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The project "ACE II" ACTIVE CITIZEN in EUROPE II Active European citizens building

Visit to European Commission Representation, Athens

The topic: Empowering democracy



The European Commission (year established: 1958 and location: Brussels/Belgium) is the EU's politically independent executive arm. EC implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU/the government ministers from each EU country, both, the main decision-making bodies of the united Europe. It is also responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation. Thus, it is the sole EU institution tabling laws for adoption by the Parliament and the Council that:

- protect the interests of the EU and its citizens on issues that can't be dealt with effectively at national level
- get technical details right by consulting experts and the public.

In general, EC manages EU policies and allocates EU funding, enforces EU law and represents the EU internationally. Its composition includes a team of 28 Commissioners, one from each EU country, led by the Commission President, who decides who is responsible for which portfolio and the six Vice-Presidents, including the First Vice-President, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The day-to-day running of Commission business is performed by its staff organised into departments known as Directorates-General (DGs), each responsible also for a specific policy area.

As far as the appointing the EC President, the candidate is put forward by national leaders in the European Council, taking account of the results of the European Parliament elections. Each nominee appears before the European Parliament to explain their vision and answer questions. Parliament then votes on whether to accept the nominees, President, Vice-Presidents and Commissioners based on suggestions from the EU countries, as a team. Finally, they are appointed by the European Council, by a qualified majority.

The current Commission's term of office ran until 31 October 2019 and after Jean-Claude Juncker the new EC President is the German Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen. Particularly, on 2 July 2019, von der Leyen was proposed by the European Council as the candidate for the office of President of the European Commission.

She was elected by the European Parliament on 16 July and she is the first woman to become President of the European Commission.

The Commission works under a strategic plan. The President defines the policy direction which enables all the Commissioners together and in an equal, close and flexible manner to decide by consensus based on collective responsibility strategic objectives and produce the annual work programme and priority projects. But votes can also take place.

The relevant Directorate-General (headed by a Director-General, answerable to the relevant Commissioner) then takes up the subjects, forms a draft legislative proposals and submits them to the Commissioners for adoption at their weekly meeting, after which they become official, and are sent to the Council and the Parliament for the next stage in the EU legislative process.

EC accepts citizens' views on EU policies, suggestions for changes or new policies through options such as: public consultation, European Citizens' Initiative, formal complaint and has advice and information services to help them with business, study, legal matters, and moving and working around Europe. Any citizen can contact EC for any questions: staff or local Commission offices in EU countries.

Monday, 11 November

A learning unit ON

1. Current political agenda - press releases by **Lithuania:** Mano Europa
2. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) by **Lithuania:** Mano Europa
3. The action: "Have Your Say" by **Romania:** University UNIVERSITATEA DIN PITESTI/ UNIVERSITY OF PITESTI
4. Data protection: cookies by **Romania:** University UNIVERSITATEA DIN PITESTI/ UNIVERSITY OF PITESTI
5. State of the European Union /SOTEU 2019 by **Lithuania:** Mano Europa

Tuesday, 12 November

A learning unit ON

1. Funding for youth sector by **Estonia:** LAG Western-Harju Partnership (LHKK)
2. Roaming - The EU "roam like at home" rules by **Estonia:** LAG Western-Harju Partnership (LHKK)
3. White paper for the future of Europe by **Greece:** HELLENIC MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE (I.ME.PO.)
4. The Greek referendum in 2015 by **Greece:** HELLENIC MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE (I.ME.PO.)
5. BREXIT by **Greece:** HELLENIC MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE (I.ME.PO.)

Methods used: Attractive Lectures with Word texts, Excel, PowerPoint, ppt and pptx forms, subtitles and legends, Audio-visual Screenings, Projections, web interactive learning tours, Peer group Discussions. Presentations and interaction of participants in Debates, Exchange of ideas and critical thoughts, Field exercises and sharing of knowledge, skills and the analyses of participants on the following topics focused on the **Twitter of European Commission**

Let's enjoy https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en, a lunch at the near-by National Garden and a strolling in the buildings at Irodou Attikou Street as a leisure and informal educational activity passing through the Presidential and Maximos Mansions.

Maps and info educational sheets on topics for development are attached as well as included in digital files via mobiles and facebook group.