

**Second Training Session,
"EU INSTITUTIONS, POLICY MAKING AND
LOBBYING"**

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TRAINING COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: EU INSTITUTIONS

- Topic - 1: Core EU institutions
- Topic - 2: European Commission
- Topic - 3: European Parliament
- Topic – 4: Council of Ministers
- Topic – 5: Other Institutions

PART II: EU POLICY MAKING

PART III: LOBBYING

PART I: EU INSTITUTIONS

Topic - 1: Core EU Institutions

EU's decision-making process involve three main institutions:

1. the European Parliament (EP), which represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them;
2. the Council of the European Union, which represents the individual member states;
3. the European Commission, which seeks to uphold the interests of the Union as a whole.

Topic - 1: Core EU institutions

“Institutional triangle” produces the policies and laws that apply throughout the EU.

- In principle, it is the Commission that proposes new laws
- Parliament and Council adopts the new laws
- Commission and member states implement the laws
- Commission ensures that the laws are properly taken on board.

Two other institutions vital part:

1. the Court of Justice upholds the rule of European law,
2. the Court of Auditors checks the financing of the Union’s activities.

Topic - 1: EU Institutions

- In addition to its institutions, the EU has a number of other bodies that play specialised roles:
 - the European Economic and Social Committee represents civil society, employers and employees
 - the Committee of the Regions represents regional and local authorities
 - the European Investment Bank: finances EU investment projects, and helps small businesses via the European Investment Fund
 - the European Central Bank: is responsible for European monetary policy
 - the European Ombudsman: investigates complaints about maladministration by EU institutions and bodies;
 - the European Data Protection Supervisor: safeguards the privacy of people's personal data

Topic - 2: The European Commission

- ❑ The Commission - independent of national governments of member states
- ❑ represent and uphold the interests of the EU as a whole.
- ❑ Like the Parliament and Council, the European Commission was set up in the 1950s under the EU's founding treaties.
- ❑ The Commission 27— one from each EU country. José Manuel Barroso heads the EU executive as President of the European Commission
- ❑ appointed Members of the Commission are known as 'commissioners'.
 - They hold political positions in their countries
 - many have been government ministers
 - as Members of the Commission they are committed to acting in the interests of the Union as a whole
 - not taking instructions from national governments.

Topic - 2: The European Commission

- A new Commission is appointed every five years, within six months of the elections to the European Parliament. The Commission politically accountable to Parliament
- Parliament can dismiss the whole Commission
- The day-to-day running of the Commission:
 - administrative officials, experts, translators, interpreters and secretarial staff.
 - approximately 23 000 of these European civil servants.
 - fewer than the number of staff employed by a typical medium-sized city council in Europe.

Topic - 2: The European Commission

- The European Commission has four main roles:
 1. to propose legislation to Parliament and the Council;
 2. to manage and implement EU policies and the budget;
 3. to enforce European law (jointly with the Court of Justice);
 4. to represent the European Union on the international stage, for example by negotiating agreements between the EU and other countries.

Topic - 2: The European Commission

1. Role of Proposing new legislation

- The Commission has the 'right of initiative'.
- Commission is responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation
- presents the proposals to Parliament and the Council.
- Commission constant touch with
 - a wide range of interest groups
 - two advisory bodies:
 - the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.
 - It also seeks the opinions of national parliaments and governments.

Topic - 2: The European Commission

If the Commission concludes that EU legislation is needed,

- it drafts a proposal that it believes will deal with the problem effectively and satisfy the widest possible range of interests.
- To get the technical details right the Commission consults experts, via its various committees and groups.

Topic - 2: The European Commission

2. Role of Implementing EU policies and the budget

- Commission is EU executive body- responsible for managing and implementing the EU budget.
 - responsible for supervising the expenditure
 - under the watchful eye of the Court of Auditors.
 - Both aim to ensure good financial management.
- manage the policies adopted by Parliament and the Council, such as the CAP, ICT policy, etc.
- make sure EU countries do not subsidise their industries to distort competition.

Topic - 2: The European Commission

3. Role of Enforcing European law

- 'guardian of the Treaties'.**
 - If EU country is not applying an EU law, Commission takes steps - 'infringement procedure'.**
 - If fails - Court of Justice → impose penalties.**
 - The Court's judgments binding on member states and the EU institutions.**

Topic - 2: The European Commission

4. Role of Representing the EU on the international stage

- Commission is an important mouthpiece for the European Union on the international stage.
- enables the member states to speak 'with one voice' in international forums such as the World Trade Organisation.
- the responsibility of negotiating international agreements on behalf of the EU.
- One example: the Cotonou Agreement,
 - which sets out the terms of an important aid and trade partnership between the EU and developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Topic - 3: The European Parliament

- ❑ EP elected by the citizens of the EU to represent their interests.
- ❑ Elections every 5 years,
 - every EU citizen is entitled to vote, and to stand as a candidate, wherever they live in the EU.
- ❑ The latest elections were in June 2004.
 - Hans-Gert Pöttering - President of the EP in 2007 until 2009
- ❑ expresses the democratic will of the Union's citizens (more than 490 million people)
- ❑ represents their interests in discussions with the other EU institutions.
- ❑ The present parliament has 785 members from all 27 EU countries.
- ❑ Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) do not sit in national blocks, but in seven Europe-wide political groups.
- ❑ they represent all views on European integration, from the strongly pro-federalist to the openly Eurosceptic.

Topic - 3: The European Parliament

- ❑ The European Parliament has three places of work:
 - Brussels (Belgium),
 - Luxembourg and
 - Strasbourg (France).
- ❑ Luxembourg is home to the administrative offices (the 'General Secretariat').
- ❑ Meetings of the whole Parliament, known as 'plenary sessions', take place in Strasbourg and sometimes in Brussels.
- ❑ Committee meetings are also held in Brussels.

Topic - 3: The European Parliament

- Parliament has three main roles:
 - 1. Passing European laws** – jointly with the Council in many policy areas.
 - CODECISION procedure
 - EP is directly elected by the citizens helps guarantee the democratic legitimacy of European law.
 - 2. Parliament exercises democratic supervision** over the other EU institutions, in particular Commission.
 - It has the power to approve or reject the nomination of commissioners, and it has the right to censure the Commission as a whole.
 - 3. The power of the purse.** Parliament shares with the Council authority over the EU budget and can therefore influence EU spending.
 - At the end of the procedure, it adopts or rejects the budget in its entirety.

Topic - 4: The Council of the European Union

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

- ❑ The Council is the EU's main decision-making body.
- ❑ It represents the member states, and its meetings are attended by one minister from each of the EU's national governments.
- ❑ Which ministers attend which meeting depends on what subjects are on the agenda.
- ❑ If, for example, the Council is to discuss environmental issues, the meeting will be attended by the Environment Minister from each EU country and it will be known as the 'Environment Council'.
- ❑ The EU's relations with the rest of the world are dealt with by the 'General Affairs and External Relations Council'.

Topic - 4: The Council of the European Union

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

- Nine different Council configurations:
 1. General Affairs and External Relations
 2. Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN)
 3. Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)
 4. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs
 5. Competitiveness
 6. Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
 7. Agriculture and Fisheries
 8. Environment
 9. Education, Youth and Culture

Topic - 4: The Council of the European Union

- The Council has six key responsibilities:
 1. To pass European laws – jointly with the European Parliament in many policy areas.
 2. To co-ordinate the broad economic policies of the member states.
 3. To conclude international agreements between the EU and other countries or international organisations.
 4. To approve the EU's budget, jointly with the European Parliament.
 5. To develop the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), based on guidelines set by the European Council.
 6. To co-ordinate co-operation between the national courts and police forces in criminal matters (see the Freedom, security and justice section).

Topic - 4: The Council of the European Union

□ How is the Council's work organised?

COREPER permanent team ('representation')

- These ambassadors known as 'permanent representatives'
- meet weekly within the Permanent Representatives Committee
- The role of this committee is to prepare the work of the Council
- COREPER is assisted by a number of working groups, made up of officials from the national administrations.

The Council Presidency

- Presidency rotates every six months.

The General Secretariat

- which prepares and ensures the smooth functioning of the Council's work at all levels.
- Javier Solana Secretary-General of the Council.

Topic - 4: The Council of the European Union

How many votes per country?

- ❑ Decisions in the Council are taken by vote.
- ❑ bigger population, the more votes

"Qualified majority voting"

- particularly sensitive areas Council decisions have to be unanimous.
- each member state has the power of veto in these areas.
- On most issues decisions by QMV
- A qualified majority is reached if a majority of member states (in some cases a two-thirds majority) approve; and if a minimum of 255 votes is cast in favour - which is 73.9% of the total.
- a member state may ask for confirmation that the votes in favour represent at least 62% of the total population of EU - the decision will not be adopted.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

The Court of Justice

- ❑ It is based in Luxembourg.
- ❑ Its job is to make sure that EU legislation is interpreted and applied in the same way in all EU countries, so that the law is equal for everyone.
- ❑ The Court also makes sure that EU member states and institutions do what the law requires.
- ❑ The Court has the power to settle legal disputes between EU member states, EU institutions, businesses and individuals.
- ❑ The Court is composed of one judge per member state, so that all 27 of the EU's national legal systems are represented.
- ❑ 'Court of First Instance' was created
 - This Court is responsible for giving rulings on certain kinds of case, particularly actions brought by private individuals, companies and some organisations, and cases relating to competition law.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

The European Economic and Social Committee

- ❑ **advisory body representing employers, trade unions, farmers, consumers and the other interest groups that collectively make up 'organised civil society'.**
- ❑ **presents their views and defends their interests in policy discussions with the Commission, the Council and the EP**
- ❑ bridge between EU and its citizens, promoting a more participatory, more inclusive and therefore more democratic society in Europe.
- ❑ an integral part of the EU's decision-making process:
 - it must be consulted before decisions are taken on economic and social policy. On its own initiative, or at the request of another EU institution, it may also give its opinion on other matters.
- ❑ **The EESC has 344 members – the number from each EU country roughly reflecting the size of its population. The numbers per country are as follows**
- ❑ The members are nominated by the EU governments but they work in complete political independence. They are appointed for four years, and may be re-appointed.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

- The European Economic and Social Committee has three main roles:
 - to advise the Council, Commission and European Parliament, either at their request or on the Committee's own initiative;
 - to encourage civil society to become more involved in EU policymaking;
 - to bolster the role of civil society in non-EU countries and to help set up advisory structures.
- **EESC's members:**
 - Working mostly in their countries of origin, the members of the Committee form three groups that represent employers, workers and various economic and social interests

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

- EESC - The Employers' Group has members from private and public sectors of industry, small and medium-sized businesses, chambers of commerce, wholesale and retail trade, banking and insurance, transport and agriculture.
- The Workers' Group represents all categories of employees, from manual to executive. Its members come from national trade union organisations.
- **The third group represents a wide range of interests:**
 - **NGOs, farmers' organisations, small businesses, crafts and professions, cooperatives and non-profit associations, consumer and environmental organisations, the scientific and academic communities and associations that represent the family, women, persons with disabilities, etc**

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

The Committee of the Regions

- an advisory body composed of representatives of Europe's regional and local authorities. The CoR has to be consulted before EU decisions are taken on matters such as regional policy, the environment, education and transport – all of which concern local and regional government.
- The Committee has 344 members.
 - The number from each member state approximately reflects its population size
 - The members of the Committee are elected municipal or regional politicians, often leaders of regional governments or mayors of cities.
- nominated by the EU governments but they work in complete political independence.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

What does the Committee of Regions do?

- The role of the Committee of the Regions is to put forward the local and regional points of view on EU legislation. It does so by issuing opinions on Commission proposals.

How is the Committee's work organised?

- Each year the Committee of the Regions holds five plenary sessions, during which its general policy is defined and opinions are adopted.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

- ❑ **The European Investment Bank**
- ❑ The EIB makes long-term loans for capital investment projects (mainly fixed assets) but does not provide grants.
- ❑ The EIB lends money to the public and private sectors for projects of European interest, such as:
 - Cohesion and convergence of EU regions
 - Support for small and medium-sized enterprises
 - Environmental schemes
 - Research, development and innovation
 - Transport
 - Energy

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

- The EIB does not use any funds from the EU budget. Instead, it is self-financing, borrowing on the financial markets
- The projects the Bank invests in are carefully selected according to the following criteria:
 - they must help achieve EU objectives;
 - they must be economically, financially, technically and environmentally sound;
 - they should help attract other sources of funding.
- The EIB also supports sustainable development in the candidate and potential candidate countries, in EU neighbour countries to the south and to the east, and in partner countries elsewhere.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

The European Central Bank

- based in Frankfurt - Germany.
 - manage the euro
 - to safeguard price stability for the more than two-thirds of the EU's citizens who use the euro.
 - framing and implementing the EU's economic and monetary policy.
- works with the European System of Central Banks (ESCB), which covers all 27 EU countries.
- only 15 of these countries have so far adopted the euro.
- The 15 collectively make up the 'euro area' and their central banks, together with the European Central Bank, make up what is called the 'Eurosistem'.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

□ Agencies of the EU

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

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

□ Community agencies

- A Community agency is a body governed by European public law; it is distinct from the Community Institutions (Council, Parliament, Commission, etc.) and has its own legal personality.
- It is set up by an act of secondary legislation in order to accomplish a very specific technical, scientific or managerial task, in the framework of the European Union's "first pillar".

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

Other specialised bodies

European Ombudsman

- The Ombudsman acts as an intermediary between the citizen and the EU authorities.
- He is entitled to receive and investigate complaints from EU citizens, businesses and organisations, and from anyone residing or having their registered office in an EU country.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

- **Common Foreign and Security Policy agencies**
 - Agencies have been set up to carry out very specific technical, scientific and management tasks within the framework of European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – the "second pillar" of the EU.
- **Police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters agencies**
 - Another group of agencies has been set up to help the EU Member States co-operate in the fight against organised international crime. This co-operation in criminal matters is the "third pillar" of the EU.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

□ Executive agencies

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

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

European Technology Platforms

- A **European Technology Platform** (ETP) is a European institution created to foster European research and development in a certain economic or scientific area. The first European Technology Platform, ACARE, launched in 2001, in the field of aeronautics.
 1. In a first phase, stakeholders of a specific area, led by industry, come together to agree on a common vision.
 2. The second phase is the defining of a Strategic Research Agenda, setting out the medium- to long-term objectives for the technology.
 3. In a third phase, stakeholders implement the Strategic Research Agenda with the mobilisation of significant financial and human resources.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

European Technology Platforms

- provide frameworks to define research and development priorities,
- timeframes and
- action plans on different strategically important issues.
- In fostering effective public-private partnerships, the Joint Technology Initiatives, technology platforms have the potential to contribute significantly to the renewed Lisbon Strategy and to the development of a European Research Area of knowledge for growth.
- powerful actors in the development of European research policy,
- orienting the Seventh Research Framework Programme to better meet the needs of industry.
- ETPs mobilise public authorities at national and regional levels.

Topic - 5: Other Institutions

- ETPs in ICT area
 - ENIAC - European Nanoelectronics Initiative Advisory Council
 - ARTEMIS – Advanced Research and Technology for Embedded Intelligence and Systems
 - NESSI – Networked European Software and Services Initiative
 - NEM - Networked and Electronic Media European Technology Platform
 - eMobility - Mobile and Wireless Communications Technology Platform
 - EUROP - European Robotics Platform
 - Photonics21 – Photonics for the 21st Century
 - ISI – The Integral Satcom Initiative

THANK YOU

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