

European Parliament: Facts and Figures

This Briefing, published by the European Parliamentary Research Service, is designed to provide key facts and figures about the European Parliament, both today and in previous terms since direct elections were introduced in June 1979.

On the following pages you will find graphics of various kinds which:

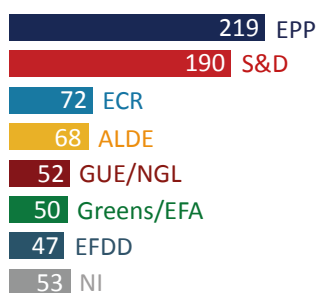
- detail the composition of the European Parliament now and in the past;
- trace the increase in the number of parties represented in the Parliament and show the evolution of political groups;
- chart the rise in the number of women sitting in the Parliament;
- explain the electoral systems used in elections to the Parliament across the Member States;
- show how turnout in European elections compares with that in national elections;
- summarise the activity of the Parliament in the last term from 2009 to 2014;
- present the annual cost of the Parliament compared with other parliaments;
- outline the composition of the Parliament's main governing bodies.

The Briefing is being updated regularly during the 2014-19 parliamentary term to take account of latest developments.

European Parliament, 2014-2019

Size of the political groups

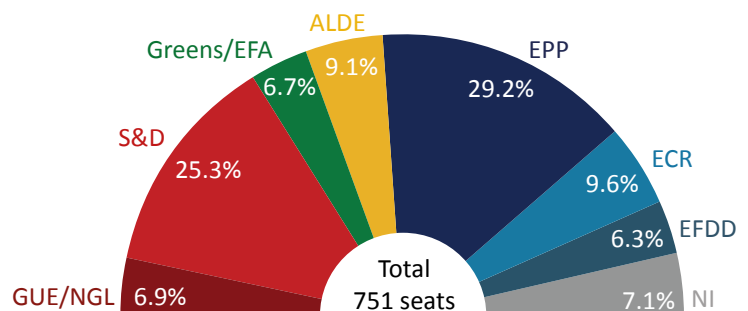
Number of MEPs in each political group as of 15 April 2015.



751
MEPs

Proportion of Members in each political group

Share of each political group in the total 751 seats in the Parliament.



The political groups in the current Parliament in order of size are:

- Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) (EPP),
- Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the EP (S&D),
- European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR),
- Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE),
- Confederal Group of the European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL),
- Group of the Greens–European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA),
- Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) group, and
- Non-attached Members (*Non-inscrits* – NI).

Size of political groups in the EP by Member State (as of 15 April 2015)

	EPP	S&D	ECR	ALDE	GUE/NGL	Greens/EFA	EFDD	NI	Total
DE	34	27	8	4	8	13		2	96
FR	20	13		7	4	6	1	23	74
IT	17	31			3		17	5	73
UK		20	21	1	1	6	23	1	73
ES	17	13		8	11	4		1	54
PL	23	5	19				1	3	51
RO	13	16		3					32
NL	5	3	2	7	3	2		4	26
BE	4	4	4	6		2		1	21
CZ	7	4	2	4	3		1		21
EL	5	4	1		6			5	21
HU	12	4				2		3	21
PT	7	8		2	4				21
SE	4	6		3	1	4	2		20
AT	5	5		1		3		4	18
BG	7	4	2	4					17
DK	1	3	4	3	1	1			13
SK	6	4	3						13
FI	3	2	2	4	1	1			13
IE	4	1	1	1	4				11
HR	5	2	1	2		1			11
LT	2	2	1	3		1	2		11
LV	4	1	1			1		1	8
SI	5	1		1		1			8
EE	1	1		3		1			6
CY	2	2			2				6
LU	3	1		1		1			6
MT	3	3							6
	219	190	72	68	52	50	47	53	751
	EPP	S&D	ECR	ALDE	GUE/NGL	Greens/EFA	EFDD	NI	Total
	29.2%	25.3%	9.6%	9.1%	6.9%	6.7%	6.3%	7.1%	100%

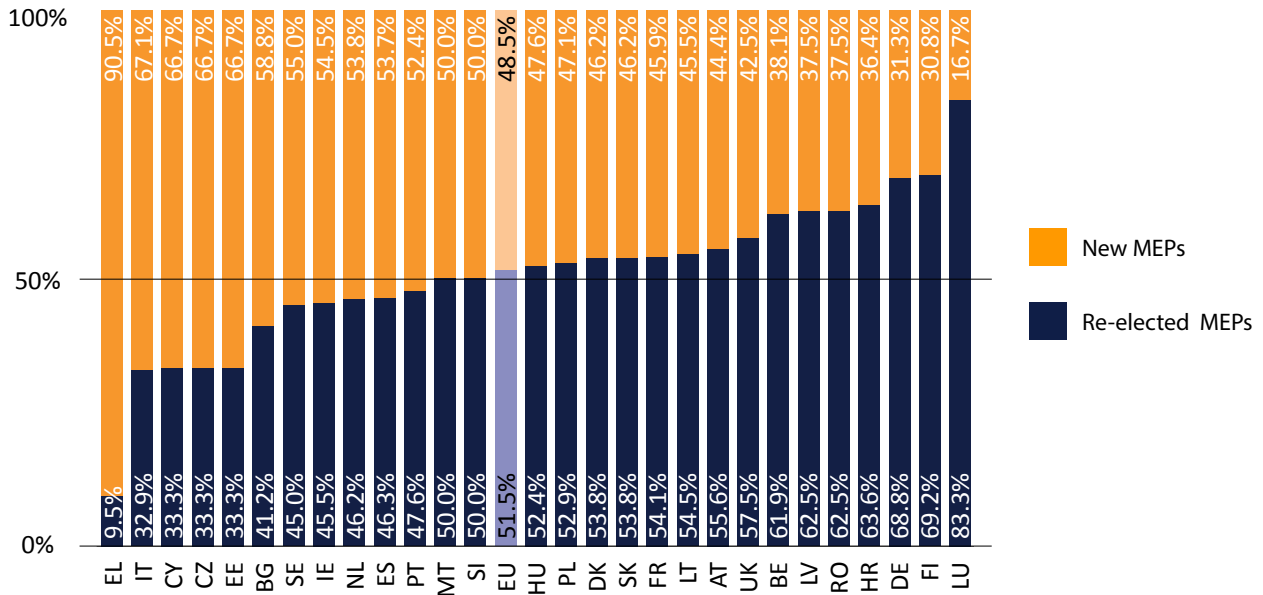
Data supplied by Members' Administration Unit, European Parliament

Country codes and flags:

Austria (AT)	Belgium (BE)	Bulgaria (BG)	Croatia (HR)	Cyprus (CY)	Czech Republic (CZ)
Denmark (DK)	Estonia (EE)	Finland (FI)	France (FR)	Germany (DE)	Greece (EL)
Hungary (HU)	Ireland (IE)	Italy (IT)	Latvia (LV)	Lithuania (LT)	Luxembourg (LU)
Malta (MT)	Netherlands (NL)	Poland (PL)	Portugal (PT)	Romania (RO)	Slovakia (SK)
Slovenia (SI)	Spain (ES)	Sweden (SE)	United Kingdom (UK)		

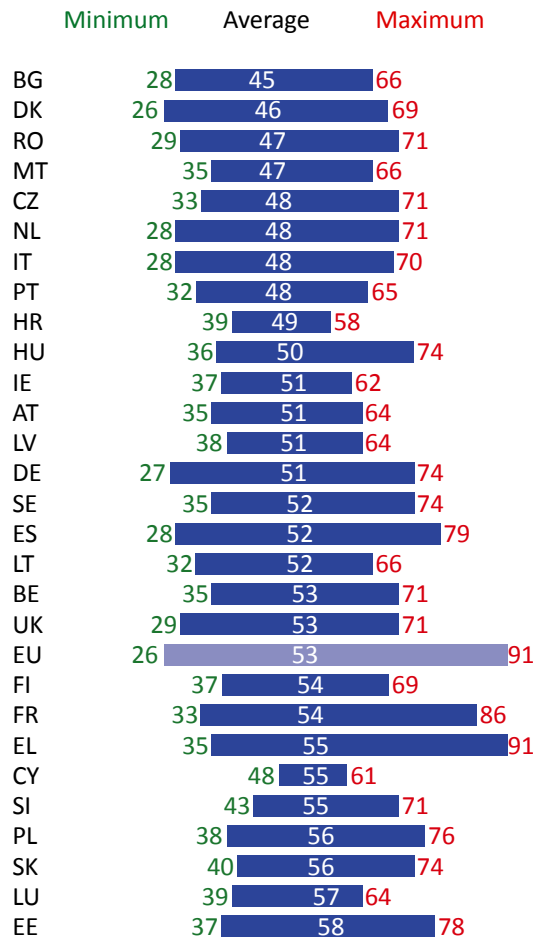
New and re-elected MEPs in 2014 (as a percentage share of total MEPs)

New MEPs are defined as those who did not sit in the EP either in the previous term or in a preceding one. Overall, of the 751 MEPs, 48.5% were new to the EP in 2014, whilst 51.5% were Members in a previous term. The highest proportion of new MEPs was in Greece (90.5%), whilst the lowest was in Luxembourg (16.7%).



Age of MEPs by Member State in 2014

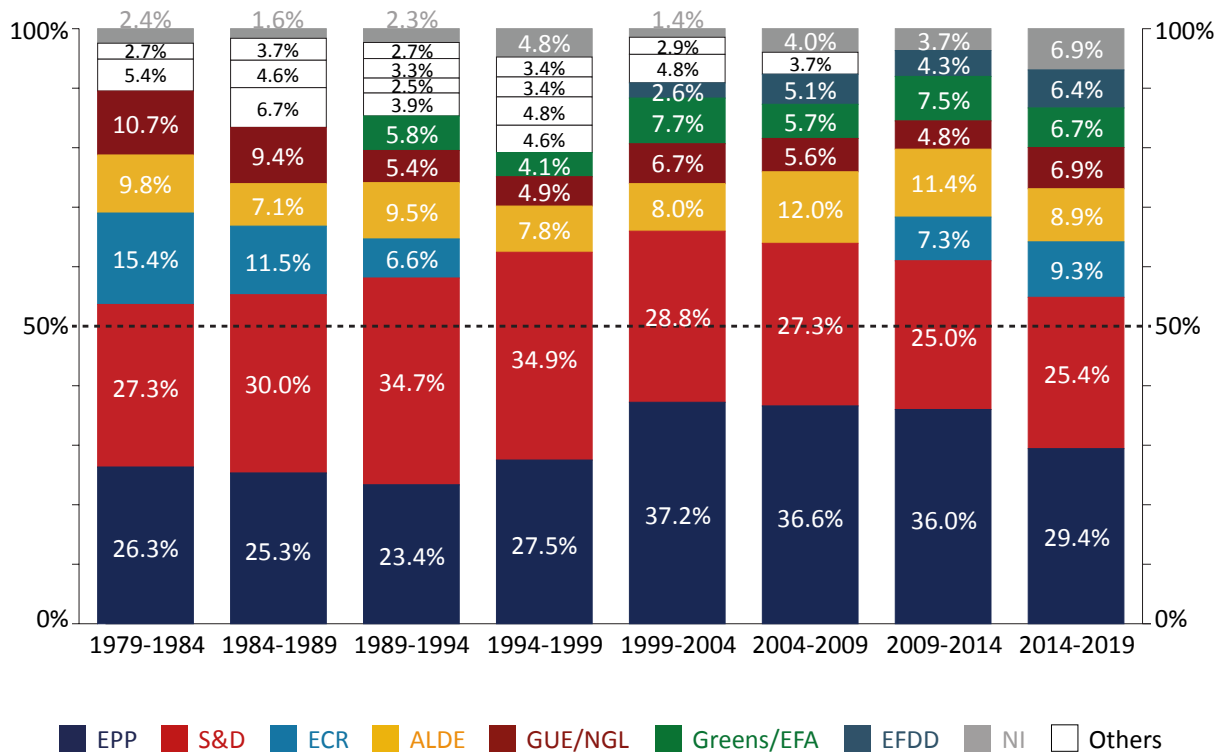
The graph shows the average age of MEPs, together with the maximum and minimum age, per Member State. The average age of Members at the constituent session in July 2014 was 53 years, with the oldest member being 91 (from Greece) and the youngest one 26 (from Denmark).



European Parliament, 1979-2014

Strengths of the political groups in each parliamentary term

The relative size of the political groups in the European Parliament is shown for each of the eight parliamentary terms since the first direct elections in 1979. The data, in percentages of total seats, refer to the constituent session (in July) at the beginning of each parliamentary term.



Source: Directorate-General for Communication, European Parliament

The group colours in the current parliamentary term are also used for groups in previous terms, where the history of today’s groups can be traced back. However, it should be understood that the names and constitutions of political groups, and indeed their membership, can change frequently. So, whilst we can identify substantial common elements between current groups and their predecessors, they cannot in all cases be regarded as the same group with an unbroken history. The category ‘others’ includes a number of groups which no longer exist.

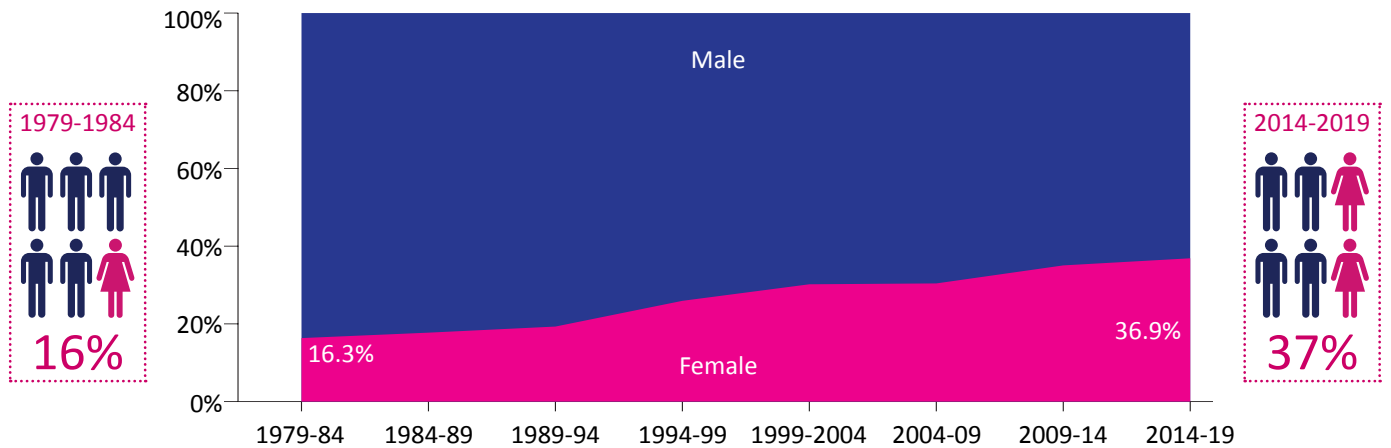
National parties and political groups in the EP

Over the eight terms the successive increases in the number of Member States and MEPs have been outpaced by growth in the number of national political parties represented in the EP. On the other hand, while the number of political groups has stabilised – the thresholds for forming a group have been raised over time – groups now tend to include Members from a greater number of Member States than in previous terms.

	1979-1984	1984-1989	1989-1994	1994-1999	1999-2004	2004-2009	2009-2014	2014-2019
Number of MEPs	410	434	518	567	626	732	736	751
Number of Member States	9	10	12	12	15	25	27	28
Number of political groups	7	8	10	9	8	7	7	7
Number of national political parties	57	67	103	97	127	168	176	191
Number of national delegations in political groups	37	42	64	58	74	109	116	129

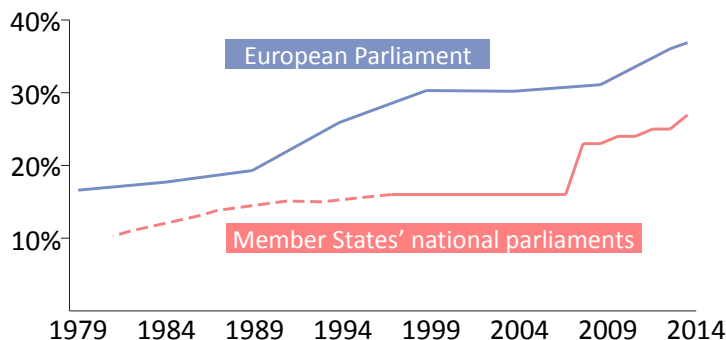
Proportion of men and women in the EP

The evolution of the proportion of women among all MEPs at the beginning of each parliamentary term shows steady growth, starting at 16.3% in the first term and reaching the highest percentage yet in the current term (36.9%).



Women in EP and EU national parliaments

Comparison of the average representation of women in national parliaments in Member States and in the European Parliament shows that both have increased over time. The line for national parliaments up to 1996 is illustrative only, as it is based on data available for a limited number of Member States. A marked increase in the percentage of women in national parliaments can be seen in the mid-2000s, which is partly a consequence of the introduction of electoral gender quotas in several Member States around this time (France - 2000, Belgium - 2002, Portugal - 2006, Spain - 2007).



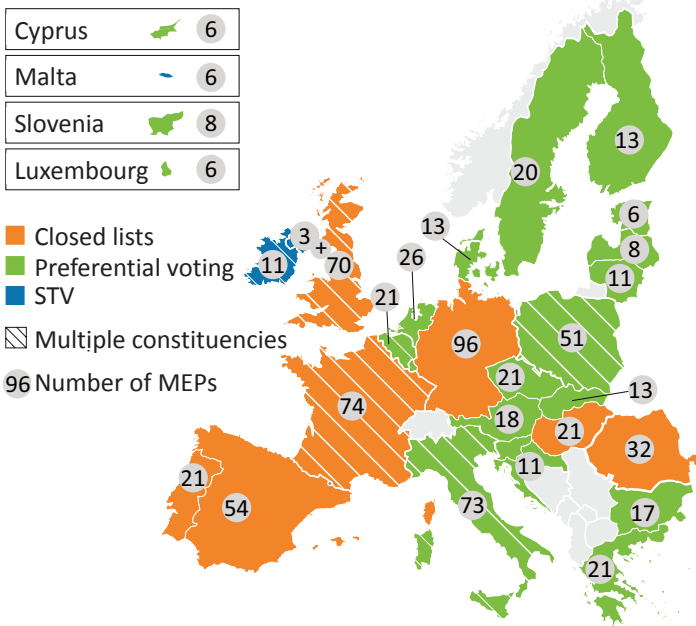
Women MEPs by Member State

MT	SE	IE	FI	EE	HR	AT	FR	NL	UK	ES	IT	DK	PT	LV	SI	EU	DE	LU	RO	SK	BG	BE	CZ	EL	PL	HU	CY	LT
Total seats																												
6	20	11	13	6	11	18	74	26	73	54	73	13	21	8	8	751	96	6	32	13	17	21	21	21	51	21	6	11
Percentage of women Members in the EP (Constituent session, July 2014)																												
66.7%	55.0%	54.5%	53.8%	50.0%	45.5%	44.4%	43.2%	42.3%	41.1%	40.7%	39.7%	38.5%	38.1%	37.5%	37.5%	36.9%	36.5%	33.3%	31.3%	30.8%	29.4%	28.6%	23.8%	23.8%	23.5%	19.0%	16.7%	9.1%
Gender quotas applicable to EP in the 2014 elections																												
None	None	None	None	None	40%	None	50%	None	None	40%	33%	None	33%	None	40%	None	None	None	> 0	None	None	50%	None	None	35%	None	None	None

The percentage of women MEPs elected in the 2014 European elections varied between 66.7% in Malta and 9.1% in Lithuania. At those elections, nine Member States had gender quotas, which mostly concern the make-up of electoral lists, with gender proportions applying to both sexes, to avoid the under-representation of either women or men.

Electoral systems for the European Parliament

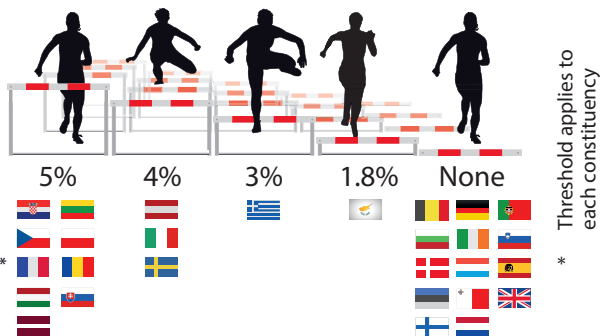
Voting system and number of MEPs



The EP now has 751 MEPs, a reduction from the previous Parliament (2009-14) in which there were 766 MEPs (754 plus 12 for Croatia, which joined in 2013).

MEPs are elected under national electoral systems, but these have to observe certain common principles established in EU law, notably proportional representation. As a general rule, voters can choose between political parties, individual candidates or both. Whilst in some Member States, voters can only vote for a list, with no possibility of changing the order of candidates (closed list), in others voters can express their preference for one or more of the candidates (preferential voting). Instead of a list system, some Member States achieve the latter possibility of preferential voting by using the single transferable vote (STV).

Electoral threshold



EU law allows Member States to establish thresholds of up to 5% of votes cast for the allocation of seats in the European Parliament. In 14 Member States, there are formal thresholds. Even in those Member States without a formally established threshold, there is an 'effective' threshold, which can exceed 5%, particularly in countries with a small number of seats in Parliament.

Annual cost of the EP per inhabitant



The above graphic shows the annual running cost, divided by the number of inhabitants, for the European Parliament, German Bundestag, French Assemblée nationale, UK House of Commons and US House of Representatives, for the year 2011 (House of Commons, April 2011-March 2012; House of Representatives, October 2010 to September 2011).

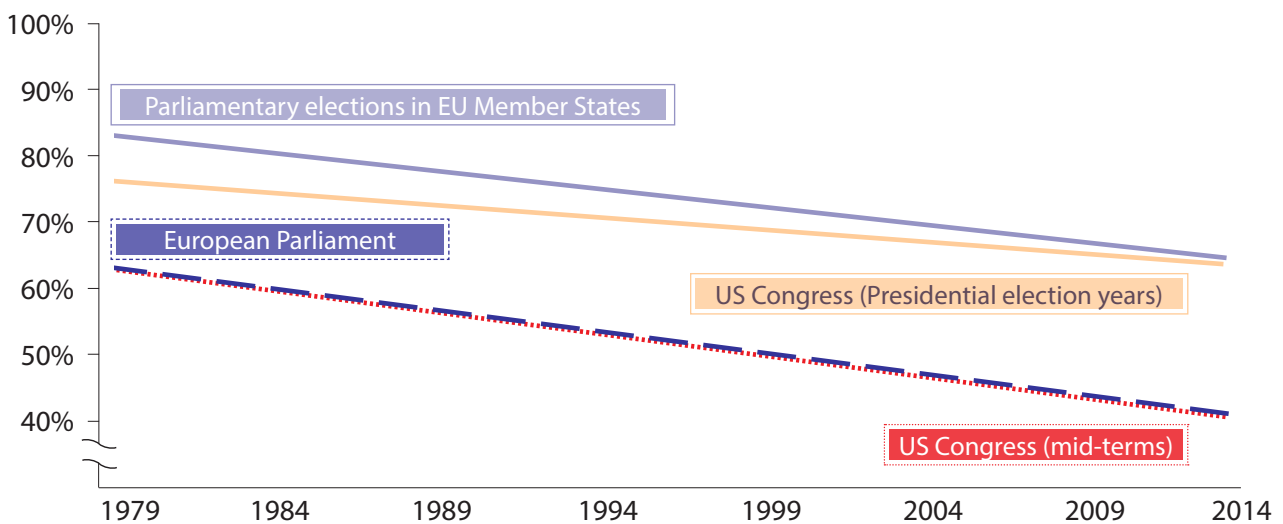
Caution is inevitably needed in making comparisons between the costs of parliaments, as each has its own history, traditions and organisational form: budget allocations for a given purpose in one parliament may have no parallel in another, while very different levels of resources may be dedicated to apparently similar tasks. The EP budget includes the costs of translation and interpreting into and out of 24 languages, and of operating in three centres – Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg – whereas other parliaments do not have these dimensions to their work.

Figures for the EP and the three Member State parliaments are taken from the EP's internal study 'Parliamentary Democracy in Action' of March 2013. Figures for the House of Representatives are the FY2011 out-turn figures for the US federal 'legislative branch' budget. Since there is no accepted means of dividing costs between the House and Senate, the figure used is simply 50% of all items which are not specifically House only. Whilst this does include costs which have no counterpart in the EP – such as the Library of Congress which also acts as national depository library – it can also be argued that the House, with more than four times the number of members of the Senate, should bear a greater than half share of the supporting services. (US\$ to € conversion is calculated at the 2011 rate of 1.38.)

Turnout in European Elections

Trends in turnout at national and EP elections

The trend lines for turnout in four different types of election in the period since the first EP direct elections took place in 1979 show that voter turnout has been on a consistently downward path, both within the European Union and in the United States. Indeed, these trends are consistent with a general decline in turnout at elections in most G20 democracies since 1945 – from around 80% in the immediate post-war period to just over 60% today.



The graph highlights the remarkably close relationship between the (downward) paths of turnout in EP elections and (mid-term) US Congressional elections, in both absolute values and trends, which correspond almost exactly. The parallel declines in turnout at Member States' parliamentary elections and at European Parliament elections demonstrate that voters treat EP elections in the same way as their national elections, but with an average turnout at national elections around 15 to 20% higher. In general, elections in which voters decide who runs the executive branch of government, as well as who controls the legislature, attract a higher turnout than other elections.

Turnout in European Parliament elections is calculated as the total number of votes cast in all Member States as a percentage of the total number of registered voters in those countries. Turnout for national parliamentary elections in Member States is calculated on the same basis, totalling all elections taking place in each year to create an annual whole-EU aggregate. Turnout in elections to the US Congress is also based on total votes as a percentage of registered voters. They are split into two series, one for the years (1980, 1984, 1988 and so on) in which voters also elected the President on the same day (when turnout is normally significantly higher) and a second for the mid-term years, in which the Presidency was not contested (1982, 1986, 1990 and so on).

Turnout in Member States at European Parliament elections since 1979

For each of the eight European elections held since 1979, the table shows the lowest turnout among all Member States, the highest in a Member State without compulsory voting, and finally the highest overall. The EU average at each election is highlighted in light blue.

	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	
BE	91.4%	92.1%	90.7%	90.7%	91.0%	90.8%	90.4%	89.6%	
LU	88.9%	88.8%	87.4%	88.5%	87.3%	91.3%	90.8%	85.5%	
MT						82.4%	78.8%	74.8%	
EL	77.2%	79.9%	73.2%	71.5%	63.2%	52.6%	60.0%		
IT	84.9%	83.4%	81.0%	73.6%	69.8%	71.7%	65.1%	57.2%	
DK	47.8%	52.4%	46.2%	52.9%	50.4%	47.9%	59.5%	56.3%	
IE	63.6%	47.6%	68.3%	44.0%	50.2%	58.6%	57.6%	52.4%	
SE					38.8%	37.9%	45.5%	51.1%	
DE	65.7%	56.8%	62.3%	60.0%	45.2%	43.0%	43.3%	48.1%	
LT						48.4%	21.0%	47.4%	
AT					49.0%	42.4%	46.0%	45.4%	
CY						72.5%	59.4%	44.0%	
ES			54.6%	59.1%	63.0%	45.1%	44.9%	43.8%	
EU	61.8%	59.0%	58.3%	56.7%	49.5%	45.6%	43.0%	42.6%	
FR	60.7%	56.7%	48.7%	52.8%	46.8%	42.8%	40.6%	42.4%	
FI					30.1%	39.4%	40.5%	41.0%	
NL	58.1%	50.6%	47.2%	35.7%	30.0%	39.3%	36.8%	37.3%	
EE						26.8%	43.9%	36.5%	
BG							38.9%	36.1%	
UK	32.3%	32.6%	36.2%	36.4%	24.0%	39.2%	34.5%	35.4%	
PT			51.2%	35.5%	39.9%	38.6%	36.8%	33.7%	
RO							27.7%	32.4%	
LV						41.3%	53.7%	30.2%	
HU						38.5%	36.3%	29.0%	
HR								25.2%	
SI						28.4%	28.3%	24.5%	
PL						20.9%	24.5%	23.8%	
CZ						28.3%	28.2%	18.2%	
SK						17.0%	19.6%	13.0%	

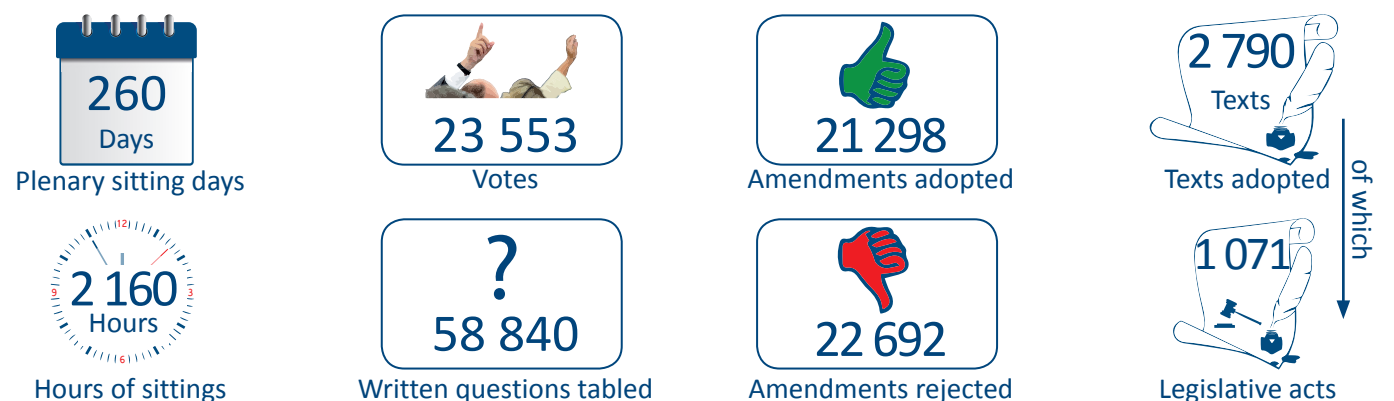
Compulsory voting (Voting was also compulsory in Italy at the 1979, 1984 and 1989 elections.)

Lowest turnout Highest turnout without compulsory voting Highest turnout with compulsory voting

Activity in the seventh parliamentary term (2009-14)

The European Parliament adopts its positions by voting in plenary session on legislative and budgetary texts, as well as on own-initiative reports and other resolutions. The Parliament’s 20 standing committees prepare the ground, undertaking detailed consideration of draft legislation and holding public hearings on key issues. In the course of the legislative process, representatives of EP committees meet frequently with their counterparts in the Council of Ministers and the European Commission, in so-called ‘trilogue’ negotiations.

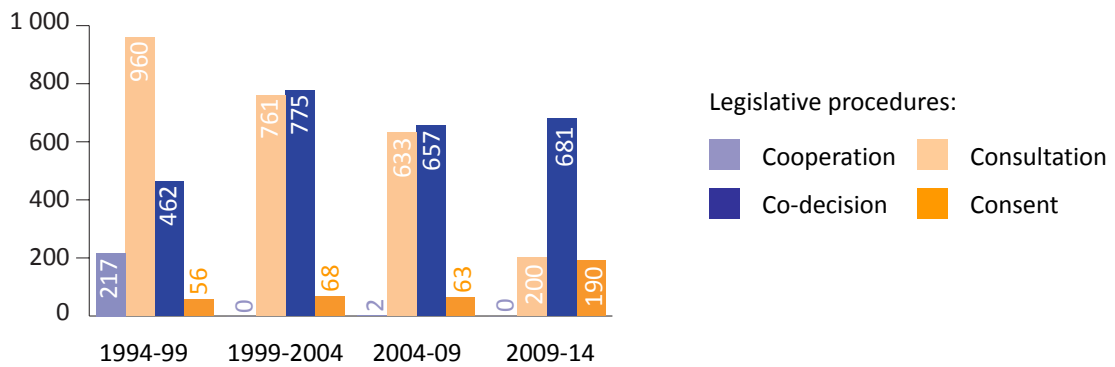
Activity in all EP plenary sessions over five years



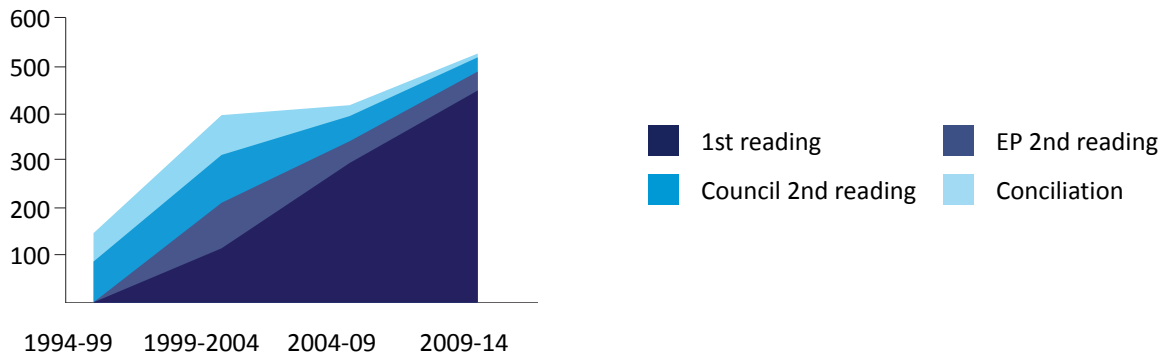
The European Parliament’s legislative activity

The core work of the European Parliament lies in amending and passing EU legislation. Three procedures are used, with the most common now being the ‘ordinary legislative procedure’ (often referred to as co-decision). The Parliament may also be required to give (or withhold) its consent to certain Council decisions, or may simply be consulted on certain Commission proposals. (A fourth procedure, cooperation, is no longer in use.) Under co-decision and consent, the EP has a right of veto over EU law. The two graphs together show the rise in the use of co-decision, reflecting greater EP power from successive Treaty changes, and the growing trend for the EP and Council to agree on legislative texts at the first reading of that process.

The bar chart below shows all legislative resolutions adopted in plenary by parliamentary term – that is, including all readings for co-decision and the cooperation procedure. The graph shows the stage of the co-decision procedure at which the EP and Council reached agreement on each legislative text.

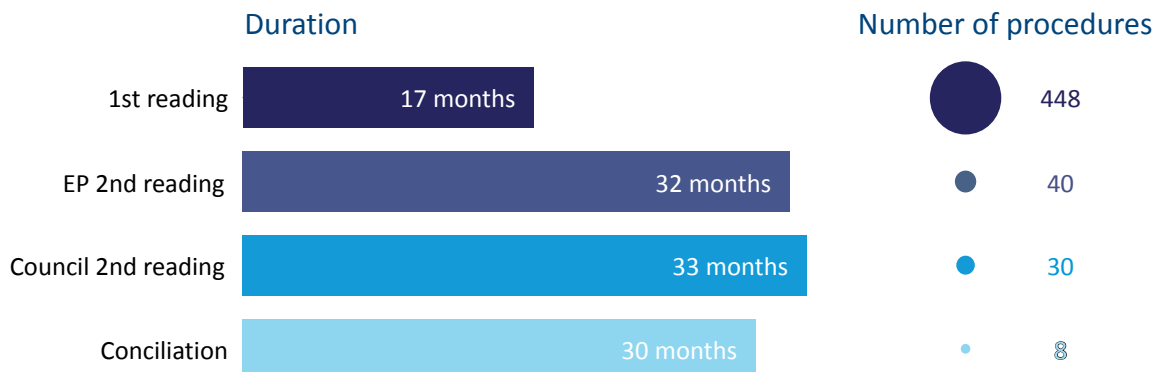


The graph below shows the stage of the co-decision procedure at which the EP and Council reached agreement on each legislative text during each parliamentary term.



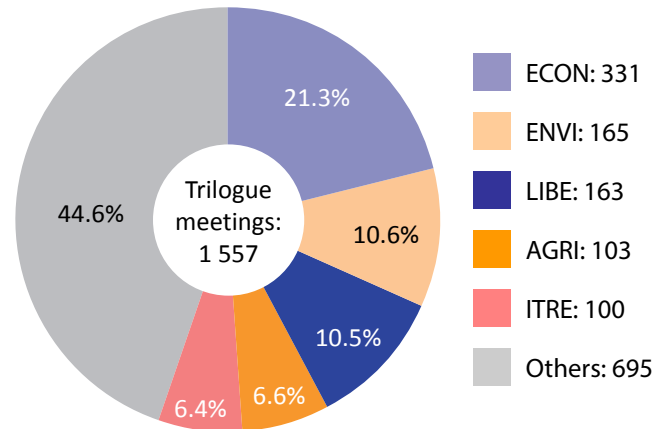
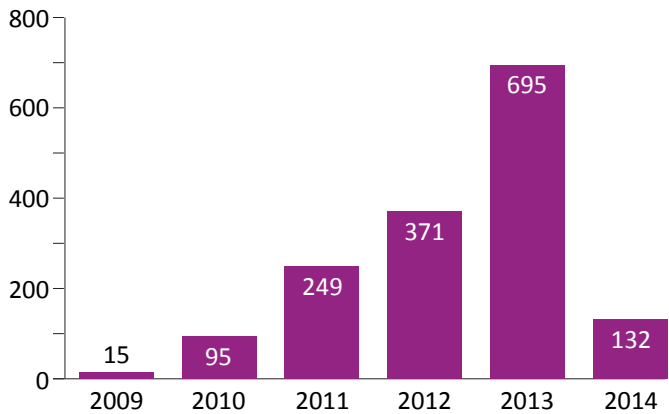
Average duration and number of concluded ordinary legislative procedures

The bar chart below shows the average duration in months of each completed ordinary legislative procedure, and the stage at which the procedure was concluded. The circles, in proportion, show the numbers of ordinary legislative procedures concluded at each stage of the procedure, during the seventh parliamentary term.



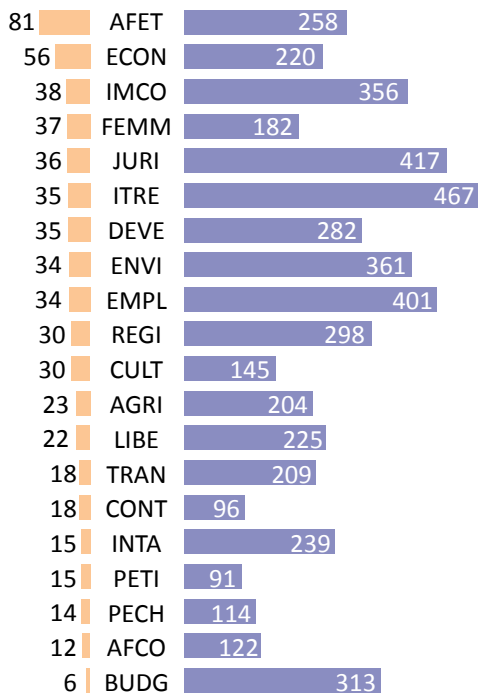
Number of trilogues per year and per committee

During the last term (2009-14), the EP participated in 1 557 trilogue meetings on legislative texts with the Council of Ministers and European Commission. The bar graph below shows the number of trilogues held each year, with a peak in the last full year, which coincided with the key decisions on programmes for the 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework. The pie chart below shows which committees were most involved in trilogues in the 2009-14 term. It highlights the five most active committees in terms of trilogues held, as a percentage of the total 1 557 such meetings.



Number of legislative opinions and own-initiative reports

The graph shows the number of legislative opinions (blue bars), as well as the number of own-initiative reports (orange bars), adopted by each committee during the whole seventh term (2009-14). The order is that of the number of own-initiative reports in each committee.



Committee names and codes	
AFET:	Foreign Affairs
DEVE:	Development
INTA:	International Trade
BUDG:	Budgets
CONT:	Budgetary Control
ECON:	Economic and Monetary Affairs
EMPL:	Employment and Social Affairs
ENVI:	Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
ITRE:	Industry, Research and Energy
IMCO:	Internal Market and Consumer Protection
TRAN:	Transport and Tourism
REGI:	Regional Development
AGRI:	Agriculture and Rural Development
PECH:	Fisheries
CULT:	Culture and Education
JURI:	Legal Affairs
LIBE:	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
AFCO:	Constitutional Affairs
FEMM:	Women's Rights and Gender Equality
PETI:	Petitions

Own-initiative report ■ Legislative opinion ■

Source: Many of the figures in this section are sourced from the Committee Statistical Report (Star Report) produced by the Legislative Coordination Unit, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, European Parliament, in October 2014.

Main governing bodies in the EP

The Bureau, the Conference of Presidents and the Conference of Committee Chairs presented below are complemented by other governing and coordination bodies, including the Conference of Delegation Chairs, the STOA Panel and the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group.

EP Bureau

The Bureau is the body responsible for financial, organisational and administrative matters within the Parliament. It is composed of the President and the 14 Vice-Presidents, elected by an absolute majority of the votes in plenary, with the order in which they attained that majority determining their order of precedence. The five Quaestors, elected in plenary to manage administrative and financial matters directly concerning Members, also attend the Bureau in an advisory capacity, but cannot vote.

Martin SCHULZ	President	S&D	
Antonio TAJANI	Vice-President	EPP	
Mairead McGUINNESS	Vice-President	EPP	
Rainer WIELAND	Vice-President	EPP	
Ramón Luis VALCÁRCEL	Vice-President	EPP	
Ildikó GÁLL-PELCZ	Vice-President	EPP	
Adina-Ioana VĂLEAN	Vice-President	EPP	
Sylvie GUILLAUME	Vice-President	S&D	
Ioan Mircea PAȘCU	Vice-President	S&D	
David-Maria SASSOLI	Vice-President	S&D	
Olli REHN	Vice-President	ALDE	
Alexander Graf LAMBSDORFF	Vice-President	ALDE	
Ulrike LUNACEK	Vice-President	GREENS/EFA	
Dimitrios PAPADIMOULIS	Vice-President	GUE/NGL	
Ryszard CZARNECKI	Vice-President	ECR	
Elisabeth MORIN-CHARTIER	Quaestor	EPP	
Bogusław LIBERADZKI	Quaestor	S&D	
Catherine BEARDER	Quaestor	ALDE	
Andrey KOVATCHEV	Quaestor	EPP	
Karol KARSKI	Quaestor	ECR	

1
President

14
Vice-Presidents

5
Quaestors
(non-voting)

EP Conference of Presidents

The Conference of Presidents (CoP) is composed of Parliament’s President and the chairs of the seven political groups. It sets the agenda of the plenary and determines the general political orientations of the institution.

The table below shows the current members of the CoP. It is ordered by size of the groups, in terms of their seats in Parliament. Two groups have co-chairs. The non-attached (NI) Members are represented by a non-voting observer.





















President of the EP: Martin SCHULZ
S&D

Chair Manfred WEBER 	Chair Gianni PITTELLA 	Chair Syed KAMALL 	Chair Guy VERHOFSTADT 	Chair Gabriele ZIMMER 	Co-chairs Rebecca HARMS Philippe LAMBERTS 	Co-Chairs Nigel FARAGE David BORRELLI 	Observer Diane DODDS

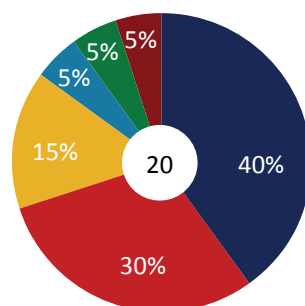
Parliament's committees

There are 20 standing committees (and two sub-committees) in the EP, each with a different set of responsibilities. The committees prepare the work of the plenary session, drawing up reports, in particular on legislative proposals from the Commission, and own-initiative reports.

The bar chart below shows the committees of the EP ordered by the number of MEPs who sit on them. It shows the chairs, elected by the members of each committee, together with their political group and nationality. The chairs of the committees meet together in the Conference of Committee Chairs, and have elected Jerzy Buzek, chair of the Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committee, as their president. The pie chart shows the distribution of committee chairs between the political groups, using the same colour code as before.

	Number of MEPs	Name of Chair		
AFET	71	Elmar BROK	EPP	
ENVI	69	Giovanni LA VIA	EPP	
ITRE	67	Jerzy BUZEK	EPP	
ECON	61	Roberto GUALTIERI	S&D	
LIBE	60	Claude MORAES	S&D	
EMPL	55	Thomas HÄNDEL	GUE/NGL	
TRAN	49	Michael CRAMER	GREENS/EFA	
AGRI	45	Czesław Adam SIEKIERSKI	EPP	
REGI	43	Iskra MIHAYLOVA	ALDE	
INTA	41	Bernd LANGE	S&D	
BUDG	41	Jean ARTHUIS	ALDE	
IMCO	40	Vicky FORD	ECR	
FEMM	35	Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ	S&D	
PETI	35	Cecilia WIKSTRÖM	ALDE	
CULT	31	Silvia COSTA	S&D	
CONT	30	Ingeborg GRÄSSLE	EPP	
DEVE	28	Linda McAVAN	S&D	
PECH	25	Alain CADEC	EPP	
JURI	25	Pavel SVOBODA	EPP	
AFCO	25	Danuta Maria HÜBNER	EPP	

Share of chairs in committees by political group



Notes

Data used in this publication are taken from a range of sources within and outside the European Parliament. Data on Members in the current term are from the Members' Administration Unit of DG PRES and the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit of DG COMM; Figures comparing the current term with previous terms are from the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit of DG COMM. Data on turnout are taken from the [IDEA database](#). Figures on activity in plenary in the 2009-14 term are from the Plenary Organisation and Follow-up Unit and the Members' Activities' Unit of DG PRES, and figures on the Committee's activity in that term are from the Legislative Coordination Unit of DG IPOL.

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ep@ep.europa.eu – <http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet) – <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet) – <http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)