

Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul

Member of the Board of Directors of the Jacques Delors Institute.



Senior Expert and Deputy Head of Unit at the European Commission in charge of citizens' engagement, former Member of the Common Secretariat for the Conference on the Future of Europe, former deputy Head of the European Commission Representation in France.

Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul holds a degree in political science from the University of Liège and an MPhil and a DPhil in European politics and society from Oxford University. Her research focused on policy formation in the European Union, and more particularly on education policy.

From 1999 to 2002, she was in charge of the team for “European and international affairs”, in the cabinet of the Belgian Vice-Prime Minister Isabelle Durant, also Minister for Mobility and Transport. She acted, among other things, as a coordinator during the Belgian presidency of the EU Council. As an adviser for institutional matters, she represented the Vice-Prime Minister in the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Nice and the Laeken Declaration.

Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul then joined the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture where she was, among other things, in charge of the accession negotiations with the applicant countries for audiovisual matters. She also assumed the coordination of an interservice group on intercultural dialogue.

In April 2004, she became Secretary General at Jacques Delors Institute. Beyond the management

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of the Institute, she initiated several projects such as the Think Global Act European report or the Etats Généraux de l'Europe. She also published several studies on institutional and democracy issues. In 2011, she published a book at Larcier entitled Pour une Fédération européenne d'Etats-nations: la vision de Jacques Delors revisitée.

Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul joined the European Commission Representation in Paris in 2011, where she was successively political analyst, acting Head of the Representation and then deputy Head and responsible for the political sector. Beyond her functions of management and representation, she was involved in numerous projects linked to communicating Europe in France and citizens' participation, such as la Fête de l'Europe in Paris, the organization of Citizens' dialogues or Les Décodeurs de l'Europe.

In 2018, she was seconded to the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs where she successively held the position of Deputy Secretary General for the Citizens' consultations on Europe and Head of the Citizens' Conferences Department at the Mission Grand Débat. She then advised the Secretary of State for European Affairs on civil society engagement and citizens' participation.

After she reintegrated the European Commission in Brussels in early 2020 as Deputy Head of the Unit dealing with Citizens' Dialogues, she subsequently joined the Common Secretariat for the Conference on the Future of Europe until June 2022, where she was more particularly in charge of the conception and organization of the European Citizens' Panels. She continues with this task today as well as with mainstreaming citizen engagement in the Commission.

She speaks publicly on many occasions, in conferences or the media. She has also taught in La Sorbonne, Sciences Po Lille, and Dijon.

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