



# Schuman Associates, a consultancy firm at the service of Europe

Interview with **Ruth Estrada Dorronsoro**,  
Partner in Schuman Associates

**Schuman Associates** is an independent consultancy firm, with more than 25 years of experience in European funding and public affairs. It is a multilingual and multinational team located in **Brussels, Dublin, Milan, Madrid, Sofia, Bucharest, Prague, Warsaw and Athens**, with partners in Africa, Asia and the USA.

They work with a wide range of clients, from governments and large multinational corporations to business associations and NGOs, in major sectors such as ICT and security, energy and environment, trade and development, financial services, telecommunications, education and health.

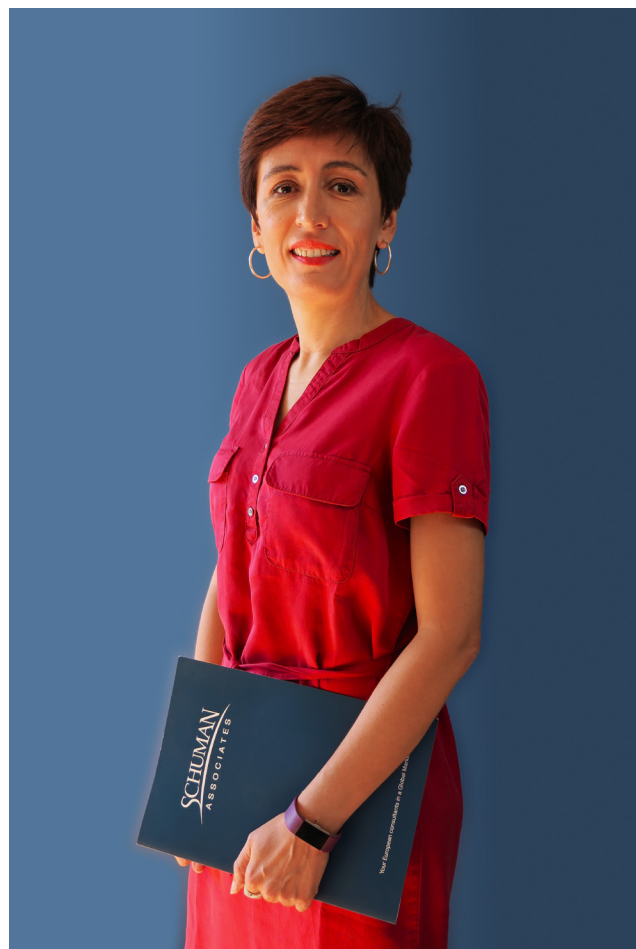
**Schuman Associates' headquarters are located in Brussels. What is the structure of the office and what services do you offer from the European capital?**

Indeed, our main office is located in the heart of the European district of Brussels, a stone's throw from the main EU institutions with which we work on a daily basis. Half of our team works in this office. We offer advisory and strategy services in European funding, legislative follow-up, positioning and influence, including communication and marketing services linked to European projects.

Over the years we have confirmed the importance and added value of working in coordination between Brussels and our clients' country of origin. For this reason, for 10 years we have had a **Schuman Associates office in Madrid**.

**Schuman Associates has been one of the leading consultancy firms in European public funding and affairs for more than 25 years with nine offices in Europe and associated centers in the US and Asia. What are the keys to its international expansion?**

The key has always been to carry out an expansion following the intensity of distribution of European funds. Our offices in Madrid, Milan and Athens respond to the need to cover the **Mediterranean countries** and



those of Bucharest, Prague, Sofia or Warsaw to the fact that in many countries of **Eastern European countries** up to 80% of public expenditure depends on the European financing. It is vital to have a local presence in these markets, as a large part of European funds, such as the **Structural and Investment Funds**, are managed at the country level, so it is important to work in coordination with national management authorities and beneficiaries.

Regarding the **United States and Asia**, we work with partners that complement us when offering financing services from the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank.

**In 2018 Schuman Associates is preparing a series of briefings about the future EU budget.**



## What type of readers are you targeting? What is the purpose of these briefings?

The EU budget is renewed **every 7 years**. So, this exercise is done on a regular basis and we know that it is important for the positioning of our clients to have early intelligence on budget spending priorities and understand how their sector can benefit. Only in this way strategic decisions can be made and have a certain advantage in such a competitive area as European funding. We try to be there before the others.

## How do you think the new EU budget will affect Spain?

It is a complicated question because the proposal of the **European Commission** has been presented right now and the **Member States** still have several months ahead to negotiate and reach an agreement. The final picture of how the situation will be for Spain may vary. It seems clear that after the post-Brexit effect, Spain would become a net contributor. However, it is also true that in regional funding we get 5% more than in the previous seven years, what happens is that the total budget to be distributed has also been reduced. So in general terms I would say that it will be a bit of chalk and cheese, everything depends on the sector we are talking about.

**Schuman Associates also helps companies that want to establish themselves in the market with financing from the European Union. What type of companies hire your services? Could you tell us a success story?**

**R**uth Estrada Dorronsoro holds a degree in Law and Economics from the University of Deusto. Later she completed her studies with an International Master in Laws at the University of Amsterdam.

She has over twenty years of experience in business and strategic consulting in the EU and has a clear focus on supporting complex organizations in their negotiation processes with the EU institutions.

At Schuman Associates, the company where she has been working since 1999, is responsible for the management of services for clients in the Brussels office, contributes to the general commercial strategy of the company and supports the practice areas for the growth of the business.

She considers herself as a person with positive attitude and a perspective oriented to objectives, combined with interpersonal skills and a genuine interest in people.

**“We have managed to establish good working relationships between some of our clients and many members of the Chamber”**

Our client base is varied and we are interested in keeping it that way, as we often try to find synergies between them when submitting European tenders. From large corporations such as **Philips, Mastercard or Adecco** that want to access public markets in the EU to innovative technology centers in Dublin or Helsinki, which want to present themselves to a Horizon 2020 project.

We are currently very involved drafting the candidature of a future FET Flagship on Big Data, the Time Machine, which answers the question What

would a world be like in which the documents of the past were still as accessible as the data of the present? A simple smartphone will allow you to see what the state of a city was like 500, 1000 or 1500 years ago, and will make you revive the street activities in which you were, as an immersion in situ in a place of the past. The experience of 600 million tourists who visit Europe each year will be radically transformed. It would make available to every European citizen the incredible cultural heritage of Europe, which represents almost half of the UNESCO World Heritage List. The project has been one of the 17 pre-selected for its possible development in the next decade.

In 2017 we were selected to offer the Support Service to the **European Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) Network**. This project offers support and training for BCOs through an annual knowledge exchange program and capacity building activities, helping to achieve the connectivity objectives of the Digital Single Market. A particular focus in 2018 will be to support rural and remote areas, as well as regions that are lagging behind.

In relation to the **external assistance and development cooperation** carried out by the EU in third countries, Schuman Associates has been selected to participate in the latest edition of the external aid framework contract of the European Commission. Together with other partners, Schuman Associates is regularly invited to participate in preparatory and evaluation missions for infrastructure projects, sustainable growth, employment and human development.

### **What are the most immediate challenges for your consultancy firm?**

I would say that in a long term we are interested in sustainable growth. **Continuing the expansion and growth without losing the values** that characterize the company such as our professionalism, team spirit and customer service. From a sectoral point of view, the progressive digitalization of some of our services requires adapting quickly to an economy with global competence and increasingly broader information sources.

### **Schuman Associates is a member of the Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg. What benefits does this association bring?**

Without any doubt, the first thing is the **network of contacts**. We have managed to establish good working relationships between some of our clients and many members of the Chamber.

But the benefit goes further, as we have also sponsored events, offered conferences and given training courses that always help in the development of the business of Spanish companies.

#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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