

Democratic accountability: the key to successful economic governance in the EU

How much money should a country devote to its health and pension systems? Although this is of course for national parliaments to decide every year, their decisions have to be in line with the country's budgetary commitments taken at the EU level. On 16 February, MEPs and their national counterparts will debate ways to increase the democratic accountability of how the EU coordinates the economic policies of member states.

Parliament President Martin Schulz, European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Juncker will address the plenary session at the start of the meeting. You can follow it live on 16 February from [10.00 CET](#) and from [11.30 CET](#).

The [European Parliamentary Week](#) continues on 17 February with an interparliamentary conference on stability, economic coordination and governance in the European Union. You can follow it live on 17 February at [9.00](#), [11.30](#), and [14.30 CET](#).

European semester

The EU coordination of member states's economic policies is known as the European semester. It starts every year with the Commission publishing its [annual growth survey](#). This is a growth forecast setting up a framework, which EU countries can use to evaluate their budgetary plans. While strong growth means more revenue, weak growth leads to less revenue.

The document also identifies countries that could find themselves in financial difficulties and spells out general priorities and country-specific recommendations. Once these recommendations have been adopted at the EU level, member states have to include them in their national budgets. However, the recommendations can have far-reaching implications for the countries involved as they can affect taxes, the labour market, unemployment benefits and pensions.

However, countries do not always respect their public spending commitments. According to Commission figures, [10 out of 157 \(6%\)](#) of recommendations in 2014 were fully or substantially

implemented. The Commission has already on occasion called governments to order.

The European Parliament plays an advisory role in the process. Its economic committee meets on 18 February to vote on its position on this year's annual growth survey.

Find out more

[European Parliamentary Week](#)

[List of participants](#)

[European Semester](#)

[Annual growth surveys](#)

[Implementation of country-specific recommendations](#)

Cycle of European Semester

- The European Commission publishes the annual growth survey setting out the EU's priorities (November)
- EU heads of state adopt the EU's economic priorities (March)
- EU countries submit their action and reform plans to the Commission (April)
- Commission produces country-specific recommendations (May)
- European Council endorses the country-specific recommendations (June)
- EU countries use recommendations when drafting next year's budget
- The European Parliament plays an advisory role in the process



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