

STRUCTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

(EXECUTIVE)

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

- 28 members, heads of state or government of every EU country, the Commission President and the European Council President, who chairs the meetings.
- They meet to decide on broad political direction, priorities and major initiatives.
- It sets the EU political agenda, but has no powers to pass laws.
- It's based in Brussels, Belgium, but meetings are often held in other cities.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

- Chairs European Council meetings and ensures the continuity of their work, in cooperation with the President of the Commission, and on the basis of the work of the General Affairs Council configuration.
- Represents the EU on issues related to the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).
- Represents the EU at international summits, usually alongside the President of the European Commission.
- He is elected by a qualified majority of the council for a 2.5-year term, which is renewable once. The current President of the European Council is **Donald Tusk**.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- Political leadership is provided by a team of 28 Commissioners (one from each EU country) led by the Commission President, currently **Jean-Claude Juncker**, who decides who is responsible for which policy area for a 5-year term
- It is the EU's politically independent executive arm, responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, and implementing EU policies, the spending of EU funds and the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.
- It Represents the EU internationally by negotiating agreements between the EU and other countries.
- Speaks on behalf of all EU countries in international bodies, in particular in areas of trade policy and humanitarian aid and negotiates international agreements for the EU.

(LEGISLATIVE)

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

It consists of national ministers of each EU Member States who discuss and prepare EU legislation. Together with the European Parliament, it's the main legislative body. Each EU country holds the presidency on a 6-month rotating basis. It's based in Brussels, Belgium.

PARLIAMENT

- MEPs represent the people and are elected by EU voters every 5 years, by universal suffrage since 1979.
- Along with the Council of the European Union it is one of the EU's main law-making institutions, debating and passing European laws.
- Parliament elects the President of the Commission, and approves (or rejects) the appointment of the Commission as a whole.
- It can subsequently force the Commission as a body to resign by adopting a motion of censure.
- Luxembourg is home to the administrative offices. Meetings of the whole Parliament or plenary sessions, take place in Strasbourg and in Brussels. Committee meetings are held in Brussels.

(JUDICIARY)

COURT OF JUSTICE

Interprets EU law so it is applied in the same way in all EU countries and settles legal disputes between national governments and EU institutions.
1 judge from each EU country, plus 11 advocates general for 47 judges. In 2019 this will be increased to 56 (2 judges from each EU country).

COURT OF AUDITORS

Checks if EU funds are collected and used correctly, and helps improve EU financial management.
Looks after the interests of EU taxpayers. It does not have legal powers, but works to improve the European Commission's management of the EU budget and reports on EU finances.