



ULTIMATE GUIDE

BLUE BOOK TRAINEESHIP

OCTOBER 2022

WWW.TRAINEESCOMMITTEE.COM



WELCOME TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION!

Dear Blue Book trainee,

Welcome to the European Commission! We hope that this guide will be a useful tool to help you make the most out of your traineeship. This document is based on the experience of former trainees, with a particular focus on those allocated in Brussels.

While it is meant as a helpful source of information, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that it is not exhaustive. Please, always *keep your eyes and ears open* and stay tuned for new information!

Part I contains **Frequently Asked Questions** about the traineeship itself (e.g. "when do I get paid") as well as everything related to the **social events** and gatherings organised by the current Liaison Committee, the succeeding upcoming **Trainees' Committee** and the potential Subcommittees of the October 2022 session.

Part II provides you with key information about **life in Brussels**, including **housing tips** and recommendations as well as other useful suggestions. The last part introduces you to the **travel allowance claim form**¹, which will be of particular importance as the majority of Blue Book trainees are entitled to get reimbursed for their journey to and from their place of assignment. Please consult the respective **Travel Allowance Claim Section**.

Finally, we hope that your traineeship will be a wonderful experience. As fellow trainees and members of the **Liaison Committee**, we are at your disposal to support you in your first weeks.

We are happy to welcome you on board!

Your Liaison Committee

¹ N.B. File it as soon as possible, as it is probable that you might forget to do so later.

O22 Liaison Committee



Nora Krecké
TC M22 Treasurer

Although she has been avoiding it for 5 years, Nora still very much considers herself as a typical Luxembourg girl. She was a trainee in DG RTD analyzing the future of labor market. Finishing up her studies in development economics in Goettingen, Nora is desperately looking for inspiration on her thesis topic and nurturing her coffee addiction.



Piotr Sanejko
*TC M22 Careers
Coordinator*

Piotr comes from Poland and studied European Law in Maastricht. He was a trainee at DG EMPL in the previous session. A self-proclaimed EU nerd, he loves anything EU law related. In his free time, he enjoys playing music and basketball. Whenever you are in a conversation with him, a dad joke is just a whim away.



Bianca-Iuliana Rîmniceanu
*TC M22 Social Events
Coordinator*

Bianca was born and raised in Romania and studied East Asian Studies, majoring in Japanese language, because she liked *anime that much*. Former Blue Book Translation Trainee in DGT, basketball player and vocalist in a rock band, she retired at 18 years old to join the chess club and sing at weddings.


Who is who?


EAC Traineeship Office (TO)

Staff members of DG EAC 

Validates and pays travel allowance claims 


Manages the payment of the living allowance 

Assesses and approves early termination claims 

In charge of the partnership with health and accident insurance providers 

Eac-Stages
@ec.europa.eu

Trainees' Committee (TC)

Volunteering association of trainees (we are you) 

Organizes networking and social events 

Organizes the job fair and shares career opportunities 

Represents trainees' interests and facilitates communication 

Supports and coordinates subcommittees and groups 

Traineescommittee
@ec.europa.eu

How to contact the Liaison/Trainees' Committee

Phone	Internal: 71891 External: +32 22971891
Email	traineescommittee@ec.europa.eu
Website	www.traineescommittee.com
Telegram Group	https://t.me/+PT3vYtozLvIzZTBi
Facebook Group	https://fb.me/g/p_bh1C7xVLTxgY5DqP/NSCGb9IT
Instagram	https://instagram.com/bluebooktraineescommittee?r=nametag
Office	Rue Joseph II / Jozef II-straat 70, Floor 4, Office 161

When applying to join the Facebook and Telegram groups, please add your first and last name and the candidate number.

Please be aware that there are other Facebook groups that are not run by us – our Facebook group is closed and private.

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Part I: YOUR TRAINEESHIP



A. Blue Book Essentials:

1. Allowance and Financial Info

1.1 How and when will my living allowance get paid?

The amount of the monthly living allowance is 1252.68€. The allowance for the first month is paid within the first four to six weeks of the traineeship. This depends on whether you have provided the Traineeships Office with your banking details within the indicated timeframe.

Please adhere to the deadlines indicated in your **Stage Online account!**

Subsequent allowances will be paid by the end of each month.

Please note in case you face severe **financial emergencies**, there is a possibility to obtain a social loan from the Trainees' Committee – please check with the TC for further details.

1.2 Travel Allowance

If you want to claim back your travel allowance for travelling to and/or from your traineeship, there are specific steps that need to be taken. You can find a detailed description of the procedure (**Travel Guide**) for Brussels, Luxembourg, REP's, Grange, London, Vigo and Copenhagen trainees on your Stage Online Account.

If you do not **upload an acceptable proof of residence** AND **submit your travel allowance claim** by pressing the 'submit' button, you **will not receive the travel allowance**. Please do not forget to save a proof of submission to avoid any misunderstandings. If you run into technical problems, immediately notify the Traineeships Office at Fac-Stages@ec.europa.eu.

If something remains unclear to you, please contact the Traineeships Office in due time before the deadline, **15th December 2022 at 23h59 GMT+1**.

Allowances will be paid before the end of February 2023.

1.3 Financial Identification Form

Follow these steps:

1. Print the form from your **Stage Online account**.
2. Go to your bank with your traineeship offer and your ID card or passport and, *if necessary and not yet possessed*, open a bank account valid for SEPA transfers.

3. Complete the Financial Identification Form (FIF) form with your information on the following indications:

- ✓ **IBAN number**
- ✓ **Signed, stamped, dated by the bank**
- ✓ **Signed and dated by you, hand-written**
- ✓ **Without any corrections or misspellings**

4. Upload the Financial Identification Form (FIF) form in your Stage Online account.

Please note that the Financial Identification Form must be necessarily completed for you to receive your allowance, so please ensure that all data are correct, complete and that your hand-written date and signature are included. Otherwise, it might slow down the payment of your living allowance and lead to additional bureaucratic issues, which can be avoided. If you have a bank account in the Eurozone, you can choose to keep it and not open a new account in Belgium.

2. What are the usual working hours?

The Commission works *40 hours per week and 8 hours per day* (e.g. 08:30-12:30/13:30-17:30) **even in teleworking conditions.**

Please be aware that overwork is not compensated.

There is an element of flexibility depending on the requirements of your unit, so make sure to confirm your working hours with your adviser when you arrive.

Your lunch break should last for at least 20 minutes.

3. Days OFF Work

3.1 Days off (personal holidays)

- *2 days/month (10 days/5 months traineeship)*
- *They can be used all at once or gradually*

Please consult with your adviser and/or Head of Unit (HoU) and then introduce an official request in **SYSPER, or any monitoring system used in services or agencies.**

SYSPER, the internal registration system, is used to submit leave requests. You also have to inform your advisor on the days off you take. **Please do not exceed the number of holidays! If you do so, it will be considered as interruption of the traineeship or as early termination of the contract.** In this particular case, your travel allowance will be halved. Days of leave not taken will be discarded at the end of the traineeship.

However, please also note that there is no special leave for Blue Book trainees!

Encoding your request in SYSPER

- Go to [*My Intracomm*](#)
- Select *Top Tools* > [*SYSPER*](#)
- Log in
- Click *MENU* > *Time Management* > *Leaves and Absences*
- Select *Enter a leave / absence / recuperation request*
- Enter your request as "*Annual leave*"
- *Save* > *Validate your request*

You are obliged to inform and consult your adviser about any potential absences from the office, even if you are working remotely.

Eventual days for **trips** and visits organised by the **Trainees' Committee**, as well as days taken for your participation in any **competition, exam** or university work are also subject to **deduction from your total number of annual leave days**.

3.2 Blue Book Traineeships Office Events

When trainees receive an **official invitation** from the Traineeships Office related to their traineeship programme, the respective **time taken to attend the event is *not to be deducted*** from the days off to which the trainee is entitled. Please **always inform your adviser in advance** that you will be attending these events. In case you cannot attend a conference or workshop, for which you registered, please notify the Traineeships Office to provide your spot for other trainees.

3.3 Sick leave

In case of sickness, please immediately notify your adviser and/or the Unit secretariat and your advisor. Absences **longer than two days** require a medical certificate issued by a doctor (to be counted from the first day of absence). The medical certificate must be sent (within 5 days to be counted from the first day of absence) **to the Traineeships Office either via your Stage Online Account (STOA) or to eac-stages@ec.europa.eu (in case STOA is not available)**. **There is no need to send the certificate to the European Commission's Medical Service!**

Your **absence due to illness can be subject to medical checks** in the interest of the service.

3.4 When will the Commission be closed?

During your traineeship from October 2022 until February 2023, the Commission in Brussels and Luxembourg will be closed for holiday (and thus will not work remotely either) on the following days:

- 1 November All Saints' Day
- 2 November All Souls' Day
- 23 to 30 December (6 end-of-year days)
- 2 January (day after New Year's)

4. When is the last working day of the traineeship?

Tuesday 28th February 2023.

You are supposed to work until the final day of the month. If you wish to leave earlier, you must take days off as “annual leave” and to count them as part of your holidays (please see “annual leave” below).

5. Health Insurance

5.1 Health Insurance Options:

You have two options:

Trainees have the option to subscribe to the [Commission health insurance scheme](#) with Allianz for €13.13 per month (to be automatically deducted from your allowance). You will be able to extend your Allianz insurance for up to 12 months after the traineeship, but you will need to request with Allianz and the monthly fee is higher.

Please note that the Allianz Insurance offers only a primary coverage. Please read carefully the Allianz documents at your disposal on your Stage Online Account to determine whether you would like to take out additional cover privately (e.g. a so-called hospitalisation insurance).

Alternatively, you can opt out to be covered by a **sickness insurance of your own choice**. In this case, you must present an European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) valid until at least 28/02/2023 or a document, not older than 6 months, indicating clearly that the rights of your personal insurance are valid until the 28/02/2023 included. If you have not uploaded the EHIC card by the deadline indicated on your Stage Online Account, you will be automatically subscribed to the Allianz Insurance scheme.

*Please note that **no change in insurance scheme will be possible after the start of the traineeship**.* Please find additional information about the Commission insurance by consulting the following link:

www.allianzworldwidecare.com/eurotrainees.

5.2 What is left of your living allowance if you opt for the Commission's Health Insurance?

- Reference amount: **1 252.68 €**
- Compulsory Accident Insurance: - 0.36 €
- Commission's Health Insurance: - 13.13 €

Monthly living allowance: **1 239.19 €**

Your living allowance is not covered by the special tax regulation applying to officials of the Commission. As specified in the FAQ on the Traineeships website and the rules governing the Commission traineeship programme, trainees are themselves responsible for checking with their fiscal administration whether or not the living allowance should be declared as an income under national law.

For trainees based in Brussels (Belgium), the national tax law requires the living allowance to be declared as income to the Belgian tax authorities by filling in the Belgian tax declaration form. This form usually needs to be submitted in the year after the year in which the income was gained, i.e. income gained in 2022 needs to be declared in the summer of 2023. This is in principle obligatory for all trainees based in Belgium, regardless of whether they are officially registered as a resident or not. Whether or not taxes are retroactively due on the allowance, depends on many individual factors like your personal status (married, single, children, ...), whether you work/study in Belgium before or after the traineeship, how long you've been a resident in Belgium (national law requires any EU citizen to register as a resident if their stay exceeds 90 days), etc.

Please note that the Commission does not deduct anything from the allowance apart from the accident and health insurances, mentioned and calculated above. Any contributions due to the Belgian authorities (e.g., taxes) will need to be paid retroactively and directly to the relevant authorities.

5.3 Making a Claim

Reimbursements are made by the insurance company: **Allianz Worldwide Care Company**. It will take approximately two weeks to receive the reimbursement. The claims process is as follows: firstly, you will need to pay the bill yourself. Secondly, fill in the medical expenses claims form. **Do not forget to attach the original invoices and proof of payment of the bill** (e.g. bank transfer document) and always keep a copy of the form and invoices.

Additionally, there is no need to provide a policy number for the first claim, since your name, given name, date of birth, institution [European Commission, your candidate number, and the session (O22)] are requested.

Please do NOT contact the Traineeships Office nor the Trainees' Committee about reimbursements as they cannot help you with this particular issue. Should you require support on that, we recommend to contact: Allianz Worldwide Care Company directly via email or phone:

IGOhelpline@allianzworldwidecare.com

+353 1 630 1301 for English

+353 1 630 1305 for Italian

+353 1 630 1303 for French

+353 1 630 1304 for Spanish

+353 1 630 1302 for German

+353 1 645 4040 for Portuguese

5.4 Can I extend this insurance cover after the end of the traineeship?

Trainees, who have opted for the Commission insurance by **Allianz Worldwide Care Company Insurance** during their traineeship, can extend their cover for a maximum period of twelve months *immediately after their traineeship* without interruption.

→ Please consult: <http://www.allianzworldwidecare.com/eurotrainees>.

5.5 How does the European Health Insurance Card work?

If you are not familiar with the European Health Insurance Card, please consult the Commission website ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=563. We recommend you to register for a 'Mutuelle'.

6. Am I insured against theft?

The Commission is not responsible for any eventual loss, theft or damage to property or personal belongings. Some landlords may have an insurance, but this cannot be taken for granted – **please verify with your landlord what insurance coverage, if any, may be included in your rent charges**, usually it is not included. Your bank or insurance company may be able to offer you home insurance or other options.

7. Training Courses in the Commission

7.1 Can I take part in the Commission's official language courses?

Commission courses are ONLY available to its permanent staff.

Other offers for language courses can be found:

- at the local commune where you are registered
- CVO Semper
- EPFC
- You can find more language centers through Dorifor

Note: Dutch language courses are free once you are registered at the commune. Learn more at Huis van het Nederlands.

Trainees sometimes organise language tables among themselves.

Other offers for language exchanges can be found:

- The Conversation Tables
- Conversation Exchange in Brussels
- Brussels Tandem: Language Exchange
- Tandem Brussels / Bruxelles - The Community for Language Exchange

7.2 Are trainees allowed to attend official training courses?

Trainees cannot apply for the training courses organised by DG HR. However, trainees may attend other applicable training courses provided by the European Commission. They can apply on their own on the MyIntracomm and **EU Learn** for training courses organised by their respective departments. For information about your possibilities, consult with your adviser. Usually your DG's or agency's HR Correspondent department circulates weekly portfolios on recent or upcoming EU Learn events and topics.

8. Can I take part in a mission during my traineeship?

In principle, yes, provided that they take place under the current restrictions due to the pandemic. Please see Article 6.4.5. of the [rules governing the traineeship](#). In these - rather exceptional - cases, the Director of the respective department may authorise a trainee's mission request on the condition that the mission is of technical and not representative nature. The mission must be paid by the respective department.

B. At Work

1. Your department

You will be assigned to a specific Directorate General (DG), Service or Agency.

1. **HR Correspondent** are usually colleagues from the Human Resources (HR) department or unit assigned to your DG, service or agency for local HR matters and strategies.
2. Your **adviser** (a person working in your unit) has a similar role to a direct line manager during your traineeship. You will be working with them to support and contribute to the tasks and objectives of your unit and they will provide you with guidance in your particular work and role in the unit. Please note that, at the end of your traineeship, *they* have to complete a report about your job performance.

Likewise, *you* will also have to write and complete a **Traineeship Report** about your work, tasks and achievements during your traineeship. You will receive an email with the link to the report towards the end of the traineeship usually at the beginning of your last month of traineeship. Additionally, **we strongly recommend to keep track of your tasks in a list of tasks, e.g. in a word.doc and to update it frequently**, since it will be extremely helpful for you and your adviser to write your mentioned required traineeship reports. Hence, keep it as short, concise and precise as possible.

More information on the Commission departments, services and agencies is available on the website ec.europa.eu, and the Commission's Intranet myintracomm.ec.europa.eu.

2. Finding rooms: the Commission buildings

Building names are often abbreviated, hence, please make sure to consult the following link: ec.europa.eu/oib/buildings_en.cfm

Furthermore, it is necessary to **always keep your badge visible**, otherwise you will not be able to enter the Commission buildings. However, please be advised that ***you may not be able to access ALL Commission premises*** with a standard trainee badge, as some departments have individual entry procedures (e.g. the EEAS, EDPS, and OLAF).

Please be aware that, **at the entrance of the official buildings, security staff members will ask you to:**

- **show your badge**
- **go through a security check (if applicable)**

Do NOT wear your badge outside the premises of EU institutions visibly, as in public areas ***your badge may attract*** the attention of ***ill-disposed individuals***. **Use your common sense!**

3. Lunch or coffee? Commission restaurants

In normal times, the Commission has several restaurants and cafés, ranging from self-service to *brasserie* restaurants. Please consult the link: <https://myintracom.ec.europa.eu/staff/en/buildings-transport/food-drinks/Pages/index.aspx?ln=en>, which contains a detailed list of the food services available in each building. You can also bring your own food, as most DGs/services/agencies have a microwave and kitchenette. It is recommended to bring your cutlery as well.

4. Confidentiality

Please note that, regarding your work in the Commission, a high level of confidentiality is requested. The following rules should equally apply to all trainees:

Under ALL circumstances: no disclosure of information, and no contacts with the press!

For any of your publications, including those for your academic fields, you need prior authorisation/approval by your adviser and/or the relevant hierarchy in your DG/service/agency. The approval by the Traineeships Office's Head of Unit is also required.

NEVER use public online translation programs (e.g. Google Translator) for confidential or sensitive information or entire documents! They seem to be private, but might serve as data leaks! Once it is shared/submitted, it is too late. You will receive briefings on Data Protection matters as well.

5. Early termination of contract

Should you wish to terminate your traineeship earlier than the date specified in the trainee placement offer, it is mandatory for you to inform your adviser AND to submit a written request to the Traineeships Office for the official approval.

This request can be sent by e-mail to the Traineeships Office, with your Advisor/Head of Unit in copy. Please note, that it must include RELEVANT REASONS and it is required to be submitted **AT LEAST THREE WEEKS IN ADVANCE** of the termination date foreseen.

Last day to request early termination	Early termination day (last day of traineeship)
10 October 2022	31 October 2022
25 October 2022	15 November 2022
9 November 2022	30 November 2022
24 November 2022	15 December 2022
9 December 2022	31 December 2022
16 December 2022	15 January 2023
10 January 2023	31 January 2023
25 January 2023	15 February 2023

6. Telephone/email

The Commission will provide you with a corporate laptop, related equipment and headset. You will receive an individual appointment containing further instructions on how and where to get it. From your corporate device, you can phone Commission buildings directly via Skype for Business. Internal telephone numbers for staff members can be found in the address book of the Outlook email software. If you enter the name in the address field, "check names", move your mouse over the name and if the window displaying details appears, click on the arrow pointing down on the right bottom of the displayed window.

You will also have your own official email address. All trainees and Commission officials are listed in Outlook, with details about their department, office location and telephone number. All provision and sharing of these and other sensitive data are governed by Data Protection and usage policies, rules and procedures.

7. Internal mail service

The Internal Mail Service enables you to post letters and parcels to other offices and buildings of the Commission. No one is allowed to send personal mail outside the Commission via this service.

Please note! The mail service can be slow. **NEVER** send any money or valuables as the Commission will not bear any responsibility for any personal possessions lost. However, due to the current restriction, this might not be applicable to the vast majority of you as current trainees.

C. Emergency & Security

1. Encoding in SYSPER

For security reasons, you are requested to encode your mobile (GSM) number in SYSPER within the **first ten days of your traineeship**. SYSPER is a system used for standard notifications by the Commission (e.g. fire alarm evacuation drills or security status) and for remote access to Commission's web applications (e.g. using your mobile phone to reset your Windows password).

2. Personal Info Sheet

(under the tab "Personal Details" in the Stage Online account)

You are expected to encode your address and phone number in Belgium. The reason why the Traineeships Office needs a valid GSM/mobile phone number is to directly contact you, should a major security emergency occur during your traineeship period. **If you have switched to a Belgian / Luxembourgish / local phone number by the time you start your traineeship, please encode it in the Stage Online account. Please also note that this request does not replace the one of encoding your number in SYSPER (see above).**

3. Security

A keynote and an introductory on safety will be provided during your first week of the October 2022 session.

Be aware that the European Commission is not responsible for any loss, theft or damage to your property or personal belongings.

Personal possessions insurance may be available through your bank. Please make sure to check your insurance (options).

Loss or theft of identity papers

If an identity card or passport is lost or stolen, you must inform the police at any police station in Belgium:

+32 (0)800 2123 2123 (free phone number).

Should you be a non-Belgian citizen and have lost your passport or national ID card related to your citizenship, the consular service of the embassy/representative office of the country or entity of your citizenship usually is in charge of issuing a new passport or ID card to you, if necessary and/or applicable. Please browse the web for the relevant address of the respective competent authorities in that case.

Loss or theft of bank card, credit card

CARD STOP +32 (0)70 344 344

Alternatively, contact your bank's dedicated card blocking service.

Victim of or witness to a crime/assault

Call the police as soon as possible (on 101 or 112, accessible 24 hours a day), or go to a nearest guard post (accessible 24 hours a day) or any other station.

Accommodation insurance

Please clarify with your landlord what insurance coverage, if any, may be included in your monthly rent and/or applicable charges. Your bank or an insurance company may be able to offer you relevant home insurance options depending on your accommodation.

4. Emergency numbers

INSIDE the European Commission

Call **22222**

24 hours a day, this number is the Commission's Internal Emergency Number, provided by the European Commission's Internal Security Directorate, for accidents etc. It directs to the First Aid/Medical Help Centre.

You can call anytime regarding any incident involving your safety or that of your belongings. **You should pass this number on to your family or your emergency contact person** (externally: +32 2 29 22222) in case they are unable to contact you directly in the event of an emergency.

OUTSIDE the Commission

If you are showing symptoms of the coronavirus, please stay home and call your General Practitioner (GP) and report your symptoms. Your GP will tell you on the phone what to do. On a general note, please always respect the current hygiene measures.

For BELGIUM, you can find the current hygiene measures available in Dutch, English, French and German:

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be>

For LUXEMBOURG you can find the current hygiene measures available in English, French, German and Luxembourgish:

<https://covid19.public.lu>

For contact details of local medical professionals and general information, you can contact the 24-hour Community Help Service helpline on +32 (0)2 648 4014 (available in English, French, Flemish, German and Spanish).

In case of heavy medical emergencies, road accidents and fires, **call 100**.
(You can also request ambulance transportation via this number)

D. Trainees Association

The European Commission Trainees Association is an informal association Blue Book trainees. It aims to create a community of trainees and alumni as well as serve as a platform for personal and professional growth. Each session, the Association recruits new members that become part of the General Assembly. In the first month, the Assembly elects the Trainees' Committee and the Auditors, who will all serve until the end of the traineeship. Between the traineeship sessions, a Liaison Committee is selected by the Traineeships Office and tasked with welcoming the incoming trainees and ensuring a smooth transition between the sessions.

The Association has four main objectives:

- To build a community of Blue Book trainees and represent them towards the other trainee bodies of the EU institutions and bodies.
- To improve your post-traineeship job and career prospects, for instance, through organising skills training initiatives, career events, peer-to-peer career coaching, and the EU Trainees Job Fair;
- To ensure you have fun and help you socialise! The board organises and coordinates all kinds of social events such as quiz nights, society evenings, cinema events, as well as the famous Euroball gala. The members are also free to create societies based on their interests/hobbies and receive assistance and funding from the TC;
- To create a tight-knit community of former and current Blue Bookers, through networking events, alumni meet ups, and the Yearbook.

The structure includes:

- The General Assembly
- the Trainees' Committee,
- the Auditors,
- Porte-Paroles,
- Societies

1. Membership benefits

Becoming a member of the association makes you an integral part of the community and comes with many benefits! If you want to contribute and help make your traineeship the best possible experience, you can buy our membership card, the T-Card!

By getting the T-Card, you can be a part of our association family and meaningfully contribute to the organisation of social gatherings, career events, and networking opportunities. Whether this is through a financial contribution via the membership fee or whether you also want to become actively involved in the many societies, the subcommittees, or even as part of the Trainees' Committee. The activities of the Association are supported by trainees' voluntary activities within the societies to insure a socially rich experience. So, if you already have a certain idea for a themed society, please elaborate your concept. Any contribution is appreciated and will contribute to the most joyful and socially active upcoming five months.

Revenues from the membership fees are, in principle, the only source of funding for the activities of the Trainees' Committee and Societies. Collection of membership fees ("Trainee Cards sales") is initially

organised by the Liaison Committee and afterwards continued by the board of the Trainees' Committee throughout the Traineeship session.

The membership also comes with many other benefits such as free or discounted ticket prices to many LC/TC activities. T-Card holders are also eligible for social fund loans and can apply to receive a cost-free loan with the LC/TC. Another important privilege of T-Card holders is participating in the election of the new TC and auditors. Not only do candidates need to hold a valid T-Card, but only members of the association are allowed to cast their vote during the election. This is highly significant as a well-working board can enrich your experience over the next months and can greatly improve your career perspectives, for instance, through a well-organised Job Fair.

Through the support of our many partnerships, you can also receive a significant number of promotions and special deals. Our partners include, but are not limited to: Dott scooters, Flibco, World Class Fitness, A Bloc, Billy, Museum Pass, Brussels Philharmonic, etc. For a detailed view on all partners and deals available to T-Card holders, please consult our website.

2. Registration

Getting a Trainee Card (T-Card) is strongly recommended!

T-Cards are made available throughout the whole period of the traineeship, but paying the membership fee and getting your T-Card within the first days of your traineeship will allow you to make the most of all promotional offers, discounts and ensures participation in all kinds of events provided by either the Trainees' Committee or the societies.

You can find out more about the current discounts and our partners on our website at <http://www.traineescommittee.com>.

Please complete the following form with your contact details here & transfer the €20 via bank transfer to:

Account name: TRAINEES COMMITTEE

Account number (IBAN): BE58310161843879

BIC/SWIFT code: BBRUBEBB

Bank name: ING BELGIUM NV/SA, BRUSSELS

You will receive your T-Card link and instructions via e-mail. Please show your T-Card on your Apple or Android mobile device at events.

3. General Assembly/Elections

On Thursday 6 October 2022, there will be a General Assembly where all Blue Book trainees will learn more about the Trainees' Committee, Subcommittees, Societies, and activities. The event will be recorded and accessible on private devices.

The election of Trainees' Committee members takes place in the first month of each traineeship period, and positions are open to all T-Card holders. The October 2022 session's deadline for presenting candidacies is Tuesday 11 October 2022, 23:59 (CET).

On Thursday 13 October 2022, there will be an Election Night where the candidates will have the opportunity to present themselves. The election period will begin during the event and last until 16 October 2022 18:00 (CET).

The composition of the new Trainees' Committee is going to be announced during the Results Night on Thursday 19 October 2022.

If you want to make your traineeship more interesting, we strongly encourage you to assume a role of responsibility and acquire managerial experience within the TC or one of the subcommittees or societies.

4. Structure



5. Trainees' Committee

The b Trainees' Committee consists of seven Blue Book trainees elected among the members. Each of the seven elected trainees has a different role, divided as follows:

President

The President chairs the board meetings and coordinates the work of the board, by drafting the agenda and helping the internal communication. They are responsible for the external representation, partnerships, and the TC contribution to the Farewell conference.

Treasurer

The Treasurer bears the financial responsibility of the Association. This includes forecasting the budgets for the subcommittees and societies, keeping an eye on running expenses, and handling all incoming and outgoing transactions. They also handle the T-Card system and support all Coordinators in their financial planning and, if necessary, help them acquire sponsors.

Careers Coordinator*

The Careers Coordinator is in charge of the professional development of trainees. They assist the trainees by conducting the career survey, organising career events, coordinating peer-to-peer career coaching, and preparing the EU Trainees Job Fair.

Social Events Coordinator*

The Social Events Coordinator ensures the social aspect of the trainees' community and brings a variety of activities in order for trainees to get to know each other. The Coordinator organises events such as gatherings, parties, trips for the Blue Book community, and, also, the EUROBALL, the Blue Book traditional gala.

Communications Coordinator*

The Communication Coordinator takes care of the communications of the Association. This includes the maintenance of the website, providing the designs for other Coordinators' projects and events, and the content of the newsletter.

Alumni Coordinator*

The Alumni Coordinator provides the connection between the generations of Blue Book trainees. This entails events tailored for Alumni as well as networking events for both former and current trainees. Furthermore, the Alumni Coordinator prepares the session's Yearbook, allowing the trainees to keep in touch after their traineeship.

The Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator*

The Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator works to ensure that all trainees are well-represented during the Blue Book traineeship and organises events to raise awareness on different topics and aspects of being a minority. The topics that have traditionally been covered had been related to LGBTQAI+, disabilities, race and gender equality, social mobility and diversity.

*** The Coordinator heads a Subcommittee**

6. Auditors

The Auditors' team consists of two members. The main tasks of the Auditors are to provide assurance and support to the board, the Liaison Committee, Subcommittees and Societies in financial matters, in particular, by:

Monitoring the financial transactions made by the board;

Assisting in approving the budgets and supervising the financial activities of the subcommittees;

Approving the general budget at the end of the period and reporting to the board and the Traineeships Office.

The Trainees' Committee decides to what extent the auditors are involved in the activities of the Trainees' Committee. Auditors do not have voting rights at meetings, but they can be heard out during meetings and can support any Coordinator in their tasks. If there is a vacant position, the Trainees' Committee can collectively fill it in (including the Auditors).

7. Porte-Paroles

A Porte-Parole (PP) is elected amongst the trainees of one DG, service or agency to represent them. Usually, they act as the liaison between the DG/service/agency, the TC, and the HR. Please keep in mind that Porte-Paroles are not HR-associated. Their tasks typically include circulating information, the coordination of mutual trainees' tasks and contributions, supporting the TC board, and taking the initiative to organise get-togethers, after-work drinks and other social activities for trainees of their respective DG/service/agency. It is up to each and every single elected PP to fill this responsible position with their very own spirit and personality.

8. Societies

Societies give you the freedom to organise your own activity or project within the framework of the Trainees' Committee! Societies receive help in their promotion, are included in the Yearbook and the Farewell Conference, and may benefit from TC funding! Creating or joining a society is a great opportunity to develop current or discover new interests and meet like-minded people.

In order to create a society, you just need a T-Card holder willing to be in charge of the organisational matters - a Society Head - who registers the society with the board using [this form](#).

The budgets for the Societies are based on the T-Card sales. In the past sessions, the budgets were sufficient to finance a wide range of activities such as conferences, study materials, equipment, events etc.

9. Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committee (LC) is a group of three or four trainees whose contracts are extended at the end of the traineeship to welcome and provide handover support to the next session of trainees.

LC Members are appointed and selected by the Traineeships Office before the end of each traineeship session. For the October session, three trainees are selected to stay from August to October; for the March session, four trainees stay during March.

Please note that there will be no official call for interest for LC members. Members of the Trainees' Committee and the Audit team are given preference for the LC. However, other trainees (e.g. subcommittee and societies' members and DG EAC trainees) who demonstrate their commitment to the activities organised during the traineeship session are also considered.

The main tasks of the LC are to welcome new trainees, organise activities during the first month of the new traineeship session, and ensure continuity by helping the new Trainees' Committee and the Auditors to get started in their new roles.

Part

II: LIVING IN BRUSSELS

Everything you need to know



We hope this guide will be useful to you – but it is by no means comprehensive! Brussels is ever changing from year to year, so it is good to check:

- visitbrussels.be
- [Brussels Commissioner \(expat assistance\) : https://www.commissioner.brussels](https://www.commissioner.brussels)
- and the Brussels-Europe Liaison Office www.blbe.be

A. Accommodation & formalities

1. Finding accommodation in Brussels

Accommodation can be found and, if you are prepared to look for it and to compromise a little along the way, you will definitely find something worthwhile. On Facebook pages such as [BXL A LOUER – de bouches à oreilles](#), [Bxl à Louer – de bouche à oreille \(II\)](#), and [Flat board for EU stagiaires](#), you can also find several housing options, some of which are advertised by former trainees. You can also ask or search in Facebook groups with people from your origin country living in Brussels (ex. [BRITS in Brussels](#), [Greeks in Brussels](#) etc) or for EXPATS in general (ex. [Expats in Brussels](#)). For more information about it, you can also consult our [Accommodation Guide](#).

Disclaimer: *The Liaison Committee and Trainees' Committee actively advertise housing options in the Telegram group, upon request from landlords. However, we are not responsible for the housing deals that trainees agree to with landlords.*

Please be careful of scammers as our experience from the previous session is that quite some trainees were tricked into sending money while not getting the accommodation. It is your responsibility to make sure this does not happen to you. Here some advice written by previous trainees that might help to prevent these situations:

- Do not only communicate by email, *talk to your potential landlord(s) and make sure their story checks out* (nationality-languages spoken-country of residence for instance; contact them through other channels, through social media - Facebook, LinkedIn etc. - to check if they are your prospective landlord and not someone whose name the scammer is using). Some housing websites also have a section listing their blacklisted landlords and proven scammers. If possible, contact current flatmates via social media to check they are real (not just a make-believe fake Facebook profile with no pictures and hardly any posts).
- *View the room*, either via Skype or ask a friend in Brussels to do it for you. Do not trust a whole bunch of pretty pictures in an email! If they refuse or make up excuses why a viewing is not possible by Skype or for real, it is very likely a scam! But even if they agree to arrange a viewing, it might be a scam because they might not turn up for the viewing in the end.
- *Google the name of the landlord* and use the search function in Facebook groups like "Bruxelles Bouche à l'oreille" because some people might have posted or commented if someone is a scammer.

- *Payment methods* - if the landlord is not using a normal bank account but Western Union or Moneygram, it is almost certainly a scam! However, do keep in mind that even a regular bank account can be a scammer.
- *Trust your gut feeling!* Talk to others, show them the details, do the Skype viewing with a parent or a friend, ask lots of questions. If the landlord runs out of answers, you know it is probably a scam! Also if it sounds too perfect, make sure it is (for instance the flatmates magically have the same nationality as you, same interests etc. - scammers try to learn everything about you by googling you and charm you into renting a room that way).
- If you get scammed despite all this, *go to the Police* - the more people report these scammers, the more likely it is they will be found, charged and prosecuted. Optionally, you could post warnings on social media, housing and trainee groups about the person to prevent others from falling for them!

2. Administrative assistance

We recommend you to make use of the services provided by the **Welcome Office** of the European Commission, as they are also available to trainees:

- You can find a **housing list** where the landlords who wish to put an ad on it have agreed to use their rental contract which is basically a contract based on the Brussels Housing Code and fair to both tenant and landlord.

If trainees are interested, they can also receive a copy of the list and of the contract by sending to them an email: HR BXL WELCOME OFFICE (HR-BXL-WELCOME-OFFICE@ec.europa.eu). However, please note that most of the ads are for longer than 5 months. It's up to the trainee to contact the landlord and ask if they wish to rent for less than a year.

- To use their **legal adviser service** (for problems related to private life), the trainees can contact the Welcome Office on 66600 and request a phone call appointment with one of their lawyers.
- The rental contracts are reviewed by the Welcome Office team. The trainees can **send the contract to be checked**, prior to signature, by email to the Welcome Office: HR BXL WELCOME OFFICE (HR-BXL-WELCOME-OFFICE@ec.europa.eu). Within 2-3 days, the trainees will receive their comments and suggestions. It will then be up to them to negotiate the most favourable conditions with the landlord. In alternative, they can also propose to use the rental contract provided by the Welcome Office.

For your first steps in Brussels, a great and comprehensive guide can be found at <http://www.commissioner.brussels/>. We highly recommend you to study the website thoroughly.

For rental contract issues, registration with municipality, social security, visa formalities, go to the 'Housing' section.

COMMISSIONER BRUSSELS

Tel. +32 (0)2 430 66 00

Email info@commissioner.brussels

Available from Monday to Friday

3. Housing in Brussels

Prices

Be prepared to spend between **€450** and **€700** per person per month on average for accommodation (flat, studio or sharing an apartment). It is difficult to find decent places for less as accommodation is becoming more expensive here in Brussels. The average deposit amounts to about 1 or 2 months' rent.

Lease contract

Please check the following before agreeing upon a contract:

- ✓ It should be in written form; read it carefully before signing;
- ✓ Do not accept a lease contract for longer than the period of your traineeship;
- ✓ Check if charges (electricity, gas, heating, internet etc.) are included.

Guarantee deposit

This is used by landlords to insure their properties against possible damages. It corresponds to the amount of 2 months' rent maximum. Since you will only be staying in your chosen accommodation for a few months, you may be able to negotiate a deposit which is equivalent to one month's rent.

The deposit is placed on a **joint blocked bank account** in your and your landlord's name. It is refunded at the end of the contract, after having verified the wear and tear (see below) of the place you rent.

Do not accept to pay a deposit in cash – *this is prohibited by law*. When you do this, chances are that you will not get the money back (even with a receipt).

Joint blocked bank account

The joint blocked bank account ('**compte bancaire bloqué**'/ '**geblokkeerde rekening**') can be opened under your name by any bank where you present a lease contract and an identity card. You will receive three forms that have to be filled in and signed by both the landlord and yourself. You will then need to transfer the deposit to this bank account.

Wear and tear

Wear and tear describes the general condition and the inventory of the property (studio, flat, etc.) and should be signed by both parties. It will also be added to the lease agreement. In French it is called '**État des lieux**', in Dutch as '**Plaatselijke toestand**'.

The tenant and the owner can establish the inventory of fixtures themselves. If they prefer to call upon an expert, each one pays half of the expenses. It is best to draw up the inventory of the property before the house is occupied or within one month following moving into the place.

At the end of the lease, the state of the property is examined and compared to its state at the start of the lease to determine whether the owner can demand payment for any rental damages.

Please check the following link for more information about housing in Bruxelles:
<https://be.brussels/living-in-brussels/housing>.

4. Registration in Brussels

You must register and apply for your residence permit ('titre de séjour'/'verblijftitel') within 90 days from your arrival in Brussels (within 8 days for non-EU citizens).

Please find out more info about the procedures by visiting the website of the commissioner.brussels:
<https://bit.ly/3aG78eW>.

5. Visa requirements in Belgium

Trainees **from non-EU countries**, except for Switzerland, Norway and Liechtenstein, **will need to apply for a single permit** before coming to Belgium. You must comply with the immigration requirements below before entering the country.

You do not need a work permit for the traineeship period. When applying for the single permit, provide the following documents:

- ✓ A valid passport;
- ✓ The traineeship placement offer issued by the European Commission's Traineeships Office Unit together with the acceptance form signed and dated;
- ✓ A medical certificate issued by a doctor recognised by the Belgian Embassy or Consulate proving you are free from any disease which could be a threat to public health (ask the embassy for a list of recognised doctors);
- ✓ A legalised police record (bearing an apostille/stamped), or an equivalent document endorsed by the Belgian authorities/ Embassy/Consulate (this does not apply to criminal records delivered in the United States of America and Israel).

Please bear in mind that the medical certificate and the police record must be **no older than six months**.

Please provide all the documents to the Traineeships Office which is responsible for submitting your request to the Belgian authorities.

→ The following **single permit related costs** will be **reimbursed**:

- **single permit fees**;
- **medical examination costs**;

(when the purpose of the examination is indicated: 'for single permit')

Please keep all *invoices and receipts* and attach them to your travel reimbursement request. If needed, enclose an unofficial translation in English or French.

Single permit costs requested by the '**Communes**' / '**Gemeentes**' **will not be reimbursed**.

Accommodation, meals and travel costs to an Embassy located in another country **will not be reimbursed**.

Single permit costs for which you *did not* submit a request **until 15th December 2022 at 23h59 GMT+1**, will not be reimbursed.

B. Healthcare

1. Finding a medical service provider

To look for a **doctor or other medical professional in Brussels**, check the following websites: famgb.be/en/find-doctor and <https://www.doctoranytime.be/en>. GPs usually have hours for walk-ins and hours with appointments. Most stronger medicines will only be sold after showing a prescription from your GP or other medical professional.

- Additionally, there is a **24h helpline** for the Brussels area that provides information on general practitioners on duty:

+32 (0)2 479 18 18 for French

+32 (0)2 242 43 44 for Dutch

→ If you need a **doctor's visit at home**, check the following website (in French only): www.sosmedecins.be. The price of the visits varies between €50 to €98.

2. Your well-being

During normal conditions, many DGs/services/agencies organise, for instance, yoga, meditation, tai chi or jogging activities during lunch and after work. Look for their schedule on MyIntraComm or ask your colleagues. **Under the context of social distancing**, some DGs provide online versions of these classes.

If you require psychological or social support, contact the European Commission Psychosocial Team. While not offering direct consultations for trainees, they are happy to direct you to the available services in Brussels that you may need. You can contact them at the following functional e-mail addresses: HR BXL EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE (hr-bxl-employee-assistance@ec.europa.eu) and HR BXL PSYCHOLOGUE (hr-bxl-psychologue@ec.europa.eu).

3. Diversity and Inclusion

Now diversity and inclusion have become key issues in the workplace and institutions such as the European Commission have played a vital role in recognizing the importance of such topics. However, it is important for the affected people to do three things in order to gain visibility:

1. Not being afraid of telling their story
2. Show that someone with health issues is as capable, if not more, as someone without such difficulty
3. Standing up when they feel as they are not treated as they need.

In case you are struggling with health issues, there is a list of people that you can reach out to in full confidentiality to ask for more flexibility:

1. The Traineeships Office
2. The HR of your DG to see if it is possible to create a more sustainable schedule within your current working arrangement.

By telling your story, you can make a difference in showing that people with health issues are as capable, if not more, than others.

Be vocal about your journey, struggles and fears and, when you feel comfortable, share them with your co-workers as your strength will be a source of inspiration for them.

Finally, if the solutions proposed by your HR or DG HR do not suit you, do not hesitate to propose new arrangements that might help others too!

4. Dentist

Dental care in Belgium is of a high standard. For a list of dentists call 02 426 10 26. The Community Help Service Helpline (02 648 40 14) can provide a list of English-speaking practitioners.

C. Transport²

All persons returning to Belgium and all persons travelling through Belgium and who are staying **more than 48 hours** must fill out an identification form (**Passenger Locator Form**). You can find this form [here](#). More information on Transportation can be found on the [Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs](#).

1. Metropolitan metro, buses and trams

Timetables for all bus, tram, and metro routes are featured on www.stib.be, the STIB app, but Google Maps is an easy way to check the route.

Please note that the running time of each line is different, you can verify the first and last service on the previously mentioned websites.

At night:

During the weekend (Friday and Saturday night), 11 night-bus lines called Noctis connect the city centre to all the '**Communes**' / '**Gemeentes**' of Brussels until 3:00.

Please check regularly the various measures taken by STIB-MIVB and the guidelines to be followed during this health crisis are regularly [here](#).

2. Tickets

You can choose to buy **paper tickets** (if you are going to use public transport only occasionally), or get a rechargeable **MOBIB card** for €5 and recharge it with 5 or 10 journeys. Various ticket options are available. Single tickets are valid for up to a maximum of one hour of travel.

You can also get monthly passes ('**abonnement**') at Bootik shops at De Brouckère, Porte de Namur / Naamse Poort, Rogier, Roodebeek, Gare du Midi, or Gare de l'Ouest metro stations (**please note that you will need your ID and 2 passport photos**). For further information, please check the following website:

<https://tinyurl.com/yanrc4tm>.

Be sure to validate your ticket every time you travel.

Regular checks on public transport do happen, so be careful or you will be **fined** over €107 if you do not have a valid ticket. A second offence will cost you €214. It will cost you €408 if you use a forged transport ticket and/or a transport ticket/MOBIB card of someone else.

[More info](#)

² N.B. The social distancing measures on means of transportation are subject to the changing environment

3. Bus line 12/21

Airport Express runs from Place du Luxembourg/Luxemburgplein through Schuman Roundabout to Zaventem airport (Brussels Airport). It costs **€7.00 (or €7.50 from the driver)** to get all the way to the airport. Up-to-date information on bus travel to Zaventem airport can be found [here](#).

4. Taxis

Taxi ranks can be found at Schuman Roundabout, near train stations, at central points in town as well as near important hotels, theatres, concert buildings and cinemas. Tips are included in the fare. From around Grand-Place / Grote Markt to Schuman Roundabout expect to pay about €12. More information on taxi stands can be found at <https://www.brussels.be/taxi>

5. Collecto

Collecto is a collective taxi service available every day from 23:00 to 6:00 in the entire Brussels Capital region. It is very flexible: you board at any Collecto stop and you alight at any point in the region. You should call in advance of your departure and you should mention the number of the stop you will be waiting at. Locations and further info can be found at <https://mobilite-mobiliteit.brussels/fr/collecto>. **Please be aware that the service is currently suspended due to the pandemic.**

6. Trains

Belgium has the highest density of railroads in the world. The national railway company of Belgium is [SNCB/NMBS](#).

There are **five main stations in Brussels**, three of them are international:

Gare de Bruxelles-Nord / Station Brussel-Noord (Brussels North Station); **Gare de Bruxelles-Central / Station Brussel-Centraal** (Brussels Central Station); **Gare de Bruxelles-Midi / Station Brussel-Zuid** (Brussels South Station).

→ All **Interregional (IR)** and **Intercity (IC)** lines pass through these three stations, serving domestic and international destinations, incl. Antwerp, Charleroi, Ghent, Liège, Bruges, Namur, Luxembourg, The Hague, and Amsterdam. **Travel restrictions may be subject to change due to the current pandemic, currently you may move around freely in Belgium, while only essential travels across the Belgian borders are allowed. Please consult www.info-coronavirus.be on current measures.**

→ **High-speed services:** the **Eurostar** provides connections to Lille Europe Station and London St Pancras International, and **Thalys** to Paris North Station, Cologne Main Station and Amsterdam Central Station leave from Gare de Bruxelles-Midi / Station Brussel-Zuid (www.eurostar.com / www.thalys.com).

Rail Pass: 10-journey ticket which allows you to travel between any two stations within Belgium. The pass costs €83 for journeys in second class, and €128 for journeys in first class.

Go Pass 10: Same concept of the Rail Pass, but for under 26-year-olds. The pass costs €53 and you can have up to 10 people on one Go Pass 10.

Weekend Ticket: If you commence your journey on Friday after 19:00 and return by late on Sunday evening, you can save a substantial amount (50% discount).

At present and following the current health crisis that we have known for several months, certain exceptional measures are still applicable when you want to take the train in Belgium and in our neighbouring countries.

For train journeys in **Belgium**, please read about the measures taken by SNCB following the spread of coronavirus. Please note that wearing a **mask is mandatory** from the age of 12 years in all public transports in Belgium, including in stations, on platforms and on the trains.

7. Long-distance buses

Travelling by bus is a good and occasionally cheaper alternative to travelling by train.

Please check the guidelines regularly of the following long-distance bus services departing from Brussels: [Eurolines](#), [Flixbus](#), [Ouibus](#), and [Megabus](#). Many European cities are served, including national and regional capitals.

8. Bicycles

Be very careful when cycling in Brussels, as drivers have a tendency to be blissfully unaware of other road users.

If you're in the possession of a T-Card, you will get discount when renting a bike via Swapfiets ([check the TC website](#))

Second-hand bikes:

- Check Sunday morning market at Brussels South Station (beware of pickpockets).
- Hire one at the Gare de Groenendael / Station Groenendaal for a ride through the Bois de la Cambre / Ter Kamerenbos or to discover the Belgian countryside in the Ardennes. A bike costs about €15 per day (plus deposit) from Cycles C.Y.D, Avenue E. Pirmez / E. Pirmezlaan 14, 1040 Bruxelles.
- You can also try Maison des Cyclistes on Rue de Londres / Londenstraat 15 (www.provelo.org).

Villo!

In case you do not feel like buying a bike, you can profit from the use of the yellow VILLO! bikes –Brussels public biking system– by [subscribing online](#).

You can also rent a VILLO! for one day (€1.65) or one week (€8,40).³

Commission bicycles

Another possibility! Just ask the security guards at the reception desk of your building to direct you to where they are stored. Commission bikes are free of charge, but mainly intended for work-related travel, and an official may need to sign it out for you. Use is limited to daytime and bikes must be returned before 20:00.

WARNING

While travelling through Belgium, you will notice that road signs and maps do not always correspond. This is because of **different linguistic communities!** Antwerpen / Anvers; Leuven / Louvain; Mons / Bergen; Liège / Luik; Gent / Gand; and Lille / Rijsel etc. It is very easy to get lost if you are not aware of these differences.

D. Daily life

1. Post offices

Post offices in Brussels are generally open Monday to Friday, from 9:00 till 17:00, but some close at midday. More information is available at www.post.be.

2. Banks

Most banks and exchange offices are open from Monday to Friday, 9:00 till 16:30. You will need to make an appointment to open a bank account. Do not forget to take **your passport, traineeship offer and a copy of your apartment lease contract**.

³ NB: you can only pay by debit card (Bancontact, Maestro) and credit card (Visa, Mastercard) that have a chip. For more information check www.villo.be. Please note that when finishing your Villo! Subscription, you have to do so well in advance, and send a letter via post.

Most small branches require a Belgian national card to introduce your account. Our suggestion is to open a bank account at the Schuman ING (Rond-Pt Robert Schuman 8) or the ING Place Luxembourg (Rue d'Arlon 26) – they can introduce an account based on your national ID.

3. Waste disposal

In Brussels, you recycle: there are blue bags for plastic, yellow bags for paper, green bags for garden waste, and white bags for everything you cannot recycle. Bags can be bought in the supermarket in different sizes. You should put glass in proper containers, although some supermarkets offer a take-back service by charging you a deposit ('**vidange**') on certain bottles. Waste is collected twice a week on specific days (ask your neighbours or at the '**Commune**' / '**Gemeente**'). Used batteries can be disposed of in the containers at Commission buildings.

Be responsible and recycle – it will help Brussels and help you manage your waste! You can find more information on www.arp-gan.be.

Information about elimination of different types of waste can also be found on <http://www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/4022>.

4. Supermarkets and markets

Supermarkets (like Carrefour Market, Colruyt, Aldi, and Delhaize) close any time between 18:00 and 20:00, depending on the branch. Shops like Proxy or Carrefour tend to close later, and are mostly open on Sundays too.

The best bargains are to be found at the outdoor markets near Brussels South Station ('Marché du Midi', Sundays until 14:00), Clémenceau ('Marché des Abattoirs', Thursdays-Sundays till 14:00), and on Parvis de St. Gilles / Sint-Gillisvoorplein near Porte de Hal / Hallepoort (daily). There is a wide choice of fruits, vegetables and cheese available there. Asian food can be found in the St. Géry / St. Gorik area, near Place de la Bourse / Beursplein.

See www.brussels.org/shopping for more information about shopping in Brussels.

NIGHT SHOPS / FOOD STORES

If you are in the mood for a late-night snack, night shops are usually open after the supermarkets close! For shopping on Sundays, check out the '**Alimentation Générale**' / '**Algemene Voeding**' shops.

5. Libraries

Most or all municipalities in greater Brussels have a library.

Royal Library of Belgium

Boulevard de l'Empereur / Keizerslaan 4

This is the largest library in Brussels. It has 5 million literary works, more than 150 km of bookshelves and a particularly impressive collection of Western European public manuscripts.

Fond Quetelet

Rue de l'industrie / Industriestraat (corner Rue Montoyer / Montoyerstraat). This library of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs has an international reputation for its wide and varied collection.

Library of the European Commission

Rue Van Maerlant / Van Maerlantstraat 18 – in the church.

Muntpunt

Place de la Monnaie / Munt 6 (next to the 'Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie' / 'Koninklijke Muntchouwburg'). This library, at the very heart of Brussels, offers a large collection of books in Dutch.

6. Lost property

Metro, tram and bus: contact STIB, Avenue de la Toison d'Or / Guldenvlieslaan 15, 1060 Bruxelles, Tel.: 02 515 20 00. There is a lost-and-found-office in Botanique / Kruidtuin, open from 12:00 to 18:00 on Mondays and Wednesdays. In principle, they will let you know if they find a document that belongs to you, but if you are not yet registered in the '**Commune**' / '**Gemeente**', it is recommended to go there and check whether your object is found. You will have to pay €3 to get your properties back.

Train: If you know the number and the destination of the train, the best thing to do is to call the next station along the line immediately. Tel.: 02 219 00 40.

7. Embassies and External Representation

The addresses and telephone numbers of all embassies are listed in the Brussels phone book under '**Ambassades**'. For a list of Missions accredited to the EU, please see: <https://bit.ly/2EfVg7d>.

8. Parks and General Advices

Lastly, we would like to draw your particular attention to the fact that you should always use your common sense, especially when you are outside. We would like to strongly encourage you to be careful and alert, especially if you are alone on the streets and highly recommend to abstain from going into parks after the sunset.

As in every capital and/or bigger city, we strongly encourage you to be careful if you are around the following areas, especially after the sunset, while this list is certainly NOT complete:

- **Parc Cinquantenaire:** Unfortunately, there are **constantly reported cases of sexual harassment, especially towards women in and around the park**. In addition, there are **obvious activities of organised dealing and trafficking crime taking place in and around the park**. Especially after sunset, they seem to “patrol” through the park and approach individuals whom they consider to disturb their activities and might even follow you once you cross the park. A certain indicator for

that is the fact that the Belgian police operate razzias by surrounding the park from time to time.

- **Parc Royal:** Especially after sunset similar activities as in Parc Cinquenaire can be observed, hence we also encourage you to be careful and rather avoid the park once it is dark.
- **City Center:** Please be aware of pickpockets, beggars and people who are looking for their entertainment by approaching other people, this includes the entire area of Brussels-Center, including the Bourse, the Grand Market and the Mont des Arts. As the latter is a popular place for all kinds of people with different intentions, we strongly recommend to be careful there.
- **Flagey:** Very similar recommendations as to the City Center apply to the area around Place Flagey, hence, again, we strongly recommend to use your common sense and be careful.

E. Discover Brussels

You will find detailed information about Brussels' main sites of interest via the following website of the **Brussels Bureau of Tourism**: <http://visit.brussels>.

Tel.: 02 513 89 40. Address: Rue Royale / Koningsstraat 2-4.

[Here](#) you can find a series of self-guided itineraries to discover the city!

1. Markets

Midi Market (near Brussels South Station): offers an array of products and clothing from all over the world. It is also a great place for cheap bicycles. Open Sunday mornings from 6:00 to 14:30.

Food and clothes: on Parvis de St. Gilles / Sint-Gillisvoorplein, open from 5:00 to 13:00, Tuesdays to Sundays (Porte de Hal / Hallepoort metro station).

Flea markets: open from 9:00 to 13:00 every day in the Place du Jeu de Balle / Vossenplein, Les Marolles / De Marollen. Every first Sunday of the month, a flea market is held in the Place Saint-Lambert / Sint-Lambrechtsplein and a vintage market at Place St. Géry / St. Gorikspanplein 1.

Antique market and books: on Place du Grand Sablon / Grote Zavelplein on Saturday and Sunday from 9:00.

Flower market: every Sunday morning on the Grand Place / Grote Markt and near Brussels South Station.

Open air market for paintings: Brueghel quarter, Place Notre Dame des Grâces, Rue Haute / Hoogstraat on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Fruit and vegetable market: a great variety of fruit and vegetables is displayed every day in winter until 16:00 and in the summer until 18:00 in the Place Sainte Catherine / Sint-Katelijneplein. You may also want to visit the markets at Place Jourdan / Jourdanplein, Clémenceau, Boitsfort / Bosvoorde or Stockel / Stokkel.

More information to be found at the following links:

<https://www.withlocals.com/locations/belgium/brussels/markets/>

<https://www.brussels.be/outdoor-markets>

2. Shopping

Shopping in Brussels need not be limited to chocolate! Other famous souvenirs include crystal, pewter ware, and Belgian beer.

Some of the shopping streets/areas include:

- Rue Neuve / Nieuwstraat
- Boulevard Adolphe Max / Adolphe Maxlaan
- Rue du Marché aux Herbes / Grasmarktstraat
- Avenue Louise / Louizalaan
- Avenue de la Toison d'Or / Guldenvlieslaan
- Chaussée d'Ixelles / Elsensesteenweg
- Boulevard de Waterloo / Waterloolaan

Department stores are open from 9:00 (10:00) to 18:00 (18:30/19:00). They are closed on Sundays and public holidays, except for the [first Sunday](#) of the month, during which at least the shops in the city centre are open.

F. Cultural life in Brussels

1. Museums in Brussels

Check all the museums: www.brusselmuseums.be.

Please note that most museums in Belgium are **closed on Mondays** and the **entrance is free on the first Wednesday of the month or on the first Sunday of the month** after 13:00. You might also get a discount if you are under 26.

If you are planning to visit several museums, consider investing in the [MuseumPass](#) which gives you access to over 200 museums all over Belgium. With your T-card, you will be able to obtain a € 8 discount.

7.2. CONCERT VENUES AND THEATRES

- Le Botanique (Botanique) - <http://botanique.be/en>
- Ancienne Belgique (Bourse) - <https://www.abconcerts.be/>
- Flagey - <https://www.flagey.be/en/>
- Beursschouwburg (Bourse) - <http://www.beursschouwburg.be/en/#intro>
- Bozar (close to the Central Station) - <http://www.bozar.be/en>
- Recyclart (Brussel-Kapellekerk station) - <http://www.recyclart.be/nl/agenda?category=muziek>
- Forest National - <http://www.forest-national.be/fr>
- La Monnaie (De Broukere) - <https://www.lamonnaie.be/en>
- Théâtre national de la Communauté française (Rogier) - <https://www.theatrenational.be/fr/>
- Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg (KVS) (Yser) - <http://www.kvs.be/en>
- Les Riches-Clares (Bourse) - <https://lesrichesclaires.be/>
- Kaaithheater (Yser) - <https://www.kaaitheater.be/>
- Théâtre royal de Toone (puppet theatre close to Grand Place) - http://www.toone.be/spip.php?page=choix_lang
- Halles de Schaerbeek (Lefranq / Robiano) - <http://www.halles.be/en/>

2. Cinemas

There are over 30 movie theatres in Brussels region. The prices of films are around €10 per adult ticket. Original versions with subtitles are labelled with “OV” (original version) and dubbed movies are labelled with a “V” followed by the language. You can find what is on at www.cinebel.be.

Here is a list of some well-known cinemas in Brussels:

- UGC Cinema (De Broukere / Toison d’Or) – www.ugc.be
- Kinopolis (Atomium area) – www.kinopolis.be
- Vendome (Porte de Namur) - <http://www.cinema-vendome.be/>
- Cinema Nova (Arenberg) - <http://www.nova-cinema.org/?lang=fr>
- Aventure (between Bourse and De Brouckère) - <http://www.cinema-aventure.be/>
- Cinema Palace (near Bourse) - <https://cinema-palace.be/fr>
- Cinematek (Park de Bruxelles area) - <http://www.cinematek.be/>
- Cinema Galeries (Saint Hubert Galleries) - <http://www.galleries.be/>

3. Sport facilities

Brussels has a lot of sports halls, swimming pools and camps that you can access either for free or with a fee. Check all of them as well as the annual sports at www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/4109.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS GUIDE, WE HOPE IT’S HELPFUL!

WISHING YOU MARVELLOUS MONTHS AHEAD!

Liaison Committee
October 2022

Commission's buildings in Brussels

B-28

DIGIT, EMPL, OID, REGIO

Rue Belliard 28, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

B100

EEAS

Rue Belliard 100, 1040 - Etterbeek

B232 (White Park)

SANTE

Rue Breydel 2-10, 1040 – Etterbeek

BERL

COLLÈGE, COMM, HR, IDEA, OIB, SG, SJ

Berlaymont

Rue de la Loi 200, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

BLMT

Belmont

Rue d'Arlon 62, 1040 - Etterbeek

BLS2

CINEA

Espace Rolin (Bloc A)

Boulevard Louis Schmidt 2, 1040 - Etterbeek

BRE2

CLIMA, GROW, HR

Breydel 2

Avenue d'Auderghem 19, 1040 – Etterbeek

BREY

DEFIS, GROW, HR

Breydel

Avenue d'Auderghem 45, 1040 – Etterbeek

BU25

Avenue de Beaulieu 25, 1160 - Auderghem / Oudergem

BU29

Avenue de Beaulieu 29, 1160 - Auderghem / Oudergem

BU31

CLIMA

Avenue de Beaulieu 31, 1160 - Auderghem / Oudergem

BU33

Avenue de Beaulieu 33, 1160 - Auderghem / Oudergem

C-25

CAPITAL IMMEUBLE PARIS

Avenue de Cortenbergh 25, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

C150

EEAS

Avenue de Cortenbergh 150, 1046 - European External Action Service

C158

EEAS

Cortenbergh 158

Avenue du Cortenbergh 158, 1046 - European External Action Service

CCAB

Centre De Conférences Albert Borschette

Rue Froissart 36, 1040 - Etterbeek

CDMA

JRC, RTD

Mondrian (champ de Mars)

Rue du Champ de Mars 21, 1050 - Ixelles / Elsene

CHAR

COMM, ECFIN, OIB, REFORM, SCIC, SG, TRADE

Charlemagne

Rue de la Loi 170, 1040 - Etterbeek +32229 90600 COMM,

CLOV

OIB

Crèche Clovis

Boulevard Clovis 75-79, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

COLE

OIB

Rue Général Leman 46, 1040 - Etterbeek

COV2

CINEA, EISMEA, ERCEA, HADEA, REA

Covent Garden 2

Place Rogier 16, 1210 - Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode / Sint-Joost-Ten-Noode

COVE

Covent Garden

Place Rogier 16, 1210 - Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode / Sint-Joost-Ten-Noode

CSM1

REGIO

Cours Saint Michel 1

Cours Saint-Michel, 23, 1040 - Etterbeek

DAV1

Bâtiment logistique

Avenue du Bourget 3, 1140 - Evere

DM24

ENER, MOVE

Rue Demot 24-26, 1040 - Etterbeek

DM28

MOVE

Rue Demot 28, 1040 - Etterbeek

EEAS

EEAS, FPI

The Capital

Rond Point Schuman 9A, 1046 - European External Action Service

F101

SANTE, SG

B232 Extension (Brey-Froi)

Rue Froissart 101-107, 1040 - Etterbeek

G-6

DGT

Genève 6

Rue de Genève 6, 1140 - Evere

G-12

Genève 12 - Evere Green

Rue de Genève 12, 1140 - Evere

DGT

J-27

Rue Joseph II 27, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

EMPL

J-30

Brittania

Rue Joseph II 30, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

OLAF

J-54

Rue Joseph II 54, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

INTPA, NEAR

J-59

City Garden

Rue Joseph II 59, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

EACEA

J-70

Emerald Court

Rue Joseph II 70, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

CDP-OSP, EAC, EACEA

J-79

Eudip-Three

Rue Joseph II 79, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

MARE, TAXUD

J-99

Rue Joseph II 99, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

MARE

L-15

HERA, NEAR

Rue de la Loi 15, 1040 - Etterbeek

L-41

INTPA

Eurosquare

Rue de la Loi 41, 1040 - Etterbeek

L-56

COMM

Rue de la Loi 56, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

L-86

ECHO

Rue de la Loi 86, 1040 - Etterbeek

L102

ECFIN

Rue de la Loi 102, 1040 - Etterbeek

L107 - The One

BUDG, CNECT, DGT, DIGIT, ECFIN, EMPL, ENER,
EPSO, ESTAT, HR, JUST, OIL, OP, PMO, SNATE, SCIC

Rue de la Loi 102, 1040 - Etterbeek

L130

AGRI, ECHO

Rue de la Loi 130, 1040 - Etterbeek +32229 50290

LX40

JUST

Rue du Luxembourg 40, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

LX46

HOME

Rue du Luxembourg 46, 1040 - Etterbeek

MADO

COMP, IAS

Tour Madou

Place Madou 1, 1210 - Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode / Sint-Joost-Ten-Noode

MERO

PMO, REGIO

41, avenue de Tervueren, 1040 - Etterbeek

MO15

BUDG

BLACK PEARL

15, rue Montoyer, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

MO59

JUST

Rue Montoyer 59, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

N105

GROW

Avenue des Nerviens 105, 1040 - Etterbeek

ORBN

RTD

Espace Orban

Square Frère-Orban 8, 1040 - Etterbeek

OVER

Dennenboslaan 54, 3090 – Overijse

PALM

Avenue Palmerston 6-14, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

PLB3

EPSO, HR

Livingstone II

Rue Philippe Lebon 1-3, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

RP14

Info Point, Experience Europe

Rond-Point Robert Schuman 14, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

SC11

DIGIT

Millenium, Rue de la Science 11, 1040 - Etterbeek

SPA2

EACEA, FISMA

The Pavilion, rue de spa 2, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

SPA3

EMPL, TAXUD

Parc Avenue, Rue de Spa 3, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel I

VM-2

Rue Van Maerlant 2, 1040 - Etterbeek

VM18

EACEA, OP

Ex-Couvent VM, Rue Van Maerlant 18, 1040 - Etterbeek

W910

CINEA

ROLIN, Chaussée de Wavre 910, 1040 - Etterbeek

WALI

OIB

WAGON-LITS, boulevard Clovis, 53, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

WILS

Garderie Wilson, Rue Wilson, 16-24, 1000 - Bruxelles / Brussel

USEFUL LINKS

Brussels

Brussels city portal

<http://be.brussels/>

Commission's buildings in Brussels

http://ec.europa.eu/oib/buildings_en.cfm

Map with Commission's buildings

http://ec.europa.eu/oib/pdf/building-map_en.pdf

Brussels Trainees' Committee website

<http://www.traineescommittee.com/>

MyIntracomm-internal website for trainees

(available from the 1st day of the traineeship)

<http://tinyurl.com/MyIntracommStages>

Expat Welcome Desk (Brussels Liaison Office)

<http://www.commissioner.brussels/>

Small ads – internal advertising website

<https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/en/SmallAds/Pages/Welcome.aspx>

Trainees' Committee

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www.traineescommittee.com

Traineeships Office

eac-stages@ec.europa.eu

European Commission Security Service

22222

Infrastructure and Logistics Office (OIB)

55555

IT Helpdesk

77777