

Institutions of the European Union

Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) is elected by the citizens of the European Union to represent their interests.

Council

The Council is the EU's main decision-making body. It represents the member states, and its meetings are attended by one minister from each of the EU's national governments.

Presidency

The Presidency of the Council rotates every six months. In other words, each EU country in turn takes charge of the Council agenda and chairs all the meetings for a six-month period, promoting legislative and political decisions and brokering compromises between the member states.

European Commission

The Commission is independent of national governments. Its job is to represent and uphold the interests of the EU as a whole. It drafts proposals for new European laws, which it presents to the European Parliament and the Council.

Court of Justice

Its job is to make sure that EU legislation is interpreted and applied in the same way in all EU countries, so that the law is equal for everyone. It ensures, for example, that national courts do not give different rulings on the same issue.

Court of Auditors

The Court's job is to check that EU funds, which come from the taxpayers, are properly collected and that they are spent legally, economically and for the intended purpose. Its aim is to ensure that the taxpayers get maximum value for their money, and it has the right to audit any person or organisation handling EU funds.