

# Former Senior EU Official, Ambassador to the US David O'Sullivan Joins Steptoe in Brussels

November 26, 2019

## Overview

**(November 26, 2019, Brussels)** — Steptoe & Johnson LLP is pleased to announce that former European Union (EU) ambassador to the United States, David O'Sullivan, has joined the firm's international practice as a senior counselor. Based in the firm's Brussels office, O'Sullivan will contribute in areas ranging from global trade to regulatory matters to compliance.

"Ambassador O'Sullivan is a highly respected senior EU official who has had a brilliant career in the European Commission," said Steptoe Chair Phil West. "The various positions he has held have given him almost unparalleled insight into the full range of trans-Atlantic business issues, including trade policy, cybersecurity, and Brexit, among others. His arrival reinforces the strength of our Brussels office as a resource for clients doing business in Europe across a range of EU issues."

O'Sullivan, an Irish national, was appointed ambassador of the European Union to the United States in November 2014 and served as the EU's chief diplomat to the United States during the second Obama administration into the first two years of the Trump administration. In this position, O'Sullivan oversaw the EU's bilateral relationship with the United States including in political, economic and commercial affairs.

O'Sullivan has held a number of senior official posts within the European Commission including director general for trade (2005-2010), the most senior trade career civil service position in the EU; secretary general of the European Commission (2000-2005), where he was responsible for the management of the EU's 30,000-member executive staff; and chief of staff to Commission President Romano Prodi (1999-2000).

O'Sullivan was instrumental in establishing the EU's European External Action Service, creating one of the largest diplomatic networks with 140 delegations across the globe. O'Sullivan was awarded the EU Transatlantic Business Award by the American Chamber of Commerce in 2014.

"Ambassador O'Sullivan has acquired knowledge of the substantive issues that are at the core of EU relations with the United States, as well as a number of the other major trade and diplomatic relationships of the European Union and its member countries," said Ruxandra Cana, managing partner of Steptoe's Brussels office. "His exceptional background complements the more than 30 years' experience our lawyers in Brussels have with EU and international matters. His arrival will further cement the Brussels office and Steptoe as a destination for multinational companies seeking legal and policy assistance in the EU, US and other jurisdictions around the world."

Launched in 2004, Steptoe's Brussels office is celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2019. The office is now home to two dozen legal professionals from 17 countries who speak 13 different languages. Together, the team helps clients with regulatory issues and disputes arising from the implementation of EU law and regulations in the areas of Environment & Life Sciences, International Trade, Sanctions, EU Competition, Financial Services and Insurance/Reinsurance, as well as

GDPR & Data Protection.

"Step toe is known as a pre-eminent international firm," said O'Sullivan. "The lawyers in the firm's Brussels office have excellent experience and contacts with the EU institutions and agencies and selected EU member state authorities. I look forward to collaborating closely with my Step toe colleagues around the world to help clients anticipate and mitigate legal risks through cross-jurisdictional work."

O'Sullivan received a B.A. degree in economics and sociology from Trinity College Dublin and then earned a diplôme des Hautes Etudes Européennes from the Collège of Europe in Bruges. He speaks English, French, Spanish, German, and Japanese.

### **About Step toe**

In more than 100 years of practice, Step toe has earned an international reputation for vigorous representation of clients before governmental agencies, successful advocacy in litigation and arbitration, and creative and practical advice in structuring business transactions. Step toe has more than 500 lawyers and other professional staff across offices in Beijing, Brussels, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington. For more information, visit [www.step toe.com](http://www.step toe.com).

## Practices

### **Trade Policy & Negotiations**

#### **EU Trade**