



THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- The European Commission is the EU's **executive body**
- It's part of the “institutional triangle”
- It represents the interests of the European Union as a whole **AND NOT** the interests of individual Member States
- Headquarters: Brussels (+ some services in Luxembourg)
- It has Representations in all Member States + 139 Delegations across the globe
- Current President: Ursula von der Leyen
- Term: 5 years

REPRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN ROMANIA

- https://ec.europa.eu/romania/home_ro

- Information centres
- Documentation centres

COMPOSITION: THE COLLEGE OF COMMISSIONERS

Made out of 27 Commissioners (one from each Member State):

- 1 President (decides who is responsible for which policy area): **Ursula von der Leyen**
- 6 Executive Vice-Presidents
- the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: **Kaja Kallas**, also a vice-president
- 20 commissioners
- Each Commissioner has a personal Cabinet.
- Each Commissioner (except for the President) is responsible for a certain policy area.

COMPOSITION

- **The College of Commissioners**
- Departments (Directorate General)
- Service departments
- Executive agencies

STRUCTURES

- Directorate-General BUDG
 - Budget
- Directorate-General CLIMA
 - Climate Action
- Service department DPO
 - Data Protection Officer
- Service department OLAF
 - European Anti-Fraud Office
- Service department EPSO
 - European Personnel Selection Office
- European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
- European Education and Culture Executive Agency
- European Health and Digital Executive Agency
- European Innovation Council and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Executive Agency
- European Research Council Executive Agency
- European Research Executive Agency

THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION

- defines the policy direction (plan)
- assigns portfolios to each of the Commissioners + can, at any time, change the attribution and or shape of the portfolios. (except the HRUFASP)
- chairs the meetings of the College of Commissioners
- regularly takes questions in front of the European Parliament
- represents the Commission in the dealing with other European Institutions

The College decides on the strategic objectives and on this basis, draws up the annual work programme.

THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE COMMISSION

- The Vice-Presidents act on behalf of the President, deputising for him.
- They steer and coordinate the work in their area of responsibility bringing together several Commissioners.
- Vice-Presidents are entrusted with well-defined priority projects that can be adapted according to need, and as new projects develop.

PRIORITIES-URSULA VON DER LEYEN 2024-2029

- A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness
- A new era for European Defence and Security
- Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model
- Sustaining our quality of life: Food security, water and nature
- Protecting our democracy, upholding our values
- A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships
- Delivering together and preparing our Union for the future

MAIN TASKS

- **Proposes new law (EP and CUE adopt)**
- **Manages EU policies & allocates EU funding**
- **Enforces EU law (Also known as the “guardian of the Treaties”)**
- **Represents the EU internationally**

INFRINGEMENT PROCEDURES

When a Member State does not apply / breaks a European law, the Commission must intervene. There are 2 steps:

1. Early Procedure

- The Commission attempts to quickly resolve the underlying problem with the Member State concerned by means of a structured dialogue.
- The goal being to find a quick solution in compliance with EU law and thus to avoid the need for formal infringement procedure.

IF IT FAILS, then:

2. Formal Procedure

- the Commission can launch a formal procedure, potentially leading to a ruling from the European Court of Justice

ELECTING THE COMMISSION

Several Steps:

1) Appointing the President

- The candidate is put forward by national leaders in the **European Council** (with qualified majority), taking account of the results of the European Parliament elections.
- He or she needs the support of a majority of members of the European Parliament in order to be elected

ELECTING THE COMMISSION (2)

- 2) Selecting the members in the College of Commissioners
 - The Presidential candidate selects other members of the Commission based on suggestions from the EU countries
 - The list of nominees has to be approved by CEU and the President of the Commission
 - Each Commissioner is assigned with a portfolio
 - Each nominee appears before the European Parliament to explain their vision and answer questions.
 - Parliament then votes on whether to accept the nominees as a team.
 - Finally, they are appointed by the European Council, by a qualified majority.

COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

- The Commission works according to the **principle of collective responsibility: /collegiality**
 - Decisions are taken collectively by the College of Commissioners, who together are responsible before the European Parliament.
- All Commissioners are equal in the decision-making process and equally accountable for these decisions.

THE COMMISSION AT WORK

- The College of Commissioners meets at least one per week-Wednesday in Brussels
 - In addition to the weekly meetings, the President of the Commission can also call for extraordinary Commission meetings, when circumstances require. These are held to discuss a particular topic, or in response to a specific event.
- Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission—post term of office activities

END OF MANDATE

- at the end of the period for which they were appointed -5 years, (term that can be renewed)
- death
- individual or block resignation
- The Parliament may dismiss the Commission as a whole
- EUCJ may dismiss them individually or revoke the mandate of a Commissioner

GREEN PAPERS AND WHITE PAPERS

- **Green Papers** are documents published by the European Commission to stimulate discussion on given topics at European level.
- They invite the relevant parties (bodies or individuals) to participate in a consultation process and debate on the basis of the proposals they put forward.
- Green Papers may give rise to legislative developments that are then outlined in White Papers.

- **White Papers** are documents containing proposals for European Union action in a specific area. In some cases, they follow on from a Green Paper published to launch a consultation process at European level.
- The purpose of a White Paper is to launch a debate with the public, stakeholders, the European Parliament and the Council in order to facilitate a political consensus.



GET INVOLVED

- **Petition the EU**
- **European Citizens' Initiative**
- **Citizens' Dialogues**

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- https://commission.europa.eu/index_en



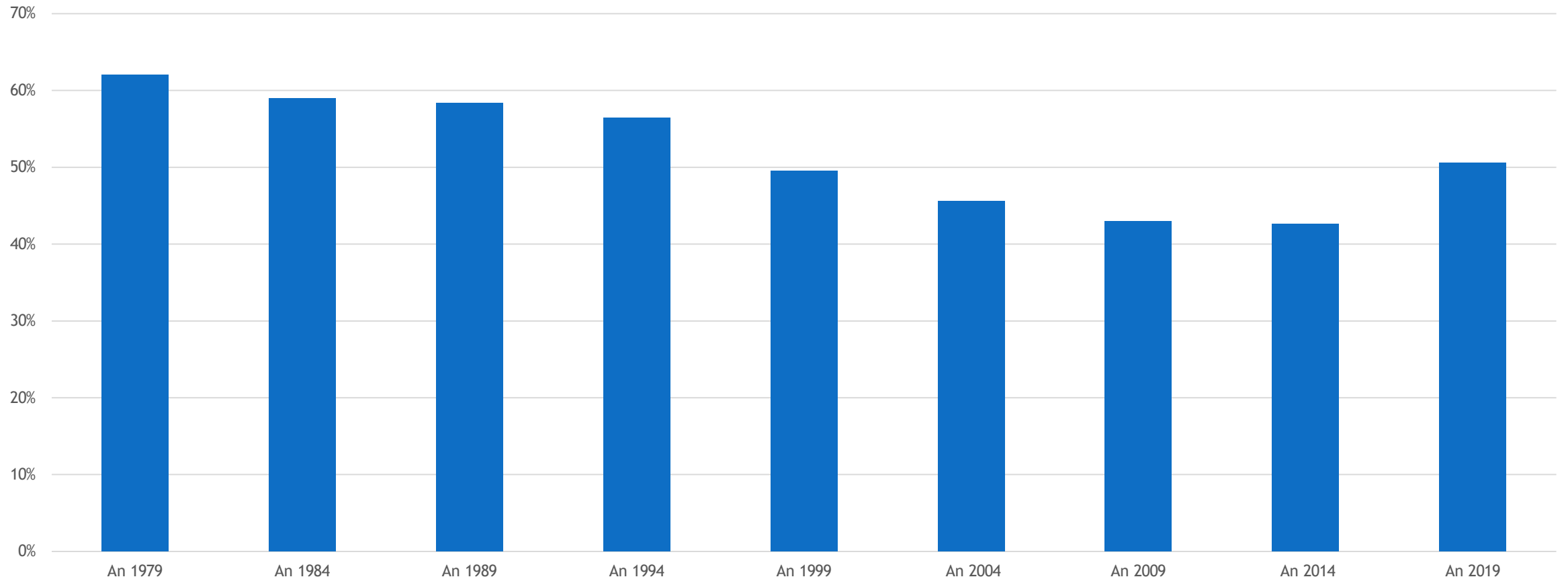
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- The European Parliament is the EU's **law-making body**
- It was established in 1952 as Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community
- In 1962 as European Parliament
- First direct elections in 1979
- **720 MEPs (Members of the European Parliament)**
- The EP is directly elected by EU voters every 5 years (direct universal suffrage)
- **President** : Roberta Metsola

ELECTION RESULTS 1979-2019



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- 24 official languages-multilingualism
- Locations: Strasbourg, Brussels, Luxembourg (administrative offices)
- Ways of getting in touch with Parliament
 - ❖ contacting your local MEP
 - ❖ the European Parliament Information Office in your country

LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGETARY POWERS

- Adopts UE legislation with the Council (co-decision)
- Establishes and adopts the EU budget, together with the Council
- Approves the EU's long-term budget, the "Multiannual Financial Framework (7 years)

SUPERVISORY AND CONTROL POWERS

- EUROPEAN COUNCIL
- THE COUNCIL OF THE EU
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION
- COURT OF JUSTICE
- EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK
- EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS
- EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The President is elected for a renewable term of two and a half years, i.e. half the lifetime of a Parliament.

The President represents the European Parliament vis-à-vis the outside world and in its relations with the other EU institutions.

The President oversees the work of the Parliament and its constituent bodies as well as the debates in plenary

The President ensures that Parliament's Rules of Procedure are adhered to.

At the beginning of every European Council meeting, the President of the European Parliament sets out Parliament's point of view and its concerns as regards the items on the agenda and other subjects.

NUMBER OF MEP

- ❖ The number of MEPs for each country is roughly **proportionate to its population**
- ❖ No country can have fewer than 6 or more than 96 MEPs and the total number cannot exceed 720
- ❖ ex: Germany - 96, Romania- 33 Estonia -7, Ciprus, Luxemburg and Malta - 6.

HOW DOES THE PARLIAMENT WORK?

Parliament's work comprises two main stages:

- **Committees - to prepare legislation**
 - The Parliament numbers committees, each handling a particular policy area.
 - Location: Brussels
- **Plenary sessions - to pass legislation (12 meetings/year)**
 - This is when all the MEPs gather in the Chamber to give a final vote on the proposed legislation and the proposed amendments.
 - Normally held in Strasbourg for four days a month (Monday-Thursday), but sometimes there are additional sessions in Brussels (5-6 times/year, 2days)
 - The European Commission and the Council of the European Union attend the plenary sessions
 - August-holiday for the MEP's

DELEGATIONS

- The European Parliament's delegations are official groups of MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) that maintain and deepen relations with the parliaments of non-EU countries, regions and organisations.

THE POLITICAL GROUPS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- There are currently 8 political groups in the European Parliament.
- The Members of the European Parliament sit in political groups - they are not organised by nationality, but by political affiliation.
- 23 Members are needed to form a political group, and at least one-quarter of the Member States must be represented within the group. Members may not belong to more than one political group.
- Some Members do not belong to any political group and are known as **non-attached Members**.
- Each political group care of its own internal organisation by appointing a chair (or two cochairs in the case of some groups), a bureau and a secretariat.

THE POLITICAL GROUPS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1. Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
2. Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
3. Patriots for Europe Group
4. European Conservatives and Reformists Group
5. Renew Europe Group
6. Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
7. The Left group in the European Parliament - GUE/NGL
8. Europe of Sovereign Nations Group

THE POLITICAL BODIES OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- **Conference of Presidents** (The President of the European Parliament and the political group chairmen)
- **The Bureau** (President of the European Parliament, the 14 Vice-Presidents and the five Quaestors)
- **College of Quaestors** (the five members of the Bureau)
- **Conference of Committee Chairs** (chairmen of all the standing and temporary committees)
- **The Conference of Delegation Chairs** (the Chairs of all the standing interparliamentary delegations)

SECRETARIAT

- The Secretariat's task is to coordinate legislative work and organise plenary sittings and meetings.
- It provides technical and expert assistance to parliamentary bodies and Members of Parliament to support them in the exercise of their mandates.
- The European Parliament must also provide a fully multilingual service for all plenary sittings and meetings.

PETITIONS

- Any EU citizen, resident, company or organisation can submit a petition to the European Parliament about EU law.
- Parliament can set up a committee of inquiry to look into violations of EU law by member states.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>



THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



OVERVIEW

- the Council of the EU represents the member states' governments.
- it is where national ministers from each EU country meet to **adopt laws and coordinate policies**
- also known informally as the EU Council
- 1958 as Council of the European Economic Community
- Location: Brussels
- **EU Council vs The European Council vs The Council of Europe**

STRUCTURE

- **The Council (meeting in 10 formal configurations + the Eurogrup)**
- **The Council Preparatory Bodies:**
 - Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) - the main preparatory body
 - 150 working parties and committees (highly specialized)

THE COUNCIL CONFIGURATIONS

- The Council of the EU is a single legal entity, but it meets in **10 different 'configurations'**, depending on the subject being discussed
 - **General Affairs** > European affairs ministers from all EU member states (cross-cutting policy areas such as EU enlargement and accession negotiations, the adoption of the multiannual financial framework, cohesion policy, matters relating to the EU's institutional set-up and any dossier entrusted to it by the European Council).
 - Foreign Affairs
 - Economic and Financial Affairs
 - Justice and Home Affairs
 - Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs
 - Competitiveness
 - Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
 - Agriculture and Fisheries;
 - Environment
 - Education, Youth and Culture

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Participants:

- representatives from each member state at a ministerial level (minister, state secretary) responsible for the area
- European Commissioners responsible for the areas

Meetings chairs:

- Meetings are **chaired** by the minister of the member state holding the 6-month Council presidency.
- The exception is the **Foreign Affairs Council**, which is usually chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

THE EUROGROUP 1997

The Eurogroup is an **informal body** where the ministers of the Eurozone member states discuss matters relating to their shared responsibilities related to the Euro.

THE EUROGROUP

Main tasks:

- to ensure close coordination of economic policies among the euro area member states
- to promote conditions for stronger economic growth.
- responsible for preparing the Euro Summit meetings and for their follow-up
- usually meets once a month (on the eve of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council meeting)

COREPER

- ‘Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the European Union’=COREPER
- all items to be included into the Council's agenda (except for some agricultural matters) must first be examined by COREPER (unless the Council decides otherwise)
- **not an EU decision-making body!** It just makes recommendations to the Council, which decides.

Main tasks

- coordinates and prepares the work of the different Council configurations
- ensures consistency of the EU's policies
- works out agreements and compromises which are then submitted for adoption by the Council

COREPER I AND II

Coreper I

- composed of each member state's **deputy permanent representatives**

Coreper II

- composed of each member state's **permanent representatives**
- They meet every week.
- Members in both configurations express the position of their governments.

COREPER I

- meetings are chaired by the deputy permanent representative of the country holding the presidency of the General Affairs Council
- prepares the work of 6 Council configurations:
 - agriculture and fisheries (partial)
 - competitiveness
 - education, youth, culture and sport
 - employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs
 - environment
 - transport, telecommunications and energy

COREPER II

- meetings are chaired by the permanent representative of the country holding the presidency of the General Affairs Council
- prepares the work of 4 Council configurations:
 - economic and financial affairs
 - foreign affairs
 - general affairs
 - justice and home affairs

WORKING PARTIES AND COMMITTEES

- 150 highly specialised working parties and committees
- they provide the Council with relevant analysis / documents for decision-making

Three main categories:

- **committees set up by the treaties, intergovernmental decisions or by Council act**
 - they are mostly permanent and often have an appointed or elected chairperson
- **committees and working parties set up by Coreper**
 - deal with very specific subjects
 - are chaired by the delegate of the country holding the rotating 6-month presidency of the Council
- **ad hoc committees**
 - are created for a specific purpose and cease to exist when their task is fulfilled.

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- PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF ROMANIA to the European Union
 - <https://ue.mae.ro/en>

MAIN ATTRIBUTES

- 1. Negotiates and adopts EU laws
 - in most cases together with the European Parliament through the ordinary legislative procedure (also known as 'codecision').

MAIN ATTRIBUTES

- **2. Coordinates member states' policies**
- The Council is responsible for coordinating member states' policies in specific fields, such as:
 - ❖ economic and fiscal policies:
 - monitors their budgetary policies
 - deals with the legal and practical aspects of the Eurozone, financial markets and capital movements
 - objective: to strengthen economic governance in the EU
 - ❖ employment policy:
 - the Council draws up annual guidelines and recommendations for member states, based on European Council conclusions on the EU employment situation
 - ❖ education, culture, youth and sport

MAIN ATTRIBUTES

- 3. Develops the EU's common foreign and security policy
 - ❖ The Council defines and implements EU foreign and security policy on the basis of guidelines set by the European Council.
 - ❖ Together with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council ensures the unity, consistency and effectiveness of the EU's external action
- 4. Concludes international agreements
 - ❖ via mandate given to the Commission
 - ❖ At the end of negotiations, the Council **decides on the signature and conclusion** of the agreement, based on a proposal from the Commission.
 - ❖ The Council also **adopts the final decision** to conclude the agreement, once the Parliament has given its consent (required in areas subject to co-decision) and it has been ratified by all EU member states.
- 5. Adopts the EU budget (codecision)

PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

- **rotates** among the EU member states every 6 months
- meetings at every level in the Council are chaired by the representatives of the country holding the presidency

The 'Trios'

- member states holding the presidency **work together closely in groups of three, called 'trios'**.
- the trio sets long-term goals and prepares a common agenda determining the topics and major issues that will be addressed by the Council over an 18 month period.
- on the basis of this programme, each of the three countries prepares its own more detailed 6-month programme

TASKS- THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

Tasks:

- **Planning and chairing meetings in the Council and its preparatory bodies**
 - ensures that discussions are conducted properly
 - ensures that rules of procedure and working methods are correctly applied
- **Representing the Council in relations with the other EU institution**
 - Regarding the legislative process: trilogies with the Parliament and the Commission, Conciliation Committee meetings, informal meetings
 - Close coordination with the President of the European Council

VOTING SYSTEM

Depending on the issue under discussion, the Council of the EU takes its decisions by:

- **1. simple majority** (14 member states vote in favour)
 - in **procedural matters**, such as the adoption of its own rules of procedure and organisation of its secretariat general, the adoption of the rules governing the committees foreseen in the treaties
 - to request the Commission to undertake **studies or submit proposals**

VOTING SYSTEM

- 2. When the Council votes on a proposal by the Commission or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, a **qualified majority** is reached if two conditions are met:
 - **55% of member states vote in favour**
 - the proposal is supported by member states representing **at least 65% of the total EU population**
- about 80% of all EU legislation is adopted with this procedure
- 3. **unanimous vote (all votes are in favour)**
 - for matters which the member states consider to be sensitive, for example
 - common foreign and security policy (including Schengen), citizenship, EU membership, etc.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/>



THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL



OVERVIEW AND HISTORIC MILESTONES

- It represents the highest level of political cooperation between EU countries.
- Established in: 1974 (informal forum), 1992 (formal status, Maastricht Treaty), 2009 (official EU institution, Lisbon Treaty)
- It meets at least 4 times a year (each quarter)
- IT DOES NOT negotiate or adopt EU laws! (it is not one of the European legislative institutions)

COMPOSITION

- the heads of state or government of the EU's member states
- the President of the European Council (not one of the heads of state of government)
- the President of the European Commission
 - (the High Representative when foreign affairs are discussed)

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

- The European Council elects its own president.
- Qualified majority vote
- The President is elected for a 2.5 year term, renewable once.
- The President represents the EU to the **outside world**.
- Currently: **Antonio Costa**

The President presides over European Council meetings and helps heads of state and government reach common conclusions.

OVERVIEW OF MAIN ATTRIBUTIONS

- defines the EU's general political direction and priorities
 - adopts a '**strategic agenda**' of priority areas for longer-term EU action and focus
 - adopts '**conclusions**' during European Council meetings which identify issues of concern and actions to take
- is responsible for certain nominations and appointments
- has a role in the assessment and orientation of EU policy-European semester
- defining strategic guidelines for the area of freedom, security and justice.

SETTING THE EU'S STRATEGIC AGENDA

- the European Council agreed on **four priority areas** to guide the EU's work over the **next five years**.
- Called "The strategic agenda 2024-2029"
 - will be used to plan the work of the European Council
 - acts as a basis for the work programmes of other EU institutions.

THE EU'S STRATEGIC AGENDA - PRIORITY AREAS

- A free and democratic Europe
- A strong and secure Europe
- A prosperous and competitive Europe
- Path to the strategic agenda 2024-2029

THE MEETINGS (SUMMITS)

- During each meeting, a set of conclusions are adopted:
 - they are used to **identify specific issues of concern** for the EU
 - They outline **particular actions to take** or goals to reach
 - can also set a deadline for reaching agreement on a particular item or for the presentation of legislative proposal



- they influence and guide the policy of the European Union

INFORMAL MEETINGS

- The European Council also holds **informal or exceptional meetings of heads of state or government.**
- Can be held with a country outside of the EU, depending on the matters on the agenda.
- Following these meetings, leaders usually adopt a statement or declaration rather than official conclusions!

NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The European Council is responsible for:

- electing the President of the European Council
- proposing the President of the European Commission
- appointing the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
- officially appointing the entire body of Commissioners
- appointing the Executive Board of the European Central Bank (ECB), including the ECB president

ASSESSMENT AND ORIENTATION-EUROPEAN SEMESTER

- The European Semester is a cycle of **economic, fiscal, labour and social policy coordination** within the EU.
- In its annual March meeting, the European Council provides policy orientations, based on the annual growth survey and the Council of the EU analysis and conclusions.
- In its June meeting, the European Council endorses the final country-specific recommendations, which set out priorities for each member state for the next 12-18 months.

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

- The Treaty of Lisbon establishes that the European Union must constitute an area of freedom, security and justice, where fundamental rights are fully respected.
- European Council : strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning within that area
- rule of law, fundamental rights, border control, migration and asylum policy, police and judicial cooperation and the digitisation of justice.

THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE COUNCIL (GSC)

It is the body of staff responsible for assisting 2 EU institutions:

- the European Council
- the Council of the EU, including its presidencies, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) and the other Council committees and working parties
- The General Secretariat (GSC) employs around 2800 staff from all EU member states.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/>