

# INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## THE EUROPEAN UNION IN BRUSSELS

Since entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) the Brussels-Capital Region is the official seat of the main institutions of the European Union and is therefore generally referred to as the Capital of the EU. The Region is highly ranked for its political functions.

The **European Commission**, the **Council of the European Union** and the **European Council**, the **Committee of the Regions** and the **European Economic and Social Committee** have their official seat in Brussels. Although the official seat of the **European Parliament** is located in Strasbourg, committee meetings and group meetings as well as most interinstitutional interaction take place in Brussels making it de facto its main seat. Finally a number of other EU-agencies and interinstitutional organisations of the EU are located here. The EU employs some 40.000 people in Brussels.

Being the capital of the EU has attracted thousands of international organisations to Brussels. They include intergovernmental organisations, diplomatic representations, regional representations, international for-profit and non-profit associations, law firms and direct representatives of private companies and public administrations.

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## INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Because of the presence of the EU as well as its central location, many intergovernmental organisations choose to settle down in Brussels or open a representation. Intergovernmental organisations have a legal personality under international public law and are set up by at least two member states by means of an international treaty. Among the most important are NATO, Eurocontrol, several UN-organisations and the Benelux Union. You can consult the full list of intergovernmental organisations in our publication "Brussels, International Capital".

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## NON-GOVERNMENTAL (INTERNATIONAL) ORGANISATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Thousands of international associations have their headquarters or at least a branch office in the Brussels-Capital Region. The Transparency Register of the European Union makes a distinction between trade/business/professional associations and non-governmental organisations. The presence of these international associations requires good quality conference infrastructure and generates important business tourism (MICE) for the Region.

Apart from public administrations, international or national, and associations, other organisations settle down in Brussels for lobbying purposes. They concern professional consultancies, law firms or self-employed consultants but also in-house lobbyists, think tanks, research and academic institutions and organisations representing churches and religious communities or private companies.

The Brussels-Capital Region is home to the highest concentration of lobbyists worldwide after Washington. An estimated 20.000+ lobbyists, mainly representing business interests, are targeting EU decision makers.

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