

Why your firm should send one of its trainees to Brussels

Spending a seat in the Law Societies' Office in Brussels is not only a great opportunity for the trainee, but also for his/her firm.

In the six/four months they spend with us, trainees develop skills and acquire knowledge which are useful to their firms and which cannot be gained in any of the traditional seats; Brexit makes this experience even more important and valuable.

Some of the useful skills and knowledge which are unique to a seat in Brussels are:

Knowledge of EU Institutions. To be in Brussels, living and breathing EU policy and legislation, gives a knowledge of the institutions, the people and the policies which no book or webinar can ever match. The participation in committee meetings and private meetings with MEPs and Commission officials gives a unique insight into the mechanisms of law making. Attending hearings and expert meetings deepens subject knowledge, and the examination of amendments and compromise agreements helps trainees to understand the scope and reasons of legislation.

Research. Trainees are usually already highly skilled in legal research, but they learn to widen and hone those skills during their time with us. They concentrate on research on EU Law, and they learn to use original sources; academic articles and blogs; general press and political sources. The variety of topics they have to research contributes to the use of eclectic and not-conventional sources.

Writing and editing. Trainees produce the Brussels Office monthly newsletter, the Brussels Agenda. They participate in the planning meetings, suggesting themes and ideas, they research and write articles, request outside contributions, and do the editing and the publishing.

Confidence in public speaking. Trainees attend, with the policy advisors and on their own, public meetings, seminars and conferences where they are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the discussion. They are required to present papers to the EU Committee, answering questions from the members. They also attend meetings of the European Bars and Law Societies Association, where they actively participate in the proceedings.

Social skills. Through participation in a number of social and professional events, trainees learn how to network and build up a wide circle of professional contacts at every level including: fellow trainees in British firms in Brussels (for whom our trainees organise a weekly meet up), people coming from all European countries who work in the EU institutions, lawyers from large and small firms who are members of the Law Societies' committees, employees of British and European NGOs, Members of Parliament of all parties and of all countries, and their assistants.

Here at the Brussels Office we actively encourage our trainees to pursue subjects that are of interest to them and their firm, even if they are not a priority in our own agenda.

The next two years will be crucial in defining the relationship between the UK and the EU. To have a trainee with us in Brussels will allow your firm to have a unique viewpoint of the negotiations, and the chance of having unfiltered and unbiased information on the Brussels scene.

We hope you will actively encourage your trainees to apply for a seat with us, and we look forward to hearing from you.

The Law Societies' Brussels Office

<http://www.lawsocieties.eu/>