

Resource 1.12

Institutions of the EU



Council of the EU

- This institution represents the member states of the EU.
- This is the main decision-making body of the EU.
- Presidency of this institution rotates between member states.
- This institution is often also referred to as the Council of Ministers.
- It is responsible for passing EU laws jointly with the EU Parliament.
- This institution has offices in Brussels and Luxembourg.

EU Parliament

- The people of the EU are represented by this institution.
- Members of the European Parliament are elected to this institution by the citizens of the member states.
- The role of this institution includes overseeing the EU budget.
- This institution meets in Strasbourg each month in plenary session.
- Most of the work of this institution is done in committee sessions.
- This institution expresses the democratic will of the Union's citizens and represents their interests in discussions with the other EU institutions.
- This institution has 3 places of work: Brussels (Belgium), Luxembourg & Strasbourg (France).

EU Commission

- This institution represents the common interest of the European Union.
- This institution is often referred to as the 'civil service' of the EU.
- Members of this institution are nominated by the government of their own member state.
- Members of this institution do not represent their own member state. Instead, they act in the wider EU interest.
- Each member of this institution has a particular area of responsibility, often called a 'portfolio'.
- This institution is divided up into departments called Directorates General.
- The role of this institution includes ensuring that EU laws are obeyed by member states (Court of Justice & the EU Commission).
- The role of this institution includes drafting proposals for new EU laws.
- This institution manages the day-to-day business of the European Union—implementing its policies, running its programmes and spending its funds.

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European Council

- This body comprises the heads-of-state or governments of each of the member states and the President of the European Commission.

European Court of Justice

- The role of this institution includes ensuring that EU laws are obeyed by member states.
- This body consists of 27 members, appointed from each member state for a six-year term.
- The decisions of this body are binding in all member states and it has the power to fine member states that do not comply.
- This body meets in Luxembourg and ensures that the European treaties are being observed.

European Central Bank

- This body is situated in Frankfurt, Germany and is responsible for keeping the value of the euro stable.

European Economic and Social Committee

- This advisory body represents the various sectors of 'organised civil society' within the member states.

European Ombudsman

- This body is completely independent of the other institutions or the member state governments
- This body acts as an intermediary between the citizens and the EU authorities.

The Committee of the Regions

- * This body is composed of representatives from regional and local authorities within the member states.
- * The role of this body is to put forward local and regional viewpoints on EU legislation.

European Court of Auditors

- * The role of this body includes making sure the EU accounts are accurate and reliable, checking that EU funds are properly spent and reporting on EU spending.