

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE SELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXPERT GROUP 'ZERO POLLUTION STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM'

*The Commission's Directorate-General for Environment extends the call for applications and welcomes further applications until 19.05.2026. This decision was taken to collect more applications with the required expertise. The applicants who already sent their applications between 31.03.2026 and 28.04.2026 do not need to re-apply under this extended call.

**All applications should be sent to ENV-ZERO-POLLUTION@ec.europa.eu with the subject line [Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform Application] - ORGANISATION NAME. Each application must include a cover letter, a Europass CV [for the representative chosen to select the organisation applying], a classification form specifying the applicant's member category, and a selection criteria form. These forms can be found in the annex. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. BACKGROUND

The Zero Pollution Action Plan adopted by the Commission on 12 May 2021¹ stressed the importance of engaging with relevant stakeholders on implementation and announced that *“the Commission, in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, will set up a new Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform to bring together stakeholders and experts of different policy areas (e.g. health, agriculture, research and innovation, transport, digitalisation and the environment) to effectively mainstream the zero pollution agenda, help create co-ownership, promote collaboration and foster integrated solutions and actions that maximise synergies with decarbonisation and post-COVID 19 recovery efforts.”*

In light of the above-mentioned Action Plan, in October 2021 the Commission's Directorate-General Environment ('DG ENV') took the initiative to set up the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform, with a view to complementing the work carried out in other groups and fora, with particular focus on the contribution that the zero pollution ambition can make to the European Green Deal.

On 29 January 2026, the European Commission published the mid-term review of the Zero Pollution Action Plan² which takes stock of the progress since 2021 and shows the need for further efforts on the road towards zero pollution in the context of the Commission's priorities. The review highlighted the continued importance of the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform in this work whilst recognising the need to update and further develop its functioning and membership³.

Following the mid-term review, DG ENV has decided to update the terms of reference of the Platform, with particular focus on the contribution that the zero-pollution ambition can make to the green and digital transformation.

¹ [COM\(2021\)400](#)

² [COM\(2026\) 42](#)

³ [Discussion document](#) on role and functioning of the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform (03/03/2025)

The group's overall mission shall be to support the European Commission in realising the objectives of the Zero Pollution Action Plan⁴ through engagement with all stakeholders concerned. The Platform will complement the work carried out in other existing expert groups and initiatives (see below), in particular by bringing focus on preventing or, reducing air, water and soil pollution and how this can be part of an integrated and holistic approach to achieve the goals of the green and digital transition towards a competitive Europe in the most efficient and effective way. It shall develop and share good practices on cross-cutting topics that could include, for instance, financing for zero pollution innovation and jobs, boosting sustainable production.

The Platform shall also seek to establish synergies with other relevant initiatives, such as the Climate Pact, Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (CESP), the Business@Biodiversity Platforms, the Chemicals Roundtable, as well as with the Green City Accord (GCA), Covenant of Mayors (CoM) and other relevant initiatives, e.g. by coordinating agendas or regular information exchange ensuring that the zero pollution dimension is considered appropriately in related policy initiatives. Discussions in the group shall not replace formal consultations on the specific actions or initiatives announced in the Mid-Term Review of the Zero Pollution Action Plan. Implementation of existing relevant legislation in the different policy areas of zero pollution shall also continue to take place in the dedicated fora put in place for this purpose.⁵

The group's specific tasks shall be:

1. to assist the Commission by contributing to identifying and addressing social, economic and cultural barriers to the transition towards zero pollution;
2. to assist the Commission in developing a regular exchange of views, experiences and good practices between relevant stakeholders, and between stakeholders and the Commission about innovative approaches by stakeholders to achieve the main objectives of the Action Plan and the priorities identified in the Mid-Term Review⁶.
3. to assist in the promotion of zero pollution solutions and best practices in the context of key enablers such as implementation, investments and integration, innovation, digitalisation and skills as well as the international cooperation.

The Commission is calling for applications with a view to renewing the membership of the group other than Member States' authorities.

The aim is to shape the group's membership in light of the objectives set out in the Zero Pollution Action Plan, as well as to achieve a wider, more balanced representation of interests and to collect more applications with expertise in the areas not yet sufficiently represented amongst the members, e.g. in the areas of chemicals industry, other strategic industrial sectors, consumer rights, youth movements, digitalisation, applied research and training/education.

⁴ The 2050 vision and the 2030 targets are set out in the Zero Pollution Action Plan. The Mid-Term Review (COM(2026) 42 sets out the priorities for this mandate.

⁵ For example, the expert groups established to implement the air, noise, water, marine, soil, industrial emission as well as other relevant legislation.

⁶ See COM(2021) 400 and COM(2026) 42 for details.

The current members and the applicants who sent their applications in 2021 will need to re-apply under this extended call.

2. FEATURES OF THE GROUP

2.1. Composition

1. The group shall be composed of up to [77] members.
2. Competent Member States' authorities shall be members of the group.
3. Up to [50] members shall be organisations that operate across intra-EU borders, preferably with EU-wide coverage and/or membership. The following organisations shall be represented:
 - a. up to [16] civil society and youth organisations operating in the following areas: health protection, environmental protection, consumer rights, workers' rights, youth movements;
 - b. up to [22] organisations from the business sector, including SMEs, with an adequate representation of frontrunners in reducing pollution of air, ocean, water and soil as well as managing chemicals and waste. Such organisations should include primary, secondary and tertiary sector businesses, from relevant fields such as chemicals, health, agriculture, transport, energy and digitalisation;
 - c. up to [6] scientific organisations, academia and research institutes, providing a good balance between expertise in fundamental research, applied research and training/education;
 - d. up to [6] organisations representing local and regional authorities that implement policies to reduce pollution.

Each member shall nominate one main representative and one back-up representative and be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high level of expertise and a strategic overview of pollution aspects across topics and media.

DG ENV may refuse the nomination by an organisation of a representative if it considers this nomination inappropriate in the light of the requirements specified in chapter 4 of this call for applications. In such a case, the organisation concerned shall be asked to appoint another representative.

2.2. Appointment

Competent Member States' authorities shall be appointed by direct invitation.

Member organisations shall be appointed by the Director General of DG ENV from applicants with competence in the areas referred to in chapter 1 and who have responded to the call for applications.

Members shall be appointed until the end of 2029. They shall remain in office until the end of their term of office or until replaced. Their term of office may be renewed.

Registration in the Transparency Register is required for organisations to be appointed.

DG ENV shall establish a reserve list of suitable candidates that may be used to appoint organisations' replacements. DG ENV shall ask applicants for their consent before including their names on the reserve list.

Member organisations who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the group's deliberations, and/or who, in the opinion of DG ENV do not comply with the conditions set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and/or who resign, shall no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the group and may be replaced by another relevant organisation to be selected by DG ENV for the remainder of their term of office.

2.3 Rules of engagement and operation of the group

The group shall be chaired by a senior representative of DG ENV , as well as a representative of the European Committee of the Regions.

The group shall act at the request of DG ENV in compliance with the Commission's horizontal rules on expert groups ('the horizontal rules')⁷.

In principle, the group shall meet up to two times a year. Meetings of the group shall be held on Commission premises or the premises of the European Committee of the Regions or online, depending on the circumstances.

DG ENV shall provide secretarial services supported, in a consultative role, by the European Committee of the Regions.

Commission officials from other departments with an interest in the proceedings may attend meetings of the group and its sub-groups.

In agreement with DG ENV, the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public.

As far as possible, the group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members. Members who have voted against or abstained shall have the right to have a document summarising the reasons for their position annexed to the opinions, recommendations or reports.

Members' representatives should be prepared to attend meetings systematically, to contribute actively to discussions in the group, to be involved in preparatory work ahead of meetings, to examine and provide comments on documents under discussion, and to act, as appropriate, as 'rapporteurs' on *ad hoc* basis.

As a general rule, working documents will be drafted in English and meetings will be also conducted in English.

Participants in the activities of the group and its sub-groups shall not be remunerated for the services they offer. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall be reimbursed by the Commission. Reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the

⁷ [Commission Decision C\(2016\)3301](#)

Commission and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

The members of the group and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443⁸ and 2015/444⁹. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

On a proposal by and in agreement with DG ENV or its chairs the group shall adopt its rules of procedure by simple majority of its members, on the basis of the standard rules of procedure for expert groups, in compliance with the horizontal rules¹⁰. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the group's rules of procedure.

DG ENV may invite experts with specific expertise on subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the group or sub-groups on an ad hoc basis. These experts may include companies' or associations' representatives and individual experts.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shall be granted an observer status, by direct invitation.

Upon request, additional public entities other than Member States' authorities, such as third country authorities, including candidate authorities, Union bodies, offices or agencies and international organisations may be granted an observer status.

Observers shall nominate their representatives and back-up representatives.

Observers' representatives may be permitted by the Chair to take part in the discussions of the group and provide expertise. However, they shall not have voting rights and shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice of the group or its sub-groups.

DG ENV may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by DG ENV. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the horizontal rules and shall report to the group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled. The members of sub-groups that are not members of the group shall be selected via a public call for applications, in compliance the horizontal rules¹¹.

2.4. Transparency

⁸ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

⁹ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

¹⁰ See Article 17 of the horizontal rules.

¹¹ See Articles 10 and 14.2 of the horizontal rules.

The group and sub-groups shall be registered in the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups')¹².

As concerns the group and sub-groups composition, the following data shall be published on the Register of expert groups:

- a) the name of Member States;
- b) the name of member organisations, the interest represented shall be disclosed;
- c) the name of observers.

All relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, shall be made available on the Register of expert groups DG ENV shall publish the agenda and other relevant background documents in due course ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be possible where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001¹³.

Personal data shall be collected, processed and published in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725.

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested organisations are invited to submit their application to the European Commission, DG ENV.

Applications must be completed in one of the official languages of the European Union. However, applications in English would facilitate the evaluation procedure. If another language is used, it would be helpful to include a summary of the application in English.

Organisations shall indicate the name of their representatives in the group.

An application will be deemed admissible only if it is sent by the deadline and includes the documents referred to below. All documents submitted by applicants should be duly filled in, legible, signed and numbered sequentially.

Supporting documents

Each application shall include the following documents:

- a cover letter explaining the applicant's motivation for answering this call and stating what active contribution the applicant could make to the group;
- a classification form duly filled in specifying the member category for which the application is made (Annex I).

¹² <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm>

¹³ These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.

- a selection criteria form duly filled in documenting how the applicant fulfills the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call (Annex II).

For individuals indicated by organisations as their representatives, a *curriculum vitae* (CV) must also be provided, preferably not exceeding three pages. All CVs shall be submitted in the European format ([Home | Europass](#)).

Additional supporting documents (e.g. publications) may be requested at a later stage.

Deadline for application

The duly signed applications must be sent by email to the European Commission, DG ENV, to the following e-mail address: ENV-ZERO-POLLUTION@ec.europa.eu by **19.05.2026 (23h59)** at the latest. The date of the e-mail will be the date of sending.

4. SELECTION CRITERIA

DG ENV will take the following criteria into account when assessing applications:

- (1) A proven and relevant competence and experience preferably at European and/or international level, in areas relevant to the objectives and actions of the Zero Pollution Action Plan and in particular in driving the transition to achieve the zero pollution vision for 2050, where air, water and soil pollution is reduced to levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems and that respect the boundaries our planet can cope with, thus creating a toxic-free environment.
- (2) Specific experience in at least two and preferably more of the following areas of pollution prevention and control:
 - Air pollution
 - Noise pollution
 - Water pollution
 - Marine pollution
 - Soil pollution
 - Pollution from chemicals, products and waste
- (3) competence, experience and hierarchical level of the proposed representatives;
- (4) representativeness and significance of the organisation at pan-European or global level in relation to an integrated approach for pollution prevention and control in two or more of the areas listed above;
- (5) dedicated commitment to actively contribute or drive the implementation of the cross-cutting actions and, in particular the actions listed in the Zero Pollution Mid Term Review and the pollution-related actions in the Water Resilience Strategy, the Ocean Pact and the Chemicals Industry Action Plan.
- (6) strong knowledge of the English language of the organisations' representatives allowing active participation in the discussions.

5. SELECTION PROCEDURE

The selection procedure shall consist of an assessment of the applications performed by DG ENV against the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call, followed by the establishment of a list of the most suitable applicants, and concluded by the appointment of the members of the group.

When defining the composition of the group, DG ENV shall aim at ensuring, as far as possible, a high level and wide expertise across the different pollution areas, as well as a balanced representation of relevant know-how and areas of interest, while taking into account the specific tasks of the group, the type of expertise required, as well as the relevance of the applications received.

For any further information please contact ENV-ZERO-POLLUTION@ec.europa.eu.

ANNEXES:

Annex I: Classification form

Annex II: Selection criteria form

Annex III: Privacy statement

Annex I - Classification form¹⁴

To be filled in by all applicants

This application is made as: (*please select only one option*)

An organisation (Type C member).

Transparency Register identification number: [...]

Nota Bene concerning C members: although registration in the Transparency Register (TR)¹⁵ is required in order to be appointed as a Type C member of an expert group, it is not mandatory for the application procedure. Thus, interested organisations that, at the time of the application, are not featured yet on the TR and, as a consequence, do not have a TR identification number, may still apply. However, should the applicant be selected as a result of the call for applications, it shall register in the Transparency Register as a condition to be appointed as a Type C member.

To be filled in by organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

This application is made as the following **type of organisation**: (*please select only one option, taking into account the definitions indicated below*).

- a) Academia, research institutes and Think Tanks
- b) Banks/Financial institutions
- c) Companies/groups
- d) Law firms
- e) NGOs
- f) Professionals' associations
- g) Professional consultancies
- h) Trade and business associations
- i) Trade unions
- j) Other (please specify):

¹⁴ This form must be filled in, signed and returned with the application.

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do>

Definitions for organisation types

Academia, Research institutes and Think Tanks

Universities, schools, research centers, think tanks and other similar bodies performing academic and/or educational activities.

Banks/Financial institutions

Banks and other similar bodies providing financial services, including financial intermediation. All sorts of banks should be classified within this category, including national central banks.

Companies/groups

Individual companies or groups of companies operating in the business sector, whether they are national companies or multinational ones.

Law firms

Business entities formed by one or more lawyers to engage in the practice of law. The primary service rendered by a law firm is to advise clients (individuals or corporations) about their legal rights and responsibilities, and to represent clients in civil or criminal cases, business transactions, and other matters in which legal advice and other assistance are sought.

NGOs

Non-profit organisations which are independent from public authorities and commercial organisations. Some NGOs are organised around specific issues, such as environment, consumer affairs, health and human rights.

Professionals' associations

Non-profit organisations seeking to further the interests of individuals engaged in a particular profession, such as physicians, nurses, architects, engineers and lawyers. Professionals' associations are different from business associations, as they promote and defend the interests of individuals carrying on a specific profession, not the interests of companies operating in the business sector.

Professional consultancies

Firms carrying on, on behalf of clients, activities involving advocacy, lobbying, promotion, public affairs and relations with public authorities.

Trade and business associations

Private bodies representing the interests of its members operating in the business sector.

Trade unions

Organisations of workers. The most common activities performed by trade unions include the negotiation of wages, work rules, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers.

Other organisations

Organisations which are not possible to classify in any other category.

To be filled in by organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

The applicant shall represent the following **interest**: (*please select one or more options, taking into account the definitions indicated below*):

- a) Academia/Research
- b) Civil society
- c) Employees/Workers
- d) Finance
- e) Industry
- f) Professionals
- g) SMEs
- h) Other (please specify):

Definitions for interests represented

Academia/Research

Universities, schools, research centers, think tanks and other similar bodies performing academic and/or educational activities.

Civil society

Civil society can be defined as the aggregate of non-governmental organisations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens or as individuals and organisations in a society which are independent of the government.

Employees/workers

Individuals working part-time or full-time under a contract of employment whether oral or written, express or implied, and having recognized rights and duties.

Finance

The management of revenues or the conduct or transaction of money matters, as in the fields of banking, insurance and investment.


Industry

Companies and groups of companies whose number of employees and turnover or balance sheet total are higher than the ones of SMEs (see below).

Professionals

Individuals operating in a particular profession, such as physicians, nurses, architects, engineers and lawyers.

SMEs

"SME" stands for small and medium-sized enterprises – as defined in EU law: [EU recommendation 2003/361](#) .

The main factors determining whether a company is an SME are:

1. **number of employees** and
2. either **turnover** or **balance sheet total**.

Company category Employees Turnover or Balance sheet total

Medium-sized < 250 ≤ € 50 m ≤ € 43 m

Small < 50 ≤ € 10 m ≤ € 10 m

Micro < 10 ≤ € 2 m ≤ € 2 m

These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm which is part of larger grouping may need to include employee/turnover/balance sheet data from that grouping too.

Other interest

Interest which is not possible to classify in any other category.

To be filled in by organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

Please select one **or more policy areas** in which your organisation operates:

- Agriculture
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Audiovisual and media
- Audit
- Banking
- Biodiversity
- Civil protection
- Civil service
- Climate
- Competition
- Conservation
- Consumer affairs
- Culture
- Cultural Heritage
- Cultural Landscape
- Customs
- Development
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Economy
- Education
- Employment and social affairs
- Energy
- Engineering (chemical)
- Engineering (civil)
- Engineering (infrastructure)
- Engineering (IT)
- Engineering (maritime)
- Engineering (space policy)
- Engineering (space research)
- Enlargement
- Environment
- Equal opportunities
- External relations
- External trade
- Finance
- Fisheries and aquaculture
- Food safety
- Forestry
- Fundamental rights
- Humanitarian aid
- Industry
- Information society
- Innovation
- Insurance
- Labour
- Land management
- Law (civil)

- Law (corporate)
- Law (criminal)
- Law (taxation)
- Linguistics and Terminology
- Livestock
- Medical profession
- Migration
- Natural resources
- Plant production
- Public affairs
- Public health
- Public relations
- Raw materials
- Research
- Science
- Science diplomacy
- Security
- Smart specialisation
- Social service
- Space and Satellites (policy)
- Space and Satellites (research)
- Sport
- Statistics
- Sustainable Development
- Systemic eco-innovation
- Tax
- Trade
- Training
- Transport
- Urban development
- Water
- Youth
- Other

For organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

Name of the organisation¹⁶:

Surname of the representative proposed:

First name of the representative proposed:

Surname of the person applying on behalf of the organisation:

First name of the person applying on behalf of the organisation:

Date:

Signature

¹⁶ It is mandatory to use exactly the same name used when registering in the Transparency Register.

Annex II: Selection criteria form¹⁷

Applicants are requested to describe how they fulfil the selection criteria listed in this call.

<p>Proven and relevant competence and experience preferably at European and/or international level, in areas relevant to the objectives and actions of the Zero Pollution Action Plan and in particular in driving the transition to achieve the zero pollution vision for 2050, where air, water and soil pollution is reduced to levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems and that respect the boundaries our planet can cope with, thus creating a toxic-free environment.</p>	
<p>Specific experience in at least two and preferably more of the following areas of pollution prevention and control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Noise pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Water pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Marine pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Soil pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution from chemicals, products and waste 	
<p>Competence, experience and hierarchical level of the proposed representatives</p>	
<p>Representativeness and significance of the organisation at pan-European or global level in relation to an integrated approach for pollution prevention and control in two or more areas listed above</p>	
<p>Dedicated commitment to actively contribute or drive the implementation of the cross-cutting actions and, in particular the actions listed in the Zero Pollution Mid Term Review and the pollution-related actions in the Water Resilience Strategy, the Ocean Pact and the Chemicals Industry Action Plan.</p>	
<p>Strong knowledge of the English language of</p>	

¹⁷ This form must be filled in, signed and returned with the application.

the organisations' representatives allowing active participation in the discussions.	
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For organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

Name of the organisation¹⁸:

Surname of the representative proposed:

First name of the representative proposed:

Surname of the person applying on behalf of the organisation:

First name of the person applying on behalf of the organisation:

Date:

Signature

¹⁸ It is mandatory to use exactly the same name used when registering in the Transparency Register.

Annex III Privacy Statement

PROTECTION OF YOUR PERSONAL DATA

This privacy statement provides information about the processing and the protection of your personal data.

Processing operation: *Selection of members of Commission expert groups and other similar entities¹⁹ and publication of personal data on the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ("the Register of expert groups").*

Data Controller:

- *Secretariat-General, Unit H3 (for the processing operation "Providing a public register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities", DPR-EC-00656), and*
- *Directorate-General for Environment/ Directorate C.3 (for the processing operation "Selection of members of Commission expert groups and other similar entities", DPR-EC-01066).*

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¹⁹ Provisions included in this privacy statement referring to expert groups equally apply to their sub-groups.

1. Introduction

The European Commission (hereafter ‘the Commission’) is committed to protect your personal data and to respect your privacy. The Commission collects and further processes personal data pursuant to [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1725](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.

This privacy statement explains the reasons for the processing of your personal data, the way we collect, handle and ensure protection of all personal data provided, how that information is used and what rights you have in relation to your personal data. It also specifies the contact details of the responsible Data Controller with whom you may exercise your rights, of the Data Protection Officer and of the European Data Protection Supervisor.

This privacy statement concerns the following processing operations:

(1) “selection of members of Commission expert groups and other similar entities” undertaken by the Commission department which runs the selection process for your expert group and which is the Data Controller for the selection process (Directorate-General for Environment/Directorate C.3), and

(2) “publication of personal data on the Register of expert groups and other similar entities” undertaken by the Commission, Secretariat-General, Unit H3 which is the Data Controller together with the Commission department managing your expert group.

As a rule, the selection of expert group members is carried out via public calls for applications, except for Member States’ authorities and other public entities and for certain representative bodies established by Union legislation for advice in specific areas.

The Register of expert groups and other similar entities is a public database containing a list of Commission expert groups and other similar entities and their sub-groups. For each expert group, the Register provides valuable information including personal data on the members of the expert groups, and their alternate, if any, members’ representatives, as well as of the groups’ observers and their representatives. The Register also includes documents that are produced and discussed by expert groups and which can contain personal data.

For the purpose of this privacy statement and the corresponding records, the term “expert groups” describes Commission expert groups in the sense of Article 2(1) of Commission Decision C(2016)3301²⁰ and their sub-groups, as well as other similar entities in the sense of Article 2(2) of Commission Decision C(2016)3301 and their sub-groups.

2. Why and how do we process your personal data?

Purpose of the processing operations:

The Data Controllers collect and use your personal data to manage Commission expert groups, in particular by selecting their members and observers, and to ensure transparency on expert groups’ membership and activities. In that context, in order to select among the applicants who

²⁰ Commission Decision C(2016)3301 of 30 May 2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups.

best fulfil the selection criteria mentioned in the call for applications, Commission services collect and assess personal information of candidate members and observers of the expert groups, of representatives of candidate members and observers, and of immediate family members of candidate members and observers to be appointed in personal capacity to act independently and in the public interest.

Furthermore, Commission services collect and assess personal information of observers and members' and observers' representatives of the expert groups which are appointed directly and not selected through a public call for applications.

For candidates, personal data are stored by the Commission service managing the expert group. Some types of personal data of individuals appointed as members (either appointed in personal capacity to act independently and in the public interest or to represent a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular policy area) are made publicly available on the Register of expert groups (as described under Headings 4 and 5 of this privacy statement). The names of the representatives of organisations, Member States and other public entities, as well as the name of specific national departments or other public authority which they represent may also be made publicly available on the Register of expert groups.

Your personal data will not be used for an automated decision-making including profiling.

3. On what legal ground(s) do we process your personal data

We process your personal data, because processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (Article 5(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725), since it allows for the selection of members of expert groups (individuals appointed as members in a personal capacity, individuals appointed to represent a common interest and organisations) and also increases the transparency on expert groups. Processing is also necessary to comply with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject (Article 5(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725). The Union act for such necessary processing under Article 5(1)(a) and (b) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 is Commission Decision C(2016)3301 of 30 May 2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups and in particular Articles 10 and 22 thereof.

As regards, in particular, the declarations of interests filled in by candidate members to be appointed in a personal capacity in expert groups, the processing of personal data serves the public interest of enabling the Commission to verify in the process of selection the experts' independence in providing advice to the Commission. Furthermore, the public disclosure of declarations of interests of those experts once appointed allows for public scrutiny of the interests declared by these experts, which is necessary in order to ensure public confidence in the independence of these experts. The public disclosure of declarations of interests also ensures a high degree of transparency with respect to the membership of expert groups and aims at contributing to fostering the integrity of the experts in question.

The names of the representatives of organisations, Member States' authorities and other public entities are usually not published in the Register of expert groups, as those persons only express the position of the organisation or entity that they represent, and, therefore, it is the name of the organisation, Member State's authority or other public entity that matters to ensure transparency of the work of the expert group. Any publication of names of the representatives of organisations, Member States' authorities and other public entities in the Register of expert groups is based on consent (Article 5(1)(d) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725), unless specific and exceptional circumstances make it necessary to publish them to achieve the purpose of the processing operation, in accordance with Article 5(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. No other types of personal data of representatives is published.

he submissions of members in the context of the work of expert groups and subgroups are generally made public, with personal data withheld where appropriate.

In the cases when the group is chaired by a person different than the Commission or its services, the name of this person may be published on the basis of consent (Article 5(1)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725).

4. Which personal data do we collect and further process?

In order to carry out these processing operations, the Data Controller may collect the following categories of personal data:

- *Name;*
- *Function;*
- *Contact details (for example, e-mail address, telephone number, mobile telephone number, fax number, postal address, company and department, country of residence, IP address);*
- *Information for the evaluation of selection criteria or eligibility criteria (for example, expertise, technical skills and languages, educational background, professional experience, including details on current and past employment);*
- *Nationality;*
- *Gender;*
- *Interest represented (only for individuals applying to be appointed as members of expert groups or sub-groups representing a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular policy area and for organisations applying to be appointed as members of expert groups or sub-groups, as well as for their designated representatives);*
- *Information included in the declarations of interests, including personal data of immediate family members as required in the declaration of interests (only for individuals applying to be appointed as members of expert groups or sub-groups in a personal capacity).*
- *Personal data that may be included in submissions of members of expert groups.*

The provision to the Commission service of the personal data required is mandatory to meet a legal requirement of selecting members of expert groups as set in Commission Decision C(2016)3301. In principle, for individuals appointed as members or observers in personal capacity to act independently and in the public interest and for individuals appointed as members or observers to represents a common interest, the types of personal data listed above (with the exception of contact details and information for the evaluation of selection criteria or eligibility criteria) are made publicly available on the Register of expert groups, in order to comply with the legal requirement to ensure transparency on the composition and functioning of Commission expert groups. If you do not provide the personal data required, possible consequences are that you will not be considered for selection as a member of an expert group or, if already selected, your membership will be suspended.

The submissions of members in the context of the work of expert groups and subgroups are generally made public, with personal data withheld where appropriate.

With the prior freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous consent of the representatives of organisations, Member States' authorities and other public entities, their names may also be published on the Register. They may furthermore be published in specific and exceptional circumstances where such publication is necessary to achieve the purpose of the processing operation.

The name of a person chairing the group, when this person is not from within the Commission (i.e. the group elects a chair from among its members or the Commission or its services appoint an individual as chair), may be published with his/ her prior freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous consent.

5. How long do we keep your personal data?

The Data Controller only keeps your personal data for the time necessary to fulfil the purpose of collection or further processing. The following modalities apply:

- The competent Commission services keep personal data submitted to them as part of rejected applications for three years after the end of the selection process and do not process them for other purposes; these personal data are not published on the Register of expert groups.
- The expert group and some types of personal data of its members and observers, as described in Heading 4, are published on the Register of expert groups during the duration of existence of the expert group.
- When an individual is no longer member or observer or representative of a member or observer of an expert group listed in the Register of expert groups, all personal data related to this individual, including a declaration of interests, is removed from the Register and is therefore not public anymore.
- The competent Commission services keep personal data for the period during which the relevant individual is a member or an observer or a representative of a member or of an observer of the group and for five years after the date on which the individual is no longer member or observer or representative of a member or observer of the group. Following this five-year period, the personal data is transferred to the historical archives and a review takes place no later than 25 years after that transfer to the historical archives to evaluate whether to keep the data permanently or to delete some or all data.
- When a group is closed down, it remains published in the Register of expert groups for five years, with the indication 'Closed'. Those types of personal data other than the declarations of interests of members appointed in personal capacity that were published while the group was active remain visible on the Register of expert groups during these five years. On the contrary, the said declarations of interests are removed from the Register after closure of a group and are therefore not public anymore; they are however kept by the competent Commission service for a period of five years after the closure of the group. Following this five-year period after the closure of the group, the personal data is transferred to the historical archives and a review takes place no later than 25 years from that transfer to evaluate whether to keep the data permanently or to delete some or all data.
- An XML file is created daily with all the information regarding active groups. All versions of this file, showing the situation of the Register of expert groups as of the day it was created, are stored in a file server for 5 years and are not public.

6. How do we protect and safeguard your personal data?

Personal data submitted in paper form is stored in the competent Commission service. All personal data in electronic format (e-mails, documents, databases, uploaded batches of data, etc.) are stored on the servers of the Commission. All processing operations are carried out pursuant to the [Commission Decision \(EU, Euratom\) 2017/46](#) of 10 January 2017 on the security of communication and information systems in the European Commission.

In order to protect your personal data, the Commission has put in place a number of technical and organisational measures. Technical measures include appropriate actions to address online security, risk of data loss, alteration of data or unauthorised access, taking into consideration the risk presented by the processing and the nature of the personal data being processed. Organisational measures include restricting access to the personal data solely to authorised persons with a legitimate need to know for the purposes of this processing operation.

7. Who has access to your personal data and to whom is it disclosed?

Access to your personal data collected in the course of the process of selection of members of expert groups is provided to the Commission staff authorised for carrying out this processing operation and to other authorised Commission staff according to the “need to know” principle. Such staff abide by statutory, and when required, additional confidentiality agreements.

Certain personal data collected, as explained in Headings 4 and 5, are publicly available on the Register of expert groups.

The XML files referred to in Heading 5 are only accessible to a reduced number of users in the Secretariat-General (System Owner) and IT development team within the Commission (System Supplier).

Please note that pursuant to Article 3(13) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, public authorities (e.g. Court of Auditors, EU Court of Justice, European Ombudsman) which may receive personal data in the framework of a particular inquiry in accordance with Union or Member State law shall not be regarded as recipients. The further processing of those data by those public authorities shall be in compliance with the applicable data protection rules according to the purposes of the processing.

The information we collect will not be given to any third party, except to the extent and for the purpose we may be required to do so by law.

8. What are your rights and how can you exercise them?

You have specific rights as a ‘data subject’ under Chapter III (Articles 14-25) and Article 35 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, in particular the right to access your personal data and to rectify them in case your personal data is inaccurate or incomplete. Under certain conditions, you have the right to erase your personal data, to restrict the processing of your personal data, to object to the processing and the right to data portability.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data on grounds relating to your particular situation in accordance with Article 23(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

As indicated in Heading 4, if you are a representative of an organisation, Member State or another public entity, you may consent to have your name published on the Register of expert groups. You can withdraw your consent at any time by notifying the Data Controller. The withdrawal will not affect the lawfulness of the processing carried out before you have withdrawn the consent.

Finally, and only as regards the publication of your name on the Register of expert groups, you may submit a request to the competent Commission service for a derogation where justified on compelling legitimate grounds in relation to your specific situation (such as the case where the publication of your name on the Register of expert groups could endanger your security or integrity).

You can exercise your rights by contacting the Data Controller or, in case of conflict, the Data Protection Officer. If necessary, you can also address the European Data Protection Supervisor. Their contact information is given under Heading 9 below.

Where you wish to exercise your rights in the context of one or several specific processing operations, please provide their description (i.e. their Record reference(s) as specified under Heading 10 below) in your request.

Data subject requests shall be handled within one month from receipt of the request by the Commission. That period may be extended pursuant to 14(3) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. Should more time be required to handle the request for justified reasons, the data subject shall receive a holding reply from the unit responsible for the request.

9. Contact information

- The Data Controller

Regarding the personal data collected in the course of the process of selection of the members of the expert groups, if you would like to exercise your rights under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, or if you have comments, questions or concerns, or if you would like to submit a complaint, please contact functional mailbox of the Directorate-General for Environment, Directorate C.3 - at ENV-ZERO-POLLUTION@ec.europa.eu.

Likewise, as regards the data published on the Register of expert groups, please contact the corresponding Data Controller Secretariat-General, Unit H3: SG-EXPERT-GROUPS@ec.europa.eu.

- The Data Protection Officer (DPO) of the Commission

You may contact the Data Protection Officer (DATA-PROTECTION-OFFICER@ec.europa.eu) with regard to issues related to the processing of your personal data under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

- The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)

You have the right to have recourse (i.e. you can lodge a complaint) to the European Data Protection Supervisor (edps@edps.europa.eu) if you consider that your rights under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 have been infringed as a result of the processing of your personal data by the Data Controller.

10. Where to find more detailed information?

The Commission Data Protection Officer (DPO) publishes the register of all processing operations on personal data by the Commission, which have been documented and notified to him. You may access the register via the following link: <http://ec.europa.eu/dpo-register>.

These specific processing operations will be included in the DPO's public register with the following Record references: DPR-EC-01066 and DPR-EC-00656.