



THE LAW SOCIETY OF ENGLAND AND WALES
THE LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND
THE LAW SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

The Law Societies

JOINT BRUSSELS OFFICE

Organising a study visit to the European Institutions CPD hours available

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Introduction

Since the early 90's, the Brussels Office has been organising study visits to the European institutions for the benefit of solicitors from England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The aims of these study visits are to enable solicitors to.

- Learn (more) about the European Union, its institutions and how European policies affect solicitors and their clients.
- Visit the European institutions (such as the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice) and see them working.
- Meet officials working for the European institutions, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), UK Government officials, solicitors and other professionals based in Brussels and to hear first hand from them about the EU, how the institutions work and the latest policy developments.
- Sample Brussels life and some of its well-known restaurants !

A. What is a study visit ?

1. Programme

The Brussels Office is keen to tailor study visits to the interests of each group and so the topics and the programme vary from group to group. We normally ask participants to let us know what their interests are and whether there are any particular subjects which they would like to explore or any particular institutions they would like to visit.

There are many different variations for study visits. For example, some groups have stayed in Brussels where it is possible to meet Commission officials, see the European Parliament in action and meet MEPs, and talk to UK Government officials. Other groups have not only been to Brussels but have also taken the opportunity to go to Strasbourg (where the European Parliament meets in Plenary Session once a month and where the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights are also based), Luxembourg (where the European Court of Justice and the European Investment Bank are based) and The Hague (where the International Court of Justice and the former Yugoslavia War Crimes Tribunal are based).

The Brussels Office would be happy to put together a draft programme for your group along the lines of the sample programme we have prepared for a two day study visit to Brussels.

2. Duration

Most study visits which take place in Brussels last for two days (normally Wednesday and Thursday to coincide with Plenary Sessions / Committee meetings of the European Parliament) though some groups extend this to three days (for example, Friday) to allow some participants to stay over the weekend. This also has the advantage of reducing the air fare.

Most visits to Strasbourg and Luxembourg take in both these destinations and therefore last for three days. Similarly, most visits to The Hague can be combined with a visit to Brussels.

3. Cost

The cost of a study visit for each participant obviously depends on the content of the study visit and standard of restaurants and accommodation, as well as the mode of travel used to get to Brussels/Strasbourg/Luxembourg/The Hague and back.

However, the aim of the Brussels Office is to make study visits as attractive and as affordable to as many solicitors as possible, especially bearing in mind that during the study visit solicitors will not be generating fees.

In our experience, we can organise a two day study visit in Brussels for about £ 250 per person which includes one night's accommodation in Brussels, lunch on both days, dinner on the first day, tea and coffee, and transport in Brussels. This price does not include travel to Brussels/Strasbourg/Luxembourg/The Hague and back (group discounts are often available on Eurostar or airlines), nor does it include personal expenditure in Brussels.

4. CPD hours

Most study visits are eligible for CPD hours, the number of which obviously depends on the length and academic/professional content of the study visit.

B. How to organise a study visit ?

If you would like to organise a Study Visit, please write to the Brussels Office specifying:

- Where you would like the visit to take place (Brussels, Luxembourg, Strasbourg, The Hague or a combination of these).
- Your preferred time of year (please try and give us two or three different dates in different months and at least three month's notice if you would like to visit the European Parliament).
- An idea of the sort of topics you would like speakers to address.
- How many participants you expect there to be.
- Your budget.

Once the date of your study visit has been agreed (and this is often timed to coincide with meetings of the European Parliament), the next step is to appoint a UK and a Brussels co-ordinator.

1. Role of the UK co-ordinator

This person will be based in the UK and will be responsible for :

- Liaising with the Brussels co-ordinator concerning the date of the visit, the content of the programme, the type of hotel and restaurants, the budget, etc.
- Advertising the study visit to potential participants in the UK.
- Finding out from participants what their interests are and whether they have any specific requests for talks, etc.
- Making the travel arrangements from the UK to Brussels/ Strasbourg/ Luxembourg/ The Hague and back.

- Collecting participation fees from participants and settling invoices in conjunction with the Brussels co-ordinator.

2. Role of the Brussels co-ordinator

This person will be a member of the Brussels Office staff and will be responsible for :

- Liaising with the UK co-ordinator.
- Making the hotel and restaurant reservations.
- Organising the visits to the European institutions.
- Contacting speakers and arranging the content of the programme.
- Inviting guests such as Commission officials and MEPs to dinner or lunch.
- Arranging transport in Brussels.
- Paying all invoices in Brussels (restaurants, hotel, transport, tea and coffee, photocopying, etc..) except personal expenditure which will then be re-invoiced to the UK co-ordinator.