

The Brussels Study Tour 2026



Public Affairs
Council

Wednesday

24 June 2026

16h30 – 19h00:

Welcome to the Brussels Study Tour 2026 – Cocktail and networking

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Nneka Chiazor
President & CEO
Public Affairs Council

Thursday

25 June 2026

08h30 – 09h00:

Arrival to Ambiorix Centre

09h00 – 09h15:

Welcome to the study tour

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels

09h15 – 11h00:

Introduction to the European institutional, policy and political framework

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Inês Reis Basto
Senior Advisor (Europe), International Practice
Public Affairs Council

11h00 – 11h15:

Coffee break

11h15 – 12h15:

Discussion with Brussels-based public affairs consultants. Insights, best practices and lessons learned from advising organizations on EU engagement

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Dagmara Franczak
Senior Associate
Director
Trilligent



Speaker

Giovanni Campi
Senior Policy Director
K&L Gates



Speaker

Mark Dober
CEO
Dober Partners

12h30 – 13h30:

Networking lunch – Mapping policy developments in the EU: Strategies, tools and resources

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Doru Frantescu
CEO
EUMatrix

13h30:

Walk to the European Commission and accreditation

DONT FORGET TO BRING YOUR PASSPORT

14h30 – 15h30:

Visit to the European Commission: Shaping Europe's Future: The European Commission at Work

Location: European Commission, Charlemagne Building, Rue de la Loi 170, 1000 – Brussels



Speaker

Stephen Davies
Adviser on Strategic Foresight, Research &
Science in Ocean Policies
European Commission

15h30 – 15h45: *Break*

15h45 – 17h00: **The EU Trade policy: Challenges and Opportunities**

Location: European Commission, Charlemagne Building, Rue de la Loi 170, 1000 – Brussels



Speaker

Ulrich Trautmann

Senior Trade Expert
Directorate-General for Trade and
Economic Security
European Commission

17h00 – 19h30: *Refreshment break*

19h30 – 21h30: **Networking dinner and discussion: Understanding the Brussels media landscape and working with EU correspondents**

NOTE, THE DINNER IS INCLUDED AND FREE OF CHARGE

Location: Maison du Luxembourg - Rue du Luxembourg 37, 1050 Brussels, Belgium



Speaker

Matthew Woelfel

Executive Director of Media
Solutions
POLITICO Europe



Speaker

Laura Greenhalgh

Editorial Director, European
Policy
POLITICO Europe

Friday

26 June 2026

09h15: *Meeting at the European Parliament and accreditation*
DONT FORGET TO BRING YOUR PASSPORT

10h00: **Visit to the European Parliament:** General introduction to the European Parliament, its function and role
Location: European Parliament

10h30: **Visit to the Parliament Hemicycle**

11h00 – 12h00: **Current political Priorities of the President of the European Parliament**



Speaker

Jüri Laas

Spokesperson to the President of the European Parliament

12h15: *Transfer back to Ambiorix Center*

13h00 – 14h00: **Working lunch – Building coalitions and partnerships in Brussels**

The perspective of EU trade associations

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Maria Linkova-Nijs

Executive Head of Policy and Strategy
European Automobile Manufacturers' Association



Speaker

Laurent Donceel

Director, Transport, Industrial Policy & Sustainability
Hydrogen Europe

14h05 – 15h00: **Transparency regulations and ethical lobbying in the EU**

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Raphaël Kergueno

Senior Policy Officer | Data-driven advocacy
Transparency International

15h00 – 15h15: *Coffee Break*

15h15 – 16h30: **Successful public affairs in Practice**

- Reflections on strategy, management and stakeholder engagement from senior corporate public affairs leaders

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Aliko Foinikopoulou

Senior Director, Global Public
Policy
Salesforce



Speaker

Kristin Brackemyre

Vice President of Member
Success & Practice
Public Affairs Council

16h30 – 17h00: **Closing Remarks on the future of the Public Affairs
Community: Key takeaways, final reflections and discussion**

Location: Public Affairs Council – Square Ambiorix 7 – 1000 Brussels



Speaker

Nneka Chiazor

President & CEO
Public Affairs Council

17h00: *Adjourn*



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 13,000 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.

**DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THE BENEFITS
OF JOINING THE COUNCIL:**





**ALIKI
FOINIKOPOULOU**

SENIOR DIRECTOR,
GLOBAL PUBLIC
POLICY

SALESFORCE

Aliko Foinikopoulou heads the Global Public Policy team at Salesforce. In her role, she works with her team to define Salesforce's public policy positions on technology topics, spanning AI, cloud, privacy, and cybersecurity. She previously led Salesforce's EU Government Affairs team for 8 years.

Aliko has more than 15 years of professional experience in government affairs and public policy, having previously worked as a consultant for leading technology companies and in the European Commission.

She served as Vice-Chair of AmCham EU's Digital Economy Committee for two consecutive terms, also leading the association's work on cloud policy. She also served as Vice-Chair of AmCham EU's Diversity & Inclusion Taskforce.

She holds a LLB from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and a LLM in Intellectual Property Law from University College London. She speaks Greek, English, and French. She lives in Brussels with her family.



**DAGMARA
FRANCZAK**

SENIOR ASSOCIATE
DIRECTOR

TRILLIGENT

Dagmara (Daga) Franczak is a Senior Associate Director at Trilligent, a global strategic advisory, public affairs and communications agency that helps innovation-led clients navigate complex policy and reputational challenges. She advises clients from technology and digitalizing sectors on public affairs, policy communications, and advocacy, with a focus on technology and digital policy, sustainability and climate, mobility, online safety, and global trade and geopolitics.

Prior to joining Trilligent, Daga held positions at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change as Tech Policy and Geopolitics Advisor, at Monitor Deloitte leading EU policy implementation projects, and at the Boston Consulting Group's Center for Digital Government in London, where she advised public sector clients on digital government and regulation. She holds a BA Cum Laude from Macalester College (USA) and an MSc in Public Policy from University College London. She is fluent in English, Polish and Spanish, with advanced French and Russian.



**DORU
FRANDESCU**

CEO

EUMATRIX

Nominated in Politico Europe's Power 40 top influencers in the EU Capital, Brussels, for providing "a data-driven crystal ball to navigate systemic changes in European politics".

Co-author of "How to Work with the European institutions" (John Harper Publishing). Doru has built an innovative organisation that combines insights of top experts with Artificial Intelligence to paint an objective and precise picture of the EU decision-making.

He has experience advising a wide range of sectors, including the EU institutions, MEPs, businesses, diplomatic organisations, NGOs, academia. He has lead strategic communication projects that have reached over 10 million people (in 24 languages).

His work has been quoted by the media and reputed institutions in over 35 countries on 4 continents, includin



**GIOVANNI
CAMPI**

SENIOR POLICY
DIRECTOR

K&L GATES

Giovanni Campi is senior policy director in the Brussels office. Giovanni has almost 20 years of experience with policy analysis, advocacy plans, strategic advice, and interest representation, in a variety of policy areas. He has vast experience organizing and leading advocacy campaigns and engagement efforts with policymakers at EU level and in various European capitals.

His experience is particularly strong in the financial services, sustainability (including sustainability reporting and supply chain due diligence), digital and tech, and internal market areas. Giovanni is also experienced in devising and deploying policy and advocacy efforts in the framework of regulatory proceedings, including investigations.

Giovanni is a member of the Public Policy and Law group, within the Policy and Regulatory practice group, and contributes to the work of various groups, including, among others, Financial Services, Tax, Energy, Infrastructure, and Resources, and Artificial Intelligence.

Giovanni has also served as Europe Director of the Trans-Atlantic Business Council, a trade association that advocated to promote and enhance transatlantic economic integration, between 2019 and 2023.



INÊS REIS

SENIOR ADVISOR
(EUROPE),
INTERNATIONAL
PRACTICE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Inês Reis joined the Public Affairs Council in March 2024, bringing over a decade of experience from the European Commission and national governmental offices.

She holds a Master's Degree in International Law, specializing in governmental and regulatory affairs. Inês has a distinguished career in policy development, international relations, and regulatory compliance.

Her roles include Advisor for European Affairs to the Portuguese Minister of Science, Technology, and Higher Education, and Legal Officer at the European Commission's DG Research & Innovation. Inês has coordinated major initiatives such as the Horizon Europe regulatory negotiations and the ECSEL Joint Undertaking for digital innovation.



JÜRI LAAS

SPOKESPERSON TO
THE PRESIDENT

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Jüri Laas is the Spokesperson for the President of the European Parliament. In this role, his efforts are crucial in shaping the public understanding of the European Parliament's actions and priorities. He has more than 20 years of experience in communications of the European Union.

Before joining Parliament, he worked as the press officer responsible for European Councils (EU meetings at Heads of State or government level) and international Summits, such G7 and G20 meetings, in the Council of the European Union. He also spent two years as desk officer in the foreign policy department, covering the Middle East and North Africa.

In 2017, he was the Spokesperson of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in Brussels, Belgium.

Prior to this, he worked in various communication and spokesperson roles in European Union crisis management missions and operations in the Balkans, Georgia and in the Aceh province of Indonesia.

Mr Laas is Swedish-Estonian. He holds a master's degree in political science and a bachelor degree in media and communications from Lund University in Sweden. He also studied at Institut d'études politiques de Bordeaux, France. He speaks English, French, Swedish and Estonian. He is married with two children.



**KRISTIN
BRACKEMYRE**

VICE PRESIDENT OF
MEMBER SUCCESS &
PRACTICE

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS
COUNCIL**

Kristin Brackemyre serves as Vice President of Member Success & Practice for the Public Affairs Council, where she serves on the senior leadership team. In this role, she spearheads the organization's member success strategy, professional development portfolio, and industry practice leadership.

An expert in public affairs management and executive education, Kristin leads the Council's efforts in member retention and relationship-focused engagement. She is a sought-after voice on political engagement and government relations, with her insights featured in premier outlets such as Axios, Bloomberg, Politico, and The Hill.

Prior to her current role, Kristin led the Council's U.S. public affairs practice. Her career includes key leadership positions in political affairs at the Consumer Technology Association and the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Kristin holds a B.A. in Political Science from Western Illinois University and a Master's in Public Policy from George Mason University.



**LAURA
GREENHALGH**

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR,
EUROPEAN POLICY

POLITICO EUROPE

Laura Greenhalgh is Editorial Director, European Policy, at POLITICO.

As part of the newsroom leadership across Europe, Laura is focused on growing the impact of our policy journalism, with particular focus on technology, energy and defense. She is responsible for strengthening policy coverage, connecting teams across geographies and shaping how policy journalism is delivered to professional audiences, as well as driving coverage of major international news moments.

Laura previously served as Managing Editor for five years and led POLITICO's subscription journalism in Europe.

Before joining POLITICO, Laura covered the EU policy bubble for outlets including Research Europe and Chemical Watch, after starting her journalism career reporting on science and sport. A former world championship athlete, Laura brings decades of experience in sport to build collaborative and high-performing newsroom teams. She holds degrees from the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London.



LAURENT DONCEEL

DIRECTOR, TRANSPORT,
INDUSTRIAL POLICY &
SUSTAINABILITY

HYDROGEN EUROPE

Laurent Donceel, Director, Transport and Industrial Policy & Sustainability, Hydrogen Europe

Hydrogen Europe is the leading organisation representing European based companies and stakeholders that are committed to moving towards a (circular) carbon neutral economy. With more than 600 companies and national associations as members, Hydrogen Europe encompass the entire value chain of the European hydrogen, RFNBO and e-fuel ecosystem. He is also Secretary-General of Res Publica Europa, the Brussels-based think tank.

Prior to joining Hydrogen Europe, Laurent was Deputy Managing Director of Airlines for Europe (A4E), where he oversaw sustainability. For over 15 years, he has worked with blue chip companies, trade associations, governments and NGOs in the fields of transport, energy and climate change. He holds a master's degree from the London School of Economics (LSE), and a BA from the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL).



MARIA LINKOVA- NIJS

EXECUTIVE HEAD OF
POLICY AND STRATEGY

ACEA (EUROPEAN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURERS ' ASSOCIATION)

Maria Linkova-Nijs leads policy and strategy at ACEA, the Brussels-based association representing Europe's largest vehicle manufacturers. She heads the organisation's Policy and Strategy department, shaping the industry's position across the issues that define its future — trade, competitiveness, and transport policy — and ensuring the strategic alignment of ACEA's engagement with the EU institutions and the wider stakeholder community.

A data- and advocacy-driven public affairs and policy communications professional, Maria brings more than fifteen years of experience spanning EU public affairs, communications, and broadcast journalism. Before joining ACEA she spent six and a half years at the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic), latterly as its Communications Director.

Known for an innovative approach to new channels and tools — including the application of machine learning and artificial intelligence to advocacy — Maria is a recognised voice on building holistic EU campaigns and on steering Europe's automotive sector through its transition to zero-emission mobility.



MARK DOBER

CEO

DOBER PARTNERS

Mark Dober is a leading executive search consultant for senior communications, public affairs and association leadership roles across Brussels and Europe. Since founding Dober Partners in 2010, he has recruited many senior leaders in the field and worked with more than 100 European association executives, including leaders at BUSINESSSEUROPE and the European Roundtable for Industry.

His experience spans major global companies and associations, including LVMH, MSC and FedEx, giving him a broad perspective on the leadership, communications and advocacy skills needed in today's public affairs environment. Before Dober Partners, Mark was APCO Worldwide's first employee in Europe, establishing its Brussels office in 1995 and serving in senior managing director roles during 16 years of rapid growth. He previously worked with Hill & Knowlton in London and Brussels.

Mark has twice been named "European Consultant of the Year" by Public Affairs News and members of The European Public Affairs Directory. He has authored reports on public affairs, association leadership, EU media relations and corporate affairs remuneration. He has taught strategic communications at IHECS University in Brussels and lectured at several universities, including Maastricht. Mark holds a master's degree in political science from PUC-Rio and speaks English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.



**MATTHEW
WOELFEL**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF MEDIA SOLUTIONS

POLITICO EUROPE

Matthew Woelfel is the Executive Director of Media Solutions for POLITICO Europe overseeing their advertising, event, and content partnerships.

Over more than a decade at POLITICO, he has held leadership roles in both the US and the EU and has worked extensively with corporations, trade associations, and advocacy groups to connect their message with influential policymakers and decision-makers.

Prior to POLITICO, Matthew worked in Washington, DC in public affairs and is a proud graduate of the University of Michigan.



NNEKA CHIAZOR

PRESIDENT & CEO

**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.



**RAPHAËL
KERGUENO**

SENIOR POLICY OFFICER
| DATA-DRIVEN
ADVOCACY

**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL**

Raphaël is part the EU integrity team, working on projects related to lobbying, conflict of interests and legislative transparency. He is also tasked with managing EU Integrity Watch and developing national versions of the online platform in partnership with our national chapters.

Prior to joining Transparency International EU, Raphaël worked at the Europe Direct Contact Centre of the European Commission and as a partnership manager at Groupon.

Raphaël holds a BA in politics and international relations from the University of Kent and an MA in European Studies from Maastricht University.



STEPHEN DAVIES

ADVISER ON STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT, RESEARCH
& SCIENCE IN OCEAN
POLICIES

**EUROPEAN
COMMISSION**

Stephen has over 20 years experience of working in the European Commission. Currently he is an Adviser in the Directorate-General (DG) for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, notably on strategic foresight, research and science in ocean policies.

Before that, he worked on a number of topics within the Commission's DG Joint Research Centre, including co-ordination, knowledge management and practices for evidence-informed policymaking. Prior to that, he was in the DG for Home Affairs working on migration policy, including developing the European Migration Network.

Stephen started his career in the Commission in the DG for Research and Innovation, where he worked as a project officer in what is now the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Stephen previously studied and worked as a physicist.



ULRICH TRAUTMANN

SENIOR TRADE EXPERT
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
FOR TRADE AND
ECONOMIC SECURITY

**EUROPEAN
COMMISSION**

Mr. Ulrich Trautmann, based in Belgium, is currently a Senior Trade Expert at European Commission. He first started working for the European Commission in 1993 and has also worked in the Canadian national administration, as well as the Delegation of the European Union to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Mr. Trautmann holds a Law Degree and a Master (LL.M.) in European Economic Law from the Europäische Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder).

Mr. Trautmann has a robust skill set that includes Business Strategy, Gesellschaftsrecht, Program Management, Microsoft Office, Strategic Planning and more.



Public Affairs Council

Important information

- **Dress Code:** Business casual is recommended.
- **Passport/ID:** Please carry a valid passport or ID at all times.
- **Dietary Preferences:** If you have any dietary restrictions, kindly indicate them in the form.
- **Photography:** We may take photos for our website and social media. If you prefer not to be photographed, please let us know in advance.
- **Weather:** Brussels can be unpredictable! We recommend checking the weather regularly and bringing an umbrella or raincoat just in case.