The EU Institutions

# 1 Council of the European Union

Also called the “Council of Ministers” or informally “EU Council”

**Description**

This is the voice of EU member states’ governments, and it is where national ministers from each EU member state meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies. It is one of the two decision-making bodies of the EU.

**Competence**

Its competence is to discuss, amend and adopt laws, and coordinate policies (with the European Parliament).

It also develops the EU's foreign & security policy, as well as concludes on agreements between the EU and other countries or international organisations.

It adopts the annual EU budget - jointly with the European Parliament.

**Members**

Members are ministers from each member state. There are no fixed members, instead it meets in 10 different configurations, each corresponding to the policy area being discussed. For example: All Ministers of Education of every country.

**Leader**

Meetings are chaired by the relevant minister from the country with the EU presidency. Each EU country holds the presidency on a 6-month rotating basis.

**Election**

The members are Ministers of national governments, and are thus a result of national parliament elections.

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# 2 European Council

**Description**

This is the EU institution that defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union.

**Competence**

It defines the EU's overall political direction and priorities.

As it is not one of the EU's legislating institutions, it does not negotiate nor adopt laws.

It sets the EU's policy agenda, by adopting 'conclusions' which identify issues of concern and actions to take.

**Members**

Members are the heads of state of the 28 EU member states, The European Council President, and the President of the European Commission.

**Leader**

The President is elected on a 2,5 year mandate by the European Council by a qualified majority, and chairs European Council meetings and drives forward its work.

**Election**

The members are heads of state or government, and are thus a result of national parliament elections.

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# 3 European Parliament

**Description**

This is the only directly elected EU body, and represents the EU’s 500 million inhabitants and is one of the two decision-making bodies of the EU.

Plays a key role in electing the President of the European Commission.

**Competence**

Decides jointly with the Council of the EU on laws.

The results of the elections are taken into account in the nomination of the President of the European Commission.

It supervises the work of the Commission and other EU bodies and cooperates with national parliaments of EU countries to get their input.

Is a forum for discussion of European issues. The members will propose initiatives, comment on the EU current affair and invite national leaders, commissionaires, and businessmen for debates.

**Members**

Members are directly elected people from the EU member states

The elected members’ group in European political groups according to their beliefs, ideology or political goals, not in national delegations.

**Leader**

Led by a member of the Parliament that is chosen by the Parliament itself on a 2,5 year term.

The President chairs the plenary sittings of Parliament, and internal meetings.

**Election**

Members are directly elected by the citizens in the member states every 5th year.

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# 4 European Commission

**Description**

This in the EU institution which promotes the general interest of the EU by proposing and enforcing legislation as well as by implementing policies and the EU budget

**Competence**

The EU’s executive body, it is responsible for proposing and implementing EU laws, guardian of the Treaties, enforcing EU law, and allocates EU funding

**Members**

One selected member from each member state (of which one is the president); This 'College' of Commissioners represents the EU, not their member state.

Each member has a responsibility for a specific policy area, and often have heavy political experience from their member state e.g. former prime ministers and ministers.

The ideologies of the members should be irrelevant for the work.

**Leader**

The President defines the policy direction for the Commission with a vision for the EU.

**Election**

The Members of the are suggested by the member states’ governments, and approved by the European Parliament, and are elected for 5 years.

The president candidate is putted forward by the European Council but approved by the European Parliament together with the rest of the College, after the Parliament elections. The parliament is very eager to have a key role in the nominations of president candidates, and the european political parties will nominate their own candidate for Commission president.

The party with the biggest win in the European Parliament election will have their candidate as Commission President. This process is called Spitzenkandidaten. This is an ongoing power-play between the two co-legislating bodies of the EU.