



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

JAI

Justice and Home Affairs



*“ Freedom, security and justice:
making it happen*

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— Print ISBN 978-92-824-8634-4 doi:10.2860/455052 QC-07-22-795-EN-C
PDF ISBN 978-92-824-8633-7 doi:10.2860/115649 QC-07-22-795-EN-N

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— EN_2022_281

HOW WE ARE ORGANISED

We have two directorates: one for justice and one for home affairs. We also have two units, one dealing with fundamental rights, values and rule of law, and the other with evaluations in justice and home affairs and drugs policy. We work actively in developing an area of freedom, security and justice, assisting the European Council and the Council and collaborating with other institutions towards the same goal.

The teams in each directorate cover a wide variety of policy areas related to justice and home affairs. The office of the Director-General also comprises a team responsible for the coordination of external relations in the field of justice and home affairs, led by a colleague with a head of unit equivalent position.

The main fields of activity of the Directorate for Home Affairs are: migration, borders, internal security, counter-terrorism and information exchange.

The main areas of the Directorate for Justice are: civil and criminal law, cyber policy, data protection, e-Justice.



WHAT WE DO

This is a summary of our **core responsibilities**:

- We assist the European Council and the Council in all matters related to the implementation of a European area of freedom, security and justice.
- We ensure the effective coordination and programming of the Union's legislative procedures and of policy decisions by the Council on justice and home affairs matters.
- We assist and advise the presidency in the negotiating process in the Council and other institutions, in close cooperation with other institutions, services and international bodies.

- We act as counsellors to the presidency at all levels by providing advice on substance, strategy, tactics and presentation of items being handled in the Council.
- We draft documents and briefs identifying political difficulties swiftly and providing options for compromise in order to build and reach politically acceptable outcomes.
- We ensure effective information-sharing, communication and transparency within the Council Secretariat.

Legislation is traditionally the bulk of our work in JAI. This involves giving substantial assistance to the presidency in all phases of a legislative proposal, including the trilogue phase with the European Parliament, which is usually very time-consuming for all those involved.

In recent years, however, JAI has increasingly been called on to produce policy papers, briefings and background notes on several policy issues for the PEC, the Secretary-General and the presidency. Therefore, desk officers in JAI often have to take the initiative and pro-actively provide concrete input. This requires them to have a solid grasp of the subject matters they cover, together with political awareness and strong drafting skills.

Because many of the issues covered by JAI require cooperation with third countries and international organisations, there is also an important international dimension to our work, which involves assisting the presidency, coordinating work with the Commission and the EEAS and attending meetings with third parties in Brussels and all over the world.

PROFILES AND SKILLS WE ARE LOOKING FOR

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- Responsibility for one or more legislative and non-legislative files. This involves: providing procedural, tactical, drafting and practical advice to presidencies, delegations, other institutions, agencies and the hierarchy; preparing and following up on working-party meetings; and preparing documents and briefing notes for Coreper, Council and European Council meetings where the files are discussed.
- Draft briefing notes to presidencies for their appearances in the European Parliament and their participation in meetings with third countries.
- Keep abreast of wider developments in their field of competence in order to pro-actively suggest solutions and identify upcoming issues and cross-cutting aspects to presidencies and the hierarchy.
- Develop and maintain a network of stakeholders within Member State delegations, EU institutions and agencies.
- Participate in and oversee internal projects, be it as a contact point for the DG in horizontal networks of the Secretariat or as an organiser of internal activities (e.g. a team day).

AST (political assistant)

- Report directly to the Director-General, assisting in the work of the European Council, Council and Coreper.
- Act as a contact person for future presidencies for administrative questions regarding Coreper/Council and inform them of deadlines.
- Prepare and send out invitations to other EU Institutions and

- agencies for the Council and liaise with the protocol service.
- Follow-up on requests from the cabinet and request contributions from management for possible topics to be discussed at Council meetings for each new presidency (using a specific template).
- Draw up draft agendas (using the template provided by the cabinet) based on contributions sent by directors as approved by the Director-General.
- Request contributions within the DG for Coreper (Coreper/COMIX) minutes and send them to the cabinet (through WORKFLOW) after hierarchical validation.
- Ensure that deadlines are met for inscriptions and briefs for Coreper and Council and check them accordingly.
- Liaise with horizontal coordination assistants to ensure that agenda items, briefs and documents are all prepared on time.

AST (horizontal coordination assistant)

- Work on coordination issues and contribute to developing more coherent working methods for the DG, in close cooperation with other assistants, the document management officer and managers, for whom they would be the first points of contact.
- Ensure that rules and procedures for preparation of Council and Coreper meetings are followed and ensure the timely delivery of briefs to the presidency of the European Council and the rotating presidency and replies to European Parliament questions.
- Take an active part in preparing and following up on working parties in the areas covered by the directorate/unit; this includes preparing documents and providing information and guidance on the state of play of work.

- Organise the secretarial support for the unit/directorate, including logistical, technical and administrative issues, by setting priorities, developing efficient working methods and coaching colleagues (in particular newcomers).
- Be the first point of contact for any questions about document and file management for their team and manage these tasks independently, ensuring appropriate training and that other team members' input is followed up on.
- Maintain contact with permanent representations and other EU Institutions and answer any queries they might have about the current state of files.

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- Prepare and follow up on the activities of working parties, namely preparation of documents and document management.
- Provide information and guidance on the state of play of work.
- Maintain contact with permanent representations and other EU institutions and answer any queries they might have on the current state of files.
- Prepare inscriptions for Coreper and Council meetings.

WHAT WE OFFER

You deal with **sensitive and complex issues** which are high on the political agenda and **make a difference** to the lives of some of the most vulnerable people.

You have the chance to understand what's happening **behind the scenes**.

Your work is a mix of legal, political and technical issues.

Yours **tasks are varied**, you have to be open-minded and you get to develop and use different skills (drafting, advising, negotiating, planning).

The working parties you mainly work with change every semester, so it's never boring!

It's a small DG, so you can develop a **close working relations** with your colleagues.

You can enjoy a **good atmosphere and friendly colleagues**. All colleagues take pride in their work and are committed to helping and assisting the rotating presidencies.

There is a **real spirit of cooperation**.

And, last but not least...
sweets and chocolate are almost always available!

WHAT DO OUR STAFF SAY ABOUT US

You often follow very complex and sensitive political discussions. JAI issues are high on the political agenda and are likely to remain so. It can be satisfying when new legislation is adopted (although that often takes time) but there is also a certain amount of frustration when you spend months negotiating and seeking solutions only to find out that a compromise among Member States is not possible.

You deal with a variety of stakeholders, which means you share a lot of information and expand your knowledge of your subject on a daily basis.

If you're thinking of applying here, you need a good political radar, excellent drafting skills, a willingness to work long hours and respect tight deadlines, good interpersonal skills to deal with Member States, the European Parliament and Commission colleagues and flexibility in terms of planning. This can be challenging at times because you must follow the presidency planning and be there to assist them when they need your help.

Despite a sometimes heavy workload, tight schedules and frequent deadlines, the atmosphere is very pleasant – this would not be possible without a supportive and understanding hierarchy.

New colleagues in the DG are always warmly welcomed and get to see the very interesting political files we deal with. If you're thinking of applying here, you should be interested in a

constantly changing environment, a wide range of issues to be covered and also working in an independent manner. Training is encouraged. Our right to disconnect is respected.

New colleagues will encounter a friendly working environment, excellent inter-personal relations, an equal distribution of tasks among team members, information and knowledge sharing and an accessible management/hierarchy.

If you're thinking of applying here, you will never be bored as the tasks are varied and there are always new challenges which give an opportunity for personal improvement and the acquisition of new skills.



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