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DGA Association Toolkit

How to Navigate the New EU Policy Landscape with Confidence

Setting-Up Your Association For Success

The recent European Parliament elections mark the start of a new policy cycle for the EU. This brings changes in policy focus, a new makeup of the European Commission and Parliament, possible updates to existing laws, and new regulations to support ambitious initiatives from the last term. To effectively navigate these changes, associations need to understand how they will affect their members and adjust their strategies to enhance their influence in this new environment. **Here are three critical success factors to get this right.**



Craft Your 360° Strategy

As the EU's political landscape changes, associations need to create a comprehensive strategy to engage with members, policymakers, and the public alike. This requires a clear **vision** of the association's role in the new EU environment, a **strategy** to address evolving member needs, and an **advocacy playbook** that includes effective positioning and engaging messaging.



Act Now for Future Success

With the new Parliament starting in July 2024 and the Commission beginning its term in the coming months, **now is the perfect moment to build a strong strategic framework** for your association. As EU institutions set their priorities and new Members of Parliament form committees, establishing a solid foundation now will help ensure your association is ready for future engagement and influence.



Embrace Your Uniqueness

Associations are unique in both their complexity and their potential for impact. Their need to navigate complex systems of member interests and multi-stakeholder decision-making. At the same time, their status as well-recognized civil society stakeholders with far-reaching influence sets them apart from other organizations.

Over the next pages, the DGA Association Toolkit outlines the key steps required to set your association up for success.

Step 1: Establish Your Unique Vision

Start by finding your unique strategic position within the new EU ecosystem. This involves actively reviewing your member's needs, identifying your unique value in the context of new EU policy priorities, and translating these insights into a clear vision and actionable strategy.



Re-Activate Your Members

- **Prepare your members to be effective advocacy partners** by addressing their needs, questions, and concerns in light of the new policy cycle. Provide insights, actionable advice, and a platform for them to share their thoughts and concerns.
- **How DGA can help:** Utilize our proven member activation package, which includes surveys, briefings, and eTownhalls, to engage and activate your membership effectively.



Connect to the EU Policy Agenda



- **Define your space the EU Agenda for 2024-2029**, including key policy drivers and influencers, to align your goals with these new political priorities.
- **How DGA can help:** We offer tailored executive briefings and comprehensive reports for your Board and members, highlighting opportunities and risks for your association.

Shape Your Strategic Position

- **Ensure your association's strategic position is relevant, engaging and unique**, reflecting the European agenda and the global 2030 priorities. Create a compelling narrative that activates members and policymakers and connect with strategic allies to enhance your influence and achieve shared goals.
- **How DGA can help:** Use our association strategy canvas to refine your strategic positioning. Collaborate with our experts to audit and develop your sector roadmap, policy outlook, partnership strategy, and winning narrative.



Step 2: Create Your EU Advocacy Map

Continue by defining your association's unique advocacy arena and defining your place within the new EU landscape. This involves mapping key influencers and decision-makers, developing tailored narratives, and building relationships with influential players to effectively position yourself in a place of influence.



Map Your New EU Landscape

- **Identify and analyze key EU influencers and decision-makers** to understand their goals, interests, narratives, and preferred communication channels.
- **How DGA can help:** We provide comprehensive political mapping of the most important MEPs, attachés, Commission officials, and critical stakeholders in your field. Use our online audience mapping to reveal your stakeholders' preferred information sources, engagement content, and spheres of influence.



Develop Your Bespoke Narratives



- Transform your core messages into **compelling, evidence-based narratives**. Use your mapping and conversation research to tailor your messages to your audience's specific interests and needs.
- **How DGA can help:** Leverage our communication expertise and policy knowledge to turn your expert insights into engaging stories that resonate with your target groups.

Connect with Your Key Players

- **Build relationships** with decision-makers, champions, challengers, allies, and partners at both national and EU levels, connecting through bespoke executive talks, engaging briefings, and attractive events.
- **How DGA can help:** Our experts boast extensive networks within EU institutions, including former attachés, MEP assistants, and Commission desk officers. Through our global network, we can facilitate conversations with influencers, stakeholders, non-profits, NGOs, industry, and potential new members.



Step 3: Launch Your Playbook

Complete the process with your association’s advocacy & engagement playbook - your guide to clear messaging, effective campaigning and member engagement. This involves consolidating your strategies, engaging your members as advocates, and developing a robust outreach plan.



Create Your Playbook

- **Consolidate your association’s campaign outreach & strategies** across themes, value-chain components, policy areas, key events, and channels, ensuring it remains fresh and updated.
- **How DGA can help:** Leverage our expertise to develop clear, compelling, and consistent outreach strategies tailored for your stakeholders and channels. Use our templates for building effective measurement and evaluation tools to refine your messaging based on feedback.



Empower Your Members



- Encourage member outreach task forces to shape joint campaigns. Create toolkits that empower members to act as ambassadors, by contributing their unique insights and support to increase the impact of your campaigns.
- **How DGA can help:** Draw on our extensive experience in designing and activating successful member advocacy programs, including the development of ambassador programmes and member-friendly campaign toolkits.

Develop a Robust Outreach Strategy

- Set your **12-month outreach agenda** to ensure synergies between your events, publications, meetings, digital and media outreach, aligned with key EU, global, and internal milestones for your association.
- **How DGA can help:** Build on our 360-degree association outreach plans that connect and combine direct engagement, printed and digital outreach for maximum impact. Our expertise ensures you match the right approach with the right audience at the right time.



Passionate Professionals at Your Service

With our unique blend of non-profit strategy, public affairs and strategic communication expertise, DGA Group offers associations the tools and knowledge needed to confidently navigate the new EU policy cycle.



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About Us

DGA Group is a global advisory firm that helps clients protect – and grow – what they have built in today's complex business environment. We understand the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly regulated and interconnected world. Leveraging the experience and expertise of Albright Stonebridge Group, a leader in global strategy and commercial diplomacy, and a deep bench of communications, public affairs, government relations, and business intelligence consultants, we help clients navigate and shape global policy, reputational and financial issues.

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