however, these characteristics of directives become relative because they frequently include highly detailed regulations, sometimes leaving the Member States hardly any latitude.

## Decisions

A third category of legal acts within the EU are decisions. Like regulations, decisions are legally binding for the addressee, and thus do not require national implementing measures. Decisions, however, are not laws in the sense of an abstract, general rule. They are rather used to regulate specific cases and may be addressed to firms, individuals or Member States. In the latter case, a decision may be of a “quasi legislative” nature, if particular implementing measures are involved for the Member States concerned.

Decisions may be adopted by the Council or the Commission. The majority of decisions emanate from the Commission.

Examples:

- EU Decision on the VW Law of March 2004: The Commission had requested the German government to amend the controversial VW law by stating an ultimatum. If, for example, Lower Saxony’s veto right with the automobile manufacturer was not overturned within two months, a complaint

before the European Court of Justice would be imminent in the treaty infringement proceedings which had been in progress for one year.

- Commission Decision 2000/418/EC of 29 June 2000 regulating the use of material presenting risks as regards transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and amending Decision 94/474/EC.
- By means of Decision 2002/358/EC concerning the approval of the Kyoto Protocol, the agreement was approved. This legal instrument was effected in the form of a decision, because it governs specific obligations of the Member States beyond the mere approval of the Protocol and the authorisation to issue implementing regulations.

## 4.2 Soft Law

Over the course of time, the Commission, the Council and the Parliament have developed a confusing number of different documents in order to manage their legislative work, divulge the results of meetings and to push political initiatives.

### Green and White Papers

Green and white papers published by the EU Commission, also referred to as consultation documents, are not legal instruments but a basis for discussion. They are intended to integrate EU institutions and the interested public in the discussion as early as possible and to that end expressly invite opinions. They play an important role, since they often pave the way for action programmes or legislation. Thus, they provide a good opportunity to become involved in the environmental legislative procedure at an early stage.

Green papers are intended to launch a debate on fundamental policy objectives at European level. They are specifically addressed to interested third parties, organisations and individuals who thereby have the opportunity to participate in the consultation and discussion process. The consultations initiated by a green paper may result in the publication of a white paper, in which concrete measures for joint action are proposed. The distinctions between green papers and white papers are in fact vague. Typically a green paper provides a basis for discussion, whereas in a white paper the Commission has already committed itself to a position.

White papers contain an assessment of specific problem areas in the Member States and basic recommendations on the development of EU policy in a particular sector. Frequently they expand on a green paper. An EU action programme for the area in question may develop out of a white paper.

Examples:

- Green Paper on agricultural product quality: product

standards, farming requirements and quality schemes (COM/2008/641).

- Green Paper: Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action (COM/2007/354).
- White Paper: European transport policy for 2010: time to decide (COM/2001/370).
- White Paper: Strategy for a future Chemicals Policy (COM/2001/88).

### Action Programmes

Action programmes are developed by the Council of Ministers and the Commission at their own initiative or at the suggestion of the European Council. They facilitate the concretisation of legislative programmes and general policy objectives laid down in the Community Treaties. If these programmes are expressly provided for in the Treaties, the EU institutions are bound to the planning content. Other programmes, however, are in practice simply understood as guidelines which are not legally binding. Nevertheless, they express the intent of the EU institutions to act in accordance with their content. Action programmes are addressed to EU institutions and Member States.

One of the main instruments of EU environmental policy is the Environmental Action Programme (EAP), which establishes objectives and measures in the environmental sector by means of directives. These programmes used to be in effect for five years and are now normally in effect for ten years. Since they form the basis for concrete environmental policy measures of the EU, they are legally binding for all EU institutions. They do not have direct legal consequences for the Member States until legal acts for implementing them are adopted.

The Sixth Environment Action Programme (6th EAP) entitled “Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice”, which is currently in force, establishes the priorities for the period from 2002 to 2012. The priority areas are: climate change mitigation, environment and health, the protection of biodiversity as well as the sustainable use of natural resources and waste management. The presentation of the Seventh Environment Action Programme is expected for the end of 2011.

Examples:

- The Sixth Environment Action Programme of the European Community 2002-2012
- The European Environment & Health Action Plan 2004-2010

### Guidelines

Guidelines facilitate the concretisation of legislation, programmes, etc. They serve as recommendations and are aimed at an informational level, similar to a handbook. They are addressed to EU states, their institutions and their citizens.

Examples:

- EU Commission Guidelines for the development of national strategies and best practices to ensure the co-existence of

genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming of 23 July 2003.

- Guideline of the EU Commission on the analysis of pressures and impacts in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) of 21/22 November 2002.
- European Commission Impact Assessment Guidelines of 15 July 2005.
- European Commission Waste Prevention Guidelines from December 2009.

## Strategies and Strategy Papers

Strategies and strategy papers are documents which present the Commission's vision for a specific situation. They are to initiate cooperation within the EU. However, they are also used to initiate or continue discussions, somewhat like green and white papers. Strategies and strategy papers are addressed to EU institutions, Member States and in a limited way to citizens and organisations. They are not binding, but may strongly influence the political discourse. In specific cases they can become binding, always if the Council and the Parliament have taken a decision in an official legislative procedure, as with the thematic strategies of the Sixth Environment Action Programme.

Examples:

- A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development (COM(2001)264).
- Working together for growth and jobs – A new start for the Lisbon Strategy (COM(2005) 24).
- The 6th EAP comprises seven thematic strategies for the following areas: air pollution (COM(2001)245), waste prevention and recycling (COM(2005)666), marine environment (COM(2008) 5), protection of the soil (COM(2006)231), pesticides (COM(2006)327), sustainable use of natural resources (COM(2006)327) and urban environment (COM(2005)718).

## Communications

The term "communication" is normally used by the Commission and has a very broad meaning. Legislative documents account for the majority of Communications of the EU Commission. Green or white papers may also be communications.

## Conclusions

The term "conclusion" is used in various contexts. Sometimes it is used in general terms for various EU legal instruments. Sometimes "conclusion" refers to legally binding documents, such as International Agreements, meaning "concluding part". Most common is its usage for concluding documents of the Commission and the Parliament. In addition, the presidencies of the Council of the European Union and the European Council summarize the results of meetings as "Presidency Conclusions" to indicate the way towards a possible compromise.

Examples:

- Council Decision of 25 June 2002 concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.
- Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14 March 2008 (topics: Lisbon Strategy, climate change, etc.).
- Council Conclusions on the Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan, 2912th Council Meeting Environment Brussels, 4 December 2008.

## Recommendations and Opinions

Recommendations are non-binding communications from EU institutions to the Member States and, in some cases, to EU citizens.

In recommendations a particular action is suggested to the addressees, without legal obligation, however.

Opinions, on the other hand, are delivered by EU institutions in appraisals of existing situations or particular events in the EU or in the Member States. Opinions may form the basis for binding legal instruments or a prerequisite for an action before the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Examples:

- Opinion of the Commission pursuant to Article 251 (2), third subparagraph, point (c) of the EC Treaty, on the European Parliament's amendments to the Council's common position regarding the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste, amending the proposal of the Commission pursuant to Article 250 (2) of the EC Treaty (COM(2008)559).
- Commission Recommendation of 30 May 2008 on risk reduction measures for the substances 2,3-epoxypropyltrimethylammonium chloride (EPTAC), (3-chloro-2-hydroxypropyl) trimethylammonium chloride (CHPTAC) and

hexachlorocyclopentadiene, (notified under document number C(2008) 2316) [OJ L 162, 21 June 2008, p. 37–38].

## Resolutions

Resolutions, somewhat like conclusions, may be used in various contexts. On the one hand, the European Council, the Council of the European Union or the Parliament express their opinions on particular political developments with resolutions. They are of particular importance for the future work of the Council. On the other hand, they used to refer to final documents of the European Council, the Council of the European Union or the Parliament up until a few years ago. Today the term is hardly used in this context anymore.

Examples:

- European Parliament resolution of 31 January 2008 on the outcome of the Bali Conference on Climate Change (COP 13 and COP/MOP 3).
- Resolution of the European Council, of 13 December 1997, on economic policy coordination in stage 3 of economic and monetary union and on Articles 111 and 113 of the EC Treaty.

## Declarations

There are two different types of declarations: One type addresses the future development of the EU. This type of declaration is similar to a resolution. It is addressed to the broader public or a specific target group. Additionally, declarations are used in the context of the decision-making process in the Council. Council members, jointly or individually, express their views regarding a specific subject in order to promote a subsequent agreement within the Council.

Example:

- Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Signature of the Treaties of Rome, Berlin on 25 March 2007.

# 5. Judicial Institutions and Types of Actions

European Union law ranks above national law. The Court of Justice of the European Union is therefore highly important and its significance is ever increasing. This section gives an introduction to the EU's judicial institutions and explains the different types of actions.

**I**N THE EU THERE ARE two judicial levels: the Court of Justice (formerly: European Court of Justice) and the General Court (formerly: European Court of First Instance). Also including a number of specialised courts, it is known as Court of Justice of the European Union (Article 19 TEU, Articles 251–281 TFEU).

of three years. The President presides over trials and directs the judicial business and administration. The Court may sit as a full court, in a Grand Chamber of 13 Judges or in Chambers of three or five Judges. It sits as a Grand Chamber if a Member State or Union institution that is a party to the proceedings so requests, as well as in particularly complex or important cases. In other cases a Chamber of three or five Judges is necessary for a ruling. In exceptional cases (such as removal of a member of the European Commission from office) and in cases of extraordinary importance, the Court sits as a plenary session or full court with 27 Judges.

## 5.1 Court of Justice

The Court of Justice, based in Luxembourg, is the highest court of the European Union. It was established in 1952 and its task is to ensure the safeguarding of the law in the interpretation and application of the EU Treaties and the legal norms adopted by the Council or the Commission. Court of Justice case law is of great importance, since it deals with imprecise wording in the Treaties, thereby closing loopholes in EU law. The rulings of the Court of Justice apply in all EU Member States.

### Composition

The Court of Justice is composed of one Judge from each EU Member State who are assisted by eight advocates-general. The Treaty determines a number of eight advocates-general. However, the Council may appoint additional advocates-general; currently there are eleven. The Judges of the Court of Justice elect one among them as President of the Court of Justice for a term

### Jurisdiction

The Court of Justice has jurisdiction in:

- preliminary rulings upon request by a Member State's national court to set out its interpretation of EU law
- rulings in different procedures on disputes between Member States, EU institutions, legal or natural persons (treaty infringement proceedings, actions for annulment, actions for failure to act)
- appeal procedures at second instance.

If a Member State does not comply with a judgment against it, the Court of Justice may impose a financial penalty. It also rules on the rights and obligations of EU institutions and on judicial protection of individuals against acts of European institutions.

## 5.2 General Court

Since 1988 an additional court has been incorporated to ease the workload of the Court of Justice: the General Court (formerly: Court of First Instance). The number of Judges and advocates-general is determined by the statute of the General Court. The General Court has jurisdiction to hear actions of individuals and companies against the EU. It has jurisdiction mainly in:

- actions brought by natural or legal persons against measures of the EU which are of direct and individual concern to them;
- actions brought by the Member States against the Commission;
- disputes between the EU and its civil servants and other staff.

Appeals against decisions of the General Court may be filed with the Court of Justice.

## 5.3 Right of Action

The Court of Justice only has jurisdiction in actions that are brought by EU institutions or Member States. If a Member State infringes EU law, only the EU Commission may bring an action against it before the Court of Justice in treaty infringement proceedings. Actions may only be brought by legal or natural persons against acts which are of direct and individual concern to them. In this case they shall refer to the General Court. Such decisions are issued for the most part against civil servants of the EU or in the area of European competition law (e. g. imposition of administrative fine in violations of competition). An objection may be filed with the Court of Justice against the ruling of the General Court.

## 5.4 Types of Proceedings

The European legal system has various types of proceedings which are used for specific cases.

### Preliminary Rulings

EU law, in general, has precedence over national law of the Member States. National courts may therefore request a preliminary ruling from the Court of Justice to ensure the uniform interpretation and application of European Union legislation by

### Court of Justice of the European Union

Rue du Fort Niedergrünewald  
L-2925 Luxembourg  
Tel.: +352 / 4303 1  
Fax: +352 / 4303 2600  
E-mail: access contact form at  
[www.curia.europa.eu](http://www.curia.europa.eu)

all Member States and national courts. In cases of doubt, national courts of final instance must refer to the Court of Justice to seek a preliminary ruling.

### Treaty Infringement Proceedings

If Member States do not fulfil their obligations under European Union law, the Commission may start a treaty infringement proceeding. This procedure is based on three steps: An action brought before the Court of Justice is preceded by a two-part, extrajudicial phase in which the Member State concerned is given the opportunity to reply to the complaints addressed to it and to bring the failure to an end.

In the first step an official warning letter from the Commission containing the factual and legal considerations of the Commission is sent to the Member State; the Commission requests the Member State to give an opinion. If no response from the Member State is received within two months of the request, or if, despite a hearing, the Commission is still convinced of a failure to fulfil obligations, the second step of the proceedings is initiated: The Commission sends the Member State a reasoned opinion in which it definitely establishes the legal assessment of the facts. The Member State concerned is in turn given two months to terminate the failure.

If that procedure does not result in the Member State terminating the failure, the Commission may bring an action for infringement of EU law before the Court of Justice and may request that a financial penalty be imposed on the Member State (Article 260 TFEU). The amount of the penalty is based on the gross national product of the Member State concerned. Bringing the case before the Court of Justice as the third step in treaty infringement proceedings is rather an exception in practice. Often the proceedings are settled in the first step.

### Actions for Annulment

Actions for annulment enable the Court of Justice to determine whether specific regulations are legitimate. If the Court of Justice finds that a legal instrument was not properly adopted or does not invoke the correct legal basis in the Treaties, or that the EU does not have the appropriate jurisdiction, it may declare the instrument wholly or partly void. Such an action for annulment may be brought before the Court by an EU institution or a Member State.

## **Actions for Failure to Act**

These procedures enable the lawfulness of the failure of the EU institutions to act to be reviewed; and the institution concerned may be called on to act.

## **Actions for Damages**

In these actions the General Court is called upon to decide whether the EU must accept responsibility for damages that its institutions or staff have caused citizens or companies in the exercise of their duties (non-contractual liability of the EU).

## **Appeals**

Appeals may be brought before the Court of Justice against judgments of the court of first instance.

# 6. Other Institutions, Advisory Bodies and EU Agencies

The EU has a number of agencies and advisory bodies. Those most relevant to environmental policy will be described here.

**I**N ADDITION TO THE institutions already described, the EU houses a number of advisory bodies and agencies that play a key role in the Union's environmental and sustainability policy.

## 6.1 European Economic and Social Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is one of the two consultative bodies whose set up is laid down in the Treaties (Articles 301-304 TFEU). It is made up of representatives of employers, trade unions, farmers, consumers and other interest groups. Members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable five-year term. Before the Council, the Parliament and the Commission adopt decisions on economic and social policy, they must request the EESC to give an opinion in most policy fields (e. g. in agricultural and environmental policy, on health and consumer issues as well as on framework programmes for research). The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) determines in which cases a consultation of the EESC is mandatory. The EESC may also adopt opinions at its own initiative on any issue which it considers important. Its opinions are non-binding.

## 6.2 Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is the second consultative body; its consultation is laid down in the Treaties (Articles 305-307 TFEU). The Committee is made up of representatives from regional and local governments. In this way, the interests of local communities, municipalities, administrative districts and provinces are to be taken into account in the legislative process. Members are appointed for a renewable five-year term of office by the Council, acting on proposals from the Member States. The Commission, Parliament and Council are obliged to consult the CoR in areas which affect the regions (e. g. regional policy, the environment, education, transport). Additionally, the Committee may deliver opinions at its own initiative. Its opinions are non-binding.

## 6.3 European Court of Auditors

The Court of Auditors carries out the audit of European Union revenues and expenditures and examines whether the financial management has been sound (Articles 285-287 TFEU). It is authorised to audit the books of all organisations that manage EU funds and it may appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union. Thus the Court of Auditors has an important control function. Its audit report is published in the Official Journal

of the European Union. On the basis of the audit report the European Parliament decides whether to discharge the Commission. The Council of Auditors consists of one member per EU Member State and may establish internal chambers (each with only a few members) in order to adopt certain categories of reports or opinions.

## 6.4 European Environment Agency and other Agencies

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is, like the other agencies, not an EU institution. It is an institution established by the European Union with a specific mandate. The European Environment Agency is a major information source for those involved in developing, implementing and evaluating environmental policy, and also for the broader public. The EEA currently has 32 member countries (EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey). Its headquarters are located in Copenhagen. The EEA's mandate is to help the European Union and its other member countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environment considerations into decisions on economic policies and moving towards sustainability.

Other agencies that have a key role to play with regards to the environment and sustainability are the following:

- European Chemicals Agency, ECHA ([www.echa.europa.eu](http://www.echa.europa.eu))
- European Food Safety Authority, EFSA ([www.efsa.europa.eu](http://www.efsa.europa.eu))
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, EU-OSHA ([www.osha.europa.eu](http://www.osha.europa.eu))
- Community Fisheries Control Agency, CFCA ([www.cfca.europa.eu](http://www.cfca.europa.eu))
- Executive Agency for Health and Consumers, EAHC ([www.ec.europa.eu/eahc](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eahc))

## 6.5 European Investment Bank

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the European Union's bank which provides long-term finance. It was created in 1958 with the mission "to contribute to the integration, balanced development and economic and social cohesion of the EU Member States." To this end, the EIB raises financial resources by borrowing on the capital markets in order to

### European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Rue Belliard, 99  
B-1040 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 546 90 11  
Fax: +32 / 25 13 48 93  
[www.eesc.europa.eu](http://www.eesc.europa.eu)

### Committee of the Regions (CoR)

Rue Belliard, 99-101  
B-1040 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 282 22 211  
Fax: +32 / 282 22 325  
[www.cor.europa.eu](http://www.cor.europa.eu)

### European Court of Auditors

External Relations Service  
12, Rue Alcide De Gasperi  
L-1615 Luxembourg  
Tel.: +35 2 / 4398 1  
Fax: +35 2 / 4398 46410  
E-Mail: [visit@eca.europa.eu](mailto:visit@eca.europa.eu)  
[www.eca.europa.eu](http://www.eca.europa.eu)

### European Environment Agency (EEA)

Kongens Nytorv 6  
DK-1050 Copenhagen K  
Tel.: +45 33 / 36 71 00  
Fax: +45 33 / 36 71 99  
[www.eea.europa.eu](http://www.eea.europa.eu)

### European Investment Bank (EIB)

98-100, Boulevard Konrad Adenauer  
L-2950 Luxembourg  
Tel.: +35 2 / 43 79 1  
Fax: +35 2 / 43 77 04  
E-Mail: [info@eib.org](mailto:info@eib.org)  
[www.eib.org](http://www.eib.org)

### Council of Europe

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

support projects that “further EU policy objectives.” In 2008, the EIB’s budget was almost EUR 60 billion which makes it the largest international non-sovereign financial institution. The EIB is active worldwide (currently in 130 countries). In the past it came under harsh criticism from NGOs which accused the institution of supporting unsustainable projects and of not having appropriate environmental and social standards (see for example [www.bankwatch.org](http://www.bankwatch.org)). The EIB is owned by the 27 EU Member States. Its principal shareholders are Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. Each Member State nominates one representative (normally the Finance Minister) as member of the Bank’s Board of Directors, which ensures that the Bank is properly run and takes decisions in concerning loans and guarantees. The European Commission is the 28th member of the EIB.



Headquarters of the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen©  
European Union, 2010

## 6.6 Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is not an EU institution and is only mentioned here in order to distinguish it conceptually from the European Council and the Council of the European Union. The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation which was established in 1949 with the tasks of protecting human rights, promoting Europe’s cultural diversity and confronting social problems such as racism and intolerance. The European Convention on Human Rights was adopted under the auspices of the Council of Europe. The European Court of Human Rights was created to ensure that citizens may exercise their rights under this Convention. The Council of Europe is based in Strasbourg.

# 7. How to get involved?

Environmental organisations are extremely well connected within the environmental movement at European level. Here the movement is known to be “small, but successful”. Many positive examples show that it is worthwhile for environmental NGOs to get involved. Here is how it works.

**A** MAJOR SHARE of national policy is now determined in Brussels. Particularly in the area of environmental policy, a very high share of 75-80% of the legislative power is located in Brussels. Conflicts of interest between, for example, economic and environmental interests are thus mainly resolved in Brussels and Strasbourg. For environmental, nature conservation and animal protection organisations this means they have to Europeanise and actively intervene in Brussels politics in order to effectively make their voice heard.

## 7.1 Lodging a complaint

EU citizens cannot institute legal proceedings, but with various types of complaints they can call the attention of EU institutions to maladministration and may prompt them to take measures.

### Complaints to the EU Commission

As “guardian of the Treaties” the EU Commission monitors compliance with EU law by Member States, authorities and companies. This means that if EU legislation is not implemented or is improperly implemented or applied by the Member States, or if a national regulation (legal or administrative provision) or administrative practice constitutes a violation of a provision or principle of EU law, the EU Commission is obliged to act. However, the Commission does not have sufficient staff

to monitor the implementation of European legal instruments in the 27 Member States. It is thus dependent on information from third parties.

Private individuals and NGOs may lodge a complaint by writing a letter. This letter should contain the facts on which the complaint is based; it should include the “breach of law” concerned and as many relevant details as possible. A standard complaint form is available on the following website: [www.ec.europa.eu/community\\_law/your\\_rights/your\\_rights\\_forms\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/community_law/your_rights/your_rights_forms_en.htm). The form may be sent by E-mail to

[sg-plaintes@ec.europa.eu](mailto:sg-plaintes@ec.europa.eu) or posted directly to the General Secretariat of the EU Commission in Brussels or to one of the Commission’s representative offices in any Member State (see Section 2.4)

It must be kept in mind, however, that the Commission does not have the capacity to handle the large numbers of incoming complaints quickly. Sometimes this may take between six months and two years. Therefore, in urgent matters, other options should be considered.

### Complaints to the Ombudsman

The European Ombudsman, based in Strasbourg, has investigated complaints concerning maladministration in the activities of the institutions and bodies of the European Union since 1995. Maladministration means poor or failed administration, such as unfairness, discrimination, abuse of power, absence or refusal of information, unnecessary delay or irregular proceedings. The Ombudsman mediates between citizens and EU authorities. EU citizens, associations and businesses may complain to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is elected by the European Par-

liament for a term of five years.

The Ombudsman is to inform the institution concerned about a complaint and shall make recommendations. The institution concerned shall give an opinion within three months. Subsequently, the ombudsman is to report to this institution and the European Parliament. The complainant shall also be informed about the state of the investigation.

The Ombudsman does not deal with matters that have already been settled by a court or that are older than two years. The institution concerned shall be contacted about the matter before a complaint is lodged with the Ombudsman. A complaint may be made by writing a letter setting out the institution the complaint is against as well as the grounds for the complaint.

## 7.2 Access to Information and to Justice – Aarhus Convention

The Aarhus Convention is the first international agreement that grants citizens rights in the area of environmental protection. It was adopted in 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus within the framework of UN negotiations. It contains three main themes or “pillars”: access to environmental information, public participation in decision-making concerning activities which have an impact on the environment, and access to justice in environmental matters. The EU ratified the Aarhus Convention in 2007. Basis is Regulation (EC) No. 1367/2006.

Thus, EU citizens can claim their right of public access to information pertaining to the environment vis-à-vis EU institutions and bodies. In addition, associations can call for an internal review of administrative acts under European environmental law, and may also institute proceedings before the Court of Justice if they see negative effects on the environment. Such a request must be made within six weeks of the date of publication of the relevant administrative act, and must depict the grounds for the review in a detailed manner. The EU institution or body shall reply no later than 18 weeks after receiving the request. In principal, any organisation recognised in Germany which is dedicated to the promotion of environmental protection is entitled to make such a request. However, the subject matter under review must fall under the objectives laid down in the organisation’s statutes. Requests can be made to the Directorate-General for the Environment.

## 7.3 European Environmental Associations

In order to strengthen matters concerning nature and the environment in European legislation, a number of environmental organisations have established themselves in Brussels as umbrella organisations or European offices. They are involved in shaping environmental policy and engage in lobbying activities. With their national member organisations and units, they represent the interests of over 20 million EU citizens. The environmental organisations in Brussels provide independent external expertise in shaping, monitoring and controlling EU policy and they provide the stimulus for new environmental projects. They work with the EU legislative institutions in advisory committees, take part in consultations and prepare expert opinions and studies when environmental interests are affected by proposed legislation. They are critical authorities who can discover undesirable developments in good time and bring them to public attention and they act as multipliers of information to environmental and consumer organisations, interested citizens and the media. In this, they work closely together with their respective member organisations in the EU Member States.

Contact details of the “Green 10”, the ten major European environmental organisations, can be found in Annex II. For detailed information about the European environmental associations access the DNR Sonderheft I/09 on “The European Environmental Associations: the Hot Line to Brussels” (German) at [www.eu-koordination.de/PDF/eur09-i.pdf](http://www.eu-koordination.de/PDF/eur09-i.pdf)

## 7.4 Lobbying for Nature and the Environment in Brussels

”Lobbyist” is not a derogative term in the EU. Lobbying is rather seen as a normal way to voice one’s concerns. Many EU officials even want interest groups to communicate to them their arguments and positions regarding the relevant legislative procedures, considering that eventually the regulations shall apply to 27 Member States with a population of close to half a billion people.

### Lobbying in the Commission

Generally, the EU Commission is the first point of contact for effectively shaping European legislative procedures. This is due to the fact that the Commission has the exclusive right of initiative and therefore prepares legislative proposals. In general, it is best to start lobbying activities in an early phase, namely in

### European Commission

attn: Secretariat-General  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels  
[www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

### The European Ombudsman

Avenue du Président Robert Schuman 1  
CS 30403  
F-67001 Strasbourg Cedex  
Tel.: +33 3 / 88 17 23 13  
Fax: +33 3 / 88 17 90 62  
E-mail: [access contact form at](mailto:access-contact-form@ec.europa.eu)  
[www.ombudsman.europa.eu](http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu)

### Environment Directorate-General

European Commission  
B-1049 Brussels  
Fax: +32 2 / 298 63 27  
E-Mail: [env-internal-review@ec.europa.eu](mailto:env-internal-review@ec.europa.eu)  
[www.ec.europa.eu/environment](http://www.ec.europa.eu/environment)

### European Parliament

Committee on Petitions  
The Secretariat  
Rue Wiertz  
B-1047 Brussels  
Fax: +32 2 / 284 68 44  
E-Mail: [ip-peti@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:ip-peti@europarl.europa.eu)  
[www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu) – Parliament – Petitions

the phase where policy concepts are being developed. In later phases of the legislative procedure, debates become more detailed and with it influencing the process becomes increasingly difficult.

In almost all cases, the Commission puts forward non-binding documents, such as green and white papers on the basis of which a discussion is held about the subject to be regulated. Often this process takes the form of “Consultations”. Interested citizens and groups may submit opinions and comments on a Commission proposal by using the Internet or during workshops within a prescribed period of time. Anybody is entitled to participate – representatives of regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, businesses and business associations, individual citizens or scientists. A list of all open (and recently closed) consultations, with specific formal requirements, deadlines and conditions for participation can be accessed on the Internet ([www.ec.europa.eu/yourvoice](http://www.ec.europa.eu/yourvoice)). Anybody who wants

to participate in a consultation is advised to first register in the Commission’s (voluntary) Register of Interest Representatives, which will increase the respondent’s credibility.

In addition to taking part in consultations, one should also seek direct contact to the relevant members of staff in the Commission’s Directorates-General.

In the phase of the actual legislative procedure, the Commission plays a minor role. The Council and Parliament then become the main targets of lobbying activities. The Commission should not be ignored completely though, because it still is of some importance in the procedure (see Section 3.3).

Once legal acts have been adopted, the Commission becomes more important again, as defining implementing measures is often delegated to the Commission, which organises them in the comitology procedure (see Section 2.4). Far-reaching decisions are often made at this stage. Influencing these implementing processes may be difficult, but might prove highly effective, considering that discussions are technical rather than political. It ought to be kept in mind that the decisive actors in the comitology committees come from the Member States and that they can also be lobbied.

### Lobbying in the European Parliament

Once the actual legislative procedure has commenced, the European Parliament becomes an important contact to make one’s voice heard. Environmental legislation is adopted primarily by ordinary legislative procedure granting the same rights to the Parliament and Council.

Important parliamentary bodies for effective lobbying are the parliamentary committees, such as the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). Draft legislation submitted by the Commission is reviewed in these committees, and proposed amendments are developed for the plenary session. Committee meetings are open to the public, and concerns can best be directed to the Members of the European Parliament present at these meetings.

The key contact is the rapporteur, who prepares the dossier-related content for the work of the committee and draws up the report for the plenary session, which in turn forms the basis for the first reading. In addition, there is the shadow rapporteur dealing with the relevant topic for his/her political group. Lobbyists are advised to voice their concerns even before the first reading, since after the first reading individual MEPs cannot introduce amendments anymore. It has also proven effective to target political group staff members who specialize in a particular policy area.

Although MEPs must be generalists who are knowledgeable in many policy areas, the majority of MEPs has specialized in certain priority areas. Make sure to always look for these specialists in the policy area concerned. Winning the support of these MEPs is crucial, as they will defend their positions far more enthusiastically than other representatives.

Another rewarding way to get involved is to establish contact to your local MEP from your constituency or your own region. Normally, your local MEP wants to lend an ear to his/her voters

irrespective of the subject.

Last but not least, one should also attempt to contact MEPs with opposing positions. An issue is unlikely to find a majority against the votes of the conservative and social-democratic political groups. The Liberals also play a crucial role in the current legislative term. Therefore, try to spend your (lobbying) time wisely and make sure to focus on the right MEPs.

In addition, any citizen or organisation may submit a petition to the European Parliament. The Committee on Petitions will review the complaints addressed to it and will decide what type of action should be taken. In any case, the subject of the petition must fall within the area of activity of the European Union, must refer to the content of the EU Treaties as well as to EU law or relate to an EU institution. Citizens may submit a petition to the Parliament that may take the form of a complaint and may relate to issues of public or private interest. If a petition is declared admissible after review by the Committee on Petitions, the Committee will then turn to the European Commission, which monitors compliance with EU law. As “Guardian of the Treaties” the Commission may, for example, bring an action before the Court of Justice of the European Union against a national authority on the grounds of infringement of EU law.

Petitions must bear the petitioner’s name, nationality, occupation and permanent address, must be written clearly and legibly, in one of the official languages of the European Union, and must be signed. The grounds for the petition must be depicted and supporting documents must be attached to it, if necessary. A petition may be submitted via the Internet ([www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu) - Parliament - Petitions) or by post addressed to the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament.

## Lobbying in the Council of Ministers

Despite the reforms of the past years, the Council is still the main legislative body of the EU. It is therefore a key target for lobbying activities. Owing to the fact that the Council is made up of the ministers of the Member States in charge of the subject concerned, lobbying might not take place in Brussels in this case, but in the capitals of the Member States.

The ministerial bureaucracies normally start dealing with an issue long before the first reading in the Council. One should therefore look for those responsible for the subject at hand in the Ministries and seek contact with them. Even if the dossier is available at the Council itself, the ministry staff working with the minister in charge, are in most cases the main contact persons as they write the proposals for decisions. If an issue becomes so important that the minister intervenes in the discussion, which happens in particular in conflict situations with other ministries, it is necessary to lobby the minister.

Indirect lobbying via the national parliaments might also prove reasonable. The German Bundestag, for example, might adopt a resolution which limits the scope of action of the minister in charge at least at the political (though not at the legal) level if a majority is reached.

If lobbying is successful at national level, this has an impact on the negotiations in the working groups of the Council

and in the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER, see Section 2.2), which prepare Council decisions. Both the members of the working groups and the ambassadors in the Permanent Representations are bound to the instructions of their governments. They can also be contacted directly. They regularly report on such contacts, and their report may lead the ministries in their countries to change their opinion.

# Brussels Lobbying in Practice

## Fourteen theses for successful lobbying in the European Union

By Frank Schwalba-Hoth, an environmental lobbyist in Brussels for more than 20 years

### 1. Lobbying in Brussels is normal, accepted and necessary

This fact is based on a very simple reason. In his/her ministry in Prague, an official from Plzeň or České Budějovice is convinced that he/she knows what is important for the whole of the Czech Republic. Someone who comes from Munich or Cologne and now sits in his/her ministry in Berlin believes that he/she knows what is good for all of Germany. In contrast, there is no one in the EU, the EU Commission, European Parliament or Council of the European Union who is so presumptuous as to believe he/she could know what would be best for the entire EU in all its facets. The EU structure, much more so than national structures, is based on concentrated input from outside. This means that every person in the EU structures does not only sit alone at his/her desk in isolation but instead absorbs information that is provided to him/her from the outside like a sponge; and if lobbying is done properly, the person who is the key target of this lobbying activity is happy to receive information. Lobbying, increasingly known as “public affairs” (not to be confused with “public relations”), is part and parcel of the political culture in Brussels.

### 2. Identify key contact persons

There are approximately 50,000 people in Brussels who in some way or the other are key contacts. The “book of books” for a lobbyist in Brussels is thus the publication that contains all of these 50,000 names: the “European Public Affairs Directory”, which is published annually by Landmarks Publishing for 100 Euros. The danger in this book is that you could be tempted to believe that you must somehow establish contacts with all of these 50,000 people. The crucial key to a particular lobbying campaign, however, is to identify the top 50 or top 60 or top 70. After identifying them, the next step is establishing contact, maintaining contact and finally monitoring whether the people selected actually cover the entire spectrum. This monitoring is also particularly important in Brussels because fluctuation is so high. Any top-50 list from the beginning of the year will list 10 people less by the end of the year.

### 3. Be wary of all academic publications on lobbying and public affairs

The reason why most of these publications are far removed from reality is relatively simple. When someone from the academic world ventures to tackle a subject like lobbying, he/she needs empirical data, which can be obtained by sending questionnaires to key contact persons. But who responds to such

questionnaires? Normally, it is not the boss, the head of the department, the ambassador or the MEP who answers them. If filled out at all, it is done by the assistant or the intern, who tries to reflect what he/she thinks the boss might do in the answers – and that is not always close to reality. If, as a result, the empirical data is false, the research that is based on it may not necessarily be accurate either.

### 4. Define your objective clearly

This might sound trivial but it is often overlooked. I have seen many lobbying efforts where success was thwarted by vague (or unrealistic) targets. The old English precept still applies when defining objectives: “Make it easy, make it simple.” Without a clear (not excessive) goal that is solidly defined at the outset, a campaign can rarely be won.

### 5. Form alliances

An example from my Greenpeace years: the campaign against genetically modified organisms (GMOs) was successful only because, on the basis of a clearly defined goal, a type of alliance was formed with other groups that opposed the use of GMOs on ethical or religious grounds. Another example: the EU debated the End-of-Life Vehicle Directive, the legislation stipulating that old automobiles can be recycled as raw materials after their use. There was a coalition between the automobile manufacturers and the electronics industry. The latter knew that, after the adoption of the directive on end-of-life vehicles, a directive on electronic waste would be next on the agenda. Many of the basic regulations in the area of end-of-life vehicles would certainly turn up again in the electronic waste sector – and that is what happened. This coalition building applies not only at technical level but also at national level. After all, Brussels is not a homogeneous scene. If you want to influence a directive with real success, you should not rely on activities in Brussels alone. You must also have a presence in most of the national capitals – and for that it is necessary form various alliances, i.e. coalition building.

### 6. Be active at different levels

It is a mistake to assume that good contact with one commissioner is enough. It is equally important to be in contact with the person in the middle of the hierarchy in the EU Commission who drafts the actual text that will be discussed by the Commissioners in one year and adopted by the Council of Ministers and the Parliament after two years.

### 7. Get in as early as possible

Most of the lobbying activities that I see start too late. They generally begin after the draft has long been adopted by the EU Commission or has long been on the agenda of the Parliament or is being discussed in the group meetings of the Council of Ministers. Really successful lobbying starts during the phase

when a draft is still in its infancy or before it is finalised. The ideal situation for a lobbyist is when the key contacts in the Council and the Parliament are informed about the draft (and the anticipated crucial issues) by the lobbyist himself/herself.

## 8. Look for “win-win” situations

Meetings during the course of a lobbying campaign in Brussels are among the most difficult tasks of environmental activists. You sit opposite someone from a completely different political and cultural environment. In every meeting your goal must be to create a “win-win” situation that satisfies both parties in the end. In concrete terms that means never letting the situation arise where your counterpart has the impression that something is being forced on him/her. The ideal situation is when he/she sees the – preferably exclusive – information that is provided as a kind of gift. During the meeting try to also pay attention to the body language of your counterpart. If you see that he/she is losing interest, sliding forward in his/her chair and looking at his/her watch, it is better to cut it short. You must find someone who is interested and willing to listen. If you sense a rebuff, it is better to stop than to continue. “Win-win” does not mean financial gain. I have been working in Brussels for over 20 years, and there are far fewer cases of overt corruption than generally assumed.

## 9. Find the right Member of the European Parliament

From my own years as an MEP I know that all representatives do two things (and neglect the third). The first thing that all representatives in the world do is try to please their electorate, their constituency, a certain social class, a political party. The second thing that all representatives do is participating in the legislative work of the Parliament. If you behave in exactly that way (satisfy the electorate, participate in legislative work) then very soon you will have a kind of midlife crisis: you feel like a hamster on a wheel. Everyone (and that particularly applies to politicians) would like to leave fingerprints, to leave something behind that is lasting. Everyone would like to be a little special, not like all the others. Everyone would like to have a specific field, in which one is a specialist, where one can leave behind unmistakable traces and where one has developed a clear profile – be it in tourism or terrorism, greening the budget, Cuba, Congo, dioxins, or any other area. The third thing which many Members of Parliament do not do, or do too late, is to acquire a strong profile in a niche area. What does that mean for a lobbyist? You must find several MEPs to whom your cause is also important. Sometimes this can be by pure luck. Let me give you an example. In a chain of events a Scottish MEP became indisputably the most active and most competent EU politician on behalf of nuclear victims in Kazakhstan – with exhibitions in the EP, an amendment to the EU budget, an honorary doctorate and regular aid shipments.

## 10. Look for exclusivity

When you have found several MEPs who are interested in your cause, be that food safety, transport or financial issues, it is counterproductive if all of them are German Social Democrats or Spanish Conservatives. Your choice of representatives should always be wide-ranging and exclusive: preferably a combination of a Finnish Communist, an English Liberal, a Belgian Green, an Austrian Social Democrat and a French Conservative (or any other combination). The work of the Parliament and the MEPs is still carried out nationally. If such a wide-ranging group of parliamentarians is committed to the same subject, there is little danger of overlap in outward perceptions.

## 11. Use the media professionally

In the “European Public Affairs Directory” mentioned earlier you will find almost a thousand companies and their public affairs offices as well as almost a thousand offices of trade and professional associations ranging from producers of automobiles to mayonnaise. You will also find approximately 500 special interest groups, around 200 regional liaison offices, consulting firms and approximately 800 accredited journalists. In view of this large number, many people believe that a press conference is absolutely necessary for a lobbying campaign and invite all the journalists. They think that their own subject is the most wonderful, most intelligent and most important subject there is. Surprise: The press conference is a flop, hardly anyone shows up. Why? Brussels is so oversaturated with “important” subjects that you have to have Richard Gere, Kofi Annan or the Pope in order to attract swarms of journalists. The effective way to create a win-win situation between a lobbying campaign and the media is once again exclusiveness: a personal conversation generally achieves the most. Then the journalist is the only one who writes (in his/her own words) about an issue and may as a result find himself/ herself in the favourable position of being cited as a source by others.

## 12. Evaluate your own activities

Nobody is perfect, and very few lobbying campaigns are planned perfectly. That is why monitoring is essential – not only a final assessment but also interim evaluations. If it becomes apparent that something is wrong with the outline of the campaign, you must also have the courage to make radical changes if necessary.

## 13. How would I like to be represented in Brussels?

There are four basic options:

- You can open your own office. That can become very costly with two, three, four staff members and the entire infrastructure connected to it.
- You use an independent lobbyist who is already based in Brussels, a consultant who acts on your behalf in Brussels. There are many options for this – smaller and larger public

affairs firms that you can approach, good and less good, prominent and less prominent. One problem always arises, however – that of credibility. Just think about it – you have selected a consultant specialising in energy issues to work for you in the wind energy sector who a few months ago called up the same people – however, that time on behalf of the nuclear industry.

- You conduct lobbying activities from the headquarters of your organisation outside of Brussels. In practical terms that means that you appoint one staff member as “Brussels representative” and he flies to Brussels four, five or six times a year at key moments when a particular meeting is taking place there, then adds one or two more days during which he holds related meetings. If you choose this version (lobbying from the organisation headquarters) then it is generally productive to look for an independent consultant as a supporting coach. This is also what I often do. Thus I never work on behalf of someone but always with someone.
- You use one of the law firms based in Brussels. Highly qualified and highly paid top-level experts then monitor what is happening in Brussels in a particular area. I have observed that this practice often ends unsatisfactorily. The reason is the high costs and the fact that many law firms represent several clients in the same sector and send the same monitoring report to several clients, although each client assumes that the report has been written exclusively for them and does not want competitors to receive the same information..

#### 14. What is a typical profile of a Brussels lobbyist?

Like everything in life, it is a mix. This mix definitely includes social skills, a certain Mediterranean lightness and Teutonic determination, in order to approach decision-makers, a certain dedication, and a great deal of sensitivity, empathy, little arrogance, little self-centeredness. Then comes expertise, followed by language proficiency. English is indispensable, French, with minor exceptions, as well. German can be helpful, as well as Spanish and Italian. The final ingredients of an ideal Brussels lobbyist are reliability and credibility.

# Annex

## Annex I: What are EU documents called?

It is not always easy to identify the numbering of the numerous EU documents, but it does help to understand the political process. The most common types of documents are listed below and illustrated by an example.

### Legislative Documents

Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 – the 1907th Regulation of 2006.  
Directive 2003/54/EC – 54th Directive of 2003.  
OJ C 112, 20.12.73 or OJ L 57, 01.03.2008 – Official Journal of the EU, Series C (Information, Communication), published on 20.12.1973 or Series L (Legislation), published on 01.03.2008.

### European Commission

COM(2007)342 – document from the Commission to other bodies/institutions (proposals for legal acts, communications, reports etc.).  
SEK SEC/2008/0034 final – term used for various Commission documents. The database only lists those documents associated with inter-institutional procedures.  
IP/09/1883 – Press release (Number 1883 of 2009).

### Council of Ministers

Council documents can have two formats:  
NNNNN/YY (Example: 10917/06) or NNNNN/RR/YY (Example 7500/1/08). NNNNN (1 to 5 digits) indicates the current

number of a document. YY indicates the respective year (the last two digits). And RR (1 or 2 digits) indicates the number of the respective draft. Various appendices can be attached to this format: ADD (Addendum), COR (Corrigendum), REV (Revision), EXT (Extract), AMD (Amendment).

### European Parliament

In European Parliament documents letters indicate the type and also the function of the document:

A – Report  
PE – Draft of a report  
T – Opinion, Resolution or Decision  
B – Motion for a resolution or oral inquiries  
COD – Ordinary legislative procedure (formerly: codecision procedure)  
CNS – Consultation procedure  
AVC – Assent procedure

### Court of Justice of the European Union

Decisions by the Court of Justice and the General Court are called as follows:  
C-176/03 – Case Number 176 in 2003 (Court of Justice)  
T-123/07 – Case Number 123 in 2007 (General Court)

### Advisory Committees

CDR – Reports of the Committee of the Regions  
CES or CESE – Reports of the Economic and Social Committee

## Annex II: Environmental Associations in Brussels

A series of environmental, nature conservation and animal protection organisations have set up their own offices and/or have formed European umbrella organisations.

### Green 10 & Co

[www.green10.org](http://www.green10.org)

The ten largest “Brussels NGOs” (NGOs which are active in Europe, not all of which are necessarily based in Brussels) also appear as the “Green 10” in order to give their voices more weight and to achieve a greater external impact by coordinated activities. The Green 10’s common objective is to improve the environmental situation in the European Union and its neighbouring countries. In terms of foreign policy, the Green 10 lobby for the EU’s position as a global leader on issues pertaining to the environment. The organisations listed below form part of Green 10:

#### BirdLife International – European Division

BirdLife International  
Avenue de la Toison d’Or 67  
B-1060 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 280 08 30  
Fax: +32 2 / 230 38 02  
[europe@birdlife.org](mailto:europe@birdlife.org)  
[www.birdlife.org/regional/europe](http://www.birdlife.org/regional/europe)

BirdLife International is the world’s leading organisation in the areas of bird preservation, protection of bird habitats and nature conservation measures on behalf of birds. BirdLife’s partners operate in over one hundred countries and regions worldwide. The European Office (European Division, ED) of BirdLife is concerned with those areas of EU policy which have an impact on bird fauna and nature. BirdLife International has 42 partners and 1.9 million members throughout Europe and is active in all EU Member States.

#### CAN Europe – Climate Action Network Europe

CAN Europe  
Rue d’Edimbourg 26  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 8944670  
Fax: +32 2 / 8944680

[info@climnet.org](mailto:info@climnet.org)

[www.climnet.org](http://www.climnet.org)

Climate Action Network Europe has acted as a climate coordination point for environmental organisations in western Europe since 1989. With over 120 European member organisations, it forms part of a global network that includes 330 member organisations. It is concerned with limiting human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels and the establishment of sustainable energy policy.

#### CEE Bankwatch Network

CEE Bankwatch Network, Central Office  
Na Rozcesti 6  
CZ-190 00 Prague 9  
Tel.: +420 274 816 571  
Fax: +420 274 816 571  
[main@bankwatch.org](mailto:main@bankwatch.org)  
[www.bankwatch.org](http://www.bankwatch.org)

CEE is the largest European umbrella organisation for central and eastern Europe. It focuses on international financial policy in the energy sector, transport and EU enlargement.

#### EEB – European Environmental Bureau

EEB - European Environmental Bureau  
Boulevard de Waterloo 34  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 289 10 90  
Fax: +32 2 / 289 10 99  
[eeb@eeb.org](mailto:eeb@eeb.org)  
[www.eeb.org](http://www.eeb.org)

The EEB is an umbrella organisation of over 140 environmental protection organisations throughout Europe and is thus the largest environmental association at European level. The EEB deals with a wide range of environmental issues reflecting the diversity of its member organisations, focussing on EU environmental policy.

#### FoEE – Friends of the Earth Europe

FoE Europe  
Mundo-B Building  
Rue d’Edimbourg 26  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 893 1000  
Fax: +32 2 / 893 1035  
[info@foeeurope.org](mailto:info@foeeurope.org)  
[www.foeeurope.org](http://www.foeeurope.org)

Friends of the Earth Europe coordinates the European campaigns and lobbying activities of its 31 member organisations in 29 European countries. Its priorities are climate, energy, agricultural and chemicals policy. The network is part of Friends of

the Earth International, the world's largest grassroots network.

### Greenpeace European Unit

Greenpeace European Unit  
199 Rue Belliard  
B-1040 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 274 19 00  
Fax: +32 2 / 274 19 10  
european.unit@greenpeace.org  
www.eu.greenpeace.org

Greenpeace is a worldwide independent campaign organisation with offices in 41 countries. The European Unit of Greenpeace ensures continuous monitoring of the work of the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council, in order to expose deficiencies in EU policy and legislation and to challenge decision-makers to implement progressive solutions. Its focuses on climate / energy, chemicals, forest and marine policy.

### HEAL – Health and Environment Alliance

HEAL  
Boulevard Charlemagne 28  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 234 36 40  
Fax: +32 2 / 234 36 49  
info@env-health.org  
www.env-health.org

This network, formerly known as the European Public Health Alliance – Environment Network (EEN), was established in 2004 at the initiative of EPHA member organisations and represents almost 5 million European citizens, as well as associated organisations that advocate a priority approach to health issues in the context of environmental policy.

### NFI – International Friends of Nature

Naturfreunde Internationale  
Diefenbachgasse 36  
A-1150 Vienna  
Tel.: +43 1 / 892 38 77  
Fax: +43 1 / 812 97 89  
office@nf-int.org  
www.nfi.at

International Friends of Nature is the umbrella organisation of over 50 national organisations with a wide range of regional and local groups. The focus of NFI's work is sustainable development, landscape preservation, sustainable consumption, commitment to conservation and environmental protection and soft tourism in theory and practice.

### T&E – European Federation for Transport and Environment

T&E  
Rue d'Edimbourg 26  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 893 0841  
Fax: +32 2 / 893 0842  
info@transportenvironment.org  
www.transportenvironment.org

T&E is the European umbrella organisation of NGOs working in the area of sustainable passenger and goods transport. T&E currently has approximately 40 member organisations in 20 countries.

### WWF-EPO – WWF European Policy Office

WWF European Policy Office (WWF-EPO)  
Avenue de Tervuren 168, Box 20  
B-1150 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 74388 00  
Fax: +32 2 / 74388 19  
wwf-epo@wwfepo.org  
www.panda.org/eu

The European Policy Office of WWF implements the European programmes of WWF International and coordinates EU-relevant programmes of the national member organisations. These programmes are not limited to EU countries but also include eastern Europe. The main focal points of the EU work are agricultural policy, structural funds and habitat protection.

## Other Organisations

In addition to the Green 10 there are other NGOs which advocate environmental protection at European level.

### BEUC – Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs

BEUC  
Rue d'Arlon 80, Bte 1  
B-1040 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 743 15 90  
Fax: +32 2 / 740 28 02  
consumers@beuc.org  
www.beuc.org

BEUC is the European umbrella organisation of 43 consumer protection organisations in 30 countries and represents the interests of European consumers in the EU policy process.

## ECAS – European Citizen Action Service

ECAS  
Rue du Prince Royal 83  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 548 04 90  
Fax: +32 2 / 548 04 99  
nathalie.calmejane@ecas.org  
www.ecas.org

ECAS is an international, independent non-profit organisation which enables NGOs and individuals to assert their interests within the EU. ECAS assists its members in developing and monitoring contacts with EU institutions, identifying financing opportunities and establishing new European associations or networks. The members of ECAS come from various EU countries and fields of activity such as citizens' rights, culture, development, health and social affairs.

## ECOS – European Environmental Citizens Organisation for Standardisation

ECOS  
Rue d'Edimbourg 26  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 894 46 55  
Fax: +32 2 / 894 46 10  
info@ecostandard.org  
www.ecostandard.org

ECOS was established by several national and European environmental NGOs to strengthen environmental policy within the European standardisation system and is funded by the EU Commission. ECOS represents environmental NGOs within political and technical bodies as well as in CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) and CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation). ECOS is a non-profit organisation with a scientific profile.

## EEAC – European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils

c/o Minaraad  
Kliniekstraat 25, 4th floor  
B-1070 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 558 01 50 / 51 / 52  
Fax: +32 2 558 01 31  
Ingeborg.Niestroy@eeac-net.org  
www.eeac-net.org

EEAC is a network comprised of more than 30 expert councils from 16 European countries. Their objective is to provide independent and scientifically sound expertise on issues pertaining to the environment and sustainability.

## EPE – European Partners for the Environment

EPE  
Avenue de la Toison d'Or 67  
B-1060 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 771 15 34  
Fax: +32 2 / 539 48 15  
info@epe.be  
www.epe.be

The EPE network consists of 42 partners in 16 countries including public authorities, the business sector, environmental NGOs and social partners. EPE provides information and practical advice on goal-oriented cooperation among partners, in order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. EPE is active in all areas of sustainable development focussing on trade, purchasing and financing.

## Eurogroup for Animals

Eurogroup for Animals  
Rue des Patriotes 6  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 740 08 20  
Fax: +32 2 / 740 08 29  
info@eurogroupforanimals.org  
www.eurogroupforanimals.org

Eurogroup for Animals is the umbrella organisation of the leading European animal protection organisations. Its goal is the adoption of binding EU regulations for an optimal protection of animals. In addition, it acts as the Secretariat of the interparliamentary working party of the European Parliament (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals).

## FERN – The Forests and the European Union Resource Network

FERN  
Rue d'Edimbourg 26  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 894 46 90  
Fax: +32 2 / 894 46 10  
info@fern.org  
www.fern.org

The goals of FERN include the preservation of the ecological functioning of forests and respect for the rights of the social communities living in them through EU policy. It mainly focuses on forests and biodiversity, climate change, trade and investment, development aid and forest peoples' rights.

## HCWHE – Health Care Without Harm Europe

Health Care Without Harm Europe  
Rue de la Pépinière 1  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 503 3137  
Fax: +32 2 / 402 3042

anja.leetz@hcwh.org  
www.noharm.org/europe

Health care Without Harm is an international association with about 470 organisations in more than 50 countries. It lobbies for environmentally friendly reforms in the health sector. It also fights against toxic medical waste and against health procedures which are harmful for man and nature due to their side effects.

### **IFOAM EU Group – International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements**

IFOAM EU Group  
Marco Schlüter, Director  
Rue du Commerce 124  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 280 12 23  
Fax: +32 2 / 735 73 81  
info@ifoam-eu.org  
www.ifoam-eu.org

The IFOAM EU Group is the umbrella organisation of more than 330 organisations, associations and businesses concerned with organic farming in Europe (EU, EFTA, EU accession candidates). Its priorities include genetic engineering, rural development and EU agricultural reform. IFOAM is active worldwide with over 750 partners in 108 countries.

### **IUCN ROfE – International Union for Conservation of Nature, Regional Office for Europe**

IUCN ROfE  
Boulevard Louis Schmidt 64  
B-1040 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 732 82 99  
Fax: +32 2 / 732 94 99  
europe@iucn.org  
www.iucn.org

IUCN ROfE is the European Regional Office of the international conservation organisation IUCN. In addition to the head office in Brussels, there are also branches in Warsaw, Belgrade and Moscow. The mission of IUCN ROfE is to promote and strengthen a European network between environmental research, environmental policy and practical application. As its members include states and government agencies, IUCN ROfE holds a special position compared to the other Brussels NGOs.

### **Seas At Risk**

Seas At Risk  
Rue d'Edimbourg 26  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 893 0965  
Fax: +32 2 / 893 0966  
secretariat@seas-at-risk.org

www.seas-at-risk.org

Seas At Risk advocates the protection, restoration and sustainable use of the marine environment, particularly the Northeast Atlantic. Members of Seas At Risk include the EEB, FoEE (see above) and national environmental protection organisations in ten EU member states

### **Vier Pfoten (Four Paws)– Stiftung fuer Tierschutz**

Vier Pfoten, European Policy Office  
Av. de la Renaissance 19/11  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 2 / 740 08 88  
Fax: +32 2 / 733 90 27  
office@vier-pfoten.eu  
www.vierpfoten.eu

The animal protection organisation Vier Pfoten (Four Paws) is active in several European countries and has an office in Brussels.

## Annex III:

# The European Union online

The digital EU world offers a lot of valuable information; you only need to know where and how to find it. You can also find this list on the internet at [www.eu-koordination.de](http://www.eu-koordination.de). Most of the EU websites have a language setting, where you often have the option of choosing your language.

### **The internet portal of the European Union**

[www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)

### **Press Services**

Official news from all EU institutions:

[www.europa.eu/news](http://www.europa.eu/news)

EU Press releases: [www.europa.eu/press\\_room](http://www.europa.eu/press_room)

DNR EU-News: [www.eu-koordination.de](http://www.eu-koordination.de) (german)

EU-News can also be subscribed to as a free weekly newsletter.

DNR-Infoservice: [www.dnr.de/infoservice](http://www.dnr.de/infoservice) (german) (environmental policy/EU)

EurActiv: [www.euractiv.com/en](http://www.euractiv.com/en)

DPA: [www.eu-info.de](http://www.eu-info.de) (german)

### **EU Institutions**

European Parliament: [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu)

European Council: [www.european-council.europa.eu](http://www.european-council.europa.eu)

Council of Ministers: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)

European Commission: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

Court of Justice of the EU: [www.curia.europa.eu](http://www.curia.europa.eu)

### **Some Directorates-General of the Commission**

Climate Action: [www.ec.europa.eu/clima](http://www.ec.europa.eu/clima)

Environment: [www.ec.europa.eu/environment](http://www.ec.europa.eu/environment)

Energy: [www.ec.europa.eu/energy](http://www.ec.europa.eu/energy)

Transport: [www.ec.europa.eu/transport](http://www.ec.europa.eu/transport)

Fisheries/Maritime Affairs:

[www.ec.europa.eu/fisheries](http://www.ec.europa.eu/fisheries)

Health and Consumers:

[www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer](http://www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer)

Agriculture: [www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture](http://www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture)

### **EU Parliament**

Committees (Day-to-day Activities, Agendas, Minutes, Documents, Calendar):

[www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees.do](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees.do)

Live broadcast of EP sessions:

[www.europarl.europa.eu/eplive/public/default\\_de.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/eplive/public/default_de.htm)

### **Council of Ministers (Council)**

EU presidencies with detailed event calendar:

[www.eu\[year\].\[country code\]](http://www.eu[year].[country code]) e.g. Spain

(January to June 2010): [www.eu2010.es](http://www.eu2010.es)

Voting Calculator:

[www.consilium.europa.eu/App/calculette](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/App/calculette)

### **Legislation**

Access to EU law: [www.eur-lex.europa.eu](http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu)

PreLex, ongoing legislative procedures:

[www.ec.europa.eu/prelex](http://www.ec.europa.eu/prelex)

Decisions of the Court of Justice: [www.curia.europa.eu](http://www.curia.europa.eu)

Ongoing consultations/your voice in Europe:

[www.ec.europa.eu/yourvoice](http://www.ec.europa.eu/yourvoice)

Summary of EU legislation:

[www.europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries](http://www.europa.eu/legislation_summaries)

### **Calendar**

Preview of all EU institutions: [www.europa.eu/eucalendar](http://www.europa.eu/eucalendar)

### **Directory of persons and telephone numbers**

Official directory of the EU: [www.europa.eu/whoiswho](http://www.europa.eu/whoiswho)

### **Audiovisual Services of the EU Commission**

Video, Photo, Audio: [www.ec.europa.eu/avservices](http://www.ec.europa.eu/avservices)

## Annex IV: The European Commission, Directorates-General and Agencies

Commissioner/Country of Origin/Department	Competent Directorate-General (DG) and Agency
<b>José Manuel Barroso</b> /Portugal President	DG Secretariat General (SG) DG Legal Service (S) Bureau of European Policy Advisers
<b>Joaquín Almunia</b> /Spain Vize-President Competition	GD Competition (COMP)
<b>László Andor</b> /Hungary Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (EMPL) European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)
<b>Catherine Ashton</b> /United Kingdom Vice President High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	DG External Relations (RELEX)
<b>Michel Barnier</b> /France Internal Market and Services	DG Internal Market and Services (MARKT) Harmonization Office for the Internal Market (OHIM)
<b>Dacian Cioloș</b> /Romania Agriculture and Rural Development	DG Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)
<b>John Dalli</b> /Malta Health and Consumer Protection	DG Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO) Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) European Medicines Agency (EMA) Executive Agency for Health and Consumer (EAHC)
<b>Maria Damanaki</b> /Greece Fisheries and Maritime Affairs	DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (MARE) Community Fisheries Control Agency (CFCA)
<b>Štefan Füle</b> /Czech Republic Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy	DG Enlargement (ELARG) DG External Relations (RELEX) EuropeAid Development and Cooperation (AIDCO)
<b>Maire Geoghegan-Quinn</b> /Ireland Research, Innovation and Science	DG Research (RTD) Joint Research Centre (JRC) European Research Council (ERC) Research Executive Agency (REA) European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)
<b>Kristalina Georgiewa</b> /Bulgaria International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Response	DG Humanitarian Aid (ECHO)
<b>Karel de Gucht</b> /Belgium Trade	DG Trade (TRADE)
<b>Johannes Hahn</b> /Austria Regional Policy	DG Regional Policy (REGIO)
<b>Connie Hedegaard</b> /Denmark Climate Policy	DG Climate Policy (CLIM)

<b>Commissioner/Country of Origin/Department</b>	<b>Competent Directorate-General (DG) and Agency</b>
<b>Siim Kallas</b> /Estonia Vice President Transport	DG Transport (MOVE) European Railway Agency (ERA) European Agency Aviation Safety (EASA) European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) Trans-European Network Transport Executive Agency (TEN-T EA) Executive Agency for Competition and Innovation (EACI)
<b>Neelie Kroes</b> /Netherlands Vice President Digital Agenda	DG Information Society and Media (INFSO) European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)
<b>Janusz Lewandowski</b> /Poland Budget and Financial Programming	DG Budget (BUDG)
<b>Cecilia Malmström</b> /Sweden Home Affairs	DG Justice, Freedom and Security (JLS) European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX) European Police Office (EUROPOL) European Police Academy (CEPOL) Visa Information system (VIS II) and Schengen Information System (SIS II) European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
<b>Günter Oettinger</b> /Germany Energy	DG Energy (ENER) Euratom Supply Agency (ESA) Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI)
<b>Andris Piebalgs</b> /Latvia Development	DG Development (DEV) EuropeAid Development and Cooperation (AIDCO)
<b>Janez Potočnik</b> /Slovenia Environment	DG Environment (ENV) European Environment Agency (EEA)
<b>Viviane Reding</b> /Luxembourg Vice President Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship	DG Justice, Freedom and Security (JLS) DG Communication (COMM) Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST) EU Office for Publications (OP)
<b>Olli Rehn</b> /Finland Economic and Monetary Affairs	DG Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Statistical Office (EUROSTAT)
<b>Maroš Šefčovič</b> /Slovakia Vice President Inter-institutional Relations and Administration	DG Human Resources and Security (HR) DG Informatics (DIGIT) Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements (PMO) Office of Infrastructure and Logistics, Brussels (OIB) Office of Infrastructure and Logistics, Luxembourg (OIL) European Personal Selection Office (EPSO) European Administrative School (EAS)
<b>Algirdas Šemeta</b> /Lithuania Taxation, Customs Union, Audit and Anti-Fraud	DG Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD) Internal Audit Services (IAS) European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF)
<b>Antonio Tajani</b> /Italy Vice President Enterprise and Industry	DG Enterprise and Industry (ENTR) European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)
<b>Androulla Vassiliou</b> /Cyprus Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth	DG Education and Culture (EAC) DG Translation (DGT) DG Interpretation (SCIC) Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CdT) Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

## Annex V: Committees of the European Parliament

### **Committee on Development (DEVE, 58 members)**

- Chair: Eva Joly (France, GREENS/EFA)

### **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET, 145 members)**

- Chair: Gabriele Albertini (Italy, EPP)

### **Committee on International Trade (INTA, 55 members)**

- Chair: Vital Moreira (Portugal, S&D)

### **Committee on Budgets (BUDG, 78 members)**

- Chair: Alain Lamassoure (France, EPP)

### **Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT, 55 members)**

- Chair: Luigi de Magistris (Italy, ALDE)

### **Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON, 91 members)**

- Chair: Sharon Bowles (United Kingdom, ALDE)

### **Committee for Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL, 95 members)**

- Chair: Pervenche Berès (France, S&D)

### **Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI, 123 members)**

- Chair: Jo Leinen (Germany, S&D)

### **Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE, 106 members)**

- Chair: Herbert Reul (Germany, EPP)

### **Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO, 75 members)**

- Chair: Malcolm Harbour (United Kingdom, ECR)

### **Committee for Transport and Tourism (TRAN, 83 members)**

- Chair: Brian Simpson (UK, S&D)

### **Committee für Regional Development (REGI, 89 members)**

- Chair: Danuta Maria Hübner (Poland, EPP)

### **Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI, 85 members)**

- Chair: Paolo de Castro (Italy, S&D)

### **Committee on Fisheries (PECH, 45 members)**

- Chair: Carmen Fraga Estévez (Spain, EPP)

### **Committee on Culture and Education (CULT, 82 members)**

- Chair: Doris Pack (Germany, EPP)

### **Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI, 48 members)**

- Chair: Klaus-Heiner Lehne (Germany, EPP)

### **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE, 107 members)**

- Chair: Juan Fernando López Aguilar (Spain, S&D)

### **Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO, 48 members)**

- Chair: Carlo Casini (Italy, EPP)

### **Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM, 55 members)**

- Chair: Eva-Britt Svensson (Sweden, GUE/NGL)

### **Committee on Petitions (PETI, 53 members)**

- Chair: Erminia Mazzoni (Italy, EPP)

### **Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI, 50 members)**

- Chair: Heidi Anneli Hautala (Finland, GREENS/EFA)

### **Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE, 55 members)**

- Chair: Arnaud Danjean (France, EPP)

The EU Parliament can also use temporary committees and temporary subcommittees. In 2009 the Special Committee on Financial, Economic and Social Crisis (CRIS) was set up.

## EU Coordination Office

The EU coordination office in Berlin was set up by the German League for Nature and Environment (DNR) in 1991 in response to the growing significance of European environmental policy in Europe and Germany. It acts as the coordination office for the member organisations of DNR and supports DNR in its EU-related political work; it coordinates contacts and is actively involved in European environmental policy. One important aspect of its work is to bring across fundamental and current issues pertaining to the EU by organising events, visits and publications.

Thanks to its representation in the board of the European Environmental Bureau, which is the biggest European environmental umbrella organisation, DNR has a Europe-wide network; this helps to coordinate its activities and positions with NGOs from other European countries.

DNR is the umbrella organisation of the nature and environmental protection associations in Germany. It has 98 member organisations with more than five million individual members.

### EU Coordination office online

#### **[www.eu-koordination.de](http://www.eu-koordination.de)**

General website providing up-to-date information, publications for downloading and the possibility of subscribing to the weekly newsletter (free and in German).

### Magazine umwelt aktuell

News, comments and background reports on German, European and international environmental policy. The monthly magazine is published by DNR and the publishing company is oekom verlag, [www.dnr.de/umwelt-aktuell](http://www.dnr.de/umwelt-aktuell).



The brochure "Brussels Basics - How does the EU work?" is an guiding map designed to help you find your way through the Brussels jungle. It will be particularly helpful for those wishing to get involved in environmental policies, be it on a professional or voluntary basis.

Brussels Basics offers a short overview of the EU institutions, the development and the principles of European environmental policy as well as the legislative and judicial procedures. It provides valuable hints for the search of information and documents, and also includes contact details of European environmental organisations as well as numerous tips for your own lobbying activities.

The brochure always keeps in mind a politically active reader. It follows a hands-on approach and attaches value to general ideas. The brochure gives an overview and quite deliberately does not seek to delve into superfluous details. Instead, the brochure offers the necessary expert knowledge required to get involved in European environmental policy.

