EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

A Concise Overview

European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) serves as a vital pillar of the European Union's structure, embodying the democratic voice of EU citizens. Initially advisory, its authority has grown through Treaty revisions over time. Formed after the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the European Parliament, then the Parliamentary Assembly, gained democratic legitimacy with direct elections in 1979. Subsequent Treaties, like Maastricht and Lisbon, expanded its powers. Beyond legislation, the EP hosts discussions and advocates for issues like human rights.

The European Parliament (EP) plays a crucial role in promoting transparency, accountability, and democratic representation within EU decision-making processes.

Roles of the European Parliament

Legislative Role

The EP participates in various legislative procedures, including ordinary and special procedures, with equal powers to the Council of the EU.

Approval of Appointments

It approves nominations for European Commissioners, ensuring accountability.

Budget Authorization

The EP approves the EU budget, aligning financial resources with political priorities.

Exercising Democratic Oversight

The EP monitors the European Commission and the Council, holding inquiries and debates.

To remember

1. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), **720 starting in 2024,** represent the EU Member States proportionally. Elected every 5 years, they shape EU policies and legislation, representing various political ideologies.

2. Germany has the most MEPs **(96),** followed by **France (81)**, and **Italy (76)**.

3. The EP can request legislative proposals from the European Commission with an absolute majority.

4. The default voting method in the EP is by **show of hands**, electronic voting can be required, or one-twentieth of the Members or a political group can request a roll-call vote. **Voting by secret ballot is used solely for nominations** (like the President of the European Parliament).

5. The term '**European Parliament**' was first introduced officially in **1986** by the Single European Act, when the EP also witnessed major changes regarding its powers.

6. Probably the EP's most important decision-making procedure, the co-decision, was introduced by the **Treaty of Maastricht**, which came into force in **1993.**

7. The number of seats each Member State has in the European Parliament depends on the **size of its population**, with some extra compensation for less populous countries.

Main internal bodies

Operational across Strasbourg, Brussels, and Luxembourg, the EP's structure includes:

The President, elected for a 2.5-year term, oversees external representation and chairs plenary sessions.

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2 **The Conference of Presidents** sets the Parliament's direction.

3 **The Bureau** manages administrative matters.

4 **The Secretariat** supports EP with 7,500 officials.

5 **Parliamentary Committees** focus on specific policy areas.

6 **The Parliament Delegations** engage with non-EU parliaments.

The political groups in the EP (2024 - 2029)

The elected MEPs form groups, most importantly not by their nationalities, but by their political affiliations.

The formation of a political group requires a minimum of **23 MEPs** and the representation of at least one quarter of the EU member states, meaning at least **7 Member States**.

Members may only belong to one political group, though they can also be 'non-attached, that is, 'independent'.

Currently, **there are 8 political groups**, and some MEPs sit as non-attached Members (or based on the French abbreviation, 'Non-inscrits' – NI).

epp Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) **(EPP)**	**ECR** European Conservatives and Reformists Group **(ECR)**
S&D Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats **(S&D)**	**Patriots for Europe** Patriots for Europe
renew europe Renew Europe Group	**ESN** Europe of Sovereign Nations **(ESN)**
Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance **(Greens/EFA)**	**THE LEFT** The Left Group in the European Parliament - **GUE/NGL**