

A background image of three business professionals (two women and one man) in a modern office setting, looking at a document together. The image is overlaid with a blue tint. The title 'A JOB IN BRUSSELS' is centered within a white rectangular border.

A JOB IN BRUSSELS

**A SIMPLE GUIDE TO FIND A JOB OR
ENHANCE YOUR EU AFFAIRS CAREER**



Introduction - How to find a job in Brussels and enhance your EU Affairs career

Brussels has become a vital point of reference for those involved in public and regulatory affairs, interest or advocacy groups and NGOs within the European Union. The *Capital of Europe* offers a variety of opportunities regardless of your background, specialisation, level of seniority and sector you are interested in. Beyond the positions at European institutions, the EU public affairs sector has significantly increased the number of people working or seeking a job in Brussels.

Part 1 - Prefigure your path: Self-assessment, EU career planning and enhancing

The starting point of a job search is self-assessment. Self-evaluation is a complex process which must be conducted carefully. Indeed, it must consider your academic background and competences, acquired and transferable skills, as well as the interrelation between your personality type, personal interests and aspirations.

Part 2 - How to start a career in European Affairs by working for the EU institutions

Taking the first steps to begin your career in EU Affairs in Brussels can be challenging, especially if you do not self-assess and position yourself as best as possible. In any case, the most searched channel for career development is through a traineeship within the European institutions.

Part 3 - A small guide to the European Public Affairs jobsites ecosystem

A great number of job vacancies correlated to EU affairs can be found there regardless of your level of seniority and area of specialisation. However, other sources can amplify the possibilities to work in EU public affairs in Brussels and elsewhere.

Part 4 - Useful tips: Networking, Stay tuned and informed, Salaries, Relocation

Networking is a powerful tool to find a matching position in Brussels. A job search must be tailored to your background, skills and interests. Therefore, you must stay informed and consult news sources to understand current EU developments. There can be sometimes a certain opaqueness over remuneration in Brussels, as well as a natural cultural reticence over discussing money. The Office of the Brussels Commissioner for Europe has a dedicated page for job seekers which includes useful advice about relocation.

How to find a job in Brussels and enhance your EU Affairs career

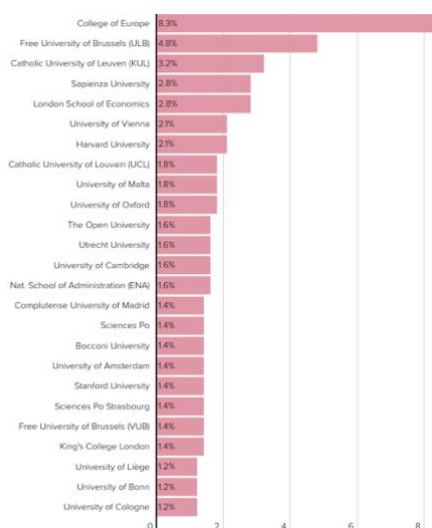


Brussels has become a vital point of reference for those involved in public and regulatory affairs, interest or advocacy groups and NGOs within the European Union. The *Capital of Europe* offers a variety of opportunities regardless of your background, your specialisation, the sector you are interested in, as well as your level of seniority. In addition, beyond the positions at European institutions, the EU public affairs sector which encompasses a vast range of organisations and domains has significantly increased the number of people working or seeking a job in Brussels.

According to the publication '[Brussels, International Capital - the figures 2020](#)', published in June 2020 at the initiative of the [Brussels Commissioner for Europe and International Organisations](#), the European and international presence "generates up to 20% of the Brussels economy and up to 23% of regional employment, or more than 162 000 jobs".

Despite this exceptional environment, every job search must be tailored to individual backgrounds and finding a job in the capital can be a challenge which needs to be carried out with the best use of information possible. Also, the Brussels job market is very peculiar, being geographically located in Belgium, while attracting job seekers and professionals from all over Europe and beyond. This fact alone explains why we compiled a selection of the essential elements for successful EU-related job searching in Brussels.

A sample of the EU officials who attended each university during their educational career



This chart represents the share of EU officials in the sample who attended each university during their educational career in percentage and should give you an idea of the variety of education institutions of origin which are present in Brussels also among those working outside EU institutions. Top 25 universities. Source: [Politico.eu](#)

We have divided this page into different parts which we consider essential in order to both self-assess and position yourself as best as possible. The page will explain where to find job advertisements and list other useful sources and guides containing valuable advice. Also, we have provided a section with EU-related news sites, as well as websites offering hints on how to improve your CV.

The rationale behind this page is to put at your disposal a useful selection of information sources. These should not be considered exhaustive, nor imply any sort of qualitative judgement or politically-oriented choice

Self-assessment, career planning and enhancing



The starting point of any job search at every level of seniority is self-assessment. Although it may seem obvious, self-evaluation is a complex process which must be conducted carefully. Indeed, it has to take into consideration the evaluation of your academic background and competences, acquired and transferable skills, as well as the interrelation between your personality type, personal interests and aspirations.

In '[14 tips to start an EU career](#)', Andras Baneth touches upon the above-mentioned questions and more, while the Harvard School of Public Health also dedicates a [page](#) to self-assessment when it comes to career and professional development. The Eurobrussels.com [guide](#) to find a job in European Affairs offers a [self-evaluation](#) guide along with job interviews and CV updating tips, but you can find other resources online. However, especially if you are a junior, we would recommend to start from the [Europass website](#) of the European Union which can give you a comprehensive overview the basics in order to [find your path](#) to a career which suits your aspirations.

These necessary steps of career planning are particularly important for juniors, as mid-seniors who wish to enhance their career have usually already undergone this process and for them, it is more a matter of searching whether their career plan could fit with the needs of the EU affairs job market. It is a notable fact that recruitment agencies and headhunters are intermediaries which are increasingly gaining importance in finding tailored solutions for both companies and institutions.

Nevertheless, regardless of your level of seniority, an aspect which is often overlooked is how to exploit the various possibilities offered by short online courses, [getsmarter](#) or [Coursera](#), for instance, which provide additional knowledge and an edge to your job search.

Once again, the rationale behind this article is to put at your disposal a useful selection of information sources which should not be considered exhaustive, but as an indication on how to best use information. In fact, career-related seminars or personalised coaching are other ways to undergo the processes described above.

Starting a career in European Affairs: working for the EU institutions



Taking the first steps to begin your career in EU Affairs in Brussels can be challenging, especially if you do not self-assess and position yourself as best as possible. In any case, the most searched channel for career development is through [a traineeship within the European institutions](#). However, both the private and the non-profit sector have internship opportunities which are equally valuable starting points.

In addition, you should also consider the EU-related opportunities by European institutions or the private sector offered elsewhere in Europe and beyond, which also constitute a gateway to enter the Brussels job market. Indeed, if your aim is to gain the chance to work in Brussels, you should take into account the whole array of opportunities which can lead to your final goal. To this end, we have listed here below both the traineeships within EU institutions and agencies in Brussels, and those which are elsewhere.

Traineeships within EU institutions and agencies in Brussels:

- [Blue Book Traineeships](#): Twice a year the Commission offers 5-month paid traineeships in its Directorate-Generals, agencies and bodies.
- [Schuman Traineeships](#): The European Parliament offers two types of traineeships: Traineeships in the Secretariat (Schuman traineeships).
- [Traineeships with Members of the European Parliament \(MEPs\)](#): MEPs may offer paid traineeships at their offices in the European Parliament in Brussels (or Strasbourg). Traineeships might be advertised on the MEP website or public affairs jobsites, but they can also be solicited directly to the MEP offices, especially those of your constituencies or member state.
- [Traineeship within the European political party groups](#): This type of traineeship offers a unique opportunity to learn how the European Parliament works and get practical knowledge on the functioning of political groups such as the [EPP Group](#), the [Socialist & Democrats, Renew Europe](#), [The Greens](#) and the [European Conservative and Reformist Group](#). These traineeships are advertised on the political group website, public affairs jobsites, but it may also be useful to get in touch with an MEP office, especially those of your constituencies or member state.
- [European Council](#): Traineeships at the General Secretariat of the Council. Every year, there are around 100 places available for paid traineeships, around 20 places for unpaid compulsory traineeships and up to 6 places for paid trainees with a disability.
- [Committee of Regions \(CoR\)](#): Traineeships at the European Committee of the Regions. The CoR is a relatively young institution and, as such, recognises the importance of giving voice to

the ideas of newcomers and younger generations. Involving young people in the EU decision-making process is precisely the aim of the CoR traineeship programme.

- [European Economic and Social Committee \(EESC\)](#): Twice a year the European Economic and Social Committee offers traineeships for a period of five months to university graduates.
- [European Ombudsman](#): The European Ombudsman's mission is to support European citizenship based on the guiding principles of independence, integrity, fairness, accountability, transparency, dialogue, and service.
- [European Defence Agency \(EDA\)](#): EDA annually runs a 1-year Traineeship Programme aimed at recent university graduates who want to transition to the world of work in an organisation at the heart of defence cooperation in Europe.

Traineeships within EU institutions and EU-related organisations in Europe:

- [European Court of Justice \(ECJ\)](#): Every year, the Court of Justice of the EU offers a limited number of paid traineeships in the chambers of Members of the Court of Justice and the General Court of the European Union and in the administrative departments of the Court.
- [European Union External Action Service \(EEAS\)](#): The EEAS is the European Union's diplomatic service and offers traineeships for those looking for a challenging job in the field of external relations, foreign affairs and security.
- [European Central Bank \(ECB\)](#): The ECB's traineeship programme offers the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge you acquired during your studies and get a better understanding of what working for Europe entails.
- [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#): The EIB offer opportunities for students in the form of short-term (two-four weeks) [summer jobs](#) and longer-term internships, which usually last between three and 12 months, depending on the programme.
- [Council of Europe](#): Twice a year the Council of Europe welcomes young graduates into their organisation as trainees. It is a chance to gain valuable experience in a complex multi-cultural and stimulating work environment.
- [European Union Agency for fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#): This traineeship scheme is mainly addressed at recent university graduates, without excluding those who – in the framework of lifelong learning – are at the beginning of a new professional career.
- [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\)](#): The OECD Internship Programme is designed to bring highly qualified and motivated students with diverse backgrounds to work on projects linked to the Strategic Orientations of the Secretary-General and to support the corporate functions of the Organisation.
- [Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe \(OSCE\)](#): The OSCE Internship Programme provides a framework for graduate students or recent graduates to develop their professional skills and gain practical work experience in an international environment.

Traineeships at national, regional representations and international organisations in Brussels

In addition, [national and regional representations and international organisations](#) can also offer jobs in public affairs, such as the [United Nations](#), [NATO](#), the [World Customs Organisation \(WCO\)](#) and [Eurocontrol](#), all of which have their headquarters in Brussels.

Spontaneous candidacies

Do not forget that several jobs in Brussels might also be found without advertising, especially, but not exclusively, in industry associations and NGOs. As a result, if you already have in mind the sector or even the organisation you wish to work with, do not hesitate to send spontaneous applications to a relevant person within the given polity. To this end, it may also prove useful to go through not only the organisational chart, but also to follow, to the maximum extent possible, what policy files the person you are aiming at is working on.

As practitioners confirm, this may give you a valuable advantage as the organisation in question would not doubt your interest and willingness to take on a role, should an opportunity arise. Indeed, the selection and recruitment process is often perceived as a loss of energy and focus on regular activities. A human resource already at disposal may result in a win-win scenario in most cases.

If the ancient Romans' motto *repetita iuvant* is correct, please acknowledge that this page is only meant to be a tool, as many organisations simply publish their vacancies on their site. Hence, the more you engage in investigating, the more information you will be able to obtain.

Getting a job within EU institutions



© European Union 2013 – European Parliament | Pietro Naj-Oleari: CC BY-NC-ND

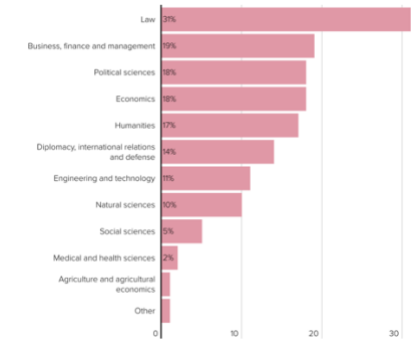
In order to have an idea of the magnitude of the EU institution administrative machine, it is useful to know that the European institutions employ around 32 000 people in Brussels, under various types of employment, namely permanent, contract agent and temporary staff.

The European Parliament not only employs directly, there are also 705 MEPs with assistants (APAs) subdivided in political groups, such as the EPP, S&D, Renew Europe and the Greens/EFA. The Council's staff mostly consists of the permanent staff of the Council and the permanent representations of member states. Other bodies are the European External Action Service, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of Regions, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the Ombudsman, also part of the initiative apparatus.

In addition, there are over [70 agencies and bodies](#) in Brussels and across Europe offering work opportunities. However, as explained above for the Brussels job market, the EU institutions job market is also very peculiar, being geographically located in Belgium, while attracting job seekers and professionals from all over Europe and beyond.

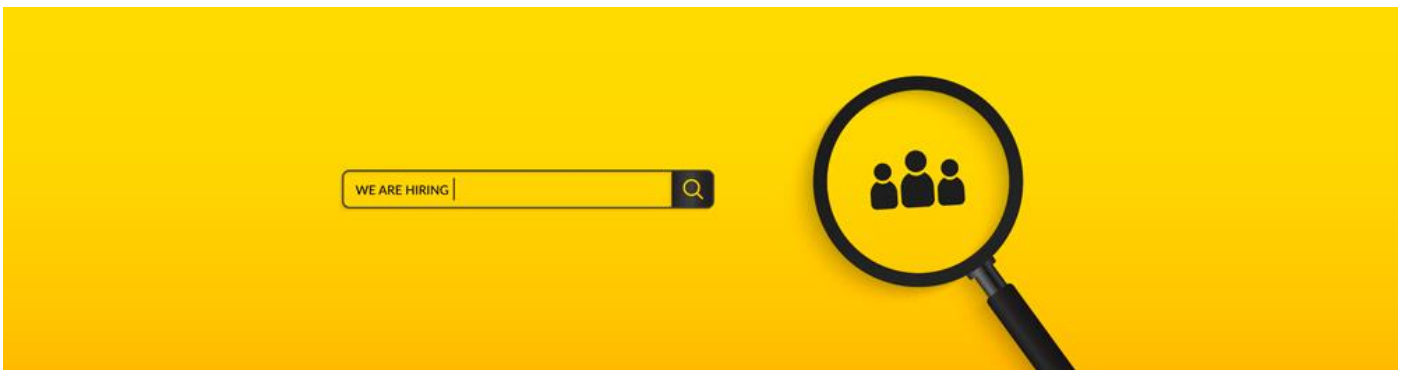
In order to understand the different positions offered by European Institutions, there is nothing better than the [EU Career profiles](#) of the [EPSO website](#), where you will find all the [published notices](#) on upcoming competitions both for permanent and temporary posts.

A sample of the EU officials studies by subject or field during their educational career



Share of EU officials in the sample who studied a subject or field during their educational career in percentage. Numbers add up to more than 100 percent because many hold more than one degree. Source: [Politico.eu](#)

A small guide to the EU Public Affairs jobsites ecosystem



With regards to public affairs sites, [EuroBrussels.com](https://www.eurobrussels.com) and [Jobs.Euractiv.com](https://jobs.euractiv.com) are essential starting points which do not need any presentation. A great number of job ads correlated to EU Affairs can be found there regardless of your level of seniority and your area of specialisation. However, there are some other sources which can amplify the range of possibilities within the sector available here in Brussels and elsewhere.

First of all, [the LinkedIn job search](#) has become a major means of finding opportunities as it allows to connect job seekers and recruiters in an easy and simple manner. Another website which we would advise to look at is [Trustedjobs.eu](https://www.trustedjobs.eu) which not only offer a variety of tips and opportunities for a career in Brussels and across Europe, but also gives you the possibility to search a given company and look for reviews, whereas [BrusselsJobs.com](https://www.brusselsjobs.com) offers vacancies mainly for the private sector, though not exclusively regarding public affairs positions.

We would also like to mention some sites which are specifically dedicated to the NGO sector and to international organisations, such as [EPLO](https://www.eploweb.org) and [ReliefWeb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int): while the former has more strict links with Brussels and with Europe in general, the latter provides some offers around the world.

Please find our list of EU-related job platforms below:

- [Europass](#): Find the right job for you from thousands of opportunities available across Europe. Search results are provided by EURES – the European Job Mobility Portal.
- [EuroJobsites](#): Targeted access to highly skilled candidates. EuroJobsites provides job board services for recruiters seeking professional candidates across Europe.
- [EurActiv](#): Public affairs, European politics, communications, legal and other job opportunities at all levels of seniority in Brussels and abroad.
- [EuroBrussels](#): European Affairs job search.
- [PolitJobs](#): Brussels-based jobs and internships in the European political world.
- [EuroLegalJobs](#): Search for legal jobs in Europe.
- [Brusselsjobs](#): Expat jobs in Brussels, Belgium and Luxembourg. Specialising in assistant and administrator, accounting and finance, business, sales and marketing, human resources and translation jobs.
- [JobsInNetwork](#): Jobs in all sectors around Europe.
- [EPLO](#): European peacebuilding liaison office. Job vacancies and internships in humanitarian action NGOs.
- [ReliefWeb](#): Jobs on the international stage in the NGO sector.
- [Intjobs](#): International affairs jobs around the world.
- [Stepstone](#): All sectors and search by job title, skill, company and location.

Useful tips: Networking, Stay tuned and informed, Salaries, Relocation

Useful tip 1: The importance of networking

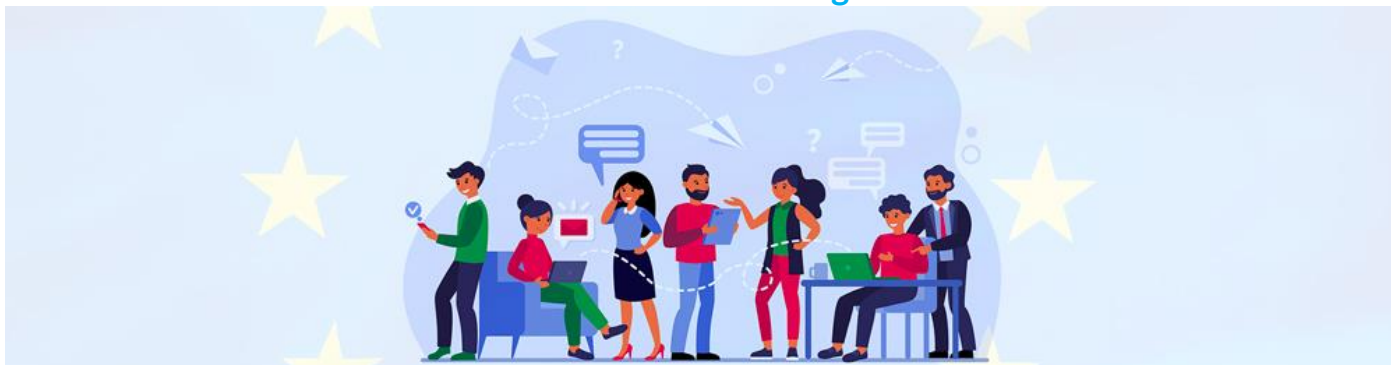
Networking is a very powerful tool to find a matching position in Brussels. Not only does it allow you to gain connections for professional endeavours but also for finding the proper momentum. Therefore, it should always be part of a job matching process as [this article](#) highlights. Here we will delve into how to approach this on and offline.

Online networking



Social networks provide excellent networking opportunities and the possibility to ask for guidance and assistance in your job search or career enhancing. The most famous approach is joining LinkedIn. After setting up your profile, you should be able to start following people, pages and join groups. Do not shy away from politely asking people for their experiences and use gained information to write spontaneous candidacies and letters of motivation. However, we advise you to look at these pages regarding the [do's](#) and [don'ts](#) when it comes to online networking.

Offline networking



Brussels has plenty of organisations, such as PubAffairs Bruxelles, holding events and networking evenings with different reasons and aims. Although the Corona crisis has temporarily removed the opportunity of social interaction, being able to attend events will allow you to have a personal impression of who is doing what, and make new acquaintances. Another opportunity to meet professionals are after-work events. Thursdays in warmer months are predestined for going to areas like Place du Luxembourg (*Plux* in short) in the European quarter and meet the European bubble. However, networking knows no boundaries, so be open to meet people anywhere.

Useful tip 2: stay tuned and informed

It could prove useful to connect the cycle of job adverts, networking and staying up to date for finding a position that suits your aspirations. Any job search in Brussels, or elsewhere, must be tailored to your background, skills and interests. Therefore, you should frequently consult as many as possible of the following news sources to understand what is going on in Brussels. You might find some of the paid outlets in your local library. Be aware that every source has a background or even an agenda. PubAffairs Bruxelles strives to balance the most relevant articles in its daily press review on [Twitter](#). Importantly, you must choose your sources wisely and read articles with a critical mind.



EU-focused Media	International News	Opinion & Analysis Websites
Euronews	Reuters	Project Syndicate
Politico	Financial Times	Euopp - LSE Blog
Euractiv	Bloomberg	ECFR.eu
Euobserver	The New York Times	CEPS
Deutsche Welle	BBC	Bruegel
France 24	The Guardian	Foreign Policy
El Pais (EN)	The Economist	Carnegie Europe
Brussels Times – EU Affairs	The Irish Times	Climate Home News
New Europe	Spiegel International	MLex
European Western Balkans	South Morning China Post	Modern Diplomacy

Additionally, we recommend having a look at the digital press corners of the [EU Institutions](#), such as the [European Commission](#), the [European Parliament](#) and the [European Council](#).

Our [EU institution news section](#) provides you with a complete overview of the EU institution press corners on a daily basis. In addition, our [Event Series](#), the [EU in the media section](#) and our [Podcast selection](#) will help you stay updated regarding the issues emerging from the European public debate.

Useful tip 3: salaries and salary expectations



While salaries in EU institutions are publicly known, some experts have stated with regard to the private sector that in Brussels there is a certain opaqueness over remuneration, as for example, salary ranges are almost never stated in job advertisements (unlike in many national capitals) and there is a natural cultural reticence over discussing money. However, the culture is changing and some online tools such as [glassdoor](#), among others, can help you guide through the question of what to expect in financial terms.

Useful tip 4: prepare to relocate to Brussels



As the Office of the Brussels Commissioner for Europe states: “Though rather small in size, its growing international position has made it a political world region, where incessant decision-making and consultation, both on a multilateral as on a bilateral diplomatic level, on matters of global significance takes place”. However, for both EU and non-EU citizens it is always better to first check the [residence formalities](#) which you will surely have to undertake. The same institution has a [page](#) dedicated for job seekers which contains some useful advice regardless of your status or level of seniority. The page also includes detailed information about housing, education, social insurance, transport and practical daily life information.