



Brussels Public Affairs Forum **2025**

The European political landscape is shifting, with new priorities, political figures, and an evolving global dynamics reshaping the environment in which businesses and public affairs teams operate.

With the EU setting its agenda for the next five years, organizations must stay ahead of policy developments, anticipate risks, and adapt their strategies to an increasingly complex and polarized world.

As global trends exert a growing influence in European politics, policy and business, how can public affairs teams help their organizations navigate a rapidly changing external environment and deliver value?

Conference Agenda

08:30 – 09:00

Registration, welcome and network coffee

09:00 – 09:50

Welcome & Keynote | The European Union in the Global Chessboard - What Now and What Next?

Speaker:

- Ricardo Borges de Castro Senior Adviser at European Policy Centre

Moderator:

- João Sousa Managing Director European Office & Global Practice at Public Affairs Council
-

09:50 – 10:00

Networking break

10:00 – 10:50

Panel 1 | Navigating the New EU Priorities: How to Stay Ahead in a Changing Brussels

Speaker:

- Ana Maria Bravo Director of Public Affairs at International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF)
- Roland Moore Public Affairs Director, Europe at Mars
- Vanessa Carpano – Chauvin Sr Director Public Affairs & Market Access EMEA at Align Technology

Moderator:

- Hana Bartakova Head of Brussels Office at Vulcan Consulting Ltd.
-

10:50 – 11:00

Networking break



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11:00 – 11:50

Panel 2 | The Strategic Role of Public Affairs - Leadership in a Polarized and Uncertain World

Speaker:

- Daniel Friedlaender Senior Vice President & Head of Office at CCIA Europe
- Nneka Chiazor President at Public Affairs Council
- Thomas Reynaert Vice President, Government & Regulatory Affairs, EMEA at IBM

Moderator:

- Carmen Bell Managing Director, Brussels at APCO

11:50 – 12:00

Networking break

12:00 – 12:50

Panel 3 | From Green to Clean - Sustainability and EU Corporate Strategies for 2025 and Beyond

Speaker:

- Carlota Gómez de la Hoz Global Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer at HIPRA
- David Carroll Director for External Affairs at Plastics Europe
- Maria Negut Associate Director Public Affairs - Corporate team at Coca-Cola Europacific Partners

Moderator:

- Lukasz Bochenek Deputy CEO at Leidar

12:50

Lunch break & Adjourn

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Speaker bios (in alphabetical order)



Ana Maria Bravo-Angel

Director of Public Affairs

International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF)

Ana María Bravo is Director of Government Affairs Europe at International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), where she supports all business divisions, including food ingredients, fragrances, pharma solutions, and health & biobased sectors. Previously, she founded Bravo Strategies, a Brussels-based consultancy promoting science and innovation in sustainability policy.

With 18 years of lobbying experience, Ana María has advocated in key areas such as the Bioeconomy, Circular Economy, Biofuels, and Food Innovation. She has worked with clients like C&A, Chemours, and Guala Closures, and partnered with consultancies such as shiftN and Eacon. Earlier, she led EMEA Advocacy for DuPont's Industrial Biosciences and headed Global Communications & Public Affairs at Genencor/Danisco. She also supported public dialogue on biotech with the European Federation of Biotechnology. Ana María holds a PhD in Molecular Biology from the University of Basel (cum laude) and a Master's in Biochemistry from the University of Strasbourg. Of Colombian and Dutch nationality, she is passionate about policy frameworks that support innovation in biofuels, biorefineries, and the food sector. She has served on numerous stakeholder platforms, including the European Commission's Expert Group on Biobased Products, EuropaBio, Cefic, Amfep, ePURE, BIC, and Biofrontiers.



Carlota Gómez de la Hoz

Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer

HIPRA

Carlota Gómez de la Hoz is the Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer at HIPRA, where she leads global corporate communications, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability initiatives. As a member of the Executive Committee, she plays a key role in shaping HIPRA's corporate strategy and reinforcing its commitment to sustainable innovation in healthcare.

With more than 20 years of experience in international corporate affairs, Carlota brings extensive expertise in managing complex communications across diverse sectors. Before joining HIPRA, she held senior leadership roles at Bayer for 17 years. Notably, she became Head of Communications and Corporate Affairs for Bayer Iberia at the age of 29 and later led communications for the agriculture division across the EMEA region. She played a central role in stakeholder engagement during Bayer's acquisition of Monsanto, one of the largest and most sensitive integrations in the industry.

Carlota holds a Master's degree in Business Communications from Pompeu Fabra University and a degree from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She also completed executive education in Business Sustainability Management at the University of Cambridge. Her leadership reflects a strategic balance between business growth, corporate reputation, and sustainability.



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Carmen Bell

Managing Director,
Brussels

APCO

Carmen Bell is Managing Director of APCO's Brussels office, bringing over 15 years of experience in EU advocacy and consulting. She advises clients on European public affairs, regulatory strategy, and legislative issues across the digital, sustainability, and financial sectors—including online platforms, cybersecurity, AI, financial services, fintech, climate policy, ESG, and corporate due diligence. Carmen also counsels on EU relations with key markets such as the UK, US, China, and India.

She has a strong track record in pan-European policy campaigns, coalition building, and strategic communications. Before APCO, she held senior roles at Portland, Hill+Knowlton, and Global Counsel, and served as a policy advisor at Insurance Europe, where she led communications for the 2015 UN Paris Climate Agreement.

A former US attorney with Reed Smith, Carmen holds a B.A. from the University of Virginia, a J.D. from Villanova Law, and an LL.M. in International Business Law from Queen Mary University of London. She also studied European Law at the University of Leuven. Carmen is listed among the Best in Brussels consultants and serves on the Board of the British Chamber of Commerce EU & Belgium.



**Daniel
Friedlaender**

Senior Vice President &
Head of Office

CCIA Europe

A Swiss and Canadian national, Daniel Friedlaender has been working in public affairs and policy for over 20 years. He holds an MA in European Political and Administrative Studies from the College of Europe, as well as an executive MBA from Imperial College, focusing on digital innovation and platform convergence.

Friedlaender started as a political staffer in Canada prior to moving to Europe, first working in strategic communications before representing the global recording industry.

In 2016 he was hired to open and lead the new office of the Sky Group (later part of Comcast) in Brussels. As Head of the EU Office and Sky's European Affairs Director, Friedlaender worked across the creative, cultural, telecoms, and technology sectors. In this role, he also chaired the European VoD Coalition and sat on the board of the Association of Commercial Television, as well as many other organisations.





David Carroll

Director Of External
Affairs

PlasticsEurope

David Carroll is the Director of External Affairs at PlasticsEurope, where he leads the organisation's advocacy, policy, and communications efforts across the European Union. Since 2020, he has played a central role in positioning the plastics industry within the EU's sustainability and circular economy agenda, fostering transparent dialogue with institutions and stakeholders.

With over 15 years of experience in strategic communications and public affairs, David has advised multinationals, industry associations, and governments during his time at consultancies such as Hill+Knowlton Strategies and Teneo. He began his career in the European Parliament, developing a strong understanding of EU policymaking.

David holds legal and political qualifications from universities in Ireland, France, and Belgium. His international academic and professional background equips him to manage complex regulatory and reputational issues with clarity and diplomacy. At PlasticsEurope, he continues to help guide the industry's transformation in line with evolving societal expectations.



Hana Bartakova

Head of Brussels Office

Vulcan Consulting Ltd.

Hana Bartáková is the Head of the Brussels office at Vulcan Consulting. She has over 12 years of experience in European affairs and the EU ecosystem, with focus on transport, energy, and healthcare policy.

Hana began her career at EurActiv, working on EU projects, before joining the office of a Czech Member of the European Parliament (MEP). She later served as a policy advisor for the ALDE Group (now Renew Europe) in the European Parliament. Following this, Hana moved into the Brussels trade association sector, where she gained hands-on experience working mainly on digital and tech issues. She then transitioned into European public affairs consultancy, advising organizations on navigating EU policymaking and legislation.

Throughout her career, Hana has worked on a wide range of EU legislative files and initiatives, including the Payment Services Directive 2 (PSD2), the SME Strategy, the Mobility Package, the Pharmaceutical Package or the Medical Device Regulation (MDR).

She holds a Belgian law degree, an LLM in EU Law from the University of Bristol, and a Master's in European Studies from the University of Bonn.





João Sousa

Managing Director
European Office

Public Affairs Council

Joao Sousa is the Public Affairs Council's Managing Director for the European office. He also leads the Council's global public affairs practice and manages the International Network. Joao is passionate about helping member organizations and public affairs leaders worldwide in identifying best practices, developing impactful strategies, and fostering peer collaboration.

Joao has more than 18 years' experience as a spokesperson, communication and political advisor, and consultant for both the private and public sectors. Presently based in Brussels (Belgium), he has advised global companies, international organizations and national authorities in different countries and diverse sectors of activity on strategic communication, public diplomacy and reputation management.

Earlier in his career, Joao worked for eight years with the European Union, where he led communication teams operating in the DR Congo and the Western Balkans and provided consultancy for EU projects in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.



Lukasz Bochenek

Deputy CEO

Leidar

Lukasz is Managing Director for Switzerland, Belgium and UK offices as well as deputy CEO for Leidar. He oversees key international client projects and relationships. In addition, he manages external partnerships and memberships of Leidar.

He is a speaker at international conferences, and was a Co-Director of the Executive Certificate Advocacy in International Affairs, delivered in partnership with the Graduate Institute in Geneva. He has published a book on "Advocacy and Organizational Engagement" which defines the core building blocks of modern advocacy.

Lukasz holds a PhD in management studies from the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, with the highest distinction, 'summa cum laude'. His research focused on the role of organisational learning and Corporate Social Responsibility in corporate communication strategic management. He also holds LLM in International Corporate and Commercial Law from King's College London, an MA in communication from the University of Geneva, Switzerland and a BA in social anthropology.



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Maria Negut

Associate Director Public
Affairs - Corporate team

Coca-Cola Europacific
Partners

Maria Negut is the Head of European Public Affairs at Coca-Cola Europacific Partners, based in Brussels since 2010 and a graduate in Political Sciences and European Studies.

Maria started her career in the EU Institutions, after which she moved to work for several European industry associations where she represented the interests of its members vis-à-vis the European Institutions and national stakeholders. Since September 2023,

Maria works at Coca-Cola Europacific Partners, part of the Central Public Affairs team in which she covers the EU.



Nneka Chiazor

President

Public Affairs Council

Nneka Chiazor is president of the Public Affairs Council, the leading international association for public affairs professionals. She has extensive corporate experience and a broad public affairs background with leadership experience to help demonstrate the value of public affairs to the business world.

Prior to joining the Council, Nneka was market vice president at Cox Communications where she led a multimillion-dollar operation with over 1,200 employees that included cross-functional teams from departments such as market expansion, field services, construction, finance, government and public affairs, marketing, and sales. Before that, she served as vice president of government and public affairs at Cox, providing executive leadership envisioning and securing funds for broadband initiatives and executing digital engagement strategies.

Prior to that, Nneka spent 14 years at Verizon. As vice president of policy & government relations, she provided thought leadership and oversight for Verizon's cross functional teams, focusing on public safety and cybersecurity.

Nneka's education background is focused on leadership, public affairs, business and technology. She received her Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Concordia University, a Master of Science in Telecommunications Management from the University of Maryland Global Campus, and she attended Harvard Business School for programs in Leadership Development and Cable Executive Management.



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Roland Moore

Public Affairs Director,
Europe

Mars

Roland joined Burson Cohn and Wolfe (formerly Burson-Marsteller) following fifteen years in public UK Government policy-making.

As part of this government career, Roland worked within DG Environment, within the UK's European team in the Cabinet Office, as Private Secretary for chemicals, waste, water and the sustainable development of policy.

He has held representation at the EU. He has a Master's in International Political Economy and European Union studies from the University of Portsmouth.

He is fluent in French, Italian and Spanish



Ricardo Borges de Castro

Senior Adviser

European Policy Centre

Ricardo Borges de Castro is an analyst on European and global affairs and a guest columnist at Sábado, a Portuguese current affairs magazine. He is a Senior Adviser at the European Policy Centre (EPC), an Associate Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), and a Senior Fellow at Agora Strategy. Ricardo is also an experienced public speaker, moderator and facilitator. With expertise in strategic foresight, planning and policymaking, Ricardo's research interests focus mainly on geopolitics, the EU's international role and the future of Europe, transatlantic relations, global trends, and scenarios.

Further to his advisory and analytical work, Ricardo is a regular commentator and contributor on global and European affairs in several media outlets including BBC World News, France24, Euronews, YLE, L'Express, Euractiv, CNN Portugal, SIC Notícias, Público and Expresso.

Ricardo is a Member of the OECD Government Foresight Community and was a Member of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transatlantic Foresight Expert Group which completed its mission in December 2024. Ricardo holds a Master of Arts (MALD) from The Fletcher School and a DPhil (PhD) in International Relations from the University of Oxford (St Antony's College). Besides Portugal, he has lived in the US, UK, Turkey, and lately in Belgium. He enjoys running and the outdoors. He posts on X @ricbdc and Bluesky.



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Thomas Reynaert

Vice President,
Government &
Regulatory Affairs, EMEA,

IBM

Thomas Reynaert is Vice President of Government & Regulatory Affairs in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa for IBM. In his role, he enables IBM to navigate complex political environments, proactively managing risk and creating opportunities to shape the regulatory agenda across the region.

Before joining IBM, Thomas founded Airlines for Europe (A4E) in 2016, Europe's largest EU airline association, which he led until February 2023. Between 2008-2015, he was the President of United Technologies, International Operations Europe, where he led the government relations activities for UTC.

Earlier positions include Director of Public Affairs EMEA at Nortel Networks, Director of EU Public Affairs at Lucent Technologies, Business Development Manager at the European Private Equity and Venture Capital Association, and external relations consultant at the European Commission.



**Vanessa Carpano –
Chauvin**

Sr Director Public Affairs
& Market Access EMEA

Align Technology

Vanessa Carpano-Chauvin is Senior Director, Public Affairs & Market Access EMEA at Align Technology, the orthodontic-innovation company behind Invisalign clear aligners.

In this role, she leads pan-European policy, reimbursement and stakeholder-engagement strategies to accelerate patient access to digital orthodontics and broader oral-health innovation, a remit she has held since April 2023.

Previously she spent seven years on Align's leadership team, progressing from EMEA Regional Counsel to Vice-President & General Counsel EMEA, where she built a ten-lawyer multicultural team covering 40 countries.

Before joining the med-tech sector, Vanessa held senior legal and market-access posts at Teva, Cephalon and Ipsen, gaining two decades of experience navigating pharmaceutical, device and biotech regulation across Europe.

A French attorney who has lived in Paris and Amsterdam, she is known for forging "win-win" coalitions with regulators, professional societies and patient organisations.

Vanessa sits on the advisory board of the General Counsel Netherlands network and frequently speaks on digital health, compliance and strategic foresight at industry forums such as Simmons & Simmons' "Future of Healthcare & Life Sciences" series.

Outside work, she actively mentors legal and public-affairs talent through the General Counsel Executive Program network.



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Brussels Study Tour 2025

June 26–27, 2025
in Person Study Tour

Gain a firsthand understanding of how public affairs, advocacy, and lobbying operate within the European Union. Designed for senior international public affairs executives, the Brussels Study Tour 2025 offers an immersive experience inside the EU's decision-making ecosystem....

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Training Seminar


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Advanced Data Analytics for Public Affairs

9 July 2025
2:30 pm to 5:30 pm CET
Training Seminar

Data is playing an increasingly critical role in shaping effective public affairs strategies, but turning large volumes of information into meaningful insight requires the right combination of tools, methodology and ...

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Webinar


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EU Policy Insights – What Should PA Professionals Expect for the Remainder of 2025

3 September 2025
3:00 pm to 3:45 pm CET
Webinar

As we move into the second half of 2025, the European Union continues to navigate a dynamic political landscape shaped by both internal and global developments. What are the key priorities and policy shifts...

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Online Workshop


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Policy Communication for Public Affairs From Strategy to Implementation

11 September 2025
Time TBC
Online Workshop

Effective communication is a critical part of any successful public affairs strategy. However, turning messaging into measurable impact can be challenging in today's complex policy environment. How can...

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Webinar


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Membership Orientation

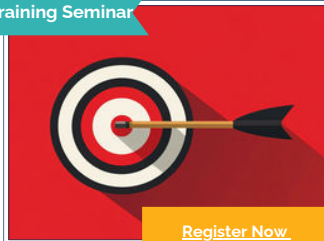
16 September 2025
15:00 pm to 16:00 pm CET
Webinar

Are you interested in learning more about the Public Affairs Council, and how membership can support your professional growth and your organization's success?

This free orientation webinar offers a comprehensive overview of the Council's services, activities, and...

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Training Seminar


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Public Affairs Planning – Strategy, Priorities & Objectives

18 September 2025
9:30 am to 12:30 pm CET
Brussels

Strong public affairs outcomes begin with clear, well-informed planning. But what does an effective planning process look like in a fast-evolving policy environment? How can teams align strategic goals with realistic priorities and build the agility to respond to new challenges? This action-oriented training seminar will...

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Online Workshop


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Understanding the Essentials of EU Decision-making

7 October 2024
3:00 pm to 5:15 pm CET
Online Workshop

The "Brussels Bubble" is often referred to as a complex and heavy machine, especially to those who first arrive or need to start looking into the European Union's policy-making universe. Political and policy decisions taken in Brussels will oftentimes have a critical impact on businesses and organizations across...

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About the Public Affairs Council



With offices in Washington D.C. and Brussels, the Public Affairs Council is the leading global association for public affairs professionals with more than 750 companies, trade associations, NGOs and other organizations as members, including more than 12,000 individuals. It provides research, roundtables, training and other resources to its members on public affairs, government affairs, stakeholder management, digital advocacy, issue management and related topics. It is non-political and non-profit, based on an annual membership model.

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