

A quick look at
**Parliamentary
committees**



European Parliament



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The European Parliament is the only directly elected European Union institution.

The 705 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) represent the EU's 448 million citizens.

They are elected once every five years by voters from the 27 Member States.

Parliament's political and legislative work is carried out by 20 standing committees and three subcommittees, each of which elects a chair and up to four vice-chairs.

At the start of every new legislature, Parliament decides which Members will sit in which committees on the basis of the preferences expressed by the Members. It is a key decision, as it will determine in which field they will focus most of their efforts.

Parliament's committees play a crucial role in policy-making as they are responsible for preparing Parliament's positions, in particular on new legislative proposals.



24 languages

The Members of the European Parliament represent all citizens of the European Union. Each MEP has the right to speak in the official language of their choice. Parliamentary documents are published in all 24 official languages of the EU.

Example of an ordinary legislative procedure



The European Commission draws up legislative proposals, which it puts forward to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.



Within Parliament, legislative work is based on two main events: committee meetings and plenary sessions.

1

The committees carry out Parliament's in-depth work. They examine legislative proposals, amend them and vote on them during their monthly meetings. The committees then submit their report to Parliament as a whole.

2

Parliament adopts the text of the legislative proposal at its plenary session.



Once an agreement is reached between Parliament and the Council of the European Union, the legislative act is published in the Official Journal of the European Union. It is then transposed into national legislation, and applies to all European citizens.

The ordinary legislative procedure puts Parliament and the Council of the European Union on an equal footing. It covers a wide range of areas, such as economic and monetary affairs, immigration, energy, agriculture, fisheries, transport, the environment and consumer protection.

In fact, the vast majority of EU laws are adopted jointly by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.



Every month, one to two weeks are set aside for committee work. During committee meetings, MEPs discuss legislative and non-legislative reports, propose and vote on amendments, and follow up on negotiations with the Council of the European Union.

Committees actively contribute to setting the legislative agenda, for example, by giving input before the adoption of the Commission's annual Work Programme. They exert an important role in the oversight of EU activities by monitoring the correct use of the EU budget and the correct implementation of adopted legislation and international agreements.

They also organise hearings with experts and scrutinise other EU institutions and bodies. In fact, before a new European Commission can be elected, all new Commissioners-designate have to be assessed by the committees that deal with their respective portfolios.



On any given subject, committees appoint an MEP from their ranks as rapporteur to steer the entire decision making process as Parliament adopts its position on the matter.

The draft report presented by the rapporteur can be modified following the adoption of amendments tabled by MEPs. The original text and the amendments, including compromise amendments agreed by political groups, are then voted on by the full committee. The report adopted by the committee is then submitted to the plenary for approval.



Parliament may also set up special committees to deal with specific issues and has the power to create committees of inquiry to investigate alleged contraventions or maladministration of EU law. Their areas of activity range from financial matters, artificial intelligence and fake news to animal welfare and public health, to name a few.

The size of the committees varies significantly, from 25 members for legal affairs to 81 members for environment, public health and food safety, during the first half of the 2019-2024 parliamentary term. Their composition always reflects the weight each political group has in Parliament as a whole.

Parliament takes the lead in promoting transparency and openness. Committee meetings are livestreamed on Parliament's website and can be watched at all times.



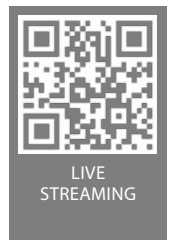
Debates – live on the internet

The committees meet once or twice a month in Brussels. Their debates are public. The majority of meetings are broadcast live on the internet and are also available as video on demand.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the extensive use of new technologies, which allow meetings to be held virtually with the availability of simultaneous interpretation, thereby accommodating the remote participation of all involved.

Follow live meetings on:

<https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu>

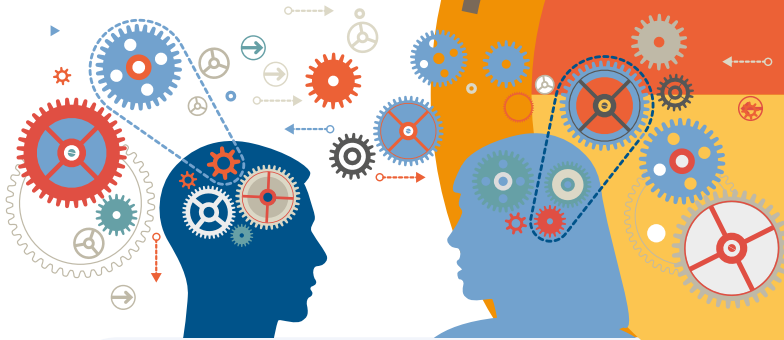


Expertise support

The committees receive independent advice and written expertise (studies, briefings, in-depth analyses and other texts) from Parliament's different research services, such as the policy departments.

Workshops and panels are organised with the aim of enabling MEPs to put questions to and exchange views with experts on subjects associated with parliamentary business or subjects of current interest.

See all expertise documents:
www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses



Fact Sheets on the European Union

The Fact Sheets provide a straightforward and concise overview of the EU's institutions and policies, and the role Parliament plays in their development. They are available in 24 languages.

See all fact sheets:
www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets





All committees and subcommittees

AFET

Foreign Affairs

EMPL

Employment and Social Affairs

CULT

Culture and Education

DROI

Subcommittee on Human Rights

ENVI

Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

JURI

Legal Affairs

SEDE

Subcommittee on Security and Defence

ITRE

Industry, Research and Energy

LIBE

Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

DEVE

Development

IMCO

Internal Market and Consumer Protection

AFCO

Constitutional Affairs

INTA

International Trade

TRAN

Transport and Tourism

FEMM

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

BUDG

Budgets

REGI

Regional Development

PETI

Petitions

CONT

Budgetary Control

AGRI

Agriculture and Rural Development

ECON

Economic and Monetary Affairs

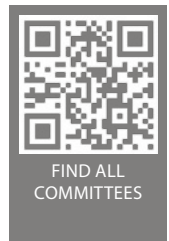
PECH

Fisheries

FISC

Subcommittee on Tax matters

Parliament may also set up committees of inquiry and special committees to deal with specific issues.





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Directorate-General for External Policies

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This publication is available in Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (original), Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish.

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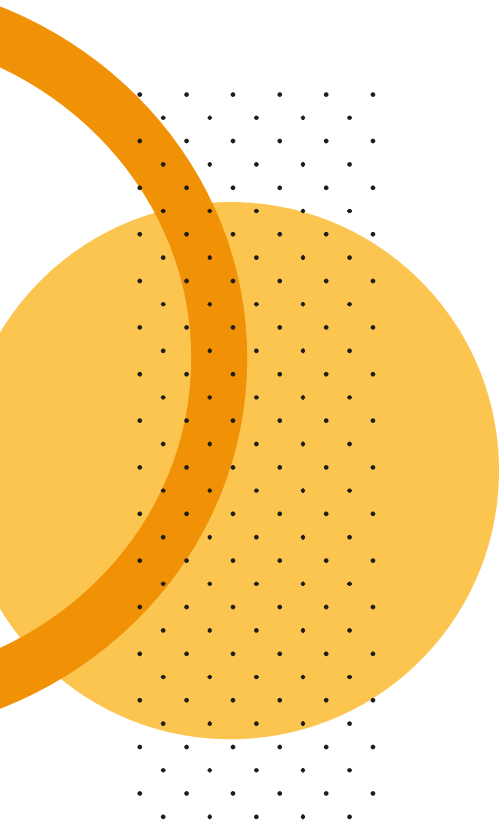
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