



**The European Commission** is one of the main institutions participating in the decision-making process of the European Union, along with the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. It was created to represent the European interest common to all Member States of the Union so that it can play its role as guardian of the Treaties and defender of the general interest. The Commission has been given the right of initiative in the legislative process, proposing the legislation on which the European Parliament and the Council decide. It is also responsible for implementing common policies (like the common agricultural policy); it administers the budget and manages the Communities' programmes. The Commission is represented in some 130 countries of the world through its offices known as Delegations. The Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in India, based in New Delhi, is also accredited to Bhutan and Nepal.

Like other accredited foreign diplomatic missions, the Delegation represents the European Commission vis-à-vis the Government of India. In parallel with the Indian mission in Brussels, it seeks to ensure a smooth and accurate flow of information between the European Commission and Indian authorities. The EU has launched a 'Strategic Partnership' with India in 2004 which is being implemented through a Joint Action Plan. The E C Delegation in New Delhi is responsible for its share of implementing the various actions listed in the Joint Action Plan. Being in charge of the EU's common commercial policy, the European Commission represents the EU at the WTO and other international trade fora. In this respect, the Delegation maintains an important policy dialogue with the host country. It is particularly relevant to India since the EU is the India's largest trade and investment partner. The Delegation participates with the missions of the Member States in New Delhi on all matters falling under the ambit of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It participates in all 'Troika' and other EU diplomatic initiatives and contacts with India. It also informs and assists the European Parliament and other European institutions in their relations with India.

The Delegation is equally responsible for overseeing implementation of a whole range of economic and development co-operation programmes supported by the EC in India (education, health, environment, trade and investment facilitation, Civil Society and NGO - related projects, cultural exchanges etc.). Since 2002, the Delegation's role has been substantially enhanced in the context of the management of external aid which has been devolved from the headquarters to the Delegations. The Delegation works closely with Union, State and local authorities, apex bodies, NGOs, and all relevant Indian partners. Informing about the EU's role in world affairs and highlighting the development of bilateral relations to Indian policy makers and opinion formers is amongst the key tasks of the Delegation. This requires close contacts with the government, trade and industry, media, academia, NGOs and civil society.