

Training EU advocacy

27 November 2024 – Eurocities Winter School

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EU institutions and advocacy for beginners: functioning of the EU institutions, who does what, how and when, legislative procedure, etc.



What is your starting point?

What is your level of knowledge about EU affairs?

What do you expect from the training?

Functioning of the EU institutions



EU institutions

- European Commission
- European Parliament
- Council of the European Union
- European Council



Europese
Commissie

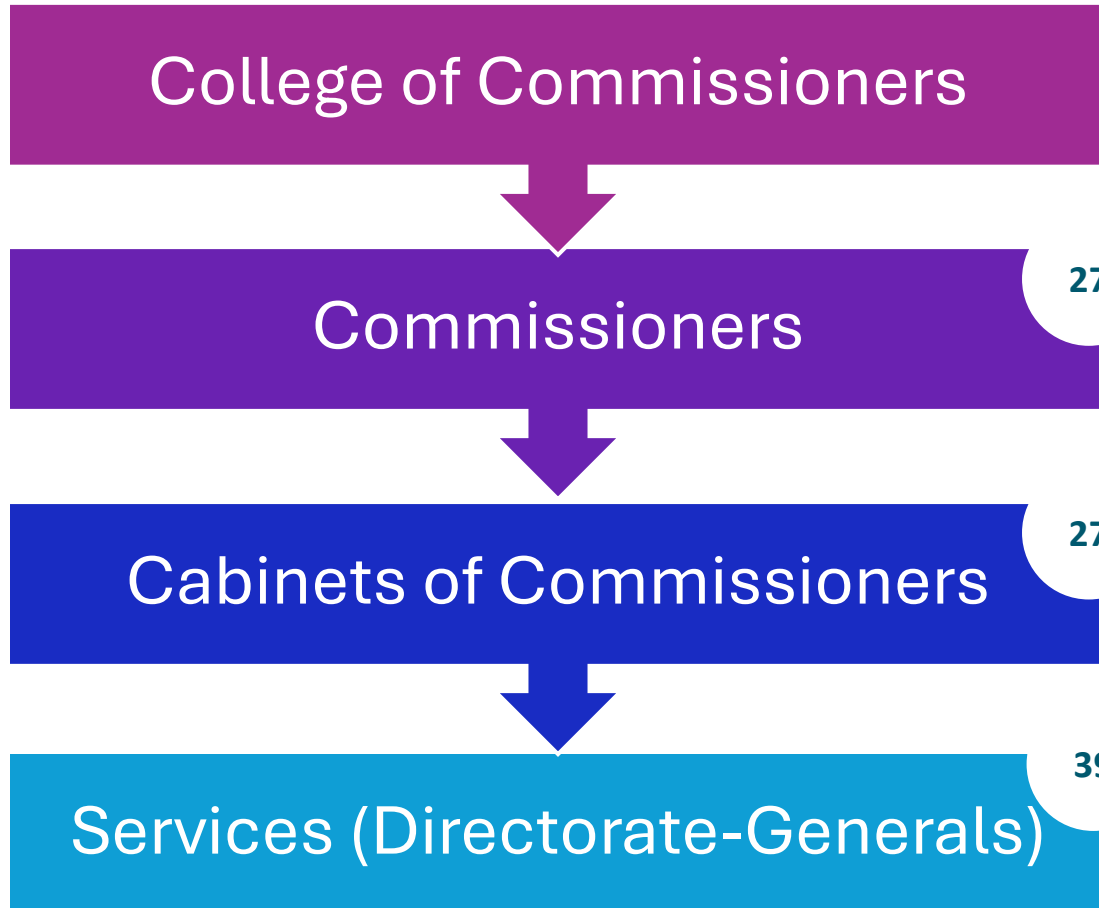
Commission
européenne

European
Commission

Role and structure

- **Legislation** – The Commission proposes legislation. It makes proposals for laws that are sent to the European Parliament and Council of the EU for negotiation.
- **Enforce EU law** – The Commission can take action against businesses or member states that are failing to comply with EU law.
- **Policy** – The Commission is the executive body of the EU. It manages policies and drafts budgets.
- **Representation** – The Commission represents the EU in negotiations with other countries or organisations.

Role and structure



Collegial decision-making. Meet on Wednesdays

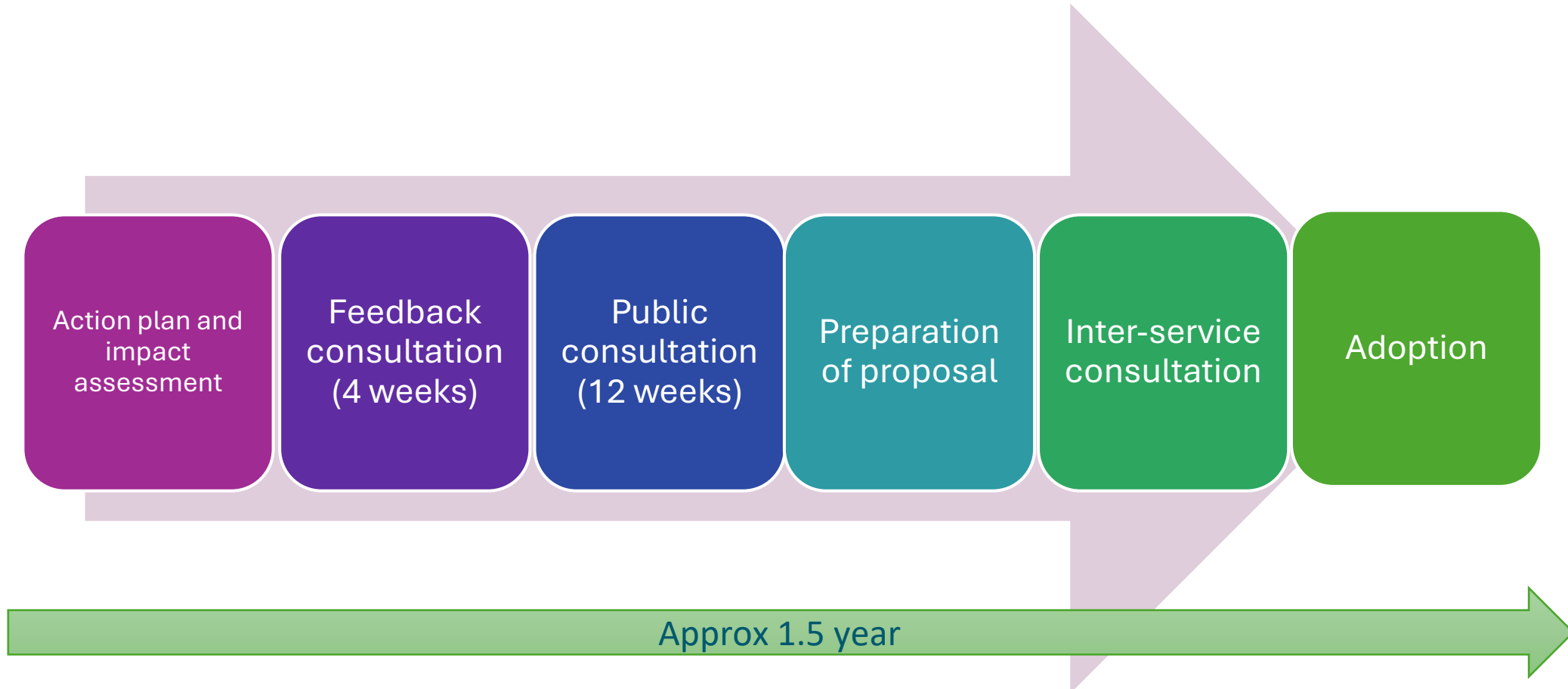
1 per Member State. Hierarchy among them (ex: EVP)

8 members, support the Commissioners, short meetings, political messages

Great influence, technical expertise, informal dialogues with other institutions



How does it work?

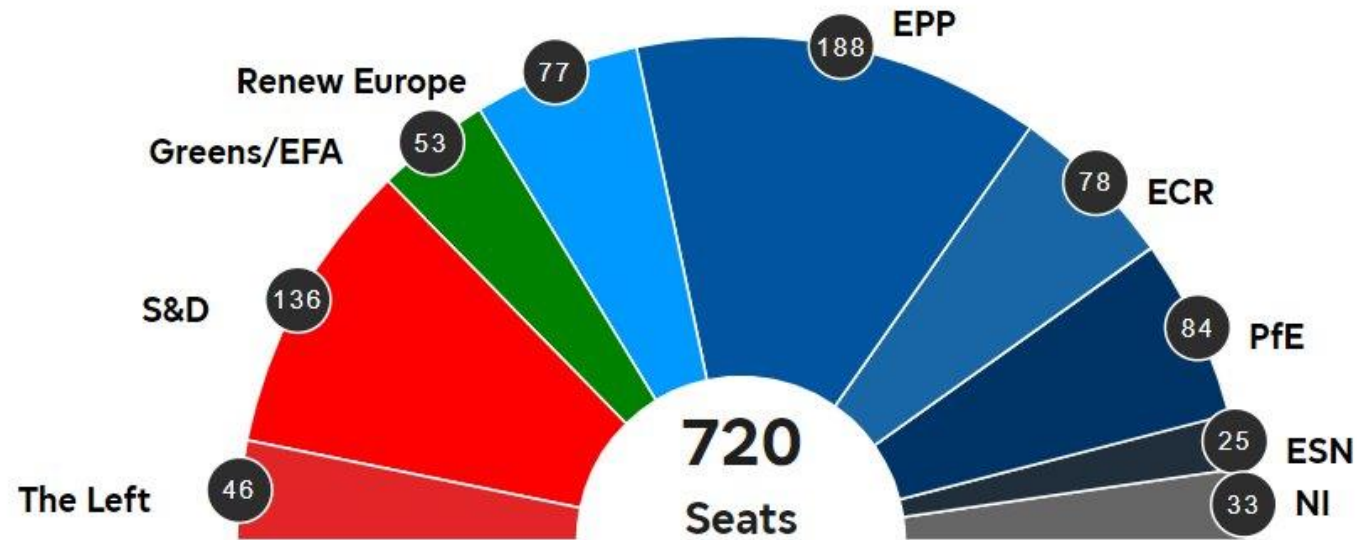
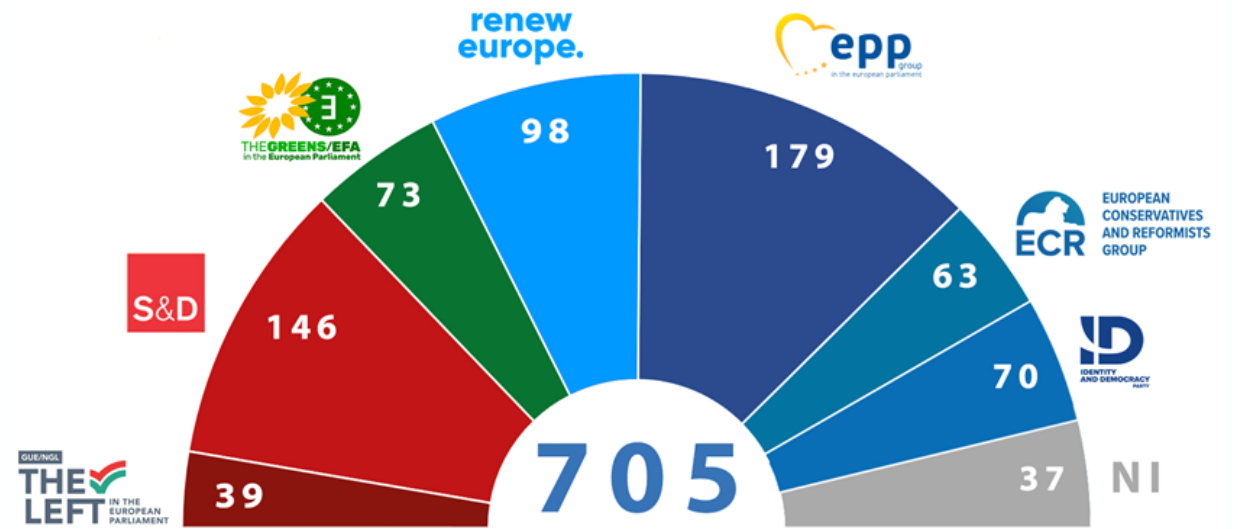




European
Parliament

EU elections

2019 vs. 2024



Role and functioning

- MEPs are directly elected to represent European citizens' interests
- **Co-legislator.** It can amend, pass or reject laws.
- **Supervisor.** It oversees the work of the EU institutions, can approve or dismiss the EU Commission and the Parliament controls budget expenditure.

Role and functioning

- The work is done in parliamentary committees (AGRI, ENVI, TRAN, etc.)
- 20 committees, made of 25 to 90 MEPs with a Chair, a Bureau and a Secretariat.
- Committees assess, amend and adopt/reject draft legislative proposals, and prepare their own-initiative reports.

Process in committees

- In Brussels

Rapporteur drafts report + deadline set for AMs

MEPs table amendments

Consideration of AMs tabled by MEPs + CAs

Secretariat creates voting list

Committee votes on draft report and AMs



Process in plenary session

- In Strasbourg (except mini/extraordinary session)

Committee
sends report to
the plenary

Amendments are
tabled (strict
criteria*)

Secretariat
proposes voting
list

Commissioner in
charge explains
the EC's proposal

**Vote + mandate
of the European
Parliament**

*Amendments may be tabled for the plenary by the committee responsible, a political group or at least 36 individual members.





Council

European Council or Council of the European Union?



Council of the EU

- So-called « Council of Ministers », this is the other **co-legislator**.
 - The Council of the EU assesses, modifies and adopts legislative proposals.
 - Rotating presidency of the Council with 'trio presidency' also called 'triplets'.
- 👉 Current trio is made up of the presidencies of Spain, Belgium and Hungary (next: PL, DK, CY).

Structure

Council of Ministers

- Political level (ex of action: op-ed)

COREPER I et II

- In charge of the political issues not fixed in working groups

Working party (attachés)

- Most of the files are dealt here. Great potential for influence



European Council

Heads of State and Government of 27 MS

Not an EU legislative institution

Establishes the roadmap of the EU (guidance)

Currently, the President of the European Council is Charles Michel, previous Belgium PM.

But it will soon change

António Costa will become President of the EUCO on 1 December 2024

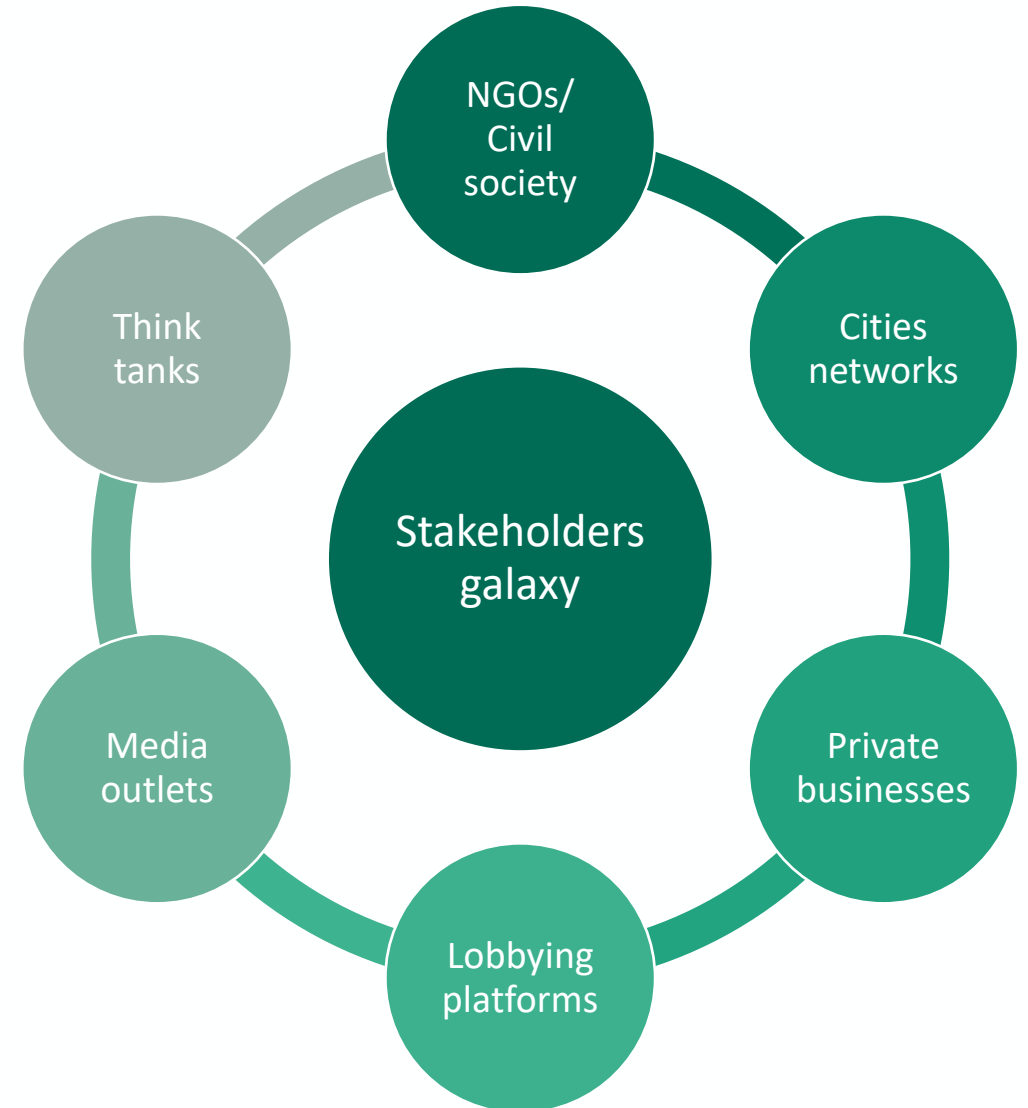




Non-
institutional
stakeholders

Non-institutional stakeholders

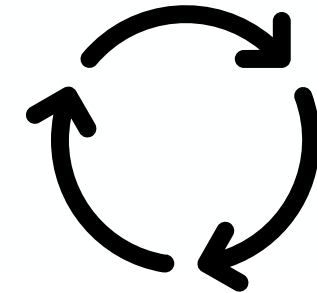
- Advocacy is not only about working with institutional stakeholders
 - Other stakeholders also have an influence on the work of the EU institutions
- Networking matters
- Building coalitions
- Looking for allies





Negotiations

Legislative process





Trilogues

- Once each institution has established its **position**, we can start the inter-institutional negotiations – also called ‘trilogues’.
- Before trilogues, negotiations = 3-5 years

Need + flexibility & efficiency

- Help to close files at first reading
- However little transparency
- Work on 4-column document
- Lobbying on existing position, few new ideas at this stage

Example of 4-column document

COMMISSION PROPOSAL (COD 2018/0148 - doc. 9185/18 +ADD1)	EP ADOPTED TEXT	COUNCIL GENERAL APPROACH (doc. ST 6695/19)	Presidency compromise proposals
Proposal for REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the labelling of tyres with respect to fuel efficiency and other essential parameters and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1222/2009	Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the labelling of tyres with respect to fuel efficiency and other essential parameters and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1222/2009	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the labelling of tyres with respect to fuel efficiency and other [] parameters, amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1369 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1222/2009	
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 194(2) thereof, Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission, After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments, Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions,		THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 114 and Article 194(2) thereof, Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission, After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments, Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽²⁾ , Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions ³ ,	

² OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

Lobbying guide 101 for cities



Different ways for cities to do EU advocacy



THROUGH A DIRECT
PRESENCE IN BRUSSELS



VIA A STAKEHOLDER'S
ORGANISATION/COALITION



THROUGH THEIR NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT



THROUGH A DIRECT
INVOLVEMENT IN AN EU
OFFICIAL BODY/INSTITUTIONS

Setting up a permanent office in Brussels



Sustained contact with EU stakeholders

Better reporting on EU affairs

Reactivity in case of pressing matters

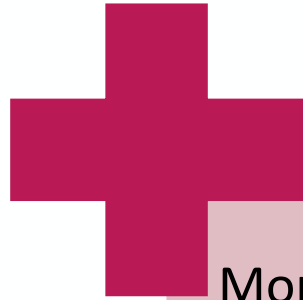
Strengthen the visibility of the city before the EU institutions and stakeholders

Cost

Outpost feeling

Political support needed

Working with a stakeholders organisation/coalition



More power of influence

Dedicated resources (either provided by the organisation or a member of the coalition)

Advocacy efforts can be shouldered by different members

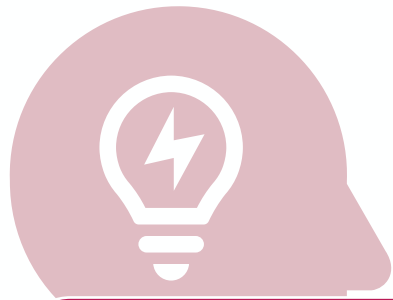
Usually require a sustainable involvement to be able to influence the group

Political support needed

Not full alignment between your administration's position and the defended position

Zooming in: Eurocities & advocacy

1. The positioning pathway



WG/TG

- Technical experts
- Advices by the Eurocities office



Executive Committee

- Approves policy papers
- Can amend the decisions



Dissemination

- Eurocities office
- Members support essential

Zooming in: Eurocities & advocacy

2. Different ways to get involved during the process



Staying informed and inform your colleagues



Participate in WG meeting to provide input for advocacy



Involving your politician



Analyse policy developments

Be your government's whisperer



More power of influence as an institutional stakeholder

Council has usually the upper-hand in the negotiations

Easier to pass on messages based on concrete local examples

Often depend on a political alignment and culture

One of many voices

Influence often depends on the level of influence of your country

Take part in official EU bodies/institutions/processes



EU expert groups



Committee of the Regions



Public consultation/ European Citizen Initiative/Petitions



Official processes

Brings visibility to your city

Usually intervene at the upstream level

Require a sustained engagement

Uncertain results

How to position yourself?

1. Establish your position and your priorities (objectives / red lines)
2. Identify the EU legislators (EP committee, rapporteur, shadows, DG in charge, policy officers, attachés, etc.) Look for allies
3. Map out other stakeholders' positions
4. Look for coalitions sharing your priorities

Case study: Nature Restoration Law

- European Commission published proposal in 2022
- Eurocities reaction paper and video in May 2023
- No previous position paper, built messages through series of meetings with WG GAB, WG Metropolitan Areas, newsletters, FLASH, individual meetings ...

Joint statement and networking

- In May and June 2023, Eurocities met with various stakeholders including MEPs assistants, Perm Reps, association of municipalities, and NGOs
- Joint statement with CEMR published in May 2023
- Publication of 'voice of cities on nature' articles
- **Op-ed by Mayor of Utrecht** published in July 2023

Green infrastructure makes up on average 42% of the city area; publicly accessible only 3%
Tree canopy cover average at 30%, with cities in Finland and Norway having the highest proportion of tree cover, while cities in Cyprus, Iceland and Malta had the lowest



EU Nature Restoration Law

Eurocities reaction on the proposal to restore nature

Key messages:

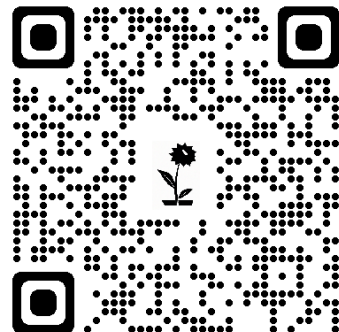
Cities welcome the ambition of the EU Nature Restoration Law including specific targets to restore urban ecosystems, highlighting that legally binding targets are needed now to drive effective and rapid change in the way we prioritise and use land in the built environment. Please find our revised articles at the end of this paper. Our key messages:

- Align the EU Nature Restoration Law with the EU Biodiversity Strategy to focus on the role of cities as connecting corridors to larger areas of protected green space
- Include provisions for the biodiversity and accessibility of urban green space
- Provide flexibility in geographic scope of implementation of targets for no net loss of urban green and blue space and tree canopy cover to prevent urban sprawl, reflect differing governance structures and differing local conditions
- Member states to determine a suitable level of urban greening and tree canopy cover in agreement with cities to reflect local competencies and existing conditions in cities
- Supplement EU level satellite data with local and national data to ensure accurate monitoring
- Ensure adequate funding to support increased responsibilities of local authorities



Positioning in discussion ... social media political campaign

- In lead up to European Parliament vote on 12 July 2023: political support through quotes and short videos launched ahead of the EP vote
- Quotes from Porto, Malmo, Utrecht, Guimaraes, Dublin, Turku, Riga, Bologna, Helsinki, Tampere (...)
- Retweeted and liked by Rapporteur, Shadow, several MEPs, Commission officials and several NGOs
- Meanwhile ...



 Eurocities
@EUROCITIES

"Cities need to ensure people have green spaces to enjoy and protect [#biodiversity](#). The Nature Restoration Law's [#urban](#) targets are important, but must be flexible," [@MinnaArve](#), Mayor of Turku.
[@emmawiesner](#) [@cesarluena](#) [@ChSchneider](#) [@sorayarr_](#)
[@JuttaPaulusRLP](#) [@AlexandrVondra](#)

 Eurocities
@EUROCITIES

"Malmo supports the [#Nature](#) Restoration Law as a boon for greening [#European](#) cities. For effectiveness, targets should be tailored and measured based on local and national agreements and [#data](#)," Sofia Hedén, Malmo Deputy Mayor.

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"Without legal protection, [#nature](#) may lose out. We need the Nature Restoration Law. [#Urban](#) growth needs greening & renewables to go together," [@lindavoortman](#), Utrecht Deputy Mayor. [@gemeenteutrecht](#)
[@emmawiesner](#) [@cesarluena](#) [@ChSchneider](#) [@sorayarr_](#)
[@JuttaPaulusRLP](#)
[@AlexandrVondra](#)

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"The Nature Restoration Law will contribute to the EU Biodiversity Strategy & resilience of cities. It reinforces our path and policies on tree canopy, green corridors climate neutrality for Guimaraes," Sofia Ferreira, Guimaraes.

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The [#Nature](#) Restoration Law should improve the quality of [#green](#) space in addition to helping [#cities](#) protect and maintain this space for all, says [@SelinaVancane](#), Riga's Housing and [#Environment](#) Chair.

... the EPP misinformation campaign turned their sights on cities ...



EPP Group @EPPGroup · 2h

"Mr Timmermans, don't kick Santa out of his house," says @petrisarvamaa.

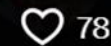
The [#NatureRestoration](#) Law has good intentions but bad design.

For example, it would turn the entire city of Rovaniemi into a forest and other nature areas.

Withdraw the [#NatureRestoration](#) bill!



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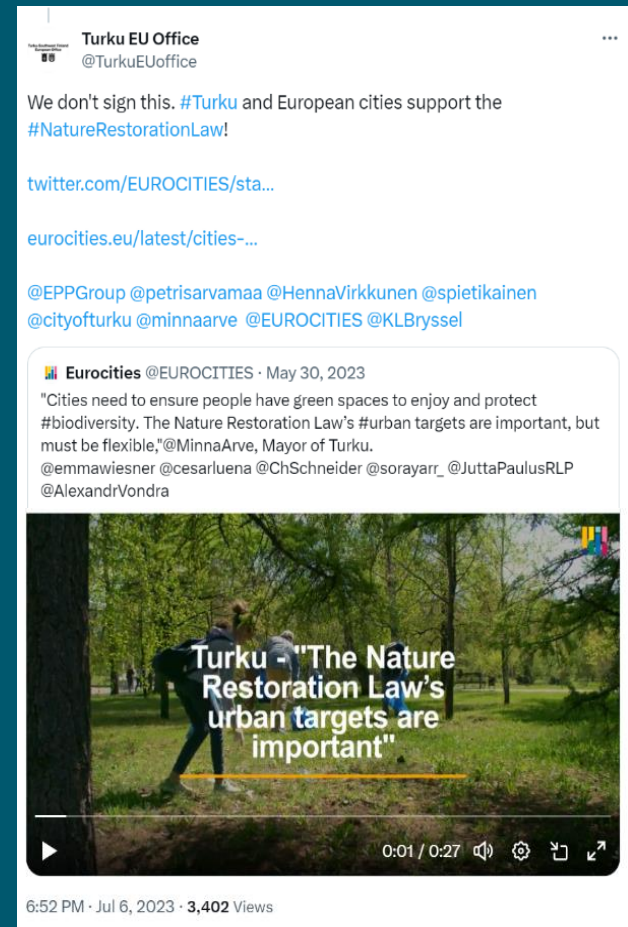
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4.7K

...but cities reacted quickly ...

- A quick reaction directly from cities helped push back against this misinformation
- Such agility was vital to get the message spread, and was picked up by key MEPs
- ... and on 12 July 2023, the European Parliament voted narrowly (by just 12 votes) to NOT reject the proposal.



...a final push on the Council side ...

- Vote took place on Monday 17 June 2024 in final ENV Committee under Belgian Presidency
- Drafted open letter to Heads of States and ENV Ministers **co-signed by 8 other city and region networks**
- Targeted the member states that were opposing / abstaining and that we'd heard were open to changing their position (tweets and emails to Ministers)
 - Vienna for Austria
 - Lodz for Poland
 - Ghent for Belgium



“Cities and regions expect us to take a future orientated decision today ...”
*Austrian Minister for Environment, Climate, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology,
 Leonore Gewessler*



Eurocities @EUROCITIES

Vienna supports the EU #Nature Restoration Law. National governments must listen to #cities & get behind this law before it's too late! A vote against nature will be a disaster for Europe's cities and people.

#RestoreNature
 @ChairNoHorseKey @BgmLudwig @Stadt_Wien @EPPCoR @EU_CoR

Vienna has been ranked the greenest model city and metropolis in the world, and consistently is voted the most liveable. We know the value of our urban nature for cooling the city and providing health benefits, especially through fostering and protecting habitats and biodiversity. **That's why we support the EU Nature Restoration Law to help us protect this space for all.**

Juergen Czernohorszky
 Executive City Councilor for Climate, Environment, Democracy and Personnel
 City of Vienna

9:32 AM · Jun 14, 2024 · 945 Views

As a European leader in urban revitalisation we focus not only on renovating buildings and putting new life into whole quarters of our city, we also focus on keeping and restoring green areas to make our city healthy, attractive and open to all citizens. That is why **we support the EU Nature Restoration Law** to help us with this aim.

Hanna Zdanowska
 Mayor of Lodz

Nature restoration is not a 'nice extra' – it is integral for adapting to the effects of climate change and ensuring the wellbeing of local people, as well as boosting the economy and agriculture... **The Nature Restoration Law is an invaluable framework** for supporting these and other local climate and environment goals.

Tine Heyse
 Deputy Mayor of Ghent

Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2024 @EU2024BE

Adopted! EU Environment Ministers just validated the trilogue agreement on the #NatureRestoration Law. This is the final step before this law can enter into force.

More soon in the @EUCouncil press re

#EU2024BE



Do you have any questions?



Feedback form

- We would appreciate your views on the training
- Please take 5' to fill in the feedback form



SCAN ME