Seminar

Understanding EU Decision-Making: Principles, Procedures, Practice (+ preliminary module)

Maastricht (NL), 26 - 29 March 2019

Practical Information

Course venue
European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)
O.L. Vrouweplein 22
6211 HE, Maastricht
the Netherlands

Programme Organiser
Ms Eveline Hermens
Tel.: +31 43 3296259
e.hermens@eipa.eu

Fee
EIPA Members’ fee: € 1370,-
Regular fee: € 1520,-

The fee includes documentation and refreshments. Lunches, a reception or dinner are included if mentioned in the programme. Accommodation and travel costs are at the expense of the participants or their administration.

Discounts
EIPA offers a 10% discount to all civil servants working for one of EIPA’s supporting countries, and civil servants working for an EU institution, body or agency.

Who are the supporting countries?
Civil servants coming from the following EIPA supporting countries are entitled to get the reduced fee: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.
For all other participants, the regular fee applies.

Meals
Lunches and the reception will be served at a restaurant in town. Special dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, diabetic) can be indicated once you receive the confirmation of the seminar.

Hotel reservations
EIPA has special price arrangements with a number of hotels. All hotels are within 10 minutes walking distance from EIPA. Should you wish to make use of this possibility, please book directly via the links below. Payment is to be made directly and personally to the hotel upon checking out. At the time of booking, please mention in the requested field the EIPA project number for your course 1912201.

• Townhouse Hotel
  www.townhousehotels.nl/eipa
• Hotel Derlon
  www.derlon.com/eipa
• Designhotel Maastricht
• Bastion Hotel
  https://www.bastionhotels.com/en-gb/eipa

Registration
Kindly complete the online registration form which can be found on EIPA’s website https://www.eipa.eu/courses/ before 8 March 2019.

Confirmation
Confirmation of registration will be forwarded to participants on receipt of the completed online registration form.

Payment
Prior payment is a condition for participation.

Cancellation policy
For administrative reasons you will be charged €150 for cancellations received within 15 days before the activity begins. There is no charge for qualified substitute participants.

EIPA reserves the right to cancel the activity up to 2 weeks before the starting date. In that case, registration fees received will be fully reimbursed. EIPA accepts no responsibility for any costs incurred (travel, accommodation, etc.).
This 2.5 days course will get you up to speed on the essential elements of how the EU system works: the different powers that the EU has, who does what, and how you can have a role in shaping EU decisions. It is concise but thorough, and focuses on EU law-making.

What you will learn in this course:
- The differences between legislative acts, implementing acts and delegated acts, relating them to their place in the EU policy cycle, as well as in the hierarchy of laws.
- Decision-making procedures in the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament, and the ways in which national officials and other stakeholders fit into the policy process.
- The ordinary legislative procedure and how a 'trilogue' works.
- Delegated and implementing acts using topical cases.

By the end of the course, you will:
- Understand the essential principles and procedures that you need to know in order to be credible when operating within an EU context.
- Be better equipped to explain how things work to your colleagues and associates.
- Have a feel for how things work in practice, and be able to prepare appropriately.
- Have a solid basis for continuous learning on the job afterwards.

Who is this course for:
- Officials who have taken on a new role in Brussels.
- Officials who have to take part in meetings in the Commission or Council.
- Anyone who needs to know how EU decision-making works in practice.

Course methodology:
- Extensive insights with multiple examples and real life cases.
- Group exercises.
- Role plays and simulation games.
- Inputs from experienced EU practitioners.

After-course support:
In order to help retain and deepen the knowledge acquired afterwards, you will receive a copy of Edward Best’s 2016 book Understanding EU Decision-Making, published with the support of the EU Publications Office.

Don’t have much exposure to EU decision-making, or want to refresh your knowledge?
You can also participate in the optional preliminary module the afternoon before the course date, covering the basics. If you are not sure you are familiar with the basics, and as you have to be in town by this date anyway, we recommend that you attend this module, to be able to make the most of the intensive course and immerse yourself in the detailed exercises over the next 2.5 days.

TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2019

EU decision-making for newcomers (optional preliminary module)
14.00 The European Union in 2019: basic structures and competences
15.45 Coffee break
16.00 Introduction to the EU institutions and decision-making procedures
17.30 Questions and answers
18.00 End of the preliminary module

WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH 2019

09.00 Welcome and self-presentation of the participants
Edward Best, Head of Unit, European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), Maastricht
09.15 Introduction and overview of EU decision-making
The day begins with a succinct summary of the main points covered in the preliminary reading / preliminary module concerning the structures and competences of the EU.
Group exercise: Who does what in the EU institutional system?
In order to engage you actively, we present a simple model of the core EU policy cycle, indicating the main roles and functions that are involved. You will divide into groups and match schematic outlines with sets of institutional actors and instruments. This is followed by a debriefing that establishes the framework for the following sessions.
10.45 Coffee break
11.00 The Commission and legislative proposals
You then look in more detail at the start of the policy cycle. We explain how the Commission elaborates legislative proposals and outlines the role of expert groups, public consultations and impact assessments.
12.45 Lunch
14.00 Decision-making case study on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure (1)
A case study is introduced that will run through the whole course, illustrating each stage of the policy cycle.
You first engage in a short exercise concerning the process of agenda-setting and problem definition.
15.15 Coffee break
15.30 Legislative procedures in the Council and the European Parliament
You will look at the internal structure and working methods of the Council, identifying the main actors and decision-making processes involved.
This is followed by a presentation of procedures within the European Parliament, showing how legislative proposals are examined in the Committees and the Plenary.
16.15 General discussion
We now summarise how the act was finalized in the real inter-institutional negotiations and open a general discussion on legislative procedures.
17.00 Recapitulation of main points covered during the day
17.30 End of the first day
19.00 Dinner in a restaurant in town

THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2019

09.00 The Ordinary Legislative Procedure
We start the day by giving an overview of the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, by which the European Parliament and the Council have to agree on most legislative proposals.
Decision-making case study (2)
You now take part in a second short exercise in which you identify the main actors and steps involved in legislative decision-making in the case. The actual process by which the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive was adopted is then presented.
10.45 Coffee break
11.00 Coffee break
11.15 Simulation exercise
A different case is now used to simulate a meeting in the Council framework at which you need to reach a compromise text as a basis for negotiation with the European Parliament.
Edward Best
Radovan Schida, Political Administrator, General Secretariat of the Council
12.45 Lunch
14.00 Decision-making case study on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure (2)
The final case study concerns implementing acts as well as broader stakeholders fit into the policy process. There will be a general discussion on legislative procedures.
15.15 Coffee break
15.30 Debriefing
16.15 General discussion
17.00 Recapitulation of main points covered during the day
17.30 End of second day and reception
19.00 Dinner in a restaurant in town

FRIDAY 29 MARCH 2019

09.00 Delegated and implementing acts
This session goes into more detail regarding the new system of ‘delegated acts’ and ‘implementing acts’. We explain the procedures for adopting these acts with specific examples, outline the institutional issues that have arisen, and show how these issues have been addressed in a new Common Understanding between the institutions.
Decision-making case study (3)
We round off the case study by looking at how delegated and implementing acts have been adopted on the basis of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive.
The session concludes with the case of Glyphosate, which illustrates some procedural questions concerning implementing acts as well as broader trends in EU policy-making.
10.45 Coffee break
11.00 Coffee break
11.45 Practical perspectives: preparing for EU decision-making
The final session is introduced by experienced EU practitioners who discuss how national officials and other stakeholders can prepare to participate effectively in EU meetings.
Anita Drondina, Counselor, Permanent Representation of Latvia to the EU; EIPA visiting expert (TBC)
[Representative of a European interest association, Brussels]
12.45 Wrap-up and evaluation
13.00 End of the seminar

Description / Programme