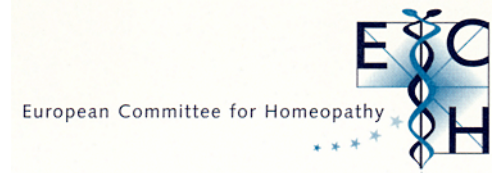


WHO IS WHO AT THE EU



European Union

The European Union is more than just a confederation of countries, but it is not a federal State. Its political system has been constantly evolving over the past 50 years and it is founded on a series of treaties – from those signed in Paris and Rome in the 1950s to the much more recent treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice. The treaties constitute what is known as ‘primary’ legislation. From them is derived a large body of ‘secondary’ legislation that has a direct impact on the daily lives of European Union citizens. It consists mainly of regulations, directives and recommendations.

These laws, along with EU policies in general, are the result of decisions taken by three main institutions:

- the Council of the European Union (representing the member states);
- the European Parliament (representing the citizens); and
- the European Commission (a politically independent body that upholds the collective European interest).

Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union is the EU’s main decision-making institution. For short it is simply called ‘the Council’. Each EU country in turn presides over the Council for a six-month period. Every Council meeting is attended by one minister from each of the member states. Which ministers attend a meeting depends on which topic is on the agenda. If foreign policy, it will be the Foreign Affairs Minister from each country. If agriculture, it will be the Minister for Agriculture. And so on. There are nine different Council ‘configurations’, covering all the different policy areas including industry, transport, the environment, etc. The Council’s work as a whole is planned and coordinated by the General Affairs and External Relations Council. The preparatory work for Council meetings is done by the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper), made up of the member states’ ambassadors to the EU, assisted by officials from the national ministries.

European Parliament

The European Parliament is the elected body that represents the EU’s citizens and takes part in the legislative process. Since 1979, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have been directly elected, by universal suffrage, every five years. The present parliament, elected in 2004, has 732 members. Members are assigned to 17 committees, 20 interparliamentary delegations and 14 delegations to joint parliamentary committees. Each committee or delegation elects its own ‘bureau’ comprising a chairman and two or three vice-chairmen.

European Commission

The Commission acts with complete political independence. Its job is to uphold the interests of the EU as a whole, so it must not take instructions from any member state government. As ‘Guardian of the Treaties’, it has to ensure that the regulations and directives adopted by the Council and Parliament are being put into effect. If they are not, the Commission can take the offending party to the Court of Justice to oblige it to comply with EU law. The Commission is also the only institution that has the right to propose new EU legislation, and it can take action at any stage to help bring about agreement both within the Council and between the Council and Parliament. From 1 November 2004, the new Commission has 25 members – one per country. It has 17 Directorates-General (DGs)

European Council

The European Council brings together the presidents and prime ministers of all the EU countries plus the President of the European Commission. The President of the European Parliament also addresses every European Council.

Court of Justice of the European Communities

The Court of Justice of the European Communities, located in Luxembourg, is made up of one judge from each EU country, assisted by eight advocates-general. They are appointed by joint agreement of the governments of the member states. Each is appointed for a term of six years which may be renewed. They can be relied on to show

impartiality. The Court's job is to ensure that EU law is complied with, and that the treaties are correctly interpreted and applied.

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe groups together 46 countries, including 21 countries from Central and Eastern Europe, and is distinct from the 25-nation European Union.

Research DG

The Directorate-General (department of the European Commission) dealing with Research affairs.

Health and Consumer Protection DG or DG SANCO (SANTé CONsommateurs)

The Directorate-General (department of the European Commission) dealing with Health and Consumer Protection affairs.

EU Health Forum

The EU Health Forum serves as an information and consultation mechanism to ensure that the aims of the Community's health strategy are made clear to the public and respond to their concerns. It provides an opportunity to representative organisations of patients, health professionals and other stakeholders, such as health service providers, to make contributions to health policy development, its implementation and the setting of priorities for action.

The EU Health Forum is composed of two complementary elements: An **Open Forum** as a platform for general exchange of information and for a discussion with a broader range of groups and interested parties, and a **Health Policy Forum** with a consistent set of member organisations, for the discussion of key policy areas. The ECH is a member of the Health Policy Forum.

ENVI committee

The Parliamentary committee dealing with the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

IMCO committee

The Parliamentary committee dealing with Internal Market and Consumer Protection

ITRE committee

The Parliamentary committee dealing with Industry, Research and Energy

EDQM - European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and HealthCare

This Directorate, located in Strasbourg (France) is part of the administrative structure of the Council of Europe and provides recognised common standards for use by healthcare professionals and others concerned with the quality of medicines. European Pharmacopoeia monographs and other texts are designated to be appropriate to the needs of regulatory authorities, those engaged in the control of quality, and manufacturers of starting material and medicinal products.

EMA – European Medicines Agency

European Medicines Agency (EMA) is a decentralised body of the European Union with headquarters in London. Its main responsibility is the protection and promotion of public and animal health, through the evaluation and supervision of medicines for human and veterinary use. The EMA coordinates the evaluation and supervision of medicinal products throughout the European Union.

Heads of Agencies

The Heads of Agencies is a body joining the medicines regulatory authorities in the European Union and Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein. It provides a forum for the exchange of views on issues of Community interest.

HMPWG - Homeopathic Medicinal Products Working Group

The HMPWG is an expert group of the Heads of Agencies, dealing with regulatory issues of homeopathic medicinal products in the European Union and Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.

EPHA – European Public Health Alliance

EPHA represents over 100 non-governmental and other not-for-profit organisations working on public health in Europe. The ECH is a member of EPHA.

EFCAM – European Federation for Complementary and Alternative Medicine

EFCAM is the collaborative platform representing the interests of patients, (non-medical) practitioners, researchers and the industry involved in complementary and alternative medicine and working to promote and develop a more holistic and integrated approach to healthcare in Europe

CPME – Comité Permanent des Médecins Européens / Standing Committee of European Doctors

The Standing Committee of European Doctors is composed of 28 members organisations representing medical doctors. These member associations are the most representative non-governmental national medical organisations of the European Union Member States or of the signatory countries of the European Economic Area agreement.

ECHAMP – European Council of Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Medicinal Products

ECHAMP represents the vast majority of the manufacturers of Europe's homeopathic industry, joining 51 full company members and 9 associated members being national manufacturers associations.

ECPM – European Council of Doctors for Plurality in Medicine

ECPM is a European Federation of Medical Doctors' Associations practising Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). It has 45 medical member associations (homeopathy, anthroposophic medicine, Chinese medicine and acupuncture, herbal medicine, naturopathy, neural therapy, manual medicine). The aim of ECPM is to promote plurality in medicine at EU level as well as in the different member states of the EU.

IVAA - Internationale Vereinigung Anthroposophischer Ärztgesellschaften – International Federation of Anthroposophical Medical Associations

IVAA is an international organisation comprising 29 anthroposophic medical associations worldwide.

ICMART – International Council of Medical Acupuncture and Related Techniques

ICMART is an international organisation comprising more than 80 medical acupuncture societies worldwide. It includes over 30,000 doctors practising acupuncture and related techniques.

ECCH – European Council of Classical Homeopathy

ECCH is an international organisation comprising 24 associations of non-medical classical homeopaths existing within 20 European countries.

Useful European Union web sites (most of them are multi-lingual):

Central web site of the European Union: <http://europa.eu>
EUROPA - The European Union at a glance: http://europa.eu/abc/index_en.htm
EUROPA - Institutions of the European Union: http://europa.eu/institutions/inst/index_en.htm
EUROPA - European Union Documents: http://europa.eu/documents/index_en.htm
European Union law: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>
Pre-Lex Monitoring decision-making process between institutions: <http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/apcnet.cfm?CL=en>
European Parliament on line: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/default_en.htm
Official documents of the European Parliament: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/guide/search/docsearch_en.htm
European Commission homepage: http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm
European Commission Health and Consumers DG: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm
European Commission Research DG: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/research/index_en.html
European Union Health Forum: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/health_forum/health_forum_en.htm
CORDIS – Community Research & Development Information Service: <http://cordis.europa.eu/>
Council of the European Union: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1&lang=en>
European Council (heads of states): http://europa.eu/european-council/index_en.htm
Eurostat – Statistical Office of the EU: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>
EU Court of Justice: http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo1_6308/ecran-d-accueil

Other useful European websites:

European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and HealthCare: <http://www.edqm.eu>
EMA – European Medicines Agency: <http://www.emea.eu.int/>
Heads of Agencies – Medicines Authorities in the European Union: <http://www.hma.eu/>
COST – European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research: <http://www.cost.esf.org/>
Comité Permanent des Médecins Européens / Standing Committee of European Doctors: <http://www.cpme.eu>
European Observatory of Health Care Systems: <http://www.euro.who.int/observatory>
Council of Europe: <http://www.coe.int/>
EPHA – European Public Health Alliance: <http://www.epha.org>
ECHAMP – European Council of Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Medicinal Products: <http://www.echamp.be>
ECPM – European Council of Doctors for Plurality in Medicine: <http://www.ecpm.org>
IVAA – Internationale Vereinigung Anthroposophischer Ärztgesellschaften – International Federation of Anthroposophical Medical Associations: <http://www.ivaa.info>
ICMART – International Council of Medical Acupuncture and Related Techniques: <http://www.icmart.org>
EFCAM – European Federation of Complementary and Alternative Medicine: <http://www.efcam.eu/>
ECCH – European Council of Classical Homeopathy: <http://www.homeopathy-ecch.org>

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