



Who to talk to - finding the right audience for your advocacy message

Part 2: The European Commission and the Council of the European Union

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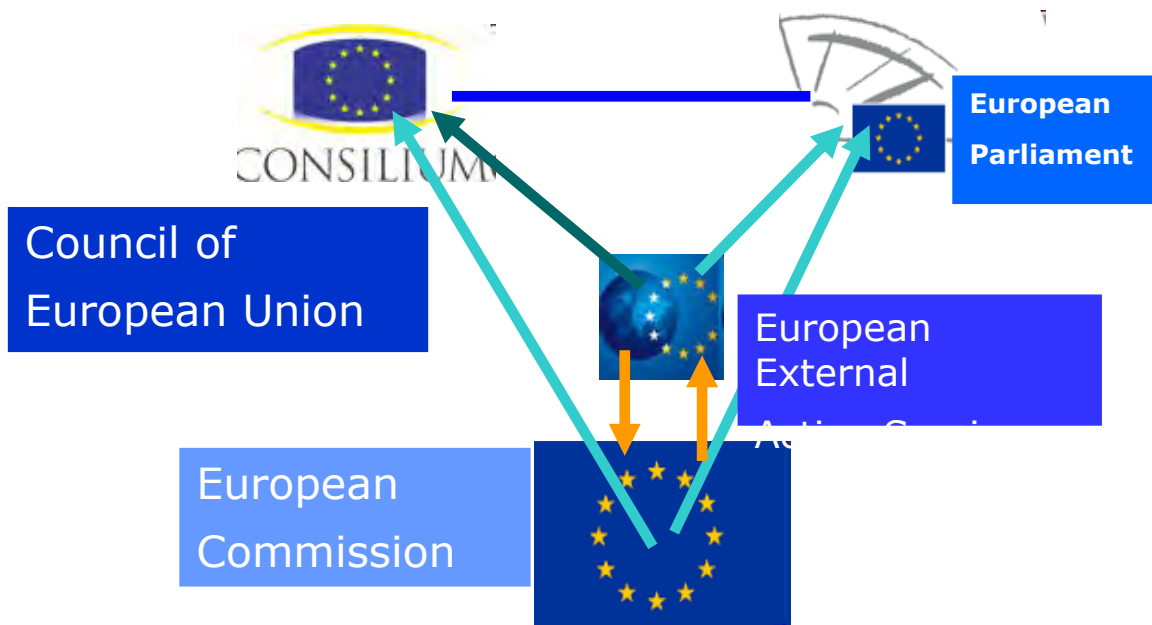
Introduction

'Who do I call if I want to call Europe' is a quotation attributed to Henry Kissinger which is often quoted when people want to suggest that the European Institutions are too diverse to provide a clear target audience for political messages addressed at 'Europe'. It is, of course, a simplification. As explained in [Part 1](#) of this briefing paper, the first question is whether we mean [Europe](#), the [European Union](#), or the [Council of Europe](#)? And if you are not clear about the reason for this question, click on the hyperlinks for more information. Secondly, any one of these is complex and therefore having just one phone number for them would be simplistic and unrealistic.

But that said, it is important for citizens to understand how they can communicate effectively and at the right time with the appropriate decision-makers about the issues they care about.

This paper tries to shed some light on the other two (and a half?) European Institutions that make up the core of the decision-making (and implementation) structures of the European Union. For information about the European Parliament, see [Part 1 of this briefing paper](#).

It is perhaps useful to think of the core of the European Union as consisting of originally 3, now 4, institutions.



The graphic above shows these four agencies and tries to indicate how they interact. The Council of the European Union and the European Parliament are said to be the co-legislators. The European Commission drafts legislative proposals. And the External Action Service - the newest of the Institutions, inaugurated in 2009 - is responsible for foreign policy. However, that description is quite simplistic.

This paper will look in more detail at the structure of the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the External Action Service, to provide an insight into how citizens -you- can find the right person to talk to about specific issues and how citizens can access the plentiful information that is available on the websites of these Institutions, when one knows where to look.

The European Commission

The Role of the European Commission

The European Commission has several different roles: it drafts legislation; it implements legislation; it spends money; and it ensures that legislation is observed correctly by the Member States and other EU bodies. In this last role, it is assisted by the [European Court of Justice](#).

The European Commission does all this only in relation to those areas of policy that are dealt with at European level. This still sounds quite straightforward, but of course there are some policy areas where the EU has sole competence (i.e. all the decisions are made at EU level) and others where this is less clear. Knowing whether or not a particular decision is one to be made at EU level is difficult and well beyond the scope of this paper.

What we will look at here are the two very different but interrelated structures that make up the European Commission and what they do.

The Commissioners and their Teams

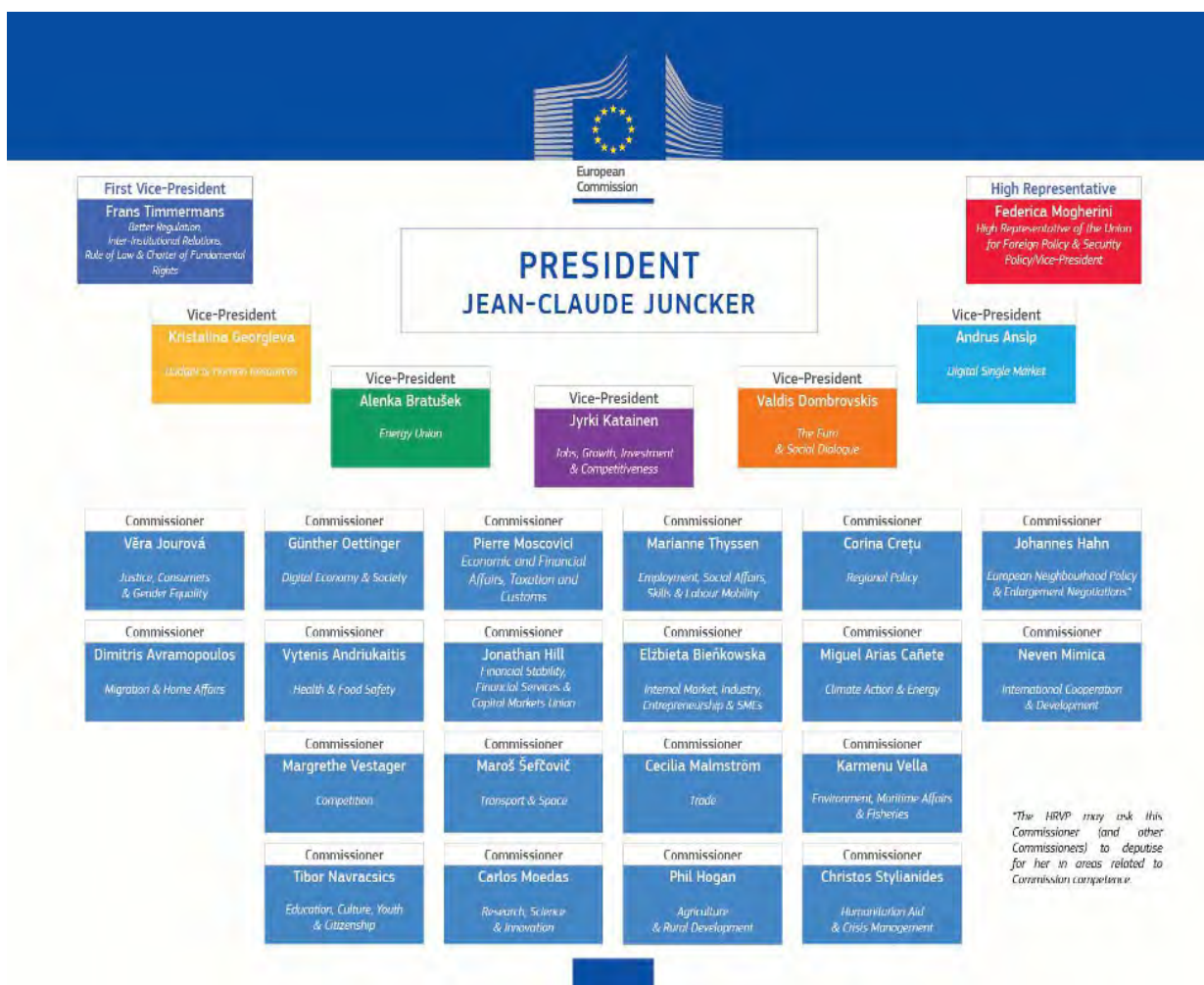
Who are the Commissioners and what are they there to do?

The European Commission is headed by a President, and since the changes made by Jean-Claude Juncker in 2014, [below him are seven Vice-Presidents](#). One is the "First Vice-President" who will act as the right hand of the President, seeking to ensure the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are respected, as well as overseeing the Commission's relations with the other European Institutions. Another is the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (who works with the European External

Action Service, see below). The other five Vice-Presidents will lead project teams of a number of commissioners - with their work currently based on Juncker's political guidelines. For example the Vice-President for Energy Union, Alenka Bratušek, is [responsible for steering the work of the Commissioners](#) for Climate Action and Energy; Transport and Space; Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs¹; Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries; Regional Policy; Agriculture and Rural Development; and Research, Science and Innovation. These associations are flexible and subject to change, as may be necessary over time. The Vice-Presidents essentially have the right to veto the proposals of Commissioners working in their project team, as Juncker says he will not add any initiative to the Commission's work programme or to the Commission's agenda without the backing of a Vice-President. It is unclear whether these Vice-Presidents will have their own teams or cabinets, but they will certainly co-operate closely with the Commissioners that report to them.

Each Commissioner is responsible for a portfolio, perhaps including a number of Directorates-General (see below), just as the Vice-President is responsible for a project including a number of Commissioners. For example, the Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy works with the Directorates-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) and Energy (DG ENER).

Although it might seem that this is a hierarchical system with two types of commissioners of differing importance and power, Juncker has emphasised teamwork in all their relations, highlighting that the Vice-Presidents and Commissioners are mutually dependent on each other. How far this will be the case with the new structure, or whether Juncker has created superior and subordinate commissioners, will become clear only over time.



¹SMEs are small businesses (small and medium enterprises).

The new Commission structure as proposed by Juncker.

The list of the 28 proposed Commissioners (which includes the Vice-Presidents and the President) is easily [accessible on the internet](#). Each Commissioner has an essentially political role, spearheading and driving policy development in their area of responsibility within the constraints set by the [Treaties](#) and the political decisions of the two legislative Institutions.

Why do Commissioners have teams?

The other responsibility the Commissioners have is the collective decision-making of the Commission as a whole². The Commission is also referred to as the ‘College of Commissioners’, indicating that decisions made are the responsibility of them all collectively. That means that any legislative proposals on whatever area of policy, has to be agreed by the ‘College’³. Of course, none of the Commissioners is capable of being fully informed about all of the issues relating to all EU policy areas. So, they have what are called ‘cabinets’ or teams who advise them.

Each ‘cabinet’ is made up of a Head of Cabinet, a Deputy Head of Cabinet, and a number of policy advisors. They each have different policy areas for which they are responsible.

For example, the cabinet of [Günther Öttinger, responsible for Energy Policy in the 2009-2014 Commission](#) ⁴



The picture (taken from the European Commission website) shows his team outside the Headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels.

²At the time of revision (September 2014), the new structure of the Commission has been proposed by Juncker and the positions allocated. The European Parliament is planning hearings of the Commissioners. The staff support teams are still being organised and are planned to be in place by January 2015. This section reflects the 2009-2014 Commission and may be updated if the new structure is approved, and as it is implemented.

³At the time of revision (September 2014), the process for decision-making within the College of Commissioners and the Cabinet structure planned for the new hierarchy of Commissioners, are not yet known in detail.

⁴For the new (in 2014) Commission structure related to energy, see the green-coded names in this organisational diagram:
http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/images/structure/eu_985_en.jpg

The cabinet is made up of:

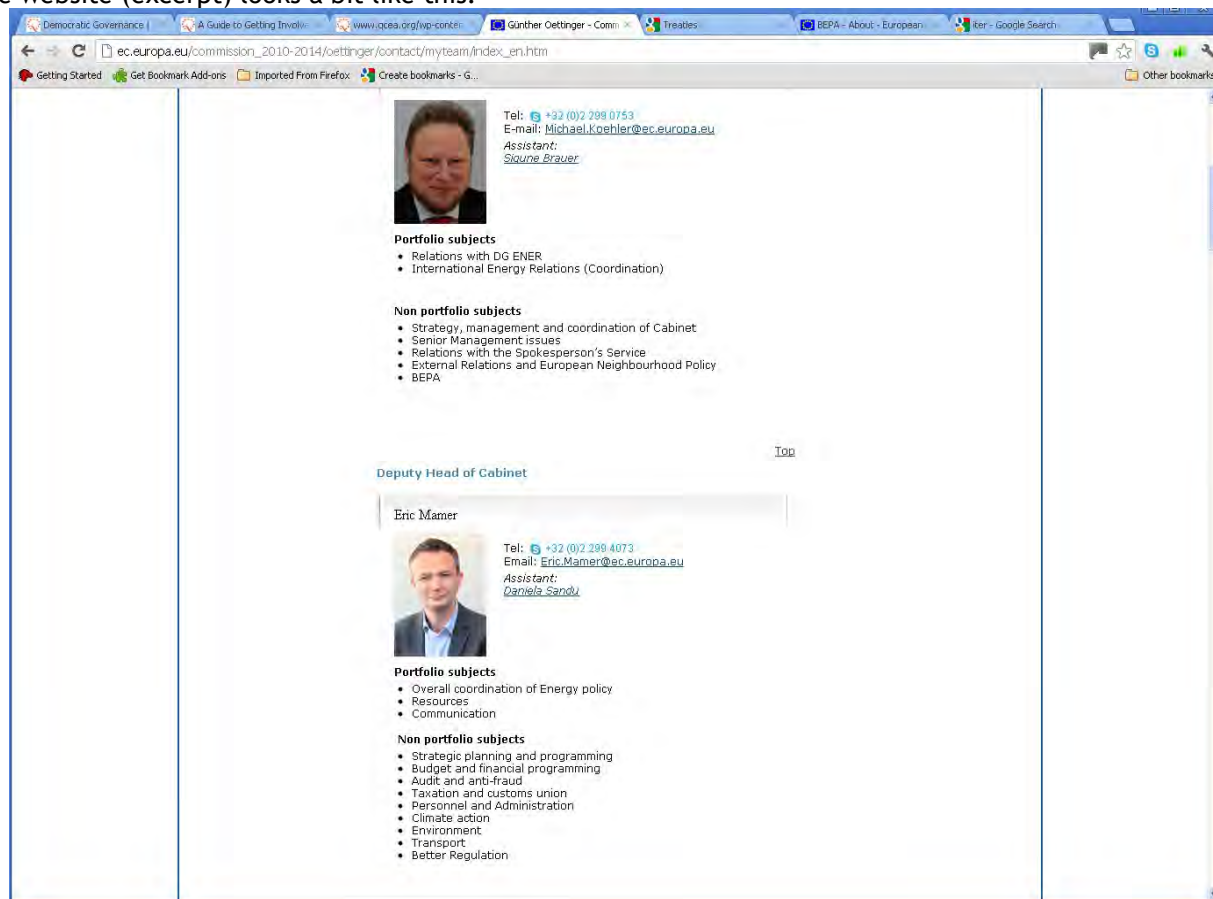
- The Head of Cabinet whose responsibilities include:
 - ***Relations with DG Energy (i.e. the Commission Directorate General dealing with Energy)***
 - ***Coordination of International Energy Relations⁵***
 - Strategy, management and coordination of the Cabinet
 - Senior management issues
 - Relations with the Spokesperson's Service (i.e. the team within the Commission dealing with public statements, speaking to the media etc.)
 - External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy
 - [The Bureau of European Policy Advisors](#)
- The Deputy Head of Cabinet whose responsibilities include:
 - ***Overall coordination of Energy Policy***
 - ***Resources***
 - ***Communication***
 - Strategic planning and programming
 - Budget and financial programming
 - Audit and anti-fraud
 - Taxation and customs union
 - Personnel and Administration
 - Climate Action
 - Environment
 - Transport
 - Better Regulation
- Four members of Cabinet whose responsibilities (between them) include:
 - ***Energy Efficiency***
 - ***CCS (i.e. Carbon Capture and Storage)***
 - ***JU Fuel cells and Hydrogen***
 - ***Networks and regional initiatives, international gas corridors***
 - ***Coal***
 - ***Oil***
 - ***Nuclear Energy***
 - ***Nuclear Safeguards***
 - ***Euratom Supply Agency (ESA)***
 - ***Relations with the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)***
 - ***Energy Research, including ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor)***
 - ***Smart Cities & Communities***
 - ***Smart Grids***
 - ***Electricity and gas***
 - ***Inter-institutional Relations***
 - ***Internal Market***
 - Economic and monetary affairs
 - Employment, social affairs and inclusion
 - Industry and entrepreneurship
 - Regional policy
 - Development policy
 - Trade

⁵ The areas of responsibility shown in ***bold italics*** relate to areas which are classified on the cabinet website as 'portfolio subjects', i.e. subjects directly related to the work of the Commissioner in his area of responsibility, rather than subjects which need to be covered for advisory purposes to take a view on matters relating to other policy areas which will be on the agenda of the College of Commissioners.

- Enlargement
- International cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response
- Agriculture and rural development
- Maritime affairs and fisheries
- Research and innovation
- Digital agenda
- Inter-institutional relations, GRI
- Internal market and services
- Two Assistants to the cabinet whose responsibilities (between them) include:
 - ***New and Renewable sources of Energy***
 - ***Relations with the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI)***
 - ***Competition (State Aids)***
 - ***Management of the Commissioner's agenda***
 - Lisbon Treaty implementation
 - Infringements
 - Justice, fundamental rights and citizenship
 - Home affairs
 - Education, culture, multilingualism and youth
 - Relations with national Parliaments and political bodies, Ombudsman
 - Relations with civil society
- One Administrative assistant to the cabinet whose responsibilities include:
 - Coordination of Cabinet's budget and human resources
 - Commissioner's website
 - Visitor groups
 - Stagiaires (i.e. trainees/interns)
 - Security and Protocol
 - Local Security Officer
 - Parliamentary Questions
- One spokesperson
- One press officer
- Seven personal assistants
- Two archivists
- An unspecified number of trainees
- Two drivers

What does this tell us? First: that each member of the cabinet has a lot of different things to do. Second: that it is possible from the website of the cabinet to identify who does what.

The website (excerpt) looks a bit like this:



For each team member (including the Head and Deputy Head), the website shows a picture, the phone number, the e-mail address, and (if they have an assistant) a link to their assistant. Getting in touch is therefore quite easy.

Getting a response might be a lot harder - cabinets are notoriously difficult to engage with - but they are powerful and therefore it is worth the effort.

The role of the Head of Cabinet

The Heads of Cabinet are key decision-makers. The 28 of them meet regularly to discuss and prepare the agenda for the College meetings. They are gate keepers and thus important to any advocacy at the stage of the preparation of legislation before it has gotten to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament respectively.

The Directorates General of the Commission

If the strategic and political head of the European Commission is firmly among the Commissioners and their teams, the engine room - as it were - is in the Directorates General (or DGs for short). Here, legislation is drafted for approval by the hierarchy and subsequently the College of Commissioners prior to being placed before the two legislative Institutions. Here, too, implementation of EU policy and EU programmes takes place; this includes, but is by no means restricted to, spending money.

This is not to say that there isn't a political process going on in the DGs: the drafting of legislative proposals is certainly a political process. It is here that the drafting of legislation can be affected by advocacy and lobbying; so it is important to know one's way around these structures too.

There are 33 Directorates General; there are also 11 Services - departments which fulfil an internal function. This paper will not address them further.

Who is who?

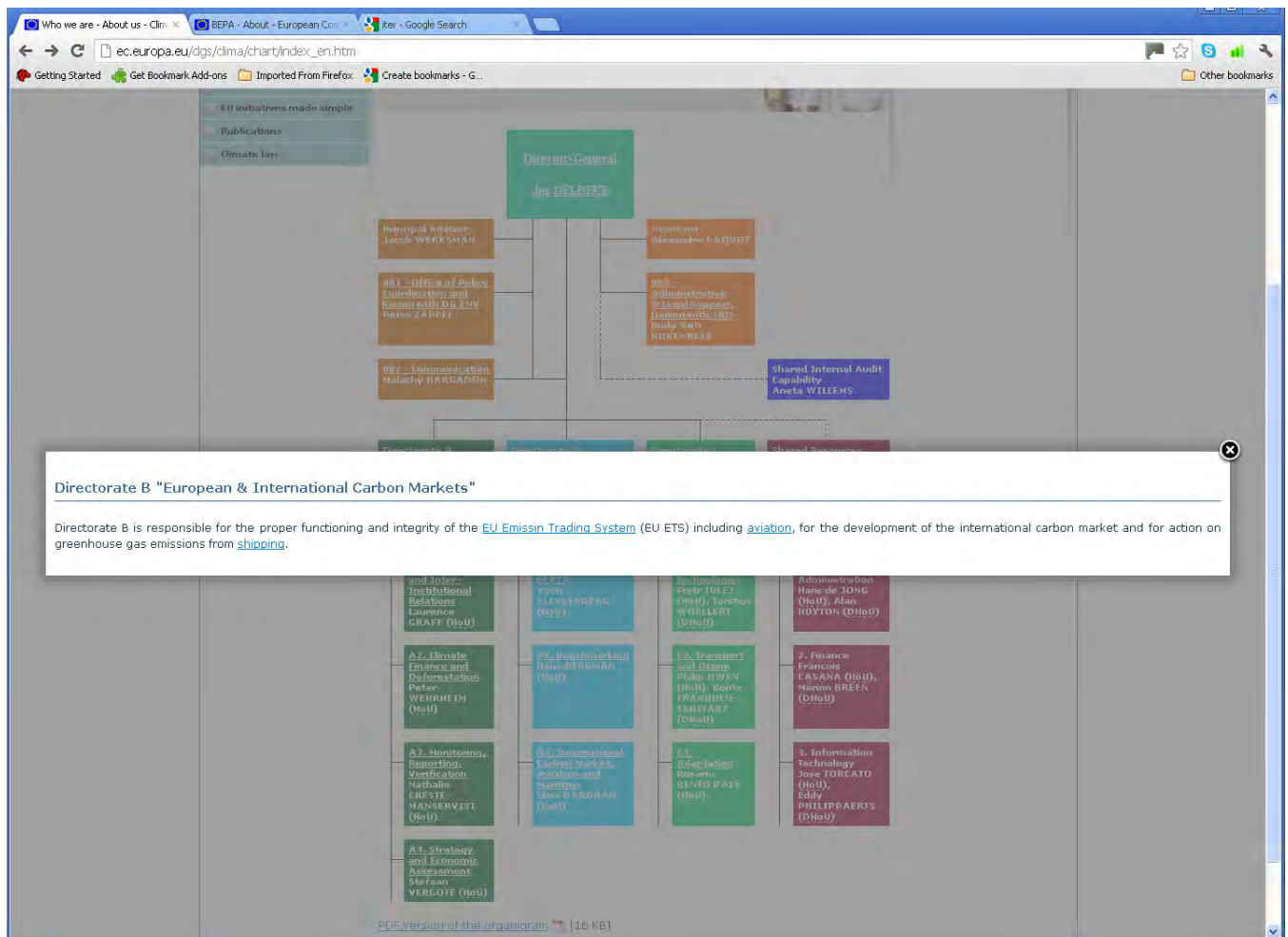
A [list of the DGs](#) is easily accessed. Their websites differ in terms of how easily accessible they are. As an example, let's look at [DG Climate Action](#).



The home page is relatively clearly set out and has links to 'About us', 'Policies', 'News', and 'Contracts & Grants'; it also has links to 'who we are', the Director General, something referred to as 'EU initiatives made simple', publications, and climate law.

To find out who might be willing to hear what we have to say, the 'who we are' link looks promising. This shows an organisation chart, which gives names and job titles of people from the Director General down to Heads of Unit. In general, DGs have a Director General, (usually) two or more Deputy Directors General - though in this particular case and because it seems to be a small DG, this is not so - a number of Directorates (with their Directors heading them), and also a number of Units in each Directorate with a Head of Unit heading each. Below that level, it is difficult to quickly identify specific staff members. So the rule of thumb is: start with the Head of Unit or the Director - if they want to delegate something downward, they will.

In the case of DG Climate Action, if you click on the name of a Directorate or Unit, you get a pop-up, which explains what that part of the DG does:



Policy Information

The quality and accessibility of information about the different policies for which a DG is responsible, varies from DG to DG. Sometimes it can be quite cumbersome to find what you want to know. The only thing we can say after years of experience is: things have improved, and, if you really want to, you will eventually find what you are looking for.

DG Climate Action has quite a good [list of policies](#) in a fairly accessible place on its website. This shows the range of things the EU deals with in the context of climate action:

- The climate and energy package
- The Roadmap for moving to a low carbon economy 2050
- The European Climate Change Programme
- Greenhouse gas monitoring and reporting
- Emissions Trading System
- Low carbon technologies
- Transport
- Protection of the ozone layer
- Fluorinated greenhouse gases
- Forests and agriculture
- Adaptation to climate change

- Climate finance
- Partnerships at the international level

Engaging - Stages of the Process

The European Commission initiates legislation; i.e. it drafts the proposals that form the basis of legislation to be passed. As with national legislative processes, for some aspects of legislation, there are stages even before the European Commission comes out with a legislative proposal.

There might be a green paper (which outlines the thinking of the European Commission and raises some questions which it needs to address) or there might be a white paper which sets out the broad approach which the European Commission is likely to take.

Finding out where certain policy issues are at, is not easy at all. Knowing what is going on, being clued into the processes: these are all important.

The Commission Work Programme

One source of information is certainly the [Work Programme of the European Commission](#). Here, one can find the [work programme](#) (for the current and prior years); [Roadmaps](#) (which are impact assessments of planned initiatives); and [planned legislative proposals](#).

The last of these is a table (see below for an image of the table). For each legislative proposal, it shows the reference number, policy area, title, lead service (or Directorate General), the estimated timeframe in which it is likely to be adopted, the legal basis on which it is based, the type of procedure, whether the European Social and Economic Committee and/or the Committee of the Regions is to be consulted, a summary of the political motivation and brief description, and whether or not it has budgetary implications.

To choose an example from the part of the table in the screen shot below, line 2 of the table says:

Reference: 2012/CLIMA/003

Policy Area: Climate Action

Title: Fluorinated greenhouse gases reduction

Lead Service: Climate Action

Estimated date of adoption: last third of 2012

Legal basis: Treaty on the Functioning of the [European Union, Article 192](#)

Procedure: Ordinary Legislative Procedure (i.e. both the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament have to approve it)

Consultation with the European Social and Economic Committee and/or the Committee of the Regions: mandatory for both

Political Motivation and short description: The aim is to ensure cost-efficient reductions of greenhouse emissions from fluorinated gases in the context of the overall EU objective to cut emissions by 80-95% by 2050. The proposal is a follow-up to an evaluation report mandated by the Regulation (EC) No 842/2006.

Budgetary implications: this is left blank; thus by implication, none are foreseen.

Commission actions expected to be adopted / Actions prévues pour adoption par la Commission: 18/07/2012 - 31/12/2012

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS / PROPOSITIONS LÉGISLATIVES

Ref N°	POLICY AREA / DOMAINE POLITIQUE	TITLE / INTITULÉ	LEAD SERVICE(S) / SERVICE(S) CHEF(S) DE FILE	ESTIMATED DATE OF ADOPTION / DATE ESTIMÉE D'ADOPTION	LEGAL BASE ENVISAGED / BASE JURIDIQUE DU TRAITÉ ENVISAGÉE À CE STADE (*)	PROBABLE PROCEDURE / PROCÉDURE PROBABLE	CONSULTATION CESE / CoR (mandatory / optional)	POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION / MOTIVATIONS POLITIQUES ET BRIÈVE DESCRIPTION	BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS / CONSÉQUENCES BUDGÉTAIRES
Commission Work Programme - 2012									
2012/AGRI/008	Agriculture et développement rural	Regulation on information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries amending Council Regulation (EC) No 3/2008 of 17 December 2007	AGRI	4ème trimestre 2012	Traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne: Art 42-43	procédure législative ordinaire (COD)	X X	Programme de travail de la Commission / 2012 / CWP2012 Recast and simplify the legislation on promotion and information to propose measures with higher EU added value and designed to address the needs of the different markets (e.g. need of more information on internal market or need to facilitate access to third markets). This proposal will be a follow-up to the Communication on promotion and information for agricultural products which set out strategic orientations for a comprehensive agricultural promotion and information policy.	Yes
2012/CLIMA/003	Action pour le Climat	Fuorinated greenhouse gases reduction	CLIMA	3ème trimestre 2012	Traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne: Article 182 (ex Article 175 TEC)	procédure législative ordinaire (COD)	X X	Programme de travail de la Commission / 2012 / CWP2012 The aim is to ensure cost-efficient reductions of greenhouse emissions from fluorinated gases in the context of the overall EU objective to cut emissions by 80-95% by 2050. The proposal is a follow-up to an evaluation report mandated by the Regulation (EC) No 843/2006.	
2012/CLIMA/001	Action pour le Climat	Including maritime transport emissions in the EU's greenhouse gas reduction commitment	CLIMA	11 décembre 2012	Traité sur l'Union européenne: Article 181	procédure législative ordinaire (COD)	X X	Programme de travail de la Commission / 2012 / CWP2012 According to the EU's climate and energy legislation, measures should be taken to include maritime transport emissions in the EU's greenhouse gas reduction commitment if these emissions are not included in an international agreement's reduction targets by 2011.	
2009/COMP/023	Concurrence	Proposal for a Directive on rules governing actions for damages for infringements of the competition law provisions	COMP	4ème trimestre 2012	To be determined: to be determined	procédure législative ordinaire (COD)	X	Programme de travail de la Commission / 2012 / CWP2012 The right of victims of an EU antitrust infringement to compensation for the harm caused by such an infringement has already been established by the Court of Justice. The objective of this legislative initiative is to ensure effective damages actions before national courts and to clarify the mission of such private actions with public enforcement by the Commission and the national competition authorities, notably as regards the protection of leniency programmes, in order to preserve the central role of public enforcement in the EU.	
2012/COMP/004	Concurrence	Commission proposal for a Council Regulation declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the common market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (New General block exemption Regulation)	COMP	4ème trimestre 2012	Traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne: Articles 107 and 108 TFEU; Council Regulation (EC) 984/98	procédure législative ordinaire (COD)		Programme de travail de la Commission / 2012 / CWP2012 Other simplification The current General Block Exemption Regulation ("GBER") includes measures that need not to be notified to the Commission. The GBER expires at the end of 2013, for which reason a revision will have to be carried out. The objective of the revision will be to examine whether the current exemption rules are still appropriate or should be modified and whether there is scope for further extension of the GBER. Also, the revision of the exemptions in the GBER will go in parallel with the review process of the related State Aid Guidelines linked to EU 2020 (PSDA), Risk Capital, Environment) and will take account of their revision.	
2011/ECHO/003	Coopération internationale, aide humanitaire et réaction aux crises	Proposal for a Regulation for the setting-up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC)	ECHO	3ème trimestre 2012	Traité sur l'Union européenne: 214	procédure législative ordinaire (COD)		Programme de travail de la Commission / 2012 / CWP2012 The objective is to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union. The scope is likely to be concentrated in humanitarian aid and civil protection. However, there might be links to other policy areas such external relations and development cooperation. Preparatory actions in 2011 an external study will help in identifying possible options, including on preparatory actions.	

(*) La base juridique mentionnée est celle à ce stade par le Service chef de file; elle sera définitivement établie lors de l'adoption de l'acte par la Commission, sur base de son but et de son contenu.

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In short, there is a lot of information that can be obtained about initiatives that are forthcoming.

At the stage at which an initiative is planned, there is scope to talk to the relevant people in the relevant European Commission Directorates General. For this initiative, for example, the right person to contact would be in DG Climate. The appropriate Directorate would be Directorate C: Mainstreaming Adaptation & Low Carbon Technologies and within this Unit C2: Transport and Ozone. The right Units and names can be found from the organisational chart (discussed above).

Commission Consultations

Another way of finding out what is going on and submitting one's views in a relatively straightforward way is to respond to Commission consultations.

The European Commission consults widely on a whole range of policy areas. The consultations are open to the public, and individual citizens, as well as organisations, can respond. The response rate can be very low, so any contribution is likely to count quite significantly. QCEA published an article about this in [March 2011 \(in Around Europe\)](#), and another about consultations in [August 2014](#).

Accessing these consultations can be done via a website called [Your Voice in Europe](#). First, you have to choose the language in which to read the consultation information:



Having done that, you will be taken to a screen where you can choose Consultations or other forms of interaction and information (Discussions, Other Tools).

The Consultations link takes you to another screen:



This page lists the open consultations showing the policy area, the title, the date the consultation opened, the date it is due to close, and a link to further information about the specific consultation.

If we consider as an example the consultation on ‘The urban dimension of the EU transport policy’, the link ‘More Information’ opens a link to the consultation itself and provides further links to the questionnaire (if there is one - sometimes the questions are embedded in a discussion document, and responses are freeform), details of the initiative under consultation, how to submit responses, and any other useful information.

The helpfulness of the ‘More Information’ page varies from consultation to consultation, but essentially it should, and normally will, contain all the information and links to the documents you need to respond.

Other forms of engagement at Commission level

Of course, the European Commission also implements policy and programmes, and engaging in that aspect of their work is also important.

The effective approach to engage with policy and programme implementation is similar: it starts with identifying the unit where the policy/programme is implemented and then talking to the relevant person there. Approaches are usually best by e-mail initially, but if there is no response forthcoming, a proper letter in the post may be more helpful. Phone calls can also be effective.

If your objective is more to find out about programmes and / or open grants, you can find these directly on the websites of the relevant DG.

If the Commission staff don’t respond

If the response you get from anyone working in the Commission is unsatisfactory (i.e. they don’t respond, they don’t respond within a reasonable timeframe), it may be worth channelling the question via your MEP (see [Part 1 of this short series of briefing papers](#)) to get an answer.

The Council of the European Union

The different European institutions can be terribly confusing. At the most basic level, it is important to understand that Council of the European Union is the EU Institution in which the national governments of the Member States work together. They make policy, they approve legislation, they develop strategy, and they agree on common positions on a variety of subjects.

The Council operates at various levels, each of which has a different role. The level that is best known is the European Council: the Heads of Government or State meeting together. These are the European Summits, which get media coverage. At this level, direct engagement from citizens is not very common or likely to have much effect.

The next level of the Council to consider is the ministerial level. This is still very high level, and direct engagement from citizens is still not likely. However, most of their meetings are public and can be followed on the Internet, so citizens can find out what is being discussed and decided. They meet in [9 configurations](#).

As an example, below is a screen shot relating to a recent meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, which shows the start of the webcast, and links to this and other webcasts.



The Permanent Representations

But the focus of this paper is engagement with the Council at its various working levels - the many people who are behind the scenes of these high level meetings and who prepare the decisions that are made there.

First among these are the Permanent Representations of the Member States. They are essentially like embassies, but they are not called embassies because they do not represent the Member State to another sovereign country but to an international institution.

You can find information about each Member State and their Permanent Representation on the European Union Website; the relevant part of the website is called [Who is Who](#).

The starting point is a screen that looks like this:

This screenshot shows the 'EU Whoiswho' website interface. At the top, it says 'This site is a part of Europa' with the European Union flag and 'EU Whoiswho The official directory of the European Union'. There are links for 'Help | Contact | Legal notice' and a language dropdown set to 'English (en)'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Europa > EU Whoiswho > Search by hierarchy'. On the left, there is a 'QUICK SEARCH' box and a sidebar with search options: 'Search by person', 'Search by entity', 'Search by hierarchy', and 'Download/Order' (with sub-options: PDF, E-book for mobile phone, Street maps & other maps, Order a paper copy). The main content area is titled 'Hierarchic view' and shows a breadcrumb trail: 'Institution > Council of the European Union > Permanent Representatives Committee'. Below this, it says 'Permanent Representatives Committee' and 'Depending entity'. A list of links is provided: 'Part 2 (Coreper II)', 'Part 1 (Coreper I)', and 'Permanent representations'.

The link called Part 2 (Coreper II) goes to a list of the Heads of each of the Permanent Representations (or Ambassadors); the link called Part 1 (Coreper I) goes to a list of their deputies; and the link called Permanent Representation goes to the list of links to the Permanent Representation themselves (see below):

This screenshot shows the 'EU Whoiswho' website interface with the breadcrumb trail extended to 'Permanent representations'. The main content area is titled 'Permanent representations' and 'Depending entity'. A list of links is provided for each Member State: 'Permanent Representation of Belgium', 'Permanent Representation of Bulgaria', 'Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic', 'Permanent Representation of Denmark', 'Permanent Representation of Germany', 'Permanent Representation of Estonia', 'Permanent Representation of Finland', 'Permanent Representation of France', 'Permanent Representation of Greece', 'Permanent Representation of Hungary', 'Permanent Representation of Ireland', 'Permanent Representation of Italy', 'Permanent Representation of Latvia', 'Permanent Representation of Lithuania', 'Permanent Representation of Luxembourg', 'Permanent Representation of Malta', and 'Permanent Representation of the Netherlands'.

The list of course goes through all 28 Member States; this is only the top part.

If you then click on a specific country, you come to another screen which provides further information about the location of the Permanent Representation, contact information, website information

(sometimes), and the names and roles of the 3 or 4 most senior people in the Permanent Representation. See below, for example, the information for Ireland:

Permanent Representation of Ireland

Rue Froissart 50 / Froissartstraat 50
1040 Bruxelles/Brussel
Belgique
Tel: +32 22308580
Fax: +32 22303203
Email: irprb@dfa.ie

Internet: <http://www.irelandrepbrussels.be>

- ▶ [MONTGOMERY Rory](#)
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative (Coreper II)
- ▶ [HANNEY Tom](#)
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative (Coreper I)
- ▶ [MCBEAN Keith](#)
Ambassador
Representative of Ireland to the PSC
- ▶ [BEHAN Thomas](#)
Brigadier General
Military representative to the EUMC

Below that are links to different sections within the Permanent Representation. This list is not always terribly informative, and the website of the Permanent Representation can be more helpful to find the person who deals with a particular matter.

Why do we need all these people in Brussels?

The Council is part of the legislative arm of the European Union. In other words, any law that is passed by the European Union has to be agreed by the Council (in many case, although not in all, jointly with the European Parliament).

That is a lot of legislation in many different policy areas. Clearly, Ministers can't make all of the technical detailed decisions themselves. So the Council works with a long list of committees and working groups; all of these are made up of one person from each Member State and one representative of the European Commission (plus someone from the Council Secretariat).

So, what are all these working groups? This is one of the areas where the European Union is criticised for a lack of transparency - and rightly so. There is no easily accessible [list of these groups and committees](#), although if you know exactly what you are looking for, it is possible to find. But even this list does not show who from each Permanent Representation is on that group, although in some cases it is relatively easy to spot who it might be.

So, if you wanted to get in touch with the person dealing with a particular policy at the Council level from your own country, you would have to try to find the right person from either the Who is Who directory or from the website of the Permanent Representation.

For example, if you wanted to know who deals with Research Policy for Ireland at Council level, you might start with the Who is Who directory. You would look in the lower section of the screen we saw above; that looks like this:

Depending entity

- ▶ [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)
- ▶ [Political and Security Committee](#)
- ▶ [Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food](#)
- ▶ [Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport](#)
- ▶ [Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht](#)
- ▶ [Office of the Attorney-General \(including the Parliamentary Draftsman's Office\)](#)
- ▶ [Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources](#)
- ▶ [Department of Education and Skills](#)
- ▶ [Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation](#)
- ▶ [Department of Environment, Community and Local Government](#)
- ▶ [Ministry of Finance](#)
- ▶ [Department of Health](#)
- ▶ [Department of Justice and Equality](#)
- ▶ [Revenue commissioners](#)
- ▶ [Department of Social Protection](#)
- ▶ [Representative of the national parliament \(Oireachtas\)](#)
- ▶ [Integrated maritime policy](#)

So, research doesn't feature here. So where do you look? Education and Skills, or Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation might be good starting points, but if you click on them you still don't get any actual mention of Research.

So then you go to the website of the Permanent Representation. And there you find, in this particular case, that they do not publish a list of staff. So you can't get any further on the Internet. A phone call might produce the answer. A look at the website of the Irish Government itself might produce the answer, but essentially, it's not easy to find out who does what.

Other Member States are more open. For example, Bulgaria has a list of Key Representatives on its website and the part of that which relates to research looks like this:

Education, Research, Youth and Culture**Ms. Milena Dimitrova**

Minister-Counsellor (Culture, Audiovisual Policy and Copyright)

Tel. + 32 (0) 22358 394

E-mail: Milena.Dimitrova@bg-permrep.eu**Ms Demetra DULEVA**

First Secretary (Education and Research)

Tel: +32 (0) 223 58 382

E-mail: Demetra.Duleva@bg-permrep.eu

So now there is a name, a phone number and an e-mail address as a starting point. Clearly, it can be frustrating for citizens not to be able to track down the person who speaks for their government on key policies at European level. The only way to change that is for citizens to put pressure on their Permanent Representations to be more open in their public information.

The General Secretariat

The Council of the European Union/European Council also has its own General Secretariat. This undertakes important work. The tasks of the General Secretariat are defined on [its website](#) as follows:

- It provides advice and helps coordinate the work of the Council of the European Union and the European Council.
- It provides logistical support and takes care of the practical organisation of meetings (including meeting rooms, document production and translation).
- It prepares draft agendas, reports, notes and minutes of meetings.
- It has custody of Council archives and acts.
- Its Legal Service gives opinions to the Council and its committees and represents the Council in judicial proceedings before the European Court of Justice.

But as the list of tasks suggests, there is little scope for civil society to directly influence those who work in this General Secretariat.

A Special Case - the European External Action Service (EEAS)

In order to be sure one can find the right decision-makers with regard to specific policy areas, one must understand also the External Action Service. In some regards, it is like a Commission Department; but, in others it isn't. To understand its special status, a little bit of history is necessary.

Foreign Policy has never been part of the EU remit (an EU competence). In fact, in the early days, the European Union (or the European Economic Community as it was) focused only on internal matters.

However, the dividing line between internal and external is actually quite difficult. One example is EU Enlargement: insofar as it is about bringing new countries into the EU (as happened with the UK, Ireland and Denmark in 1973, and has happened since at different times with other countries - the EU has grown from the original six Member States to the current 28 in 55 years), it is an internal matter; but during the process that leads to accession, it is also an external process.

Another example is fisheries: what the EU does in its waters has an impact on the waters of other - non-EU - countries.

Or take the Environment and Climate Change: there are internal dimensions - what the EU Member States will agree to do/not to do; but there are also external dimensions because greenhouse gases do not respect national borders. Or Trade: in order for there to be a functioning internal market, the access to that market from outside its borders has to be governed in a coordinated way; is that internal or external policy? Or development assistance: the EU decided relatively early on that it should work together on development assistance to third countries; clearly an external policy area.

These are examples. Essentially, the EU maintained a distinction between what it referred to as External Action (Development Assistance, Humanitarian Aid, Trade, relations with immediate neighbours and Enlargement) and Foreign Policy, which was essentially everything else. Thus, engaging in joint media projects with countries in the Southern Mediterranean would be external action (under the Neighbourhood Policy); taking military action in the Gulf of Aiden to protect aid convoys (and oil tankers) would be foreign policy.

Until 2009, External Action was the remit of the European Commission (with involvement of the European Parliament and the Council), and foreign policy was a matter for the Council alone. So there were two structures (one in the European Commission and one in the Council), which dealt with these two areas, and they sometimes didn't agree on an approach to another country or didn't coordinate well with each other.

The Lisbon Treaty introduced the idea of bringing the two together without really doing anything about the rather fictional distinction between external action and foreign policy. It created a role called High

Representative for Foreign Affairs/Vice President of the Commission; this post - held by Catherine Ashton (the UK Commissioner) up to November 2014 - is conceived of as 'double-hatted'; she oversees both external action and foreign policy. The Treaty foresees that she has 'an External Action Service to assist her'; that service had to be created from scratch once she was in post.

The second person to be nominated for this post Frederica Mogherini (Italian)⁶, [has agreed to move her office to the main Commission building nearer Juncker](#), which means she will not have an office in the External Action Service building near the staff in her service.

This is not the place to discuss [the success or otherwise of this organisational task](#). What we will do below is simply to set out the broad structure now in place and how you might find who you might want to talk to.

What does this External Action Service Look Like?

The first thing to say is that this is still a very complex set up. It is important to realise that there are parts of it that are located in Brussels and parts of it that are located around the world.

The Brussels Hub



Headquarters of the European External Action Service, Brussels photo: EEAS website

The structure of the service is complicated; you can see the current organisation chart [here](#). (It is too complex a graphic to reproduce.) But the key features are:

- The Corporate Board composed of the High Representative and 4 other senior people
- The Political Affairs Department, composed of the Chair of the Political and Security Committee (a committee of Member State Ambassadors), the Chair of the committee responsible for civilian crisis management, and three other people concerned with strategic and planning matters (the Chairs of these committees and others associated with the External Action Service are permanent appointments rather than rotating between Member States)
- A Crisis Response Unit
- A section which brings together the various elements of the crisis management planning and implementation sections together with the Military Committee and military staff
- An intelligence gathering and analysis centre

⁶At the time of revision (2014), the Juncker's Commission has been named, but hearings and approval or not by the European Parliament is yet to happen (scheduled for early October 2014).

- Five Directorates relating to different geographical parts of the world: each has a Managing Director, several Directors, and several Heads of Unit as well as Desk Officers working on specific countries
- A Directorate for Global and Multilateral Issues which includes Human Rights, Counter-Terrorism (although it does not include the EU Counter-Terrorism coordinator who is part of the Council structure), and multilateral relationships

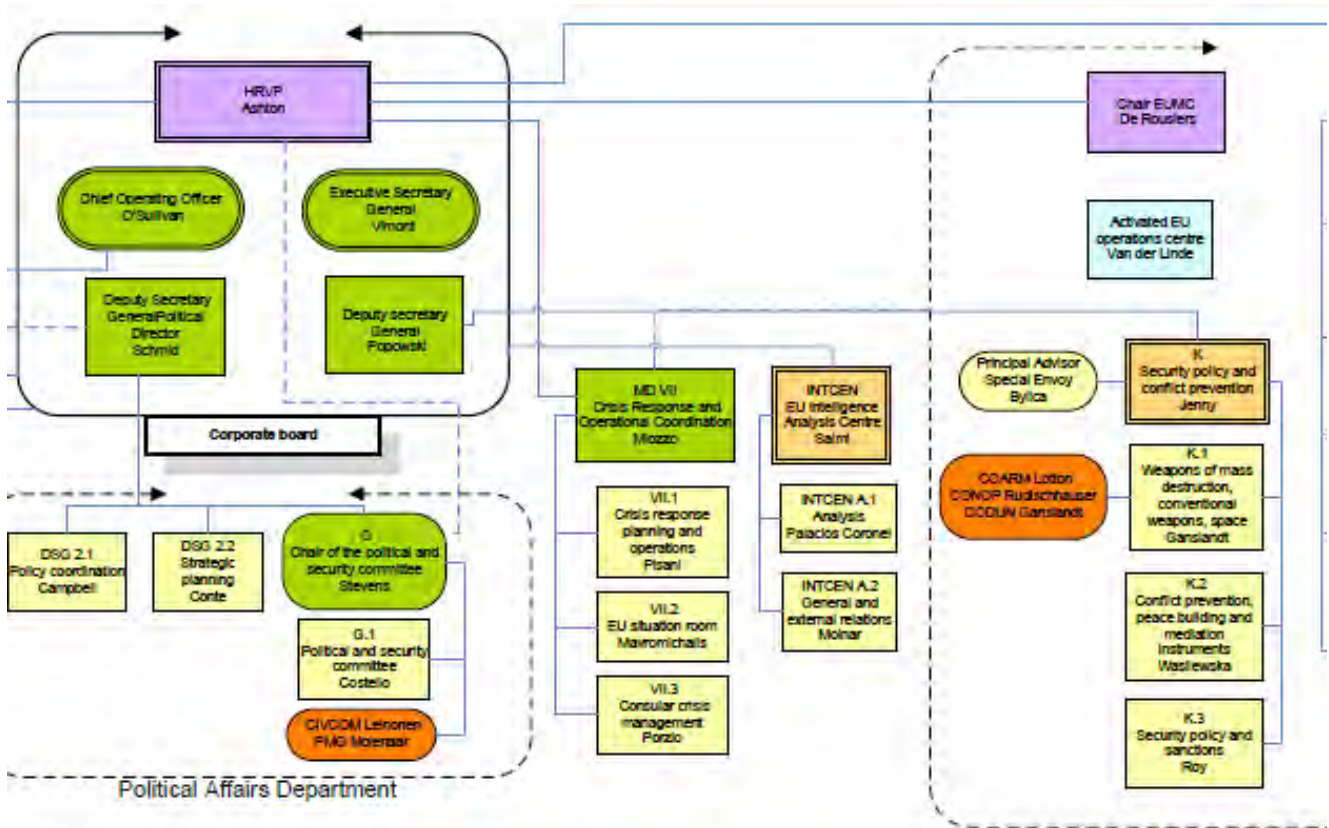
The EAS is an emerging structure that has undergone significant change and is currently subject to a review.

But, to return to our theme, how do you find the person you want to talk to? If the issue is geographical (i.e. you want to talk to the EEAS about the EU relationship with, say, Colombia, then you would find the right geographical Directorate (Americas) and the right Unit (the one dealing with Andean countries) and then you would have the relevant Director to contact; their name is on the organisation chart. Then it's just a matter of finding that person in the European Union Who is Who directory:

The screenshot shows the 'EU Whoiswho' website interface. At the top, it says 'This site is a part of Europa' with the European Union flag. The main header reads 'EU Whoiswho The official directory of the European Union'. There are links for 'Help | Contact | Legal notice' and a language dropdown set to 'English (en)'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Europa > EU Whoiswho > Search by hierarchy'. On the left, there is a 'QUICK SEARCH' box and three search options: 'Search by person', 'Search by entity', and 'Search by hierarchy'. The main content area is titled 'Individual profile' and shows a breadcrumb trail: 'Institution > European External Action Service > Geographical, Multilateral and Global Affairs Departments > MD V – Americas > Dir V A – Americas > V A 3 – Andean Countries > MARTINEZ CARBONELL Maria Belen'. Below this, the profile for 'MARTINEZ CARBONELL Maria Belen' is displayed, listing her as 'Head of Division' with contact details: 'Rue de la Loi 242/Wetstraat 242, 1046 Bruxelles/Brussel, Belgique*', 'Tel: +32 2584-6258', and 'Internet: <http://eeas.europa.eu>'.

Generally speaking, once you have the name, you can find the contact details of anyone from Head of Unit upwards - in the EEAS, the Commission, or the Council Secretariat - by typing their name into the Quick Search on the Who is Who website and up come their contact details and the position they hold.

With more thematic issues, such as, for example, conflict prevention, it is more difficult. But even there, the organisation chart will provide a first step to the right section.



This extract from the Organisation Chart shows the Security Policy and Conflict Prevention Unit with its relationship to the relevant member of the Corporate Board. Within that unit, is section K2 which deals with conflict prevention, peace building, and mediation instruments.

What you want to talk about will always help you locate the appropriate person. For example, if you want to talk about Colombia with someone in the EEAS, there are likely to be only one or two people whose work programme is relevant; similarly, if you want to talk to someone about conflict prevention, there will only be a handful of people who are relevant. Once you have found them, you are likely to have an interested and often very receptive audience.

The EU Delegations

The EAS also includes within its structure the EU Delegations in non-EU countries. They are headed up by the Head of Delegation who has Ambassadorial status. And they are staffed by EU diplomats (some from the Commission, some from the Member States, and some from the old Council Secretariat section dealing with Foreign Affairs), who will be responsible for different aspects of the relationship between the EU and that country.

A full list of all the [EU Delegations](#) can be found on the EEAS website.

The Delegations are useful contact points for issues that require action in third countries, such as monitoring human rights abuses or engaging with local projects and civil society groups.

Delegations also provide grants and have some influence over the award of grants handled centrally in Brussels.

Is it all worth it?

All this may seem like a lot of effort. But politics involves effort. I would like to quote here from the [Advices and Queries](#) of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends:

34. Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.

So we take it as read that effort is required. But are the people, the decision-makers, likely to be responsive?

There are three things that are important to take into account when planning to approach decision-makers, especially if they are people who are not directly elected and therefore do not have a vested interest in keeping voters happy.

They are People, not Institutions

Quakers believe that there is 'that of God' in every person. So when we approach decision-makers, we approach them on that basis. We should not see them as faceless representatives of big and unapproachable institutions, but as individuals who are doing the job they are doing because they want to make the world - or at least the EU - a better place. We may not agree with their idea of what that would look like. We may not agree with their approach. But we respect the basic fact that they work hard for an end they consider to be a good end.

So: think people, not institutions! And don't forget: some of them have spent part of their career in civil society organisations - they know how we work, they can be of help!

They have Fears and Concerns

Many of the people you may be contacting don't have much experience of meeting civil society organisations or individual citizens. They often don't 'get' where civil society is coming from. They wonder about the legitimacy of civil society organisations and individuals who are pursuing their own aims.

But they have targets for meeting civil society; so when we do get to see them, we have to make it count. One way of doing this is to recognise their fears and to take them into account when we plan our message.

Here is a list of the most common (and you might add, most obvious) fears the EU institution staff may have about civil society:

- They only want money
- They don't have anything new to say = waste of money and time
- They know more than I do = losing face
- They are not representative - am I running a risk by talking to them?
- They may disrupt delicate political processes by radical, thoughtless activism
- They don't understand my constraints
- They could misrepresent what I say to them in the media
- They are not really influential - how are they able to help me anyway?

By addressing some of these fears head-on (for example saying: we are not looking for funding, when you are not; or by saying: we are not going to publish what you say to us; or we are not going to publish it in such a way as to make it traceable to you), the decision-makers can be put at ease.

By understanding the complexities of the situation under discussion, by understanding the constraints the decision-makers are under, and by making that clear in the discussion, some of the fears can be dispelled.

One of the phrases I have heard time and again when talking to decision-makers was: 'that's above my pay grade'. That is not an excuse (well, not always!). What it means is: someone higher up in the structures makes the decisions about things like that. Understanding that, and getting the person to explain the structure and where the decision sits, who makes the decisions, which way they are likely to go on it and why, and even sometimes how to approach them, can be much more effective than just hammering away at a point.

They have Hopes and Expectations

By the same token, the institution staff are people who want to do what they think is right and necessary, and their interactions with civil society and with citizens are among the many tools which they have to do so.

So they also have hopes and expectations for the contacts with us.

Here is a list of the sort of hopes and expectations, which we have come across:

- They have good information I can use (so make sure you have good information to share; first-hand experience of situations and pictures and videos can be very effective)
- They don't just want money
- They are not arrogant and not judgemental (you have to demonstrate that by coming across as knowledgeable and willing to ask questions, hear the answers and learn)
- They have interesting partners on the ground
- They could help me achieve my objectives
- They are sensitive to the issues and the political processes
- They understand where I am coming from institutionally
- They can help me reinforce messages I want to send to others in the political/institutional process (sometimes decision-makers want to achieve something themselves that they can only get on the agenda if there is evidence that civil society / citizens want it on the agenda).

The political process in a democratic environment only works if citizens - as individuals or in groups - are willing to engage. It takes time, it takes effort, but it is the only way to ensure that democracy works.

*Martina Weitsch, August 2013
updated by George Thurley and Alexandra Bosbeer, September 2014*