

# WORKING IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Are you interested in politics? Are you curious about how legislative decisions impact people and businesses? Do you want to work in a fast-paced, stimulating environment? Maybe a career in public affairs is right for you!

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## What is public affairs and why is it important?

Public affairs is a crucial part of the **democratic process**, bringing the **necessary knowledge**, expertise, and real-world insights to **decision-makers**, so that they can make **informed choices**.

**Public affairs is the activity of representing the interests of businesses and/or citizens vis-à-vis EU policy makers.**

When EU legislators are considering a proposal for a directive or regulation, it is important that they have all the information about how that decision would impact people on the ground. This can be small and large businesses, citizens, the environment, climate, animal welfare and more. Interactions between EU institutions and a wide range of interest representatives lead to a better understanding of citizens' and businesses' concerns, more creative and innovative solutions, and ultimately, better decisions.

An important part of EU public affairs is building trust with the EU institutions, by acting in an ethical and transparent manner. Via the Transparency Register, it is possible to have a clear view of who policy makers discuss with and how organisations undergo public affairs activities. EPACA has long been a proponent of transparency and ethics in the profession.



Public affairs can take various forms.

From professional and self-employed consultants, to in-house corporate teams, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), lawyers and law firms, trade, business and professional associations, academic institutions and think tanks, civil society groups, consumer associations and unions. In a sense, any organisation aiming to add facts and arguments to the political debate is engaging in public affairs, although other terms can be used such as advocacy, government relations, or lobbying.

## DAY-TO-DAY OF A PA PROFESSIONAL

A day in the job of a public affairs professional is full of diverse tasks and activities, meaning you keep learning and developing your skills.

In public affairs consultancies, for example, you have the chance to learn about lots of different types of clients and sectors, honing your skills and developing your expertise.

Every day is different for EU public affairs professionals. The work consists of a mix of activities such as:

- Analysis & monitoring of policy developments
- Attendance or organisation of events
- Writing position papers
- Communications activities
- Media relations
- Campaign development
- Network building
- Social media management
- Outreach & establishing coalitions





# PA CAREERS

## PATH TO BECOMING A PA PROFESSIONAL

### Common education paths

Politics, European/International Law, European Studies, Political Science, EU Affairs, Diplomacy, International Relations

Different, but complementary studies: History, Communications, Journalism

### Internships

Combining studies with specific types of internships can help give students a sense of what working in public affairs is like, and guide them towards developing the relevant skills needed for a post-studies job

## USEFUL SKILLS CAN BE DEVELOPED DURING STUDIES OR INTERNSHIPS/ENTRY LEVEL JOBS, AND INCLUDE:

- Strong written and oral communication
  - Ability to discuss and network with diverse types of people
  - Willingness to find solutions
  - Analytical and critical thinking
  - Attention to detail
  - Enthusiasm and passion
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# FAQs



## What is a usual career path in PA?

People enter public affairs with many backgrounds, degrees, and interests. Once you decide to work in EU public affairs, several options are available: in-house (inside a company), in an NGO, in a consultancy (where you will work on many different clients and topics), in a trade association (where you will represent the interests of companies in a sector), or in the EU institutions themselves. Each organisation offers diverse options for progression and growth.

## Where can I find job openings for EU public affairs jobs?

You can either look directly at the website of organisations you are interested in, or check online job websites:

**EuroBrussels:** [www.eurobrussels.com](http://www.eurobrussels.com)

**UNjobs:** [www.unjobs.org](http://www.unjobs.org)

**EurActiv:** [www.jobs.euractiv.com](http://www.jobs.euractiv.com)

**LinkedIn:** search for specific job titles

**EU institutions:**

[www.epso.europa.eu/en](http://www.epso.europa.eu/en)

## I study an unrelated degree but I'm also interested in EU PA – what can I do to get more experience in it?

Even if you study a completely different degree, you can learn more about EU public affairs by taking short courses on the functioning of the EU. It is important to remember that public affairs activities require a diverse set of skills and strengths, from policy knowledge to strong visual communication, from writing skills to technical know-how. Do not be afraid to apply for internships where you can learn more about public affairs and where you can build on the interplay between your knowledge and the PA tasks at hand.

## I'm looking for a job and PA interests me; what job titles should I search for?

In EU public affairs, job titles include: public affairs trainee, EU communications assistant, policy officer, policy/public affairs consultant, strategic communications consultant, and more.

# ABOUT EPACA



EPACA is the European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association. It is the representative trade body for public affairs consultancies working with EU institutions and was launched in January 2005. Since its founding, EPACA has had a professional Code of Conduct and has been a strong proponent of transparent and ethical standards in the sector. The Code has been maintained and updated ever since by our members, and is the basis for all such codes in the EU affairs marketplace. Please note that EPACA itself does not offer internships or job opportunities, but it is more than happy to share resources.

## EPACA MEMBERS

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