



Understanding the European Parliament

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Introduction

The European Parliament:

- Represents 446 million citizens
- Consists of 705 directly elected Members (MEP)
- Decides upon EU legislation, including the multiannual budget (together with Council)
- Elects President of European Commission and assesses candidate Commissioners



Structure of the European Parliament

- The European Parliament is made up of several Positions:
 - The President,
 - Vice Presidents and The Bureau
 - Presidents of Political Groups
 - MEPs
- MEPs form groups, committees, delegations and intergroups.



Presidents, Conference of Presidents

The President:

- Presides over debates and activities
- Represents the Parliament within the EU and internationally

Presidents of Political Groups:

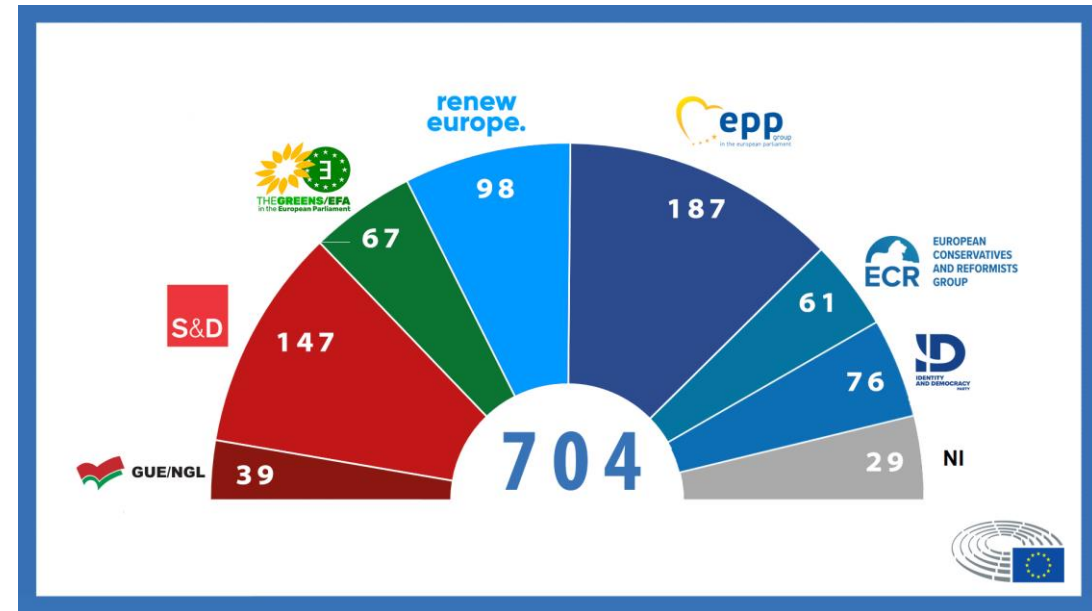
- Head representative from each political group

Conference of Presidents:

- Consists of President of Parliament and President of Political Groups
 - Sets political agenda and organizes Parliament
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Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)

- Elections held once every 5 years
- 705 Members elected (704 + the President)
- Organized into Seven Political Groups or as Non-Inscrits
- Meet in Plenary once a month except August
- Meet in Committees and Political Groups



Groups, Intergroups, Committees, Delegations

- **Groups**: ideological groups of MEPs that formally represent European major political parties
 - **Committees**: groups of MEPs who aid the Commission in initiating legislation on designated subjects. Can create:
 - **Legislative**: In which a file from the Commission is evaluated/amended by the relevant committee
 - **Non-legislative Own-Initiative (INI)**: Report proposed to both Plenary and Commission that brings attention to an issue or political position that does not result in legislation
 - **Legislative Own-initiative Reports (INL)**: Make a formal request to the Commission to initiate legislation on a specific issue
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Groups, Intergroups, Committees, Delegations (Continued)

Delegations: groups of MEPs who form relations with countries, regions, or organizations outside of the EU

- 44 standing delegations

Intergroups: formed by MEPs of any political party or committee to focus on a specific issue

- 27 Intergroups



Secretariat General, The Bureau

- **The Secretariat:**
 - Coordinates legislative work and organizes plenary/committee meetings and sittings,
 - provides technical and expert assistance
 - **The Bureau:**
 - Manages the budget, administration, organization and staff
 - Comprised of The President of the Parliament, 14 Vice Presidents, and 5 Quaestors
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Parliament Powers

- Acts as co-legislator with the Council, supervises the Commission and other EU institutions, and works with National Parliaments
- Parliament's powers are broken down into three categories: legislative, supervisory, and budgetary



Legislative Powers

Legislative Procedures: co-legislators with Council

- May approve, reject, or amend a legislative proposal from the Commission ([ordinary legislative procedure](#))
- Consultation: Special legislative procedure in which Parliament is consulted for opinion by Council

Legislative Initiative:

- Can ask the Commission to submit a legislative proposal

Consent:

- Parliament must consent to and ratify association agreements, accession, and certain EU-negotiated agreements
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Legislative Powers (Continued)

Ordinary Legislative Procedure:

- European Commission proposes legislation
 - Tabled legislation is adopted jointly by Council and Parliament
 - Parliament acts first voting by simple majority after Rapporteur report, either adopting, adding amendments, or rejecting
 - Legislation then goes to Council who reviews, adopts or amends. The process then repeats going back to Parliament for second reading.
 - Conciliatory Committee negotiates between Council and Parliament if there is no agreement after second reading
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Supervisory Powers

- Has the right to approve of and dismiss the Commission
 - Exercises oversight over EU institutions, monitors the EU budget, elects European Ombudsman, and ensures correct implementation of EU law
 - Can ask the Court of Justice to act against the Commission or the Council in the event of wrongdoing
 - **EU Budget:** Receives annual report from European Central Bank and European Court of Auditors
 - Receives [petitions](#) from citizens, and can set up an inquiry committee to investigate breach of EU law
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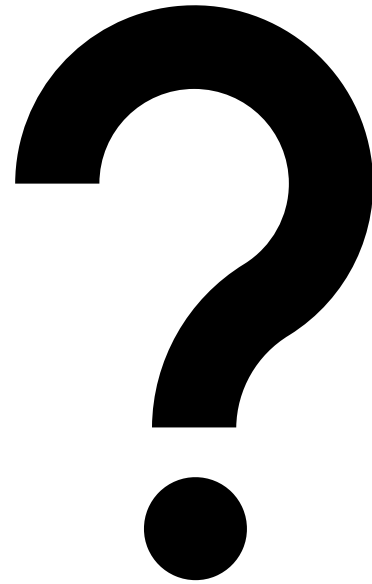
Budgetary Powers

- Decides annual budget of EU together with Council (in line with Multiannual Financial Framework)
 - Has final approval of annual budget
 - Has oversight on implementation, discharge, and postponement of budget funds for other EU institutions, including the Commission
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Overall budget 2021-2027



Questions?



Legislative Process: What can an MEP do?

An MEP has the individual right to:

- [Table a motion for resolution](#)
 - [Put questions](#) to Council and the Commission:
 - [Written Question:](#) submission of a written question by an MEP(s) to the EP President to be approved and passed to the Council, Commission, or High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
 - [Oral Question:](#) Questions posed to Commission, Council, or High Representative for answer in plenary debate (must be approved by Conference of Presidents)
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What can an MEP do? (Continued)

An MEP has the individual right to (continued):

- [Table an amendment](#) to any text in their committee
 - [Make explanations of vote](#)
 - [Raise points of order](#)
 - [Move the inadmissibility](#) of a matter
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Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs

Rapporteurs: MEP appointed by a Committee to compile information, present a report, and negotiate with Council on a proposal for legislative text by the Commission

- **Selection Process:** Political groups receive a set number of files in a Committee, they then bid to have a rapporteur for said file using a points system

Shadow Rapporteurs: MEP(s) appointed within Committee by political groups to represent their views

Parliament Process

Committee Process:

- Appointed Rapporteur creates draft report
 - Report is discussed in Committee (with potential hearings) in which Shadow Rapporteurs and other MEPs can propose amendments
 - **Compromise Amendments:** a result of informal discussion between Rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs that offers alternatives or reorganizations of different amendments
 - Report is adopted in Committee upon discussion of proposed amendments
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Parliament Process (Continued)

Plenary Process:

- Rapporteur leads initial discussion of legislation, in which all political groups and MEPs have the chance to speak
 - Political Groups of at least 40 MEPs and responsible committees can table additional amendments in Plenary
 - Voting takes place by roll call: report is adopted with absolute majority
 - Rapporteur then leads negotiations with Council post adoption of report by European Parliament
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Parliament Process: Accessibility Act

- **Step 1:** Commission publishes [legislative proposal](#) (02/12/15)
 - **Step 2:** Committee referral announced (18/01/16):
 - **Responsible committee:** IMCO (MEP Lokkegaard); **associated committees:** EMPL (MEP Kosa) & TRAN (MEP Taylor)
 - Opinions: CULT, FEMM, PETI.
 - **Step 3:** Committee adopts report (25/04/17)
 - **Step 4:** Committee submits [report](#) to Plenary, 363 amendments, [debate](#) and adopts the [Parliament report](#) (14/09/17)
 - **Step 5:** Interinstitutional negotiations (“trilogues”)
 - **Step 6:** [Agreement](#) adopted in committee (22/01/19)
 - **Step 7:** [Debate](#) and [vote](#) in Plenary (13/03/19)
 - **Step 8:** Final act adopted (17/04/19)
 - [Published in official journal](#) (07/06/19)
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Lobbying

Art. 11 of TEU requires Parliament to allow for relations between institutions and civil society through lobbying

Transparency Register:

- organizations register with the EU if they wish to have access to Parliament or participate in Lobbying

Intergroups:

- Registered Lobbying groups may formally declare support in cash or in kind (secretarial assistance), and may interact with Parliament intergroups

The logo for the Disability Intergroup, featuring the text "Disability Intergroup" in white, bold, sans-serif font centered within a dark blue, horizontally-oriented oval shape.

**Disability
Intergroup**

How EDF Fits In

Disability Intergroup (DIG):

- The EDF supports the Disability Intergroup by acting as its secretariat
 - What DIG can do:
 - Organize meetings & events with EDF and its members
 - Coordinate parliamentary work (e.g. submit amendments)
 - Co-sign parliamentary questions and letters
 - Participate as keynote speakers on European disability events
 - DIG Objectives:
 - Advocate for and advance the rights of persons with disabilities through European Parliament
 - Facilitates dialogues between persons with disabilities and their representatives
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Other Disability Related Structures Associated with Parliament:

- [EP High-Level Group on Non-Discrimination, Equality and Diversity](#)
 - [EU Monitoring Framework for the UNCRPD](#) (PETI, EMPL and LIBE)
 - [CRPD Network](#)
 - Disability contact point for EP staff and visitors with disabilities
 - [European Parliament Disability Support Group](#)
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Resources For Lobby Groups

- [European Parliament Research Services](#): Parliament's in-house research service and think tank on any issues pertaining to possible legislation
 - [Legislative Observatory](#): Data base for observing EU decision-making processes
 - [Legislative Train](#): Another tracking service for EU legislation
 - [Multimedia Centre](#): Archive of all recorded Parliament meetings (including political groups, committees, delegations, and intergroup sittings)
 - [European Union Factsheets](#): Fast facts on EU institutions, including [Parliament Committees](#), [supporting analyses](#), and [policy departments](#)
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Questions?



Thank you for your attention

The European Disability Forum

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