Influencing the European Union

An advocacy guide

Acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States
AU	African Union
BIS	Department for Business Innovation and Skills
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CODEV	Council Working Group on Development
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSPs	Country Strategy Papers
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DEFRA	Department for Environment and Rural Affairs
DEVCO	EuropeAid Development and Cooperation
DFID	Department for International Development
DG	Directorate General
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GNI	Gross National Income
IfS	European Instrument for Stability
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NIPs	National Indicative Programmes
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PQs	Parliamentary Questions
RIPs	Regional Indicative Programmes
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UKREP	UK Permanent Representation to the European Union

EU jargon buster

- **Competencies:** This can be translated as 'powers and responsibilities'. It is often used in political discussions about what powers and responsibilities should be given to EU institutions and what should be left to national, regional and local authorities.

- **Policy coherence for development:** According to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU shall take into account development objectives in its external policies (eg. trade, foreign affairs, energy policy etc.) which are likely to affect developing countries. This is referred to as Policy Coherence for Development.

- **Coordination and Complementarity:** In order to promote the complementarity and efficiency of their action, the EU and the member states shall coordinate their policies on development cooperation and shall consult each other on their aid programmes, including in international organisations and during international conferences.

- **Instrument:** A financial envelope attached to a specific programme. For instance, the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) is the financial envelope for the EU development programme as outlined in the European Consensus for Development.

Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Fully revised since the Lisbon Treaty came into force in December 2009, this guide provides a comprehensive understanding of how to influence European Union (EU) international development policies.

Section 1 provides an overview of the EU, its decision-making structures and the key agreements and strategies that guide the EU's approach to development. It then gives an introduction to the main EU institutions including the Council of the EU, the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, and their specific role in relation to development.

Section 2 explains the key steps for planning an EU advocacy campaign. It contains practical information and guidance on situating an issue at the EU and case studies providing concrete examples of civil society actions, which have achieved change at the EU level. It also includes practical information and tips to help you find your way through the corridors of power in Brussels.

This guide is primarily aimed at development professionals in the UK, but will also be a useful reference document for other parts of civil society in the UK and in other EU countries who aim to influence EU decision-making.

Section 1
Introduction to the European Union

The EU at a glance

What countries are members of the EU?

With 27 member states, and a population of nearly half a billion, the EU is the largest development aid donor and provider of humanitarian assistance globally. It is also the largest single market and the main trading partner for most developing countries.

What institutions make up the EU?

According to the Treaties there are seven EU Institutions. The four main institutions covered in this guide are:

- The Council of the European Union
- The European Council (new status following the Lisbon Treaty)
- The European Parliament
- The European Commission

The other three institutions are the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors and the European Central Bank (new status following the Lisbon Treaty). The Lisbon Treaty also established a new service, the European External Action Service (EEAS). The EEAS commenced its work on 1 December 2010.

Figure 1:
Member states of the European Union

- EU member states
- Candidate countries
- Potential candidate countries

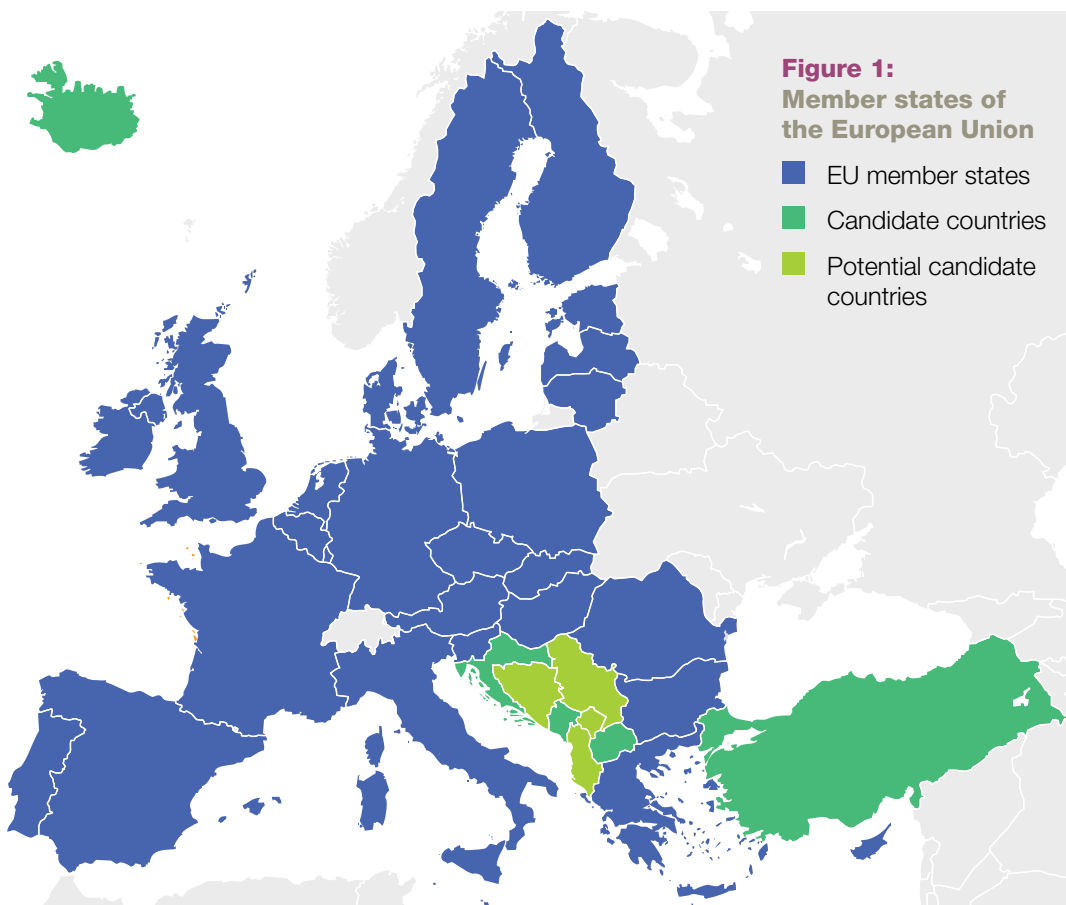Source: ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/index_en.htm

With 27 member states, and a population of nearly half a billion, the EU is the largest development aid donor and provider of humanitarian assistance globally.

What decision-making powers does the EU have?

Before the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009, the EU was founded on a 'three pillar' structure. The first pillar was supra-national and was commonly referred to as the 'European Community' pillar. Under this pillar, the decision-making authority (known as 'competency') of the member states had been taken over jointly by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The second pillar was the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs constituted the third pillar. Decision-making under the second and third pillars was inter-governmental and was based on unanimous decisions by the Council.

The Treaty of Lisbon abolished this pillar system, and established the EU as a legal entity. Therefore, the EU is now able to sign international treaties in its own name. For example, the EU gained membership of the World Trade Organisation immediately after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force effectively replacing the 'European Community' as a member.

The Lisbon Treaty clearly sets out policy areas in which the EU shall either have exclusive legislative competence, a shared competence with member states or a supporting competence (see Figure 2). Development cooperation and humanitarian aid are areas of shared competence between the EU and the member states. This means that both the EU and its members have the power to pass legislation in these policy areas within their respective domains.

Figure 2: Areas of competence of the European Union

Exclusive Competence	Shared Competence		Supporting Competence
Areas in which only the EU may legislate and adopt legally binding acts (art. 2,3 TFEU)	Areas where states cannot exercise competence if the EU has done so already (art. 4 TFEU)	Areas in which the EU exercise of competence shall not result in member states being prevented from exercising theirs (art. 4 TFEU)	Areas in which the EU can take measures to coordinate member states' policies (art. 5 TFEU)	Areas in which the EU can carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement member states' actions

Exclusive Competence	Shared Competence			Supporting Competence
• Customs union • The establishing of the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market • Monetary policy for those member states whose currency is the Euro • The conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy • Common commercial policy	• Internal market • Social policy (for the aspects defined in the TFEU) • Economic, social and territorial cohesion • Agriculture and fisheries (excluding the conservation of marine biological resources) • Environment • Consumer protection • Transport • Trans-European networks • Energy • Freedom,security and justice • Common safety concerns in public health matters (for the aspects defined in the TFEU)	• Research, technological development and space • Development cooperation and humanitarian aid	• Economic • Employment • Social policies • Common foreign and security and defence policies	• The protection and improvement of human health • Industry • Culture • Tourism • Education, youth, sport and vocational training • Civil protection • Administrative cooperation

The EU's role in the developing world

Why is EU aid significant?

The EU – including Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) channelled through the European Commission and that of individual member states – provides almost 60% of the world's ODA, totalling €53.8 billion in 2010. It is also the largest trading partner for developing countries.

The European Commission alone is the world's fourth largest donor spending €12 billion in 2009. In 2005, the EU pledged to increase its aid from 0.39% of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2006 to an interim collective target of 0.56% of GNI by 2010, in order to achieve the 0.7% target, set by the UN, by 2015.

Besides quantitative targets, the EU has also committed to improving aid quality and effectiveness. In 2009, as a result of the economic slowdown, EU aid decreased from €50 billion in 2008 to €49 billion. In 2010, 17 member states increased aid volumes again, thus reversing the trend of the previous year. Expressed as a share of GNI and in total terms, 2010 saw the highest amount of ODA ever spent by Europe equivalent to 0.43% of GNI. Still, this falls far short of the commitments made by the EU. In absolute terms, EU spending stayed €14.5 billion below the commitment to reach 0.56% of GNI by 2010.

What are the guiding aims of the EU Development Cooperation Programme?

The Lisbon Treaty explicitly states that EU development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty. Articles 208 to 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provide the binding legal basis for EU development cooperation and humanitarian aid. These articles cover four fundamental principles guiding EC development efforts:

1. poverty reduction
2. coordination and complementarity between the EU and the member states
3. cooperation between the EU and member states with regard to commitments in the context of United Nations
4. coherence between the EU's development objectives and its external policies which are likely to affect developing countries

Agreements and frameworks that guide the EU's approach to development

What is the European Consensus on Development?

Signed in 2005, the European Consensus on Development sets out, for the first time in 50 years of development cooperation, a common framework of objectives, values and principles that the Union – all member states and the Commission – supports and promotes.

The European Consensus on Development covers all developing countries and its overarching objective is poverty eradication. Priority is given to least developed countries and other low-income countries, with a special focus on Africa. The framework also covers EU commitments on more effective delivery of aid, better coherence among EU policies and clearly lays out areas of European Commission comparative advantage over the member states.

For the first time, the Consensus is meant to guide both member states' bilateral efforts and EU activity in the field of development aid. Since the Consensus is both an EU and a member state responsibility, both can be held to account for the commitments included in it.

What is the Cotonou Partnership Agreement?

Signed in June 2000, The Cotonou Partnership Agreement is a legally binding international agreement between the EU and the group of 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries guiding relations between the two blocs until 2020. It is the largest north-south partnership in the world covering development, trade and political domains. The central objective of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement is to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty while contributing to sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy. Its main aims are to:

- reduce poverty
- enhance the political dimension and promote political dialogue
- include non-state actors in aid policy
- reinforce economic and trade partnerships
- improve financial cooperation

The European Commission alone is the world's fourth largest donor spending €12 billion in 2009.

EU relations with African states are guided by a series of formal agreements and policy frameworks.

Aid to the ACP countries represents the single largest EU aid programme. It is funded through the European Development Fund (EDF). The EDF is a fund set up in 1957 to provide aid to countries and regions that have been former colonies or have very close links to the EU member states. Usually lasting six years, each EDF lays out EU assistance to both individual ACP countries and regions. The EU is currently on its tenth EDF from 2008-2013 with a budget of €22.7 billion channelled to ACP states.

Grants towards development programmes are defined on a country by country basis in national Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), which are instruments for guiding, managing and reviewing European Commission assistance programmes at national level.

Useful links: For more information on the ACP and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement: www.acpsec.org

Principles of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement

1. Equality of partners and ownership of development strategies: In principle it is up to ACP countries to determine how they should develop.

2. Participation: In addition to the central government, partnership is open to other non-state actors including civil society organisations.

3. Dialogue and mutual obligations: The signatories assume mutual obligations (eg. respect of human rights) which are monitored through continuous dialogue and evaluation.

4. Differentiation and regionalisation: Cooperation agreements vary according to each partner's level of development, needs, performance and long-term development strategy.

What is the role of the EU in Africa?

EU relations with African states are guided by a series of formal agreements and policy frameworks. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy is the only policy framework encompassing all African countries. Agreed at the EU-Africa Summit in December 2007, the partnership defines the long-term policy orientations between Africa and Europe, based on a shared vision and common principles.

Central to the partnership is the aim to foster political dialogue between the EU and the African Union (AU) in order to strengthen relations between the two continents. The partnership hinges on four major commitments and objectives:

- to reinforce and elevate the Africa-EU partnership to address issues of common concern
- to treat Africa as one upgrading Africa-EU political dialogue to enable a strong and sustainable partnership with the AU and the EU at its core
- to strengthen regional and continental integration
- to provide an overarching long-term framework for Africa-EU relations

Partnership areas:

- Peace and security
- Democratic governance and human rights
- Trade, regional integration and infrastructure
- Millennium Development Goals
- Energy
- Climate change
- Migration, mobility and employment
- Science, information society and space

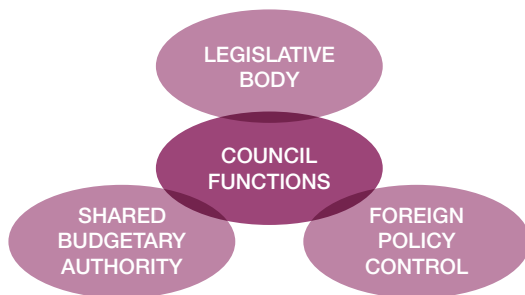**Useful links:** www.africa-eu-partnership.org

The EU Institutions

The Council of the European Union

What is the role of the Council of the European Union (also referred to as "the Council")?

The Council is the main legislative and decision-making institution in the EU. It represents the interests of the 27 member states in the EU.

Figure 3: Council functions

The Council has three main functions including:

1. Legislative body: The Council decides on proposals by the European Commission. This function is shared with the European Parliament through the ordinary legislative procedure by which the majority of EU laws are now adopted.

2. Budgetary authority: This is shared with the European Parliament.

3. Common Foreign and Security Policy: The Council takes all decisions necessary for framing and implementing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

How is the Council organised?

The Council is composed of ministers of the governments of each member state of the EU. The presidency of the Council is held by each member state for six months on a rotating basis. This means that for any year the presidency will be held by one member state from 1 January to 30 June and by another member state during the second half of the year, ending on 31 December. The presidency organises and manages the Council's business. It is seen as a mechanism through which the member states can advance specific issues.

Council meetings are attended by ministers from the 27 member states. Which ministers attend a meeting depends on which topic is on the agenda. If foreign policy is to be discussed, it will be the Foreign Affairs Minister from each country that will travel to Brussels to attend, if agriculture is on the agenda then it will be the Minister for Agriculture, and so on. The person chairing the Council will always be the Minister from the state holding the Presidency. The exception is the Foreign Affairs Council, which is chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Catherine Ashton). There are 10 different Council configurations covering all the different EU policy areas.

Council Configurations (groups)

- Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN)
- Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)
- Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)
- Environment
- Transport, telecommunications and energy
- Agriculture and Fisheries
- Competitiveness
- Education, youth and culture
- Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)
- General Affairs Council

The preparatory work for all Council meetings is done by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER). Permanent Representatives are like member states' ambassadors to the EU. They reside in Brussels and they head the member states' Permanent Representations (like embassies) to the EU. Staffed by civil servants from the member states, Permanent Representations are meant to represent and convey national interests in Council discussions. COREPER meetings are in turn prepared by several thematic Council Working Groups. These are composed of staff members from all the Permanent Representations and meet weekly in Brussels.

Council meetings are attended by ministers from the 27 member states. Which ministers attend a meeting depends on which topic is on the agenda.

The FAC adopts Council Conclusions after every meeting setting policy guidelines on specific issues.

Who works on development at the Council?

The most relevant Council to international development issues is the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). The FAC is attended monthly by Foreign Affairs Ministers from the member states and it is responsible for:
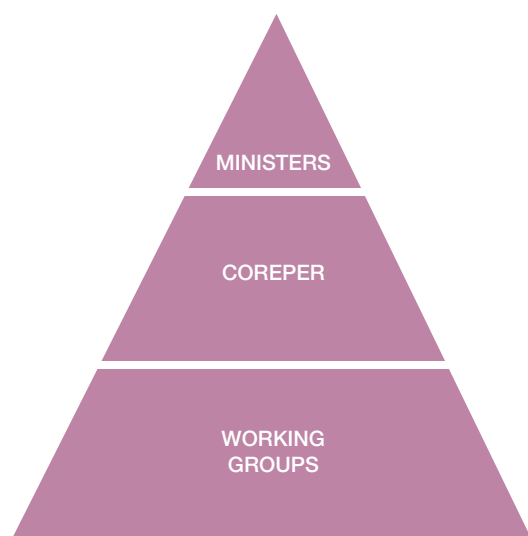
- Foreign affairs
- Common Security and Defence Policy
- Trade
- Development Cooperation
- Humanitarian Policy

Development Ministers attend the FAC in May and November to discuss development issues. Development Ministers also meet every six months for "informal Development Council" meetings chaired by the High Representative. The FAC adopts Council Conclusions after every meeting setting policy guidelines on specific issues. Seeking to influence Council Conclusions in the run up to FAC May and November meetings is an effective way for NGOs to steer EU development policy in specific areas.

As with all Council meetings, COREPER is responsible for preparing FAC and informal Development Council meetings. The most relevant Council Working Groups that feed into COREPER ahead of FAC meetings are the Development Cooperation Working Group (CODEV) and the ACP Working Group.
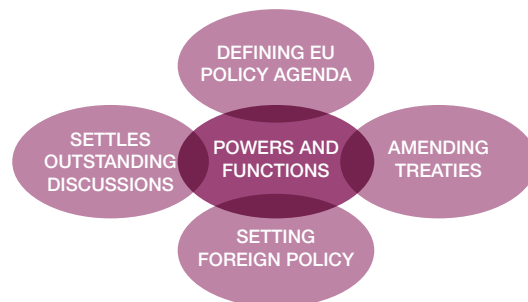
Useful links: www.consilium.europa.eu

Figure 4: Composition of the Council

MINISTERS

COREPER

WORKING GROUPS

The European Council

What is the role of the European Council?

Figure 5: Role of the European Council

DEFINING EU POLICY AGENDA

SETTLES OUTSTANDING DISCUSSIONS

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

AMENDING TREATIES

SETTING FOREIGN POLICY

Elevated to' Institution' status following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council comprises Heads of State of EU member states. It is presided by the President of the European Council, a new position introduced under the Lisbon Treaty, elected for a term of two and a half years. The Belgian Herman Van Rompuy was selected as the first ever President.

The President of the European Council

www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president.aspx

Herman Van Rompuy has been the President of the European Council since 1 December 2009. With effect from January 2010, he has been responsible for preparing and chairing the meetings of the European Council. The president's role is largely political. He is responsible for:

- chairing and driving forward the work of the European Council

- ensuring the preparation and continuity of the work of the European Council in cooperation with the President of the Commission (José Manuel Barroso – Portugal), and on the basis of the work of the Foreign Affairs Council

- endeavouring to facilitate cohesion and consensus within the European Council

- presenting a report to the European Parliament after each of the meetings of the European Council

- ensuring the external representation of the EU on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy

The European Council is the EU's 'supreme political authority' as it provides the impetus for the major political issues relating to European integration: amendments to the Treaties and changes to the institutions, declarations on external relations in the context of the common foreign and security policy, and so on. It also serves as a forum for top-level political discussion in crisis situations and endeavours to resolve disagreements between member states.

European Council meetings, sometimes referred to as "EU Summits", take place at least once per Presidency and are attended by the EU Heads of State, the President of the European Council (Van Rompuy) and the President of the European Commission (Barroso). Presidency conclusions are published after each meeting. Following these negotiations the European Council, on a consensus basis, can issue:

- Guidelines setting out the European Council's priorities relating to management of the Union and its common policies by the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. These sometimes take the form of general policy guidelines and determine the timescale and specific objectives.

- Declarations or Resolutions: they express the views of the Heads of State or Governments on a specific point.

European Council guidelines and declarations are not legally binding. To be put into effect, they have to be translated into EU law jointly by the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament (see section 2 for more details of this process).

Useful links: www.european-council.europa.eu

The European Parliament

What is the role of the European Parliament?

As the only directly elected body of the EU, the European Parliament represents the citizens of Europe. The Parliament has been elected through direct universal suffrage since 1979. European elections are held every five years. The next European elections will be held in June 2014.

Figure 6: Powers of the European Parliament
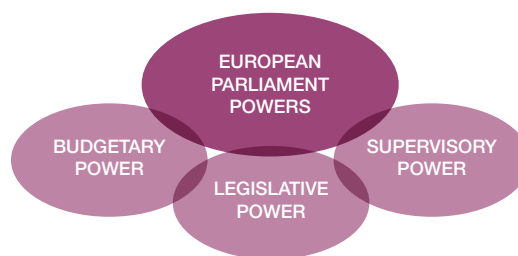
The European Parliament has three main powers:

1. Legislative power: Legislating on an equal footing with the Council in a large number of areas through the ordinary legislative procedure – including development as an area of shared competence with member states.

2. Budgetary power: The European Parliament holds the 'purse strings'. It has the final say in the adoption of the EU's annual budget, which is often used to assert the Parliament's political priorities.

3. Supervisory powers: The European Parliament has democratic oversight through the formation of committees of inquiry or the submission of oral and written questions. It also has the power to approve the President of the European Commission, as well as to appoint or dismiss the entire college of 27 Commissioners.

How is the European Parliament organised?

The European Parliament is composed of 736 members elected in the 27 EU member states. The Parliament meets in plenary every month in Strasbourg (France). Each plenary session is four days long. 'Mini Sessions' (two days long) are also held in Brussels six times a year.

The next European elections will be held in June 2014.

Figure 7: Composition of the European Parliament 2009-2014

- GUE/NGL (35)
- S&D (184)
- Greens/EFA (55)
- ALDE (84)
- EPP (265)
- ECR (54)
- EFD (32)
- NA (27)

Source: European Parliament, graphic representation Ssolbergj

Political groups at the European Parliament, in order of size:

- Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats (EPP)
- Socialist Group in the European Parliament (S&D)
- Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)
- Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance (GREENS/EFA)
- European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)
- Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)
- Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD)
- Non attached members (NA)

The UK is represented by 72 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) at the European Parliament.

The largest number of UK MEPs (25) belongs to the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, a splinter group of the European People's Party established following the last European elections in 2009. These are followed by 13 UK MEPs belonging to the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats and 12 in the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. UK MEPs are also represented in the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group, the 'Non Attached' Group, the Greens and the European United Left.

Although MEPs are elected on a national basis, they are organised – and sit in – political rather than national groups based on party affiliation. There are seven political groups at the European Parliament.

MEPs spend two weeks each month in Committee meetings (in Brussels). One week is devoted to meetings of the political groups (in Brussels). Four weeks each year can be used by MEPs for work in their own constituencies. The president of the Parliament is elected by the MEPs for a two and a half-year term. The current President is Jerzy Buzek (EPP – Poland).

To prepare the work of the Parliament's plenary sessions, parliamentary committees are organised according to specific areas of engagement of the EU. There are 20 in total but the European Parliament can also set up sub-committees (eg. Human Rights and the Security and Defence are sub-Committees of the Foreign Affairs Committee) and temporary committees (eg. Climate Change).

Each Committee is chaired by a Chairperson, four Vice-chairpersons and its work is supported by its own Secretariat, which is composed of European Parliament civil servants. Each political group represented on a Committee has a Co-ordinator. Each Co-ordinator plays a leading role vis-à-vis MEPs from their own political group co-ordinating MEPs' voting at both committee and plenary levels. Committees meet once or twice a month in Brussels. Their debates are held in public. Committees draw up, amend and adopt legislative proposals and own-initiative reports.

Political Groups at the European Parliament

- Each political group takes care of its own internal organisation by appointing a chair (or two co-chairs in the case of some groups), a bureau and a secretariat.

- 25 members are needed to form a political group, and at least one-quarter of the member states must be represented within the group. Members may not belong to more than one political group.

- Some members do not belong to any political group and are known as non-attached members.

- Before every vote in plenary the political groups scrutinise the reports drawn up by the parliamentary committees and table amendments to them.

- The position adopted by the political group is arrived at by discussion within the group. No member can be forced to vote in a particular way.

Who works on development at the European Parliament?

The Development Committee at the European Parliament is responsible for:

- handling Communications and proposals from the European Commission

- drafting own-initiative reports on development issues

- supervising the EC Aid budget and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement

- MEPs on the Committee may participate in missions to third countries (eg. for electoral monitoring)

Other parliamentary committees relevant to international development issues might be the Foreign Affairs Committee (comprising the sub-committee on Human Rights), the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee, the International Trade Committee and the Budgets Committee.

Useful links: www.europarl.europa.eu/en
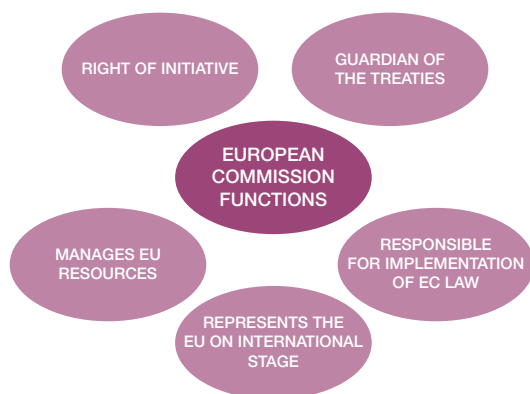
The European Commission

What is the role of the European Commission?

The European Commission is the driving force of the EU. It is the main executive body, the civil service, of the EU and it has five main functions (see fig.8 below):

- it is the only EU body with the right of initiative to make legislative proposals to the Council and the Parliament

- as the guardian of the EU Treaties, it ensures that European legislation is correctly applied by member states and other actors. In order to do this it has investigative powers and can take legal action against persons, companies, or any member states that violate EU rules

- it is in charge of managing the EU's resources

- it represents the EU on the international stage (eg. international trade negotiations or development conferences, or accession negotiations)

- it is responsible for the implementation of legislation, as mandated by the Council

The European Commission is the driving force of the EU. It is the main executive body, the civil service, of the EU and it has five main functions.

Figure 8: European Commission functions

How is the European Commission organised?

The European Commission is led by a President. The President of the Commission is selected by the European Council every five years and must be approved by the European Parliament. José Manuel Barroso (Portugal) was confirmed President of the Commission for a second term covering the period 2009 – 2014.

The members of the European Commission are called European Commissioners. There are currently 25 Commissioners. Commissioners are selected by the President of the Commission from lists of candidates put forward by member states. These must then be approved by the Council and the European Parliament. The Commissioners act in the EU's interest, independently of the national governments that nominated them. Each Commissioner is responsible for a specific 'portfolio' (eg. Development Cooperation, humanitarian aid). The College of Commissioners – ie. all 25 Commissioners plus the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy plus the President – meet once a week (traditionally on a Wednesday) in Brussels to discuss and approve proposals and in order to plan ahead.

The Commission's administrative staff (around 20,000) is based mainly in Brussels and it is divided among 25 Directorates-General (DG), or departments. Each DG covers a specific portfolio under a specific Commissioner. DGs are headed by a Director-General, like a CEO. Director-Generals report to the relevant Commissioner, who can be responsible for one or more DGs.

Useful links: ec.europa.eu

Who works on development at the European Commission?

The EU bodies responsible for external relations are commonly known as the external services. The Commissioners who are responsible for the external services are also informally referred to in Brussels as the "Relex Family", where 'relex' is short for external relations in French (see fig. 9, below).

EuropeAid Development and Cooperation (DEVCO)
www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid

EuropeAid Development and Cooperation is a new Directorate General (DG) responsible for designing EU development policies and delivering aid through programmes and projects across the world. It incorporates the former Development and EuropeAid DGs, and it comes under the responsibility of the Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs (Latvia). The new Directorate-General formally began its work on 3 January 2011. According to the DG's mission statement:

"EuropeAid Development and Cooperation will be responsible for putting into motion the European Commission's worldwide concern for development, by bringing together policy design and policy implementation covering all development countries. It will act as the single contact point for stakeholders both inside and outside the EU, but also for the EEAS and for all sectoral DGs of the European Commission. EuropeAid Development and Cooperation will play a leading role in the international debate for development involving donors, international institutions, developing and emerging countries and non-state actors".

Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)
www.ec.europa.eu/echo

Under the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria), ECHO's mission is "to provide emergency assistance and relief to the victims of natural disasters or armed conflict outside the European Union."

Since 1992, when ECHO was first established, it has funded humanitarian aid in more than 85 countries. Its grants cover emergency aid, food aid and aid to refugees and displaced persons worth a total of more than €700 million per year.

Figure 9: The "Relex Family" of European Commissioners

Catherine Ashton High Representative	Andris Piebalgs	Kristalina Georgieva	Stefan Fule	Karel de Gucht
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
CFSP	Development Policy	Humanitarian Aid	Enlargement	Trade
CSDP	EuropeAid Development & Cooperation DEVCO	ECHO	Neighbourhood Policy	
FAC Chair				
EEAS				

DG Trade

www.ec.europa.eu/trade

The Commissioner for Trade, Karel de Gucht (Belgium), is responsible for the Directorate General for Trade. DG Trade conducts the EU's trade policy ensuring the Union's commercial and economic interests are secured. The Commissioner for Trade is ultimately responsible for dealing with the development related dimensions of trade.

DG Enlargement

www.ec.europa.eu/enlargement

The Commissioner for Enlargement, Stefan Füle (Czech Republic), is responsible for the Directorate General for Enlargement. DG Enlargement conducts negotiations for the accession to the EU of the so-called candidate countries (Turkey, Croatia, Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia, Iceland and Montenegro) and is responsible for relations with potential candidates to the EU (Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo). DG Enlargement is also in charge of the European Neighbourhood Policy – covering all countries bordering the EU from North Africa to Eastern Europe – and its financing instrument.

The European External Action Service (EEAS)

www.eeas.europa.eu

The EEAS is a new independent service made up of national and EU diplomats and officials from the Commission, which started working officially on 1 January 2011. The EEAS supports the work of the High Representative, Catherine Ashton (UK), in implementing EU foreign policy. It is responsible for managing general foreign relations, security and defence policies. The EEAS has six geographical departments headed by a managing director.

The departments divide the world into:

- Africa
- Asia
- Americas
- Middle East and Southern Neighbourhood
- Russia, the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans
- Global and Multilateral Affairs

The EU delegations take on the role of coordinating national embassies and speaking for the EU as a whole.

Geographic desks are not duplicated in the Commission. The EEAS also includes departments for security, strategic policy planning, legal affairs, inter-institutional relations, information and public diplomacy, internal audit and inspections, and personal data protection. EEAS staff is drawn from the Commission and Council and from the member states' diplomatic services, seconded temporarily.

On 1 January 2010, all former European Commission delegations in countries around the world were renamed European Union delegations and were gradually upgraded into embassy-type missions that employ greater powers than the regular delegations and have become a part of the EEAS (see below for details). The EU delegations take on the role of coordinating national embassies and speaking for the EU as a whole, not just the Commission. There are over 130 EU delegations and offices around the world.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
www.eeas.europa.eu/ashton

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council appointed Catherine Ashton as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 1 December 2009. Ashton ensures the consistency of the Union's external action. Straddling both the Council and the Commission, the High Representative is responsible for:

- conducting the Union's common foreign and security policy

- contributing to the development of common foreign and security policy, which she will carry out as mandated by the Council, ensuring implementation of the decisions adopted in this field

- presiding over the Foreign Affairs Council

- being one of the Vice-Presidents of the Commission, she is responsible within the Commission for coordinating all aspects of the Union's external action

- representing the Union for matters relating to the common foreign and security policy, conduct political dialogue with third parties on the Union's behalf and expresses the Union's position in international organisations and at international conferences

- exercising authority over the EEAS and over the Union delegations in third countries and at international organisations

Development programming at the EU

Programming is the setting of long-term development objectives for a country, together with financial envelopes and a set of identified projects. The five levels of development programming and implementation in the European Commission are:

1. Country/regional strategy papers (CSPs/RSPs): five to seven-year strategic assessment of the political and economic situation of the country/region and general themes of the intended response (including political dialogue, development, trade etc.).

2. Country/regional allocation: the seven-year (six-year only for the EDF) allocation of resources for each region and country based on population, needs/poverty assessment, absorption capacity and commitment to political reform.

3. National/regional indicative programmes (NIPs/RIPs): derived from the CSPs/RSPs, these identify priority sectors and themes for the country including multi-year financial envelopes.

4. Annual action programmes: set within the overall and financial limits of the CSP and NIP.

5. Implementation: including contracting, management, monitoring and evaluation.

These five programming stages apply to a number of EU instruments relevant to international development including the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), the EDF and the European Instrument for Stability (IfS).

Source: Gavas and Koeb 2010

The division of responsibility between the EEAS and DEVCO

Following the recent institutional reform, stages one to three of the programming cycle are now the responsibility of the EEAS while stages four and five are under the newly formed DEVCO.

Under the new decision-making regime, proposals under the EDF and the DCI, including those for changes in the basic regulations and the relevant programming documents, are prepared jointly by the relevant services in the EEAS and in the Commission under the responsibility of Commissioner for Development (Piebalgs). They are then jointly submitted to the College of Commissioners by the High Representative and the Development Commissioner, and then follow the normal procedures in the Council and the European Parliament. Similar arrangements will be made for cooperation with neighbourhood countries (under the responsibility of the Commissioner for Enlargement, Stefan Fule).

A continual operation will guarantee that the political expertise provided by the EEAS will be combined with the development expertise of the European Commission. On the budgetary side, the European Commission will remain responsible for the implementation of the operational expenditure, while the EEAS has full autonomy over its administrative expenditure with the High Representative fully accountable in budgetary terms.

Section 2
How to plan your EU advocacy campaign

Situating your issue at the EU

This section will take you through some of the fundamental steps for planning your EU advocacy campaign. Before embarking on advocacy and influencing at EU level – whether you are influencing in Brussels or from your own country – you should consider the following key questions.

The EU Advocacy checklist

- What is the problem that you want to address?
- How is the problem relevant to you (your organisation) and what credibility do you have (ie. how does it relate to your mission and what evidence do you have)?
- How is the EU part of the solution to your problem?
- What do you want to change? (concrete policy and practice outcomes)
- Is there existing EU policy/legislation on your issue?
  - if so, do you feel that it is adequate appropriate?
  - If so, is it being implemented or not?
  - if there is no adequate EU policy on your issue, how can you raise awareness and put your issue on the EU agenda?
- If you have identified a specific document or legislative proposal you want to influence you will need to determine:
  - what status the document will have (ie. are we seeking to influence a legislative proposal, council conclusions, a policy document or a staff working document?)
  - at what stage is the decision-making process and is there still time to influence it?
  - what is the role and weight of the different Institutions in the procedure?
  - should you be influencing the decision at the national level or in Brussels, or both?
  - who will make the final decision?
  - who are your allies and opponents (both in terms of peer NGOs, MEPs and EU member states)?
  - what resources (human and financial) will your advocacy campaign require?
  - How will you know when you will have reached your aim?

Knowing what you want to change

Any advocacy initiative should have clear change objectives. Once you have situated your issue within the EU political framework, you will need to define the concrete changes in policy and/or practice that you are aiming to achieve. Finding your way around the EU, however, is not straightforward, particularly if you are not well versed in 'Euro-jargon' or familiar with the corridors of power in Brussels. Here is some guidance to help you along the way.

What are the different types of EU legislative acts?

To exercise its decision-making powers, the EU institutions can adopt regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions. Regulations and directives are adopted by the Council and the European Parliament through ordinary or special legislative procedures explained in more detail below.

An **EU Regulation** is a specific form of legislation which transcends all member state domestic legislation, unless the member state has secured a treaty opt-out in the area covered by the regulation. Regulations are one of the most powerful forms of EU law and therefore they can be very contentious and hotly debated. When a Regulation comes into force, it overrides all national laws dealing with the same subject matter and subsequent national legislation must be consistent with and made in the light of the Regulation.

Examples of Regulations include implementing UN regulations on fire arms control, regulation of credit rating agencies, agriculture and fishing. The next Multi-annual Financial Framework (also referred to as financial perspectives) for the EU budget from 2014 onwards will be set by an EU Regulation. This, among other things, will establish the overall size of the EU budget as well as what the money will be spent on and under what headings. European civil society networks, including Bond, will be influencing this important decision making process over 2011-12.

An **EU Directive** is a form of legislation that is directed at the member states. It sets out the objective or policy that needs to be attained. The member states must then pass the relevant domestic legislation to give effect to the terms of the Directive within a set time frame. Directives can be used to set minimum EU standards to be applied at national level, but also leave member states free to apply more stringent national measures, provided these do not conflict with free movement and free market rules. Directives can be used to establish common social policies including for instance employment issues, labour law, working conditions, and health and safety. Examples of well-known EU Directives in this area are the 'Working Time Directive' and the 'Equal Pay Directive'.

A **Decision** may be addressed to member states or individuals and it is only binding on the person or entity to which it is addressed. Common uses of decisions involve the Commission ruling on proposed mergers, and day-to-day agricultural matters (eg. setting standard prices for vegetables). In some areas, such as competition policy, the Commission may itself issue decisions. A well known example of a Council Decision is the one setting a uniform percentage rate (1.24%) for contributions made by member states to the EU Budget.

Recommendations and **Opinions** can be issued by either the European Parliament or the Council. They are not legally binding and only serve as guidance to the other Institutions or specifically to the Commission.

How can I influence policy and practice on development cooperation in Brussels and beyond?

Influencing EU legislation is not the only option, particularly if you work on development cooperation, which is an area of shared competence between the member states and the EU.

Council conclusions:

You may be able to secure high-level endorsement for your issue and advocacy asks by influencing **Conclusions** adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council, for instance. Although Council Conclusions are not legally binding they may guide relevant EU policy-making and practice in a given area.

Policy documents:

You may also wish to directly input to and inform the development of relevant **policy documents** issued by the Commission such as for instance thematic communications, green papers (shaping EU acts to come), staff working papers or guidelines to EU Delegations. Although these are also not legally binding, they have a significant bearing on how the European Commission and the EU Delegations in-country

Finding your way around the EU is not straightforward.

manage and deliver development cooperation programmes on the ground.

Regional and Country Strategy Papers:

Alternatively, you may assist your partners in the south to influence the programming of aid through influencing Regional and Country Strategy Papers under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, for instance.

How is EU legislation adopted?

Under the Lisbon Treaty EU legislative acts (including regulations, directives and decisions) can be adopted through either:

- ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as co-decision)
- special legislative procedures

The **ordinary legislative** procedure applies to the joint adoption by the Council and the European Parliament of a regulation, a directive or a decision on a proposal from the Commission (see below for a detailed explanation).

Under **special legislative** procedures the European Parliament and the Council do not act jointly. These procedures envisage the adoption of an act by the European Parliament with the participation of the Council, or by the latter with the participation of the European Parliament where either institution needs to seek the **consent** of the other. EU decisions on international trade agreements, formerly adopted by the Council, are now subject to consent by the European Parliament. Similarly, the regulation setting the new Multiannual Financial Framework for the Union will also be subject to consent by the European Parliament.
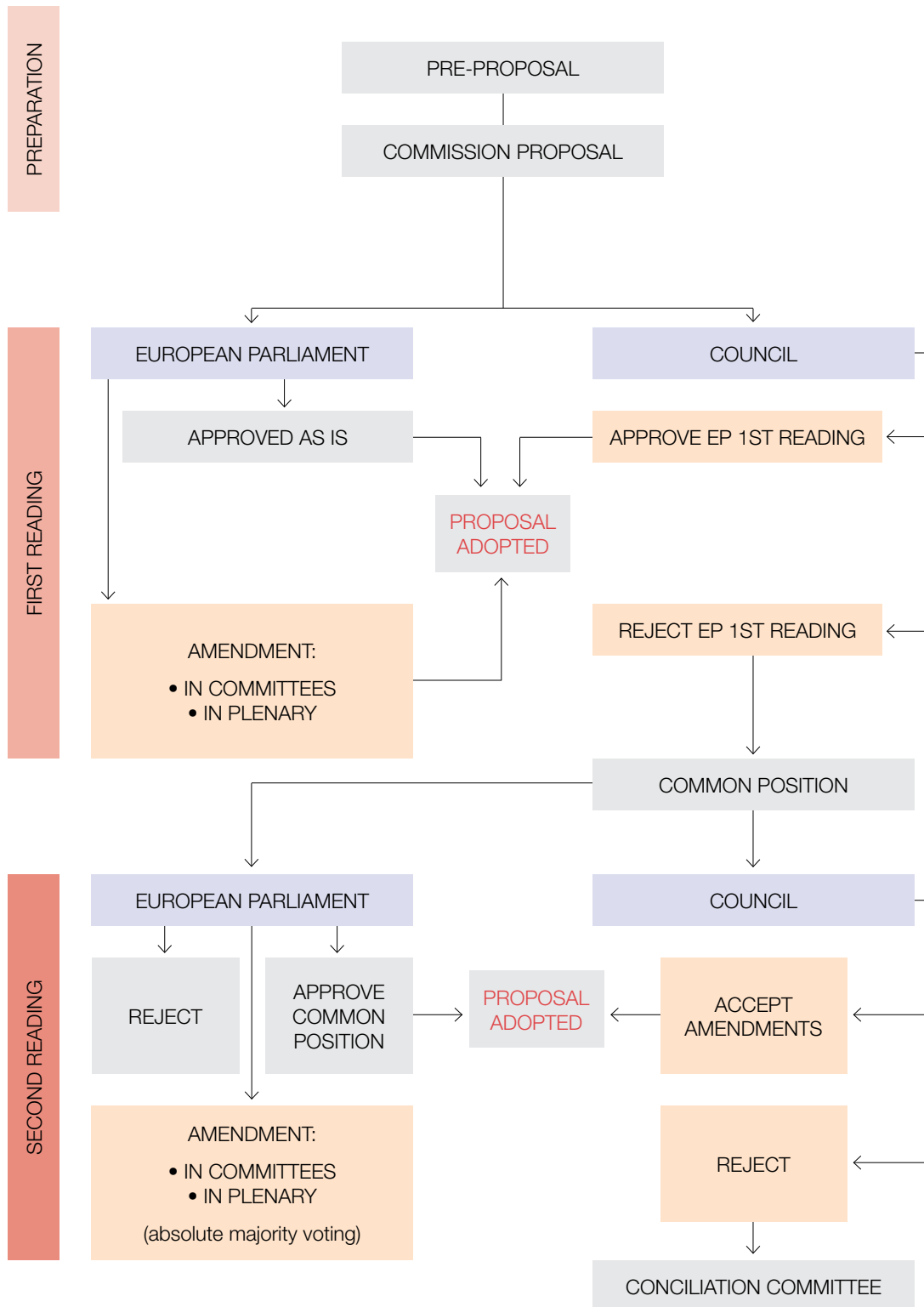
Under special legislative procedures the initiative for the legislative act does not just emanate from the Commission but it may come from a group of member states or of the European Parliament, on a recommendation from the European Central Bank or at the request of the Court of Justice or the European Investment Bank.

How can I influence the EU's ordinary legislative procedure?

The ordinary legislative procedure – still widely referred to as co-decision – has been the EU's usual method of decision-making for over 15 years. Under the Lisbon Treaty, co-decision becomes the rule for passing legislation at EU level as it now applies to 85 policy areas from 44 previously.

Co-decision is extended to a significant number of policy areas, including cooperation with third countries, where the European Parliament used to only have a right of consultation (now known as consent) or areas such as international trade where they were previously not involved at all. The procedure as such remains virtually unchanged. It starts with a legislative proposal from the Commission (which has the right of initiative) to the Council and the European Parliament, who then debate it, propose amendments and eventually adopt it as EU law. This may comprise one, two or three 'readings' (see fig. 10). It is important to note that the majority of legislative proposals on development issues are adopted after the first reading and none have gone beyond the second reading stage. For the purpose of this guide, we will cover the process in detail from the pre-proposal stage at the European Commission to the completion of the second reading.

Figure 10: Ordinary Legislative Procedure (first and second readings)

PREPARATION

PRE-PROPOSAL

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

FIRST READING

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

COUNCIL

APPROVED AS IS

APPROVE EP 1ST READING

PROPOSAL
ADOPTED

AMENDMENT:

• IN COMMITTEES
• IN PLENARY

REJECT EP 1ST READING

COMMON POSITION

SECOND READING

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

COUNCIL

REJECT

APPROVE
COMMON
POSITION

PROPOSAL
ADOPTED

ACCEPT
AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENT:

• IN COMMITTEES
• IN PLENARY

(absolute majority voting)

REJECT

CONCILIATION COMMITTEE

Once a proposal is being developed, your key targets will be the European Commission officials responsible for actually drafting the document.

Influencing the stages

Pre-proposal stage

There are a variety of ways to get information about what proposals might be in the pipeline at the European Commission. Once you have that information, you should identify who (which Directorate General, which Unit and what officials) will be responsible for drafting any legislative proposals. At this early stage, it is also worth finding out if the Commission is planning on setting up an **Expert Group** to advise on the drafting of the proposal or if they are planning on working with an existing Expert Group. These groups are open to NGOs and any other actors that are perceived as expert partners to help develop EU proposed legislation. Building alliances with other like-minded NGOs and networking with established NGO networks in Brussels to raise awareness of your issues is also a good idea at this stage.

Drafting stage

Initial research, networking and constituency building efforts should ensure that you are well placed to influence any proposal when it is eventually drafted. Even if you haven't had the luxury of getting in earlier, once a proposal is being developed, your key targets will be the European Commission officials responsible for actually drafting the document. You should ensure that you are not a 'lone voice' at the Commission. Networking and constituency building, both among peers and with other influentials (for instance, friendly UK MEPs or friendly officials at the UK Permanent Representation) should also be prioritised.

First reading

Once a legislative proposal is published by the European Commission, your focus should switch to the Council and the European Parliament. Both institutions consider the proposal simultaneously.

Influencing the European Parliament

After receiving the Commission's proposal, the President of the European Parliament refers it to the relevant parliamentary committee for examination. The lead committee will be responsible for producing a report amending the Commission's proposal. Other relevant committees may also issue an 'opinion' on the Commission proposal. These 'opinions' are included in the final draft of the lead committee's report.

During the development of the report, the Commission may be invited to speak to the committee in order to defend its proposal and answer questions by committee members. The report is then drafted by a rapporteur (ie. an MEP sitting on that committee). It includes an overview of the Commission's proposal, the views of different parties involved, any possible 'opinions' from other committees and a resolution including amendments to the Commission's proposal.

Amendments can be tabled by any MEP sitting on that committee. MEPs will accept suggested wording for amendments from trusted sources, including NGOs. It is worth contacting any friendly MEPs at this stage, if you have not already done so, in order to raise awareness of your issues, convey any concerns on the Commission proposal being debated and offer to draft amendments. Once these are tabled by

your friendly MEP, however, you should mobilise support more broadly in order to ensure your amendments are approved by the committee.

After the report has been adopted at committee level it will go to plenary. Here it will be voted on by qualified majority voting.

Influencing the Council

The Council examines Commission's proposal in parallel to the European Parliament. Throughout the first reading there is an intensive exchange of information between the three institutions. At the Council, the Presidency is tasked with brokering contacts with the European Commission and negotiations and the European Parliament. The relevant working groups at the Council discuss the proposal. The deliberations of the working groups are then sent upwards to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) for the latter's approval. The role of COREPER is essential to secure the requisite political agreement among the member states. It is important to keep abreast of these discussions if possible. This can either be done by meeting with members of the Permanent Representation in Brussels or with relevant government officials at the national level.

After the European Parliament has voted on its report in plenary session the Council can either accept the outcome of its first reading, in which case the proposal is adopted, or it can reject its position. In this case, where no agreement could be reached, the Council adopts what is known as a Common Position. The Council's common position is communicated back to the European Parliament together with a statement of reasons for both the Council's and the Commission's position towards the European Parliament's amendments.

Second reading

Within three months from the receipt of the Council common position, the European Parliament may approve, reject or amend the Council's common position at its second reading. The process for approval at the Parliament is similar to the first reading. The one notable difference is that, if Parliament decides to adopt amendments to the common position, it can only do so with the agreement of an absolute majority of MEPs. In the case of approval, the act is adopted. In the case of rejection, the procedure lapses and the legislative proposal falls.

As soon as the Council receives the European Parliament's amended text the Council has three months from that date to decide whether or not to approve all its amendments. This is Council's

second reading. In cases where the Council is not able to do so, the co-decision procedure provides for the European Parliament and the Council to convene a Conciliation Committee.

Useful links:

Follow current legislative procedures:
www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil

Discover which way MEPs have voted:
www.votewatch.eu

Top tips for influencing EU decision-making

- get in early

- have clear objectives, messages and outcomes

- always understand the wider EU context

- identify the Institution in charge and your key targets depending on what stage in the co-decision procedure you get in at

- establish your organisation as the 'expert' vis-à-vis your key targets

- use the UK government as your first port of call

- use Bond as a source of information, for networking and for collective influencing in the UK

- use friendly UK MEPs

- build relationships with key contacts in Brussels at the Institutions and among the NGOs

MEPs will accept suggested wording for amendments from trusted sources, including NGOs.

DFID should be the first port of call for anyone wanting to influence the Council on development.

Who has the power to make change happen?

Tax as a development issue: Christian aid's EU advocacy Campaign

By Jenny Brown, Senior EU Relations Adviser, Christian Aid

Developing countries lose massive sums through tax avoidance and evasion that could be invested for development. They often do not know what tax they are entitled to, because companies do not have to disclose where profits are earned, and tax havens can conceal taxable funds. Greater transparency through country-by-country reporting (CBCR) and automatic tax information exchange (ATIE) would make a big difference. This has been a priority for Christian Aid since 2009, with encouraging results.

The EU's Tax and Development Communication, approved in June 2010, acknowledged the importance of these demands. The European Parliament was already supportive, the European Commission's recent consultation on CBCR seems likely to recommend CBCR for extractives (a good start, but definitely not enough) and other processes are ongoing.

Why this progress? It's partly timing – our campaign coincided with the recession – but it's more than that. We knew the bodies that could enable the necessary transparency – the OECD, (for CBCR), the G20 (mainly for ATIE) and ultimately for CBRC the International Accounting Standards Board – and that the EU has influence with each of these.

One advocacy track was therefore the EU. We identified processes, influential MEPs and committees, and Commission officials, and invested time in relationship-building and understanding the dynamics and contexts in Brussels and key member states.

The authority and relevance of our research and reports, and the active involvement of Southern partners, enabled access and increased our credibility and impact. We established links with other NGOs and networks who promote the messages, as member states sign off on policy, so work in capitals as well as Brussels is vital and that can't be done solo. We don't take all the credit for where we have got to, but we have done our bit!

Who should I target at the Council?

Given that the Council represents the interests of member states at the EU, in order to influence decision-making processes at the Council it is best to begin at the national level. It may be useful to know that Permanent Representatives sitting on COREPER and Working Group officials agree their positions with their own national governments. So, if you don't have an office in Brussels or the capacity to engage in front-line advocacy in Brussels, you can still put your views and recommendations across to decision-makers in your own government. Even if you do have a Brussels presence, national level advocacy is vital.

In the UK, the Department for International Development (DFID) has overall responsibility for development related issues dealt with at the EU level. This responsibility is shared primarily with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as well as with other Whitehall departments including the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Treasury.

DFID should be the first port of call for anyone wanting to influence the Council on development. Within DFID, the Europe Department has overall responsibility for relations with the EU. The DFID Europe Department holds quarterly meetings with Bond's European Policy Group (see page 25). This is open to any Bond member who wishes to influence the EU. Depending on what specific development related issue you wish to influence the EU on, you may also consider engaging in dialogue directly with other DFID thematic teams as well as other Whitehall departments. Bond and DFID's Europe Department also broker occasional cross-Whitehall meetings to discuss topical issues on the Council's agenda.

The Bond European Policy Group

The European Policy Group is a working group of Bond members set up to develop advocacy and policy initiatives on EU development policy issues. UK NGOs have been increasingly pooling their resources and expertise to speak out with one voice on cross-cutting EU development issues.

As Bond's think tank on EU development policy, the group is a key forum for this work, ensuring effective representation of UK development NGOs in the EU and maximum impact of Bond's work with its sister NGO platforms across the EU. The European Policy Group believes that the EU's international role should be to deliver on international commitments to eradicate poverty, promote economic justice and fair trade, and realise universal human rights. As a first step towards these goals, the EU should make a significant contribution towards achieving and surpassing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in sustainable, inclusive and equitable ways.

For more information on Bond European work and the activities of the European Policy Group: www.bond.org.uk

If you do have capacity to travel to Brussels, or you have offices there, it is useful to meet with the UK Permanent Representative and getting to know the officials at the UK Permanent Representation (UKREP) who are responsible for international development and sit on the relevant Working Groups at the Council.

In recent years, NGOs have had an increasing voice at the Council Working Groups and COREPER through coalitions and alliances such as CONCORD (the European confederation of relief and development NGOs). CONCORD holds regular meetings with Council Working Group on Development (CODEV) on topical issues, such as the recent EU institutional reforms. Targeting Council Working Groups or COREPER is only worthwhile if you can sway a significant number of member states over a common cause. The outcome of such influencing efforts may be the inclusion of your issue, and potentially your advocacy asks, into Council Conclusions following a particular Council meeting (eg. of the Foreign Affairs Council), potentially leading to new policy guidelines and legislation in that area.

Useful links: Find out more about the UK Representation to the EU: ukeu.fco.gov.uk

Keeping Informed

- The Press Room of the Council: www.consilium.europa.eu/press.aspx?lang=en

- The Presidency website: each presidency will have its own dedicated website where you can find all the information on upcoming meetings including the General Affairs and External Relations Council, and the Informal Development Council

- CONCORD: to keep track of upcoming Presidencies' priorities: www.concordeurope.org

- A list of member states' Permanent Representations in Brussels: europa.eu/whoiswho/public/index.cfm?fuseaction=idea.hierarchy&nodeid=3780&lang=en

- Staff at the UK Permanent Representation: europa.eu/whoiswho/public/index.cfm?fuseaction=idea.hierarchy&nodeID=4500&lang=en

Who should I target at the European Parliament?

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has increased powers and authority. It is now more important than ever to include MEPs in your EU advocacy efforts. It should not be forgotten that MEPs are democratically elected in their own countries. Like UK MP's, MEPs are accountable to their constituencies back home. All MEPs have offices in Brussels, Strasbourg and in their own constituencies, where they can be contacted by members of the public. It is advisable to focus on UK MEPs as they will be the most receptive to UK voices. Parliamentary assistants act as MEPs 'gatekeepers'. Assistants will generally be more accessible than MEPs and may actually actively seek support from their contacts – including NGOs known to them – for input on specific reports. Unless you know an MEP personally, making contact with their assistant/s in their Brussels office should be your first step. It is important to invest some time in getting to know them and raising their awareness of your issue as well as targeting their MEP.

Through the ordinary legislative procedure – or co-decision – MEPs have the power to amend Commission legislative proposals by tabling and voting on amendments both at the committee level and in plenary. Most MEPs will be open to tabling amendments drafted by reputable

and trusted external actors (including NGOs) with whom they have been in contact. It is worthwhile to identify and get to know key MEPs that may have an interest in your area of work in order to raise their awareness of your issue.

The most relevant Committee to your issue (eg. Development) is a good place to start. You can easily find out which MEPs sit on each Committee by consulting the European Parliament's website (see below for useful links). Once you have identified potential champions within your Committee you can browse individual MEPs' personal pages on the European Parliament's web portal in order to find out more about their background, any relevant parliamentary questions they may have tabled and reports they may have drafted. It is also useful to find out who the Committee Chair and Vice-Chairs and the co-ordinators (for each political group represented on the Committee) are and make contact with them.

Useful links: The web portal of the European Parliament provides all the information you will need to inform your advocacy work with MEPs: www.europarl.europa.eu

There you will find links to:

- MEPs individual pages with contact details and information on parliamentary questions and reports

- Political Groups pages with information on political co-ordinators on all parliamentary committees

- European Parliament Committees homepages with detailed information on mandates, members and work programmes

- European Parliament online Press Service including the latest information updates on what's new at the European Parliament plenary sessions including agendas

Who should I target at the European Commission?

The European Commission is the most important institution to focus on if you want to be involved in policy-making at the EU from the start. It is essential to keep track of the Commission's intentions in your area of interest. Even before a legislative proposal is drafted, the European Commission may publish consultative documents (green papers, white papers and communications), conduct open consultations, hold hearings, workshops, conferences, seminars, set up Expert Groups or commission studies by external consultants.

Expert Groups

Expert Groups are consultative bodies comprising national, private-sector and civil society experts on a specific issue/theme or policy area. The main task of Expert Groups is to advise the Commission and its services in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives as well as in its tasks of monitoring and coordination or cooperation with the member states. These groups can be either permanent or temporary.

For more information on Expert Groups: ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert

It is administrative officials at the European Commission who are tasked with drafting legislative proposals and other policy documents. These officials are generally open to external advice and input at the drafting stage. The earliest this comes the better. It pays to familiarise yourself and build a solid relationship based on mutual respect and trust with key Commission officials working in your area. Sharing any new intelligence, research and reports on your issues will help establish you and your organisation as experts vis-à-vis the European Commission.

In order to raise awareness of your issues and mobilise 'political' support more broadly at the European Commission you may also wish to target relevant Heads of Unit, Director Generals and Commissioners. These are less accessible than administrative officials. Your friendly contacts in the Commission may be able to advise on the timing and the best way to go about securing a meeting with their managers.

Meeting with a Commissioner is not straightforward and you will need to pass through key members of their personal staff first. Each Commissioner is supported by an entourage of civil servants, which belong to their cabinet. You will be able to find information on who is who in each Commissioner's cabinet on their homepage on the Europa web portal. Working through coalitions and alliances in Brussels is also an effective way of advocating at the higher political levels at the Commission. Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, for instance, has been very amenable to civil society organisations and has met with a number of NGO groups and coalitions in Brussels and in the member states since he came into office in 2009.

Useful links: The web portal of the European Commission provides links to all of the following and more – ec.europa.eu:

- all the Commissioners' homepages

- all the Directorates General's homepages

- staff directory; europa.eu/whoiswho

- European Commission Press Room: europa.eu/press_room

- European Commission studies

- green papers

- discussion papers

- list of Expert Groups

- live Consultations

- European Commission Annual Work and legislative programme

- Directorates General work plans

- European Commission Annual Policy Strategy

Conveying your messages

HelpAge International advocacy on social protection at the EU

By Alice Livingstone, Policy Programme Officer, HelpAge International

Following the European Council's conclusions of December 2007 that called for the development of an EU policy on social protection, our advocacy in Brussels has sought to build support for a more comprehensive policy framework on social protection in EU development cooperation.

Our key message was to promote a broad and inclusive approach to development through social protection mechanisms that can help to reduce poverty and vulnerability and promote social and economic development. In particular, we sought to highlight the pivotal role of social protection for marginalised and excluded older informal sector workers.

In collaboration with our civil society allies, we were able to influence EuropeAid to include social protection in their aid programming at the national and regional level. Through DG Dev we were able to influence internal position papers calling for an overarching EU policy on social protection, and ensure that the key issues raised by HelpAge and our allies were included in the 2010 European Report on Development which focused on social protection.

Our collaborative approach to influencing, both with civil society organisations and decision makers, undoubtedly gave us status and visibility in Brussels. Our broad network of Southern partners and programmes, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, also gave us credibility as an NGO actor and led to us being invited to expert groups and technical meetings on social protection. We also encouraged the participation of older spokespersons from developing countries who greatly enriched discussions with key decision makers in Brussels.

Whilst there is still more to be done to achieve lasting change in policy and practice we have contributed significantly to building support for social protection. Our future strategy will therefore focus on leveraging political support for social protection through senior targets at the European Commission and through developing stronger relations with the European Parliament.

Working through coalitions and alliances in Brussels is also an effective way of advocating at the higher political levels at the Commission.

External experts, including NGO representatives, can be invited to present to MEPs on the topic of the hearing.

How can I raise awareness of my issue with MEPs?

Besides directly inputting to the legislative process, MEPs may also help raise awareness of specific issues at the European Parliament. MEPs can table oral and written parliamentary questions (PQs) which can serve the purpose of either obtaining detailed information from the European Commission or the Council (written PQs) or making public political statements (oral PQs).

MEPs can support awareness-raising activities, such as public hearings on topical development issues in Committees. External experts, including NGO representatives, can be invited to present to MEPs on the topic of the hearing. Proposals for public hearings may also come from Committee Secretariats. It is advisable to meet with the senior officials on the Secretariat of the parliamentary Committee that is most relevant to you in order to raise awareness of your issues and secure their support.

You can also raise awareness of your issues with MEPs through exhibitions (eg. photographic), events (eg. report launches) and informal lunches or breakfast meetings at the European Parliament.

As with All-Party Groups in the UK, MEPs may also belong to informal thematic interest groups, called Intergroups. These are officially registered at the European Parliament and a list of all registered Intergroups can be found on the website. Secretariat services to Intergroups are mostly provided by external actors, including NGOs.

Getting accredited to the European Parliament

A code of conduct adopted by the European Parliament regulates lobbying activities at the Parliament. The European Parliament's Quaestors are responsible for issuing individual named passes valid for a maximum of one year to people who wish to enter Parliament frequently to provide MEPs with information relating to their parliamentary duties, in their own interests or those of third parties. Their names are recorded in a public register kept by the Quaestors, which can be consulted on Parliament's website.

For further information on accreditation procedures, contact the relevant department: SecuLongTermPass@ europarl.europa.eu

How can I organise an event at the European Parliament?

Events cannot be organised without 'sponsorship' by an MEP and some administrative support from their assistants. Events should be planned at least six months to a year in advance, particularly if your timing will coincide with a European Parliament plenary session and you wish to book a prominent place/room at the Parliament. Organising an event (eg. a photographic exhibition or a launch) in Strasbourg during a plenary session may be very effective as it will give you good political visibility and ensure good attendance. The organisation however might be more difficult as both MEPs and their 'regular' assistants only go there once a month. Timing your event with one of the two-day mini-sessions of the European Parliament in Brussels may also be very effective.

When is it best to reach MEPs?

Bear in mind that MEPs do not live in Brussels but that they travel there weekly. Generally, MEPs arrive in Brussels either on the Monday or the Tuesday morning and leave to go back to their constituencies late on the Thursday or on Friday morning. Many UK MEPs hold 'surgeries' in their constituencies back home on Fridays. Before planning your travel to Brussels to meet with your target MEPs, or simply when trying to reach them on the telephone, it is worth first checking the Parliamentary calendar to see whether they will be in Brussels for either political group meetings or Committee meetings or whether they will be in Strasbourg for a plenary session (one week every month). Catching MEPs in Strasbourg may be trickier as they may be less available during a plenary than during Committee and political group meetings in Brussels. Meeting with parliamentary assistants once their MEPs have left for the week on a Friday is a good idea as they will usually be more relaxed and have more time for you.

How can I make sure an MEP will read my briefing?

Briefings aimed at MEPs should be very concise (not longer than two pages) and to the point. Grabbing their attention within the first two paragraphs of your briefing is essential. It is a good idea to include your advocacy asks and the action/s that you require the MEP to take at the very top rather than at the bottom of the paper. The action, be it supporting an amendment in a specific report, tabling a PQ or sponsoring your organisation's event, should always be very clearly spelled out. Any other supporting information, including 'killer' facts and statistics, should be included in the briefing as incisively and succinctly as possible.

Bearing in mind that you may wish to influence MEPs from different member states, you might want to consider translating your briefings in other key languages besides English. This will be hugely appreciated by non-English speaking MEPs as it will help them understand and connect to the issue better as well as making your organisation stand out among all the others.

Top tips for influencing MEPs

- target UK MEPs

- find out what they are interested in (search for their PQs and reports)

- meet them face to face (remember they will not be in Brussels on a Monday or a Friday)

- do not give them policy briefings more than two pages long

- use clear messages and 'killer' facts or statistics

- share 'cutting edge' relevant research/reports

- tailor your messages to their interests and political and personal beliefs

- establish yourself as the expert

- try to win over their assistant

- provide concise, relevant, to the point information (maximum one page) with clear advice on what you would like them to do for you (eg. support a specific amendment)

- never try to impose your views

How can I work through networks and coalitions in the UK and in Brussels?

In the UK

Two Bond working groups have a specific focus on EU institutions:

- Bond European Policy Group provides joint analysis of EU policy developments and coordinates advocacy initiatives targeting the EU

- Bond EC Funding Group provides information sharing on technical EC funding issues and joint analysis and influencing of EC funding environment

For more information: www.bond.org.uk/groups

Other Bond working groups and UK networks target EU institutions on specific issues. Project groups can be set up on specific initiatives. Some examples of active Bond working groups, project groups and UK networks are:

- Bond European Neighbourhood Working Group

- Bond Latin America and Caribbean Working Group

- Bond Environment and Development Working Group

- UK Food Group

- Development Education Association

The Bond Advocacy team offers support to Bond working groups and members to analyse how the EU affects the issues they are working on and to plan collective influencing of EU institutions.

Useful links:

- To learn more about Bond's EU work: www.bond.org.uk/europe

- For further information and advice, contact the Bond EU Policy Officer and the Bond International Advocacy Officer: advocacy@bond.org.uk

You might want to consider translating your briefings in other languages besides English.

It is worthwhile investing time and energy in building up a relationship with individual journalists, editors or, in some cases, media owners.

In Europe

Bond is the UK national platform in CONCORD, the European confederation of relief and development NGOs consisting of 25 NGO national platforms and 18 international networks representing over 1600 NGOs. CONCORD represents the development community within the EU Civil Society Contact Group, which brings together eight large rights and value based NGO sectors – environment, social, development, human rights, lifelong learning, public health, culture and women.

Participation in CONCORD is strategic for Bond and its members in order to access information, share best practice across Europe and be able to speak with one strong voice in Brussels.

Useful links: www.concordeurope.org

Using the media in Brussels – guidance and tips by David Cronin[1]

The advice to any social justice activist who seeks coverage from the mainstream media is to realise firstly that the media is probably not on your side. Editors might speak about how they pride themselves in their "objectivity" but in practice, "objectivity" means avoiding any serious challenge to the prevailing ideology, especially that of their media institution.

That doesn't mean you should stay away from the mainstream press. Having your views expressed in the mass media can be important in shaping public opinion or even elite opinion. Rather, it means that you should not expect your views to be automatically given the same weight as those representing the political or corporate establishment.

The mainstream media is not monolithic, so finding individual reporters who genuinely care about poverty, human rights or the environment is possible. Instead of taking a scattergun approach of sending press statements everywhere, it is worthwhile investing time and energy in building up a relationship with individual journalists, editors or, in some cases, media owners.

Securing press coverage does not require any specialist skills. The only tools needed to contact journalists are literally telephone and a computer. It does help, though, if you can identify issues that are topical, if you can present your facts in an accessible manner and choose your timing carefully – you don't want badger a reporter 10 minutes before his or her deadline.

The importance of strong visuals should not be underestimated, either. Greenpeace has mastered the kind of creative campaigning that guarantees colourful photographs. Greenpeace publicity stunts have even helped draw attention to tedious negotiations over EU fishing quotas and aid to those developing countries most affected by climate change.

Despite the FT being the only paper unanimously (or almost unanimously) regarded as essential reading by EU officials, there have been a proliferation of specialist publications dealing with European affairs over the past 15 years. These include European Voice (owned by The Economist), EUObserver, Euractiv, New Europe and The Parliament. Most of these publications are heavily reliant on corporate advertising or sponsorship but are usually willing to give some space to commentators with an alternative perspective.

Attracting media coverage can provide an important psychological boost if you are involved in a difficult campaign over something that more cynical observers would write off as a lost cause. Yet it is no substitute for convincing as many people as possible to advocate for justice. There have been few cases in history where positive social change has been brought about solely because of what happens in newsrooms.

Useful links:

- European Voice: www.europeanvoice.com
- EUObserver: www.euobserver.com
- Euractiv: www.euractiv.com
- New Europe: www.neurope.eu
- The Parliament: www.theparliament.com
- Terra Viva Europe: www.ipsterraviva.net/europe

---

1 David Cronin is a journalist, author and political activist based in Brussels. He has written for a wide variety of publications including *The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal Europe, the Inter Press Service* and *European Voice*.

About Bond

As the membership body for UK international development organisations, Bond unites the sector by inspiring members to work, learn and take action together. The network has 358* members ranging from large organisations with a world-wide presence to smaller, specialist organisations working in certain regions or with specific groups of people.

Our vision is a world of justice and equality, free from poverty, where human rights and the environment are respected.

bond.org.uk   *at March 2011

Bond European Policy Group

The European Policy Group is a working group of Bond members set up to develop advocacy and policy initiatives on European Union (EU) development policy issues. See page 25 for more information.

bond.org.uk/groups

groups@bond.org.uk

"Europe is the largest aid donor in the world and its impact needs to be acknowledged. We can't ignore the EU as a key target for effective advocacy."

Carolina Gottardo, Head of Policy and Advocacy, One World Action