



Main principles of the working methods

A College in which we will all work, decide and deliver together

10 September 2019

The Commission is one team where all of its members work together following a whole of government approach. They all have their say, all decide collectively. All take ownership of what is agreed.

All members of the Commission are equal in the decision-making process and equally accountable for the decisions they take.

The President of the Commission is in charge of the Commission's policy direction and sets the agenda of the College meetings. This is where members of the Commission meet to discuss politically and to take collective decisions. It is part of the members of the Commission duties to be present at all meetings.

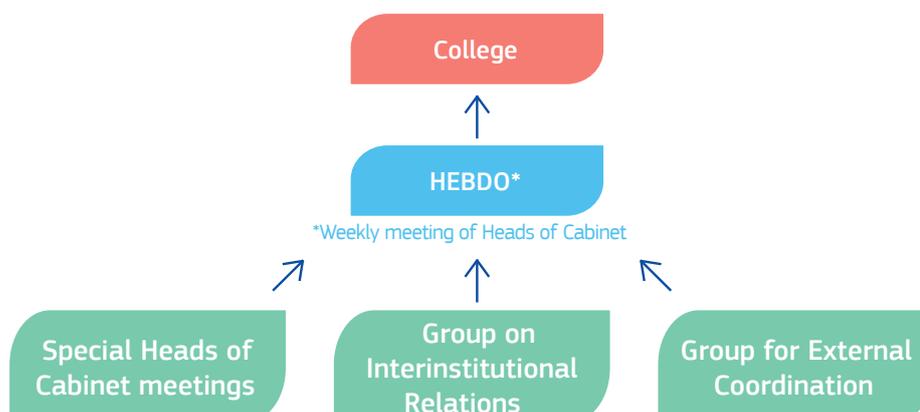
The College discusses and adopts policy documents, legislative proposals, holds orientation debates, and decides on positions to be taken on external relations matters or interinstitutional issues. The College will be seized of all European Parliament Resolutions¹, requesting that the Commission submit legislative proposals.

The College meetings require careful preparation. This is the main purpose of the collegial preparatory bodies:

- the weekly «Hebdo» meeting of Heads of Cabinet and the preparatory meetings that precede them;
- the special meetings of Heads of Cabinet,
- the meeting of the Group for External Coordination – EXCO,
- the meeting of the Group on Interinstitutional Relations - GRI.

In all College preparatory meetings, Heads of Cabinet and Cabinet members speak on behalf of their respective member of the Commission: they must be mandated with a clear position.

How we take decisions



¹based on Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Principle 1 - Whole of government approach

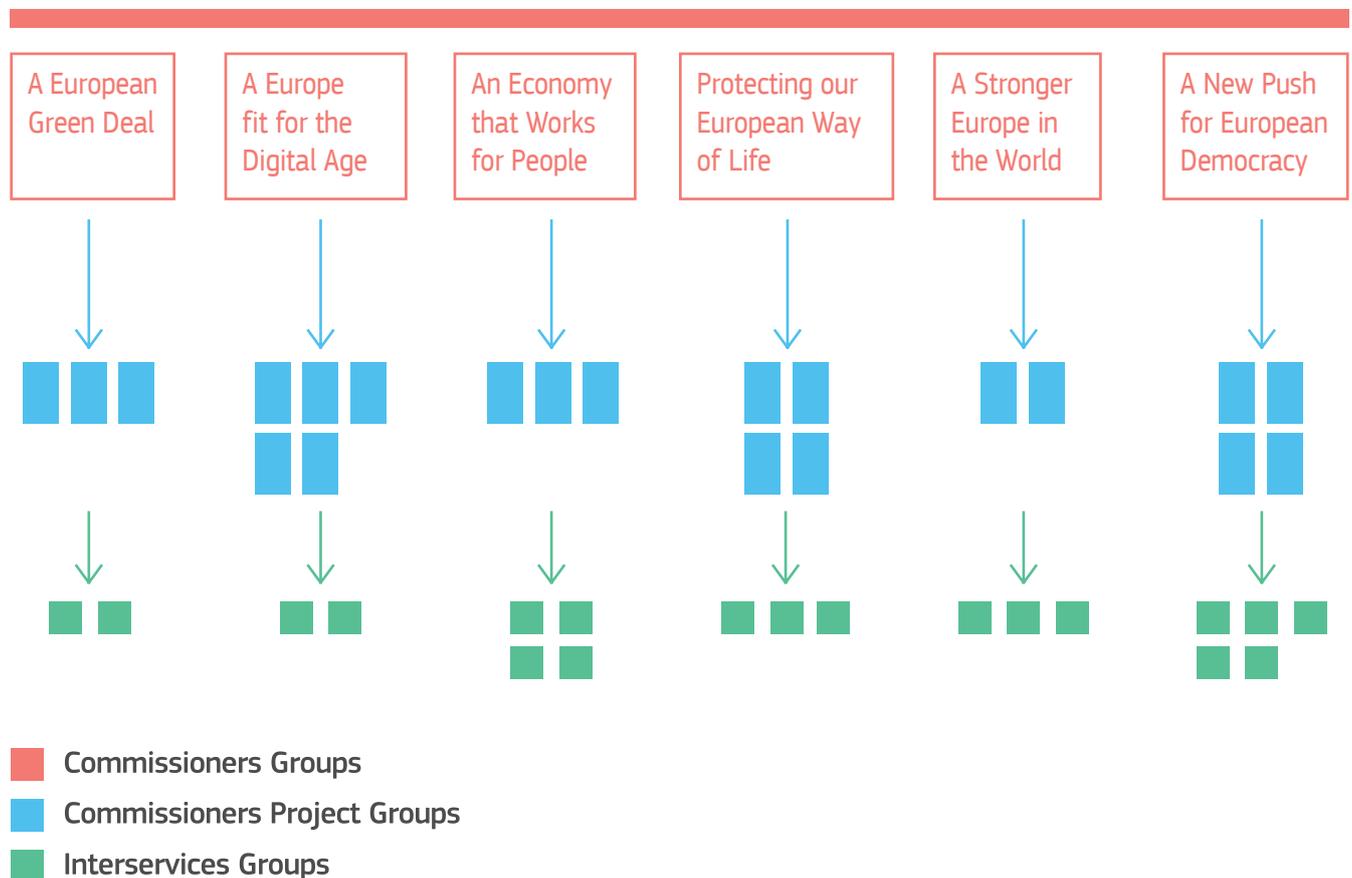
In their areas of responsibility, the Executive Vice-Presidents and Vice-Presidents act on behalf of the President and help her exercise her rights and prerogatives. They coordinate work across the Commission on the six headline ambitions of the President's Political Guidelines. These priorities are interlocking and part of the same mission: they require joined-up thinking and action.

Such coordinating work involves bringing together several members of the Commission and different parts of the Commission services to shape coherent policies and deliver results.

To help Executive Vice-Presidents and Vice-Presidents deliver this task, the President will establish Commissioners Groups. These Groups are chaired by the relevant Executive Vice-President or Vice-President, including the High Representative/Vice-President. If the President attends a meeting of the Group, she may decide to chair it. Executive Vice-Presidents and Vice-Presidents may call more focused meetings of Commissioners Project Groups. The Cabinet of the President will participate in all such meetings and the Secretariat-General will prepare them and organise their follow up.

This close cooperation at political level will be matched at services level, pooling creativity from the administration. For initiatives mentioned in the Political Guidelines and other key initiatives, the Secretariat-General will chair Interservices Groups bringing together all relevant Commission services. These Groups will prepare drafts, including the relevant Impact assessment, legal text or communication, to make the most of the expertise available across the Commission.

How we coordinate



The Secretariat-General will support the Executive Vice-Presidents and Vice-Presidents in their coordination tasks, in accordance with the specific working arrangements drawn by the President. In the President's Cabinet and in the Secretariat-General, there will be dedicated contact points for each Executive Vice-President and Vice-President.

Executive Vice-Presidents play a dual role as they will each coordinate one of the headline ambitions of the President's Political Guidelines and manage directly a policy area.

Executive Vice-Presidents, when managing directly a policy area, and Commissioners will have services reporting directly to them.

The President's Cabinet and Secretariat-General will be the guardians of fairness, objectivity and efficiency in the relationship between Executive Vice-Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Commissioners.

Executive Vice-Presidents and Commissioners should hold weekly meetings ("Jour Fixe") with the senior management of their respective services. Monthly "Strategic Jour Fixe" meetings will bring together the relevant Executive Vice-President or Vice-President, and a Commissioner with his/her senior management. The Secretariat-General will coordinate and prepare these meetings. All notes that the services address to their line Commissioner, and vice-versa, will be copied to the relevant Executive Vice-President or Vice-President, as well as to the President's Cabinet and Secretariat-General.

The President will establish a close relationship with the Directors-General, who represent the excellence of the European Commission administration. She will meet them collectively at least twice a year. She will make use of their expertise for projects she leads directly.

Principle 2 - Geopolitical

According to the Treaties, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is one of the Vice-Presidents of the Commission. The High Representative/Vice-President will support the President in coordinating the external aspects of the work of all Commissioners and chair the Commissioners' Group "A Stronger Europe in the World".

To ensure that the Union's external action becomes more strategic and coherent, it will be systematically discussed and decided on by the College. To support this, all services and Cabinets will prepare the external aspects of College meetings on a weekly basis, mirroring the process already in place for interinstitutional relations, through a new collegial preparatory body, the Group for External Coordination ("EXCO"). This should also better align the internal and external aspects of our work and enhance the working relationship between the Commission and the European External Action Service. EXCO will be co-chaired by the Diplomatic Advisor of the President and the Deputy Head of Cabinet of the High Representative/Vice-President. The Secretariat-General will provide for its secretariat.

The Commission should develop a culture of resilience, business continuity and security. Staff should be vigilant towards cyber and other threats. They must obtain appropriate security clearance to access highly classified documents. Unauthorised disclosure of information is subject to disciplinary measures.

Principle 3 - One in, one out

In order to make lives easier for people and to allow businesses the time and space they need to grow, the Commission must ensure that regulation is targeted, easy to comply and does not add unnecessary regulatory burden. The Commission must always have the leeway to act where needed. At the same time, it must send a clear and credible signal to citizens that its policies and proposals deliver and make life easier.

In this spirit, the Commission will develop a new instrument to deliver on a "One In, One Out" principle. Every legislative proposal creating new burdens should relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area. The Commission will also work with Member States to ensure that, when transposing EU legislation, they do not add unnecessary administrative burden.

Proposals must be evidence-based, widely consulted on, subject to an impact assessment and reviewed by the independent Regulatory Scrutiny Board. They must respect the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity and show the clear benefit of European action.

Principle 4 - Digital

The College will use state of the art digital tools to ensure the highest efficiency of its decision-making process and the strict confidentiality of its proceedings. The weekly College meetings will be paperless. Their agenda and supporting documents will be accessible in digital format, in full respect of the Commission security rules.

The Commission should become a digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven administration. The on-going digitalisation of the Commission's policymaking processes will streamline them while guaranteeing efficiency, security and legal soundness. Additional process automation and new technologies will bring further benefits across the organisation.

Principle 5 – Communication

Members of the Commission will aim to strengthen the links between people and the institutions that serve them, to narrow the gap between expectation and reality and to communicate about what Europe is doing. They should visit every Member State within the first half of the Commission mandate at the latest and engage with all Europeans, not just those who live in the capitals or are knowledgeable about the European Union. Members of the Commission will take part in Citizens' Dialogues across the Union, notably to prepare the Conference on the Future of Europe.

As all other activities, external communication is anchored in the principle of collegiality and under the leadership of the President. To be effective, it must be focused on the political and strategic priorities of the College as a whole.

The Spokesperson Service (SPP) is the official voice of the European Commission, and is placed under the authority of the President. It provides information about the priorities and decisions of the Commission to the media via the spokespersons.

Every member of the Commission will designate one member of his/her Cabinet to be in charge of communication. This Cabinet Communication Adviser plays a central role in shaping the communication profile of the member of the Commission, in close and permanent cooperation with the senior media advisor of the President and the SPP. The planning for press material is established by the SPP in close cooperation with the Cabinet Communication Advisers. Press releases and other press material are prepared and issued by the SPP, in close cooperation with the Cabinet Communication Advisers.