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Commissioner

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Meet the tailor cutting
it with the EU elite

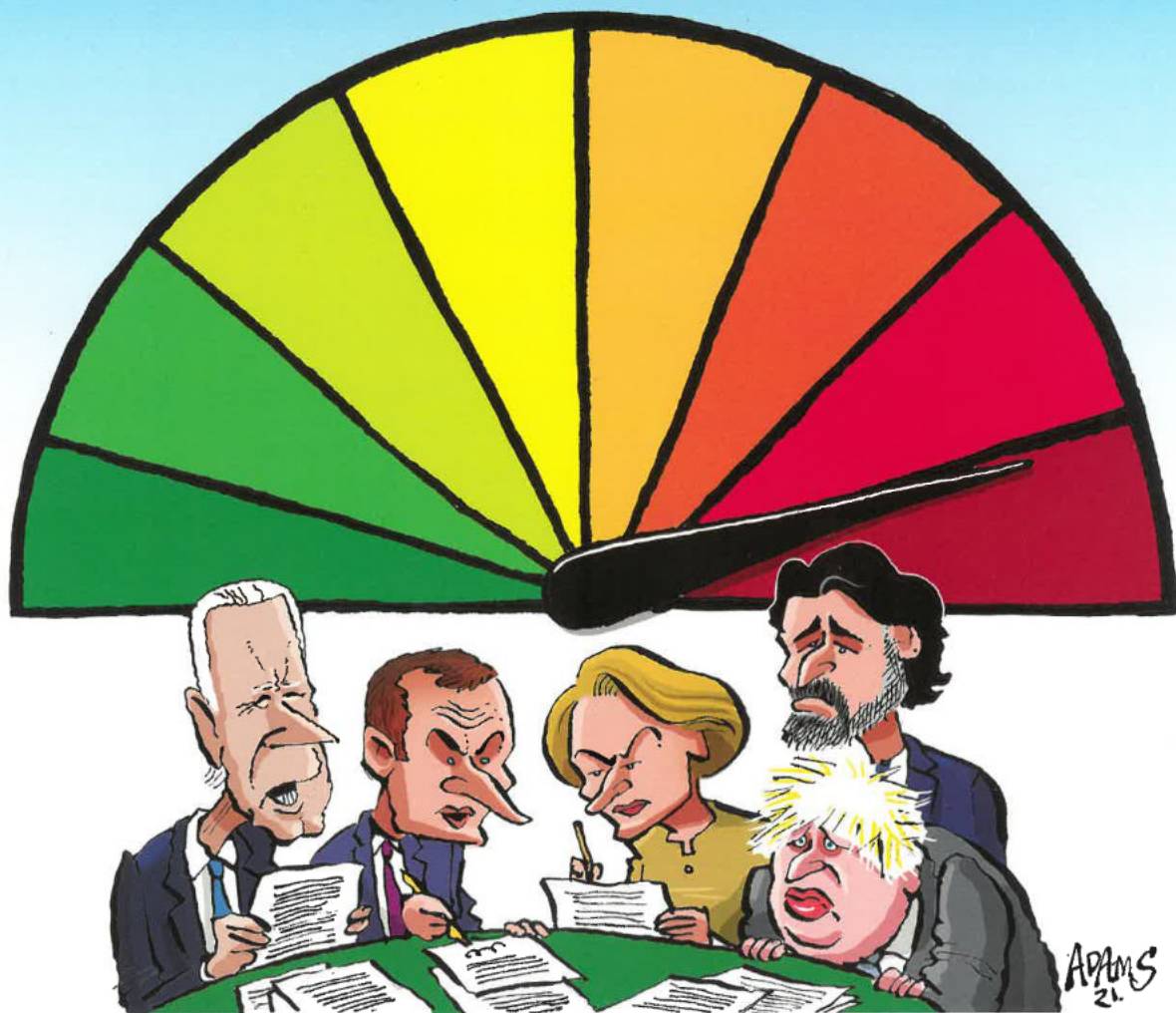
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INSIDE EUROPE:

INTRODUCING THE BRUSSELS INDEX

Brussels, the unofficial capital of the European Union, hosts the official seats of the European Commission, Council of the European Union and the European Council, as well as the de facto official seat of the European Parliament. With 40,000 EU employees and 4,000 NATO ones, Brussels is teeming with politicos: fully 27 per cent of its population is foreign.

Mace's Brussels Bureau has consulted with EU insiders and meticulously researched The Brussels Index, to be launched in early 2022. Ahead of its publication, Mace offers here a carefully selected compilation of the European Commissioners, most capable political consultants and the top think tanks, calling the shots on the continent.



Introducing the Brussels Political Consultants Index

By Richard Milsom

Peer-reviewed and selected for their cross-sector skills and successes, Mace's list of professional advocates reveals who's being heard at the EU's centre of power.

After Washington DC, Brussels has become the world's second capital of lobbying and public affairs. According to Transparency International, there are 25,000 lobbyists working in Brussels with a combined annual budget conservatively estimated at more than €3bn seeking to influence EU policy. Approximately 7,500 of them are accredited with the European Parliament, which means they are able to regularly meet with parliamentarians.

Nearly every significant global business has some presence in town, a vital outpost for many multinational corporations who have created large, bespoke operations across the EU. Others amplify their voices through joining associations, NGOs or chambers of commerce – or contract public affairs companies to represent their issues in Brussels.

As the European Union has evolved from a free trading block to a comprehensive political and

economic union, there has been an inevitable centralisation of power within the institutions. This growth in regulation – often called the bureaucratic “creep” – has created a more inward-looking European Union, which has in turn made it more difficult for businesses to understand its inner workings – and harder still for its stakeholders to be heard.

According to Oliver Kaye, a director in Luther Pendragon's office in Brussels, the lobbying industry has ‘grown and matured’ over the last five years.

“Just as the industry sees the merit in engaging with the EU institutions, in turn, the institutions are also increasingly (though not always) recognising the importance of engaging with industry,” he says. “They have evolved in how they deal with a greater number of lobbyists – and more and more often they want industry to cut to the chase and say what they want, or they need. Being pithy has never been more important.”

Over 50 per cent of Brussels political consultants have previously worked in the European Parliament, with another quarter coming from the European Commission – often beginning their careers on one of the Commission's traineeship programmes before finding



Over 50 per cent of Brussels consultants have previously worked in the European parliament

positions as MEP assistants or within one of the political groups. Others have experience working at the OECD, whose looser structure gives consultants experience in successfully influencing legislation.

Brussels has long attracted some of the finest young minds in Europe, lured by well-paid roles, both in the institutions and in NGOs, as well as in commerce. Educational standards are high, with at least 75 per cent educated to Master's level. Nevertheless, the consultancy field is competitive and entry-level net salaries average around EUR 1900 a month for consultants, EUR 2500 for senior consultants and EUR 3500 for directors. Many hold contracts based in their member states, as Belgian employment costs and taxes are extraordinarily high (the base rate of income tax in Belgium is 55 per cent, and further employers' costs and taxes can be more than double the net salary offered).

Brussels lobbying is not without controversy. In 2011 journalists from Britain's Sunday Times posing as lobbyists secretly filmed four MEPs negotiating a deal to propose amendments to legislation in exchange for €100,000 a year.

Since 2015, EU Commissioners are required to make public their meetings with registered lobbyists, as are senior members of the parliament. Nevertheless, half of 705 MEPs do not reveal their dealings with lobbyists.

Most recently, the sector has had to contend with the pandemic. Many EU officials were available via online calls, however “zoom fatigue” and decreased activity has created difficulties. Political consultancy is desperately looking forward to getting back to face-to-face meetings and engagement.

regulatory and reputational issues arising from Europe's financial services, digital, taxation and macro-political agendas. He is Fleishman Hillard Brussels' co-Head of Financial Services Practice & Head of Technology Practice. He is also a vice-chair of Amcham EU's Financial Services committee. Between 2004 and 2010, Huet ran European Public Affairs for the Association for Financial Markets in Europe (AFME) in London. Between 1995 and 2004, Bertrand worked as a capital markets transactional lawyer at Bankers Trust and Deutsche Bank in London and Paris. Huet started his career as a UK solicitor with the international law firm Linklaters in 1992.

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OLIVER KAYE

Director, Luther Pendragon



After five years in the European Parliament, Oliver Kaye co-founded LP Brussels, with

former MEP Mark Watts, to help clients improve their reputation, increase their understanding of EU policy and legislative systems, and bridge the gap between business and government to ensure effective and positive legislative change in the EU. Over the last 12 years, his particular focus has been in the fields of energy, sustainability, mobility and research, and he has built a host of campaigns spanning several years with visible results for clients in these areas.

In addition, Kaye has been involved in the running of the UK Football Club in the Brussels Euroleague since its inception more than ten years ago.



DR KLEMENS JOOS

Founder, EUTOP

For 30 years, EUTOP founder and CEO, Dr Klemens Joos, has been at the forefront of European public affairs consultancy. He established EUTOP in 1990, before the EU existed, and while he was a student at Ludwig Maximilians University (LMU) in Munich. Its beginnings were certainly very modest, operating out of student digs – but today, EUTOP and its group of companies have 17 European locations and over 150 professional staff, servicing big-name corporations listed on the EURO, DAX, MDAX and STOXX, as well as subsidiaries of various Dow Jones Index companies.

EUTOP has always taken a different and scientific approach to consultancy and has sought to develop the idea that in complex decision-making systems like the EU, with its numerous players and levels, the focus is no longer on substantive content, but is at least as much about process competence. Indeed, Joos asks: "what use are the best substantive arguments if the right decision-maker doesn't know what they are?"

EUTOP's success formula is therefore to combine the content competence of the customer with the process structure competence of EUTOP. Projects can then be guided confidently with perspective change competence methodology and perspective support competence.

Dr Theo Waigel, Father of the Euro, who served as German Federal Minister of Finance from 1989 to 1998, is amongst Dr Joos's fans. "There are few entrepreneurs who recognised 1990 as being groundbreaking for German and European politics," he says. "Dr Klemens Joos is one of them. The European Union is the solution, not the problem: a project more successful than any other in the history of Europe, and one to which Klemens Joos and his staff and partners have made a significant contribution. I congratulate him with all my heart."

In 1990, Joos identified a groundbreaking opportunity for German and European politics

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CLAUDIA LA DONNA

Managing Director, Hanover



Claudia La Donna oversees all EU public affairs work for the Brussels office and

provides Hanover's clients with high-level strategic advice on EU digital, financial services and competition policies.

She has extensive experience in advising organisations in the ICT, media and financial sectors on a wide range of EU regulatory, competition and reputation issues, and political aspects of corporate communications. Prior to joining Hanover, La Donna held senior positions in different Brussels-based public affairs consultancies, Sky Italia and the European Commission.

La Donna's client experience includes Sky, Apple, Qualcomm, and Vodafone, YBS, SCM Private and the European Pensions and Equity Release group.

GAËLLE LEMAIRE

Partner, Brunswick Group



Gaëlle Lemaire has 15 years' experience in public and corporate affairs.

She specialises in

advising clients on European and global engagement, positioning and reputation campaigns, spanning a broad range of industries. She also advises clients on M&A regulatory clearance, litigation communications and on trade and Brexit-related matters. Lemaire is co-chief of staff to Brunswick chairman of Europe, Pascal Lamy.

Lemaire started her career working with the European Commission's diplomatic team,