



Keys for acting in the EU and engaging with European Institutions

A GUIDE FOR NGOs


Connect to Social Europe!






How did the European Union evolve?

The EU began as a joint project in which several European nations created a common market for their steel and coal production to promote more solid economic development.



To oversee the project, in 1951 the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established. This was a supranational organisation comprising the following countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.



In light of the success of this project, in 1957 these 6 countries created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC).

The EEC was notable in that its members set more ambitious goals:

- “To lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe”
- “To ensure the economic and social progress of their countries”
- “To strengthen peace and liberty”

At present, the EU comprises 27 nations and is governed by the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force in 2009.

Who determines what the EU can and cannot do?

The EU exists because:

- Countries wish to be part of a supranational union.
- They sign and ratify an international treaty.

EU Treaties have the following characteristics:

- They are international agreements between sovereign nations aimed at achieving common goals and reaping common benefits.
- They grant authority to supranational institutions, which in turn must fulfil the mandates established by the nations.
- They regulate the sphere of activity of these institutions, as well as the scope of their competence.


In short, **it is the nations that form the EU themselves that decide what the EU can and cannot do.**


What type of competence does the EU have?

The EU's competences have varied over time, but it is essential to know that the EU:

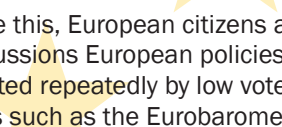
- Has **exclusive competence** in some areas, such as agricultural policy.
- Has **shared competence** in other areas, for example migration policy.
- **Has no competence** in certain areas. For example, it cannot set an EU-wide minimum inter-professional wage.

So, what
should an NGO
know in order
to interact
with the EU?






Although in its early years the EU was little more than a project aimed at economic development, over time it has gained growing competences in other areas, such as health, education, job safety and risk prevention, as well as equal employment policy and equal access to services. The EU now has a direct impact on people's daily lives.



Despite this, European citizens are clearly unaware of the repercussions European policies have on their lives. This has been illustrated repeatedly by low voter turnout in European elections and by studies such as the Eurobarometer surveys.



The EU, however, is aware that the building of Europe requires a civil society that is both informed and participative. To this end, for several years it has made a large effort to improve communication between its institutions and citizens or societal organisations.

As a result, European citizens and organisations have access to numerous systems and channels to facilitate their interaction with the EU. These include channels aimed at providing information and channels allowing them to influence, participate in and, essentially, to help building Europe.

In the process of the Europe construction, NGOs have a great deal of say due to their importance in terms of size, volume, representativeness and activity, as well as their role as facilitators of civil society and their close relationship with society's most disadvantaged groups. NGOs can work towards a *more social*, just and egalitarian Europe.

This guide specifically aims to function as a tool for non-profit organisations, helping them to understand how to interact with the EU and providing key information on the EU's legal framework, how its institutions operate and the reasoning behind the EU's actions, while also addressing two very important questions: why would an NGO want to interact with the EU, and where can it start?



1.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

What competences does the EU have over social issues?

What is the EU's legal framework?

The EU exists because the countries that comprise it have the will of being part of a supranational union. To this end, they sign and ratify an international Treaty that is incorporated into the national law of each of the countries.

At present, the EU comprises 27 Member States, all of which meet the objectives and obligations set out in the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1st December 2009.

Are all of the decisions made by the EU's institutions binding on its Member States?

EU institutions use various legal instruments to make decisions, but not all of them have the same legal implications for EU Member States.

Binding	Non-Binding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulations• Directives• Decisions• Judgments by the European Court of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations• Opinions

Other instruments are also used by EU institutions for the purposes of carrying out their function, for example:

- Internal Regulations and Community Action Programmes.
- European Commission Communications. These normally contain guidelines, and the most well-known are the following as they are the first step in proposing legislative change:

- Green Papers: used to present information on a specific European issue and to initiate a process of consultation with stakeholders. In some cases, they may turn into White Papers.
- White Papers: summarise legislative proposals for a specific area.

What type of legal actions can the EU take with respect to social issues?

Directives or Decisions (binding)	Recommendations, Communications, Action Plans (non-binding)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment (e.g. Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78). • Social security and social protection of workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment. • Social security and social protection of workers. • The combat against social exclusion (e.g. National Action Plans for Social Inclusion). • Modernisation of social protection systems.

In that case, what is the extent of the EU's competence in social issues?

In the social sphere, the EU only has competence in some areas, and it shares this with national governments. Article 153 of the consolidated version of the TFEU (formerly Article 137 of the TEC), stipulates that the “Union shall support and complement the activities of the Member States in the following fields”:

Field	
1. Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the working environment (health and safety) • Working conditions and protection of workers when their employment contract is terminated • The information and consultation of workers • Representation and collective defence of the interests of workers and employers • Conditions of employment for third-country nationals legally residing in Union territory • The integration of persons excluded from the labour market • Equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work
2.	Social security and social protection of workers.
3.	The combating of social exclusion.
4.	The modernisation of social protection systems.

Some of the most significant developments introduced under the Treaty of Lisbon are:

- Under Articles 2, 3 and 6 of the TEE and Title II of the TFEU, which lays out provisions of general application, it is established that the EU will combat social exclusion and discrimination and promote measures of social protection and justice.
- Clauses are introduced committing the EU to combating discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- As regards gender, clauses are included specifically aimed at promoting equality between men and women (Articles 2, 3 and 9 of the TEU and Articles 8, 153 and 157 as well as the declaration on Article 8 of the TFEU).
- Protocol 26 of the TFEU, concerning services of general interest, addresses the protection of services of general economic interest: high levels of quality, safety and provision must be guaranteed, and universal access, consumer rights and the right to equal treatment must be respected.
- A commitment to development of asylum policies is stipulated, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

In addition, it is also important to highlight the following development:

The social clause, contained in Title X of the consolidated version of the TFEU:

11 articles establish the general principles and mechanisms under which, when defining and implementing its policies and initiatives, the EU must bear in mind its obligation to promote a high level of employment, guarantee adequate social protection, combat social exclusion and ensure a high degree of education, professional training and protection of health.

The Citizens' Initiative, contained in Article 24 of the consolidated version of the TFEU:

The EU must guarantee that all people can actively participate in the decision-making process. The Regulation determining the rules and procedure governing the Citizens' Initiative was approved in February 2011, in order to enable the legal instrument to enter into force on 1st April 2012.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights, article 6 of the amended TEU:

This fundamental charter was signed during the Nice Summit. Despite this, it was not incorporated into the text of the Treaty of Nice, and was thus not legally binding on Member States. The Treaty of Lisbon gives it the same legal value as the Treaties.

2.

HOW THE EU FUNCTIONS

EU Institutions and the reasoning underlying the EU's actions

The European Union is not a federation like the United States, nor is it merely an organisation designed to promote cooperation between governments, like the United Nations.

The truth is that the EU is unique. The countries that comprise it (its “Member States”) cede some of their decision-making powers to pan-EU institutions, which they create to make decisions on a European level regarding certain matters of common interest.

To understand how the EU functions, it is important to be aware of its two basic principles:

The principle of subsidiarity

- This principle is used when the EU shares competence in an area with national governments, in order to decide who does what.
- This principle restricts the EU's action to cases where its involvement will provide an added value impossible to achieve otherwise, or where its actions increase effectiveness.

How does this affect Member States and individuals?

This means that political and administrative decisions must be made at a level that is as close as possible to the citizen.

Example: *the education of minors falls under the authority of municipal governments. This means that the EU cannot decide whether to open or close a school. On the other hand, the EU has competence in the harmonisation of university degrees. This means that people can move freely between Member States and that their degrees will be recognised in any of these states.*

The principle of proportionality

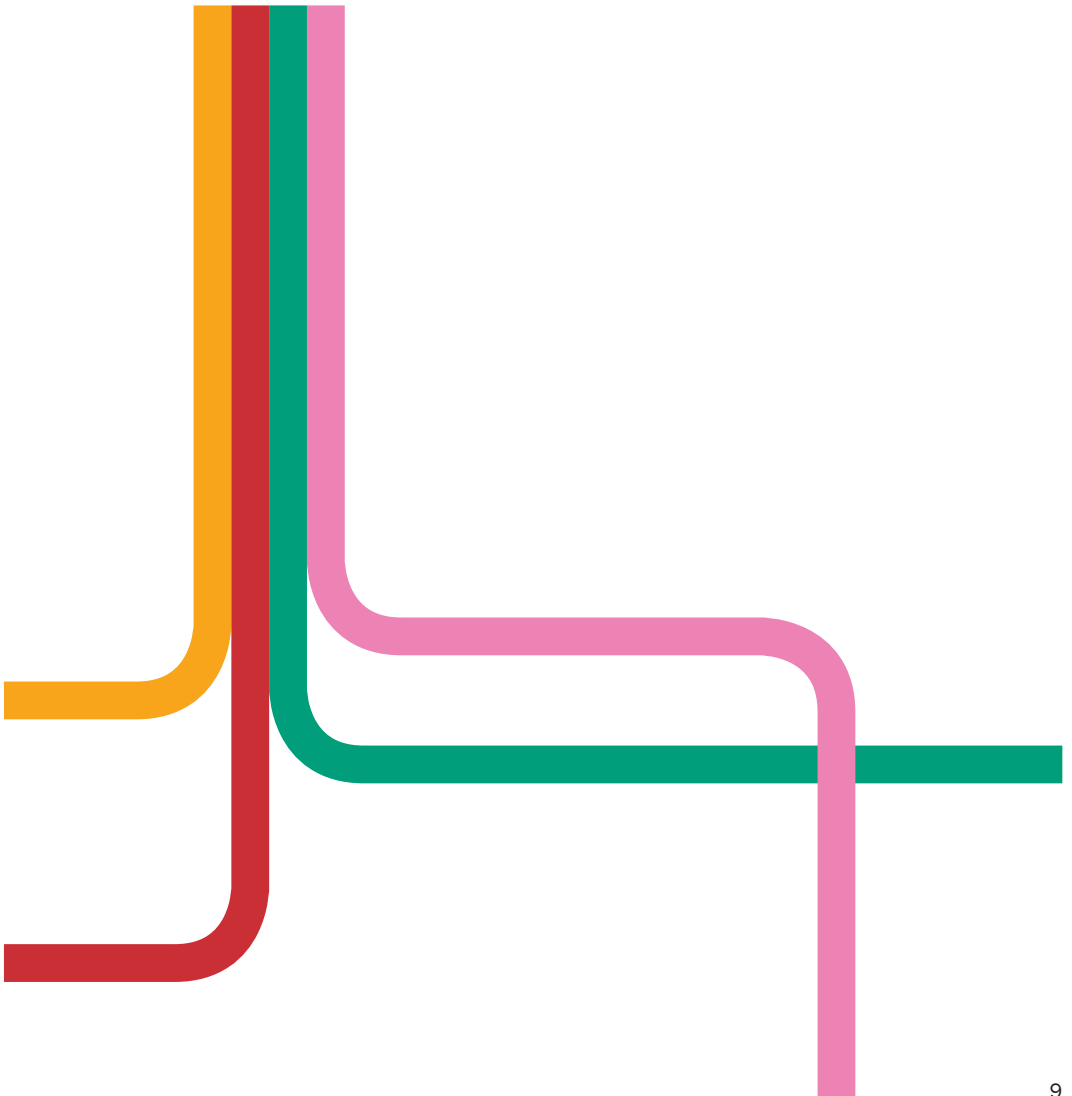
- This principle is used to restrict and to frame the EU's exercise of its power, irrespective of whether its competence is exclusive or shared.
- This principle stipulates that the exercise of power by EU institutions must be restricted to the minimum necessary to achieve the goals set forth in the Treaties, in proportion to the aim pursued.

How does this affect Member States and individuals?

This means that when the Union can choose between various modes of intervention that would be equally effective, it must select the one which assures Member States and individuals the most freedom.

What are the EU's most important institutions?

1. The European Commission.
2. The Council of the European Union.
3. The European Parliament.
4. The Court of Justice of the European Union.





THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Represents the interests of the EU ENFORCES DECISIONS

- Composed of one commissioner from each Member State.
- Divided into Directorates-General and Services.
- Renewed every 5 years, coinciding with the European parliamentary elections.



FUNCTIONS

- Responsible for proposing legislation to the Parliament and the Council.
- Manages and enforces the budget and decisions made by the Parliament and the Council.
- Represents the EU at a global level (negotiates agreements between the EU and other countries).
- Monitors compliance with the Treaty: when a breach occurs it can bring a case before the Court of Justice of the European Union.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TREATY OF LISBON

The Treaty creates the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the holder of which will be the Vice-President of the Commission (and preside over the Foreign Affairs Council).

HOW CAN AN NGO INTERACT WITH THE EC?

- By participating in the consultation initiatives on specific subject areas launched by the Commission via its green papers.
Example: Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion - Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength.
- By participating in consultation or debate in the online platform “Your Voice in Europe”.
Example: EU-Wide Public Consultation on the Future of Youth Policy.
- By attending lectures or workshops organised by the EC.
- By being aware of the creation of committees in specific subject areas and trying to get selected for them as experts.
Example: Social Protection Committee.
- By promoting relations with the European Commission or European Parliament Representation in your country.
- By signing up to join the **registers of relevant groups** (Transparency Register) open to any entities that carry out “activities that aim to influence the policy formulation and decision-making processes of the European institutions”.
- By getting in touch with any of the Commission’s Directorates-General.
- By requesting and managing grants from European programmes.

THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

Represents the interests of national governments LEGISLATES AND MAKES DECISIONS

- Composed of one minister from each national government.
- Its composition changes depending on the issue to be addressed (there are a total of 10 possible structures):
 - General issues
 - Foreign Affairs
 - Economic and financial issues
 - Cooperation in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)
 - Employment, social policy, health and consumer policy
 - Competitiveness
 - Transport, telecommunications and energy
 - Agriculture and fishing
 - The environment
 - Education, youth and culture.
- Meets up to 4 times a year with the President of the Council and the heads of national governments.
- The Presidency falls to a different Member State every six months.

FUNCTIONS

- Shares responsibility for legislation with the European Parliament.
- Coordinates the economic policies of Member States.
- Approves the EU budget in conjunction with the European Parliament.
- Responsible for coordinating foreign policy and EU-wide security.
- Coordinates cooperation in criminal matters between national courts and police forces.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TREATY OF LISBON

- The Treaty creates the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who will preside over the Foreign Affairs Council (and will also be the Vice-President of the Commission).
- Presidency of the Council is no longer on a rotating basis; the new, permanent office of President of the European Council has been created, with a term of two and a half years.
- The general procedure for decision-making will be “qualified majority voting”: votes in favour must come from at least 55% of all Member States (at present, this means 15 of the 27 nations), representing 65% of the population.

HOW CAN AN NGO INTERACT WITH THE COUNCIL?

- By participating in the activities organised by the country that holds the Presidency of the Council.
- By voicing a reaction to the decisions made by the Council through letters, manifests, etc.

THE COUNCIL SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH:


- The **European Council**, which is composed of the heads of national governments and the President of the European Commission. It provides the political impetus for important issues.
- The **Council of Europe** is an international organisation composed of European nations. Its mission is to defend human rights, pluralist democracy and the pre-eminence of rights, among other things.



THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Represents the interests of citizens

LEGISLATES AND MAKES DECISIONS

- 
- Composed of 736 MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) from the EU's 27 Member States. By the end of 2011, the number of members will be increased to 754 on application of Protocol 36, annex of the Treaty of Lisbon.
 - Elected by universal suffrage every 5 years.
 - MEPs do not sit in national blocks, but rather in seven European political groups:
 - European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
 - Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)
 - Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)
 - Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)
 - European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)
 - Confederation of the European United Left (GUE)/Nordic Green Left (EUL/NGL)
 - Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group (EFD)

FUNCTIONS

- Shares responsibility for legislation with the Council.
- Has democratic control over all EU institutions, particularly the Commission (it can approve or reject the appointment of commissioners).
- Approves the EU budget in conjunction with the Council.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TREATY OF LISBON

- National parliaments will have a say in the EU's decision-making process: they will be able to express their opinions from the initial stages of a proposal, before it is studied in depth by the EP and the Council.
- The Treaty increases the number of policy areas in which Community legislation must be approved by the directly elected European Parliament as well as by the Council composed of national ministers.

HOW CAN AN NGO INTERACT WITH THE EP?

- By attending **public hearings**: these are public meetings or conferences organised by parliamentary bodies to address specific issues.
- By being familiar with and **contacting accredited stakeholders (private, public or non-governmental)**: these provide the EP with specific information and give their opinion on economic, social, ecological, scientific and a wide range of other sectors. They are listed in a public register on the EP's webpage.
- By being familiar with the differently **themed committees of the European Parliament** as well as with the members of these committees, in order to interact with the relevant MEPs.
- By exercising the **right to petition** the EP: this allows a written request, complaint or observation to be submitted concerning the implementation of Community law, or an appeal to be submitted to the EP requesting it to adopt a certain stance on a concrete issue.
- Through **the Citizens' Enquiry Service Unit**: this unit enables every EU citizen to contact the EP to ask questions, request information or make suggestions.
- By participating in **the Citizens' Agora**: an initiative designed to link the EP to civil society, enabling debate with citizens over EP orders of business.
- Through specific **grants**.

THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Ensures that Community law is enforced PASSES JUDGMENTS

- Composed of one judge from each EU Member State.
- The court does not normally sit in plenary session, but rather as a 'Grand Chamber' of 13 judges, or in chambers of 3 or 5 judges.

FUNCTIONS


- Ensures that European Union legislation is interpreted and implemented similarly by all Member States.
- Ensures that Member States and EU institutions comply with legislation.
- Resolves legal conflicts between Member States, EU institutions, companies and individuals.
- Can sanction Member States that breach its rulings.
- Makes judgments in cases brought before it:
 - Preliminary rulings
 - Actions for non-compliance with an obligation
 - Actions for annulment
 - Actions for failure to act
 - Actions for damages (reparation)

HOW CAN AN NGO INTERACT WITH THE CJEU?

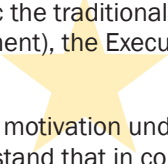
- By initiating an action or requesting a preliminary ruling.
- By being aware of the rulings made by the Court in order to use the precedent established in similar cases in your country or, should the NGO object to the ruling, to lobby for change in future cases.

What other institutions and bodies does the EU have to help it achieve its aims?

Institutions	Bodies that Provide Support	Financial Bodies
The European Parliament	The Economic and Social Committee	The European Investment Bank
The Council of the European Union	The Committee of the Regions	The European Central Bank
The European Commission	The European Ombudsman	
The Court of Justice of the European Union		
The Court of Auditors		



As we have seen, the EU is a complex supranational organisation that does not mimic the traditional branches of power of a state: the Legislature (Parliament), the Executive (Government) and the Judiciary (The Courts).



To comprehend the motivation underlying the EU's actions, it is important to understand that in contrast to national governments, the EU institution that makes the most important decisions is the Council, not the Parliament. On many issues the European Parliament has a strictly consultative role.



WHAT ARE THE EU'S DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES?

Consultation

After the Commission puts forward a proposal, the Council consults the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Parliament can approve, reject or request amendments to the proposal.

During this process, the Council is not obligated to take Parliament's opinion into account.

When is it used?

When the issue at hand is not subject to co-decision or the Assent Procedure.

Consent (formerly known as the Assent Procedure)

For certain legislative areas, the Council must obtain Parliament's consent before making specific decisions. The process is identical to that of consultation, except that Parliament cannot amend a proposal; it must either accept or reject it. Consent (the 'Assent Procedure') requires an absolute majority amongst the votes cast.

When is it used?

Mainly for agreements with other countries.

Example: for agreements enabling new countries to join the EU or when adopting new legislation to combat discrimination.

Cooperation

This procedure was introduced in 1986 to increase the role of the EP in the consultation process. Parliament can introduce amendments, but the final decision rests exclusively with the Council.

When is it used?

At present, it is only used for matters pertaining to the Economic and Monetary Union.

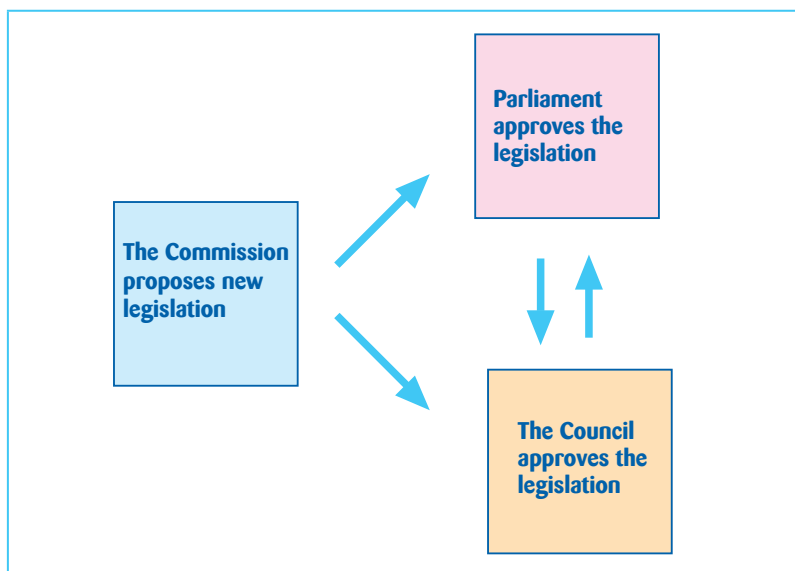
Co-Decision

In this procedure Parliament is not restricted to merely voicing its opinion. Rather, it makes decisions in conjunction with the Council.

When is it used?

Under the changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, this procedure has become the standard decision-making procedure, and encompasses the following areas:

- Free movement of workers.
- Right of establishment.
- Services.
- Internal market.
- Education (incentive measures).
- Health (incentive measures).
- Consumer policy.
- Trans-European networks (guidelines).
- Environment (general action programme).
- Culture (incentive measures).
- Research (framework programme).



To approve a piece of legislation, the EP and the Council must agree.

If they fail to reach an agreement, the proposal is put to a **Conciliation Committee** comprising an equal number of representatives from both the Council and the EP. Once the committee has reached an agreement, the text is re-sent to the EP and the Council for approval.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TREATY OF LISBON

When the areas that must be approved by co-decision were broadened, some new areas were introduced. These include, for example, non-discrimination and social policy.

3.

Why interact with the EU?

At present, 85% of the decisions made by the EU affect our daily lives. These range from the labels on our food products and labour risk prevention rules to the roaming rates we pay when travelling in Europe and equal access to jobs.

The European decision-making process is complex and involves many entities: nations, regions, companies, trade unions, NGOs, individuals, etc. The actions, but also the opinions, of these entities decide what type of Europe we want. More social? Less? More liberal? More conservative?

Why would an NGO want to interact with the EU?

If the aim is to build a more social, egalitarian and mutually supportive Europe, NGOs play a decisive role as they are ideally placed to influence European decisions, thereby:

- Acting as conduits for the opinions of society's most disadvantaged members and defending their rights.
- Representing the sectors of society that defend and promote equality and solidarity within Europe.

Examples:

1. *In 2007, thanks to pressure from NGO disability networks, the EU signed the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, thereby providing protection to 80 million EU citizens. This Convention guarantees human rights and fundamental liberties on an equal basis with all other citizens.*

2. On 17th December 2010, during the closing ceremony of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, European Red Cross president and European Year 2010 Ambassador Lesley-Anne Knight handed the Secretary of State for Social Integration and Combating Poverty of Belgium - the country that held the EU presidency at the time - a declaration signed by over 150,000 citizens calling for the eradication of child poverty, guaranteed minimum resources, universal access to social services and decent employment.

3. In September 2008, the European Parliament debated the Petitions Committee report, which recounted that in 2007 the EP received 1,506 petitions, an average of nearly four per day, on issues as diverse as the environment, urban over-development, health and fundamental rights. Spanish citizens made the most petitions (a total of 254). Each of these issues must be addressed by the European Parliament. Many of them give rise to formal questions to the European Commission, which the EC is obligated to answer.

4. On 17th March 2009, MEP Maria Eleni Copa (PES) sent a written question to the Commission on the issue of discrimination against HIV-positive individuals, after several reports by the NGO ACTUP, thereby obligating the Commission to reply and declare its stance on the issue.

5. On 10th July 2008 the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled on case c-54/07, a reference for a preliminary ruling on the interpretation of Council Directive 2000/43/CE of 29th June 2000, concerning implementation of the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

The petition was brought before the court in the form of an action against a company for the remarks of one of its directors, who publicly stated that the company did “not wish to recruit immigrants”. With respect to the issues raised in the case, the Court ruled: “The fact that an employer declares publicly that it will not recruit employees of a certain ethnic or racial origin constitutes direct discrimination”.

In short, there are many reasons for an NGO to be interested in interacting with or acting alongside the EU:

To participate in the drafting of European policies, i.e. through talks with and lobbying of European institutions, particularly the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council.

To ensure that people are aware of the rights they possess arising from their residence in the EU, through projects designed to promote information, communication and awareness.

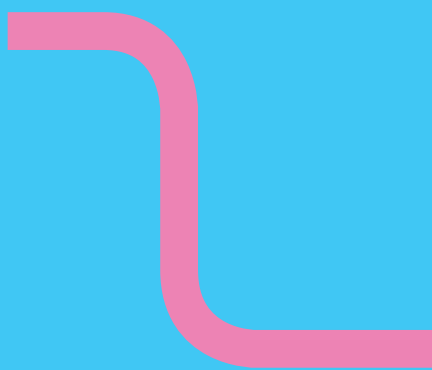
To report abuses of the rights of society’s most disadvantaged members.

To obtain funding from Europe to enable improvement to the services offered by my NGO.

But...

Where should
I start?

What steps can
I take?





1.

ANSWER A SET OF QUESTIONS

What issues do I want to influence?

Does the EU have competence in the area I wish to influence?

What is my cause?

Does it mesh with the EU's policy priorities?

Do I have societal support for my cause?

How many people support my cause?

Are there other national or European organisations that support my cause?

What modes of participation are available to me?

What institutions (European and national) can I interact with to further my cause?

What EU funding programmes or instruments can help me achieve my aims?

What bodies manage these funds?



2.

UNDERSTAND THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR MY ORGANISATION



... We will have to invest resources in order to ‘Europeanise’ the organisation and its activities. Do I have enough resources?

- Financial:
 - If I am awarded a European grant, do I have the wherewithal to obtain the necessary co-financing (public or private)?
 - Am I overly indebted?
 - What is my annual budget?
- Tangible:
 - Do I have adequate and prepared offices and venues?
 - Is information on my organisation available in English?
 - Do I have a webpage?
- Human: are there enough?
- Intangible:
 - Do I have a staff trained on European affairs?
 - Do I have skills/competences enabling innovation?
 - Do I speak English, French or German?
 - Do I belong to European networks?
 - Do I have contacts in my country and abroad (public relations), etc.?
 - Does my organisation mesh with the EU’s priorities and competences?

... We must stay informed on current European affairs

- Be very familiar with the EU’s competences in the area I want to influence.
- Be aware of new developments in the area of European policy I want to influence.
- Be familiar with the institutions involved in European policy-making and with how they operate.
- Be familiar with the various European programmes and funding instruments, the bodies that manage them, their objectives and their characteristics.

... We must be willing to adapt our organisation’s structure and working culture to the requirements of European funds

- Replace corporate competition with inter-institutional cooperation.
- Be willing to adapt to new values and working cultures (innovation, new methods, new aims, etc.)
- Will I know how to deal with differing opinions and ways of doing things?
 - It is important to be able to understand/empathise with those whose language/cultural background differs from yours.

3.

APPROVE A STRATEGY COMBINING THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS

Join the European networks that are compatible with the aims of my organisation (you must know which ones to choose).

Initiate strategic relationships with organisations similar to mine in other EU countries.

Participate in public consultations organised by the EU.

Participate in European forums: attend events/courses organised by European institutions and bodies or by European networks: increase my organisation's contacts.

Build relationships with MEPs who can further our interests.

Build relationships with government departments that represent your country in EU institutions and bodies.

Invite European organisations to participate in our events/courses.

Manage a European fund.


Find out if there are other European or national organisations we can build synergies with.



4.

OBTAIN FUNDING

Does the EU provide funding for NGOs?



NGOs are the natural recipients of a significant amount of EU funds, given that they operate without profit (a prerequisite to receiving EU funding).

It is difficult to find an EU programme that does not include some form of potential funding for NGOs.

It is estimated that the Commission directly allocates over EUR 1 billion per year to NGO projects:

- The bulk of this (EUR 400 million) is spent in the area of foreign relations:
 - Development and cooperation.
 - Human Rights.
 - Programmes to promote democracy.
 - Humanitarian aid.
- Significant funds are also allocated to EU-wide social issues (EUR 70 million), education (EUR 50 million) and the environment.

What types of funding does the EU offer?

Grants

Awarded to co-finance specific projects or aims, generally via calls for proposals.

Public Contracts

Awarded via calls for tender (public procurement) to purchase goods, services or building projects aimed at ensuring the operation of EU institutions or programmes.

Who manages the money and decides whether to award a grant or contract?

EU Member States

Over 76% of the EU's budget is managed by national and regional authorities, including Structural Funds and agriculture grants.

The European Commission

Roughly 22% are programmes managed centrally (e.g. research, education, health or activities to benefit young people).

Non-EU countries and international organisations

For example, the Red Cross or the United Nations: 2%.

5.

STAY INFORMED

Source of information	Website
Grants	http://ec.europa.eu/grants/index_en.htm
The European Commission and social organisations	http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/index_en.htm
The European Social Fund	http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp?langId=en
EuropeAid Cooperation Office	http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm
EU Regional Policy	http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/index.cfm?LAN=EN (newsroom)
The EC's DG for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities.	http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/esmail_en.cfm (monthly newsletter)
European Commission's Representations	http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm
Network of Europe Direct centres (network of information on the EU)	http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm
Europe Direct-Luis Vives Foundation	http://www.fundacionluisvives.org/temas/europe_direct/ (ES) http://www.fundacionluisvives.org/temas/europe_direct/convocatorias_de_propuestas/index.html (Open calls for proposals ES)

(ES): information only available in Spanish

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If you want a more social, just and united European Union:
Get informed, express your opinion and take action.

Connect to Social Europe!

http://www.fundacionluisvives.org/temas/europe_direct



Fundación Luis Vives

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