

EU Institutions

Overview

- the EU's broad priorities are set by the **European Council**, which brings together national and EU-level leaders
- directly elected MEPs represent European citizens in the **European Parliament**
- the interests of the EU as a whole are promoted by the **European Commission**, whose members are appointed by national governments
- governments defend their own countries' national interests in the **Council of the European Union**.

European Parliament

- Directly elected by EU voters every 5 years, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) represent the people. Parliament is one of the EU's main law-making institutions, along with the Council of the European Union ('the Council').
- The European Parliament has three main roles:
 - debating and passing European laws, with the Council
- scrutinising other EU institutions, particularly the Commission, to make sure they are working democratically
- debating and adopting the EU's budget, with the Council.

The European Parliament

- the only directly elected EU institution. The Parliament meets in Brussels and Strasbourg, as well as having offices in Luxembourg. There are 753 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). This was reduced from 785 MEPs after the 2009 EU election, and the Lisbon Treaty (2007) limits the number of MEPs to a maximum of 750, plus the President. The number of MEPs each country has reflects its population. Britain has 73 MEPs.

The European Parliament

- The Parliament does not have the powers of a normal national parliament. It cannot propose legislation. Instead, it can only discuss and vote on laws proposed by the Commission.
- In order for a new EU law to pass, it has to have the support of both the Parliament and the Council of the European Union.
- The Parliament also has the power to accept or reject Commissioners when they are nominated by member states, and to sack the entire Commission through a vote of censure

Council of the European Union

- Also informally known as the EU Council, this is where national ministers from each EU country meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies.
- Not to be confused with:
 - [European Council](#) – another EU institution, where EU leaders meet around 4 times a year to discuss the EU's political priorities
 - [Council of Europe](#) – not an EU body at all.
- **What does it do?**
 1. Passes EU laws.
 2. Coordinates the broad economic policies of EU member countries.
 3. Signs agreements between the EU and other countries.
 4. Approves the annual EU budget
 5. Develops the EU's foreign and defence policies.
 6. Coordinates cooperation between courts and police forces of member countries.

The Council of the European Union

Made up of government ministers from all the member states.

It meets regularly to discuss new EU policies.

Each country is represented by their minister in charge of the policy area to be discussed

plays a central role in developing EU legislation, in relation to foreign, defence and home affairs policy, and has the power to issue Directives.

However, it cannot make new laws

The European Council

- made up of the Heads of State and Government of the member states and the President of the Commission (therefore Britain's representative is Prime Minister David Cameron) It meets for summits four times a year to discuss the direction of EU policy and any controversial issues which may arise. The European Council also selects the President of the Commission, based on the results of the elections to the European Parliament.
- Lisbon Treaty (2007) established a permanent President of the European Council, currently Herman van Rompuy, former Prime Minister of Belgium

European Commission

- The European Commission is one of the main institutions of the European Union. It represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole. It drafts proposals for new European laws. It manages the day-to-day business of implementing EU policies and spending EU funds.

The EU Commission

- The EU's permanent administration. It is the only institution which has the power to propose EU laws and is also responsible for enforcing them.
- It writes the EU budget and distributes EU money
- There are 27 Commissioners, one from each member state. They are appointed every 5 years, within 6 months of European Parliament elections (Baroness Ashton is UK Commissioner)

It oversees and implements [EU policies](#) by:

1. proposing new laws to Parliament and the Council
2. managing the EU's budget and allocating funding
3. enforcing EU law (together with the Court of Justice)
4. representing the EU internationally, for example, by negotiating agreements between the EU and other countries.

Other EU institutions

- the [Court of Justice](#) upholds the rule of European law
- the [Court of Auditors](#) checks the financing of the EU's activities
- The powers and responsibilities of all of these institutions are laid down in the Treaties, which are the foundation of everything the EU does. They also lay down the rules and procedures that the EU institutions must follow. The Treaties are agreed by the presidents and/or prime ministers of all the EU countries, and ratified by their parliaments.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ)

- ECJ is the court that implements EU law.
- The court is made up of 27 judges (1 from each member state) and meets in Luxembourg.
- The ECJ is the highest court in all of the member states.
- Its judgements can affect not only nations but also individuals and it serves as the judicial arbiter between member states, institutions and individuals in cases relating to EU law.
- Its rulings cannot be appealed and it outranks national Supreme Courts on EU matters.

Fin,ende,final,fine

- Any questions?
- Tutte le domande?
- Toutes les questions?
