

# Two new director-generals appointed in the Council's General Secretariat

Today, the Council appointed Maryem van den Heuvel as the new Director-General for External Relations (RELEX), and Didier Seeuws as the new Director-General for General and Institutional Policy (GIP).



Maryem van den Heuvel

Maryem van den Heuvel, a Dutch national, is currently Chief Foreign Policy Advisor in the cabinet of Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and previously served as Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Belgium. She is a senior diplomat with longstanding experience in European and foreign affairs.

DG RELEX provides policy support to the European Council and its president in the areas of the EU's external relations and international summits. It assists and advises the Council, the Council presidency and the High Representative in his capacity as President of the Foreign Affairs Council. It prepares and coordinates the work of the Council and its different preparatory bodies in the areas of foreign policy, security and defence, trade, development cooperation and humanitarian aid, enlargement and the EU's integrated political crisis response.

Maryem van den Heuvel replaces Leonardo Schiavo, who retired at the end of 2020. She will start her new assignment on 1 April 2021.



Didier Seeuws

Didier Seeuws, a Belgian national, has been working in the General Secretariat of the Council since 2014, having previously held the position of head of cabinet of former President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy. He is currently Director of the Task Force on the UK.

DG GIP provides many horizontal political services in support of the work of both the Council and its presidencies, and the European Council and its president. GIP is also responsible for horizontal files such as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and for interinstitutional relations.

It acts as secretariat for the General Affairs Council and for the European Council, drafting all European Council supporting documents and providing assistance during meetings.

Didier Seeuws will replace Jim Cloos, who retired on 1 February. He will start his new assignment on 16 February 2021.

The decisions to appoint Maryem van den Heuvel and Didier Seeuws were adopted by written procedure.