

EU institutions and other bodies



The most important EU institutions are:



The European Council

The European Council is the EU's **top political institution**. It consists of the Heads of State or Government , plus the President of the European Commission.

It normally meets four times a year, in **Brussels**.



It has a permanent President, whose job is to coordinate the European Council's work . The permanent President is elected for a period of two and a half years. The former Belgian Prime Minister, Herman Van Rompuy, has occupied this post since 1 December 2009.



The European Parliament (EP)



The European Parliament is the **elected body** that represents the EU's citizens. It supervises the EU's activities and, together with the Council, it **enacts EU legislation**.

Since 1979, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have been directly elected, by universal suffrage, every five years.

Plenary sessions are normally held in **Strasbourg**, and any additional sessions are held in **Brussels**.



The president of European Parliament is Martin Schulz





The European Commission.

The European Commission is a key EU institution. It alone has the right to draw up proposals for new EU legislation, which it sends to the Council and Parliament for discussion and adoption.

There is one Commission member ('Commissioner') from each EU country, including the Commission President.

On 9 February 2010 the former Prime Minister of Portugal, **José Manuel Barroso**, was reappointed President of the Commission for a second five-year term.





The Court of Justice

The Court of Justice of the European Union, located in **Luxembourg**, is made up of one judge from each EU country, assisted by eight advocates-general.

They are appointed for a renewable term of six years. The Court's **role** is to **ensure that EU law is complied with**, and that the **Treaties are correctly interpreted and applied**.





The European Central Bank

The European Central Bank (ECB), in Frankfurt, is responsible for managing the euro and the EU's monetary policy . Its main task is to maintain price stability in the euro area. The Italian Mario Draghi is the today President of ECB.



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