



THE EU TREATIES

WHO DOES WHAT IN THE EU

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**THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DURING MY PRESENTATION DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT
THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**





WHO TAKES THE DECISIONS?

Decision-making at EU level involves various European institutions, in particular:

- ☐ The **European Parliament**, which represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them;
- ☐ The **European Council**, which consists of the Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States;
- ☐ The **Council**, which represents the governments of the EU Member States;
- ☐ the **European Commission**, which represents the interests of the EU as a whole.





WHAT TYPES OF LEGISLATION ARE THERE?

- ❑ **Regulation:** applicable and binding in all Member States directly.
- ❑ **Directive:** binding on Member States, or a group of Member States. Usually, directives must be transposed into national law to become effective.
- ❑ **Decision:** can be addressed to Member States, groups of people, or even individuals. It is binding on addressees in its entirety.
- ❑ **Recommendations and opinions** have no binding force.





HOW IS LEGISLATION PASSED?

- ❑ Every European law is based on a specific treaty article, referred to as the '**legal basis**' of the legislation.
- ❑ The treaty sets out the decision-making process, and whether **unanimity or qualified majority** applies for the Council to adopt legislation.
- ❑ The great majority of EU legislation is adopted using the **ordinary legislative procedure**.
- ❑ Special legislative procedures includes **consultation** (EP is consulted but Council is not required to take EP's advice) and **consent procedures** (EP has to approve or reject but can not amend).



THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

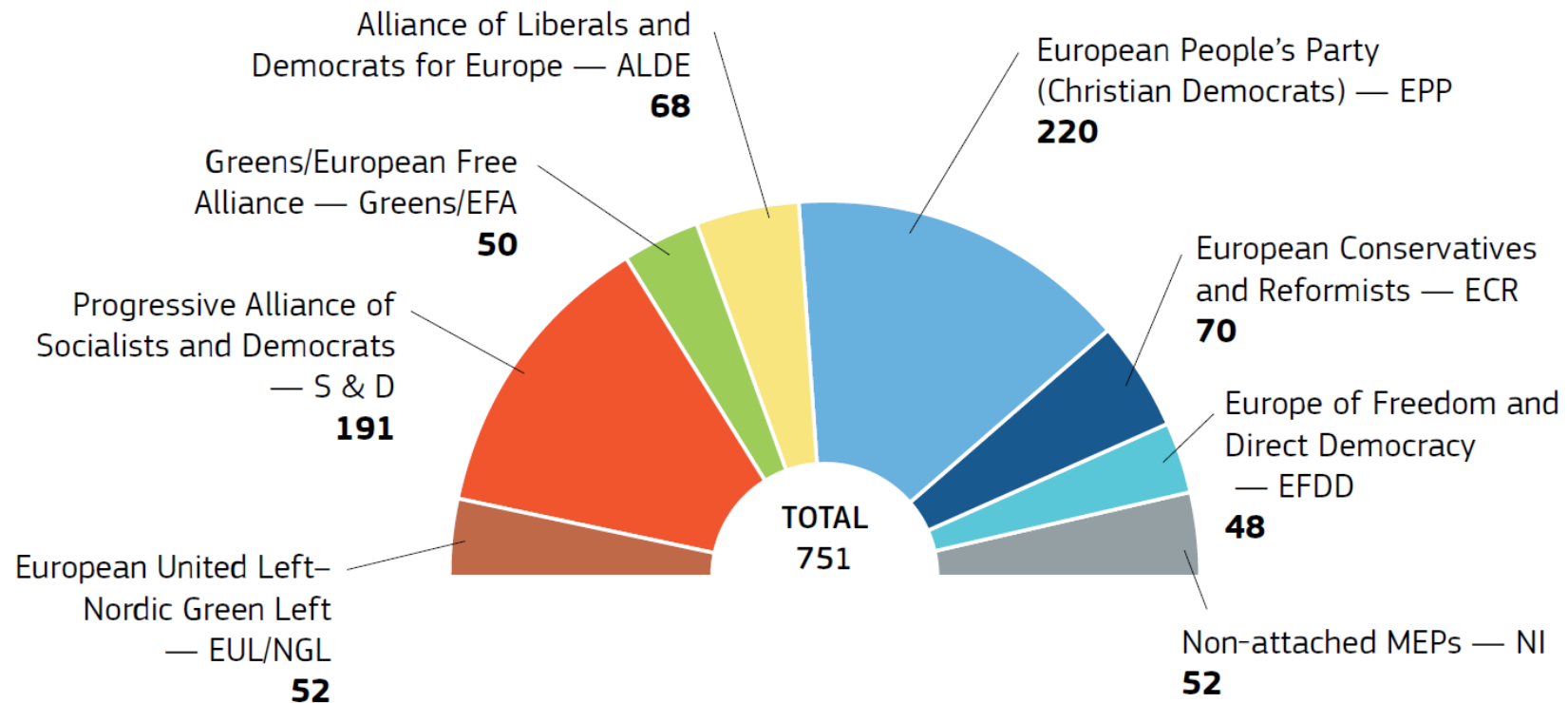
NUMBER OF MEPS PER MEMBER STATE IN 2014

Member State	Number of MEPs	Member State	Number of MEPs
Austria	18	Italy	73
Belgium	21	Latvia	8
Bulgaria	17	Lithuania	11
Croatia	11	Luxembourg	6
Cyprus	6	Malta	6
Czech Republic	21	Netherlands	26
Denmark	13	Poland	51
Estonia	6	Portugal	21
Finland	13	Romania	32
France	74	Slovakia	13
Germany	96	Slovenia	8
Greece	21	Spain	54
Hungary	21	Sweden	20
Ireland	11	United Kingdom	73
		TOTAL	751



THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

NUMBER OF MEPS IN EACH POLITICAL GROUP (OCTOBER 2014)





THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Parliament has three main roles:

- ❑ **Legislative:** It shares with the Council the **power to legislate** — to pass laws.
- ❑ **Supervisory:** It exercises **democratic supervision over all EU institutions**, and in particular the Commission.
- ❑ **Budgetary:** It **shares authority with the Council over the EU budget** and can therefore influence EU spending.





THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- ❑ The Parliament elects its own President for a 2½-year term and is assisted by 14 Vice-Presidents.
- ❑ Plenary sessions are normally held in Strasbourg (1 week per month) and sometimes additional sessions are held in Brussels.
- ❑ Preparatory work is done, mainly in Brussels, by the MEPs in the 20 parliamentary committees.





THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

- ❑ Meeting of the Heads of State or Government of all the EU Member States who provides high level **overall direction and sets priorities** of the Union.
- ❑ It issues '**conclusions**' which **may invite** the European Commission to come forward with proposals.
- ❑ European Council **meets as a rule every 6 months** but additional (extraordinary or informal) meetings may be called to address urgent issues.





THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL



- ❑ The President is elected by the European Council for a once-renewable term of 2½ years.
- ❑ The President of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy also take part in the work of the European Council.
- ❑ The European Council is assisted by the General Secretariat of the Council.





THE COUNCIL

- ❑ The Council is an essential EU decision-maker.
- ❑ Its work is carried out in Council meetings that are attended by one minister from each of the EU's national governments.
- ❑ Which ministers attend which Council meeting depends on the subjects on the agenda — this is known as the 'configuration' of the Council.





► *Education, Youth, Culture and Sport*





THE COUNCIL

□ The Council has five key responsibilities:

1. to **legislate** - in most fields, jointly with the European Parliament;
2. to **coordinate** the Member States' policies, for example, in the economic field;
3. to **develop the EU's common foreign and security policy**, based on guidelines set by the European Council;
4. to **conclude international agreements between the EU and third countries or international organisations**;
5. to **adopt the EU's budget**, jointly with the European Parliament.





THE COUNCIL

Economic and Monetary Union



- ❑ **All Member States participate in Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Not all Member States have joined the euro.**
- ❑ The euro area Member States' Ministers meet informally in the **Eurogroup**.
- ❑ The agreements reached in the informal Eurogroup gathering are formally decided upon in the Ecofin meeting by the Eurogroup members.





THE COUNCIL

Common Foreign and Security Policy

- ❑ The European Council, chaired by the President, defines the **Common Foreign and Security Policy**.
- ❑ The **Foreign Affairs Council takes the decisions** needed to define and implement the CFSP following the European Council guidelines.
- ❑ The High Representative, together with the Member States, **implements CFSP** through the **European External Action Service**.
- ❑ The High Representative also represents the Union's foreign and security policy worldwide. At the level of Heads of State or Government, the Union is represented by the President of the European Council.





THE COUNCIL

EU common security and defence policy

- ❑ The **EU common security and defence policy** (CSDP) enables EU Member States to undertake joint humanitarian and peace-making or peacekeeping missions.
- ❑ The Political and Security Committee (PSC) monitors the international situation and examines the EU's options for response during a crisis situation abroad.
- ❑ The European Union Military Committee (EUMC) directs EU military activities and provides advice on military matters.
- ❑ The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) assists the EUMC.





THE COMMISSION

- ❑ The Commission is the **politically independent institution** that represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole.

- ❑ Commission: refers to Commissioners (The College) and institution.
 - **College:** 28 Commissioners (20 commissioners, 7 Vice-Presidents and 1 President)
 - **Institution:** 33.000 officials organized (for the most part) in Departments known as Directorate-Generals.





THE COMMISSION





THE COMMISSION

- ❑ Under the EU Treaty, the Commission has the '**right of initiative**'.
- ❑ The Commission is the **executive** body of the EU.
- ❑ The Commission acts as '**guardian of the treaties**'.
- ❑ The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is a Vice-President of the Commission and has **responsibility for external affairs**.





NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

- ❑ National parliaments can **express their views on draft legislative acts** as well as on other matters which may be of particular interest to them.
- ❑ EU actions are subject to the **principle of subsidiarity**. Correct application of this principle in EU decision-making is monitored by national parliaments.





THE COURT OF JUSTICE

- ❑ The Court of Justice of the European Union includes the Court of Justice, the General Court and specialised courts.
- ❑ The Court of Justice deals with requests for **preliminary rulings** from national courts, certain actions for annulment and appeals. The General Court rules on all **actions for annulment** brought by private individuals and companies and some such actions brought by Member States.
- ❑ The Court of Justice is composed of 28 Judges assisted by nine 'Advocates General' who are either former members of the highest national courts or highly competent lawyers who can be relied on to show impartiality.
- ❑ The General Court is also composed of 28 Judges.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/court_of_justice.html





THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

- ❑ The ECB is the **institution of the EMU** and stands at the core of the European System of Central Banks.
- ❑ The primary objective of the ECB is to maintain price stability. This is defined as a consumer price inflation rate of less than, but close to, 2 % per annum. The ECB also acts to support employment and sustainable economic growth in the Union.





WHO DOES WHAT IN EMU

- The **European Council** sets the main policy orientations and **Council** coordinates economic policymaking and takes decisions.
- The **EU Member States** set their national budgets within agreed limits for deficit and debt, and determine their own structural policies.
- The **euro Member States** coordinate policies for the euro area in the **euro summit** and in the **Eurogroup**.
- The **European Central Bank** sets monetary policy for the euro area, with price stability as the prime objective.
- The **European Commission** monitors what the EU Member States are doing and issues policy recommendations.
- The **European Parliament** shares the job of formulating legislation with the Council and exercises democratic oversight of the economic governance process.
- The **European Stability Mechanism**, owned by the euro area countries, provides assistance to euro countries experiencing, or threatened by, severe financial difficulties.





THE COURT OF AUDITORS

- ❑ The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is the independent external audit institution of the EU.
- ❑ ECA operates as a collegiate body of 28 Members, one from each EU Member State. They elect one of their number as President for a term of 3 years.
- ❑ ECA cooperates closely with supreme audit institutions in the Member States. 80 % of EU expenditure is shared with national authorities.
- ❑ ECA produces an annual report on the implementation of the EU budget for the previous financial year.





OTHER

- ☐ **THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**
- ☐ **THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**
- ☐ **THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK**
- ☐ **THE OMBUDSMAN**
- ☐ **THE DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR**
- ☐ **EU AGENCIES**





AGENCIES

Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)

Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)

Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO)

Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency (Chafea)

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

Euratom Supply Agency (ESA)

Eurojust

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)

European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex)

European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA)

European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

European Banking Authority (EBA)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)

European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

European Defence Agency (EDA)

European Environment Agency (EEA)

European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

European GNSS Agency (GSA)

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA)

European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)

European Medicines Agency (EMA)

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

European Police College (CEPOL)

European Police Office (Europol)

European Railway Agency (ERA)

European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)

European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)

European Training Foundation (ETF)

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA)

European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC)

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized enterprises (EASME)

Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA)

Fusion for Energy Joint Undertaking

Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) (OHIM)

Research Executive Agency (REA)

Single Resolution Board (SRB)

Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CdT)



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NEXT SEMINAR

THE ORDINARY LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE

