

Parliamentary questions



European Union 2014 – EP

Parliamentary questions, and the subsequent replies of the other EU institutions, are a rich source of information for citizens.

Parliamentary questions are questions addressed by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to other European Union institutions and bodies. They are a direct form of parliamentary scrutiny of the other EU institutions.

There are three categories of parliamentary question: questions for oral answer with debate, Question Time, and questions for written answer. Every question category is regulated by specific rules.

Questions for oral answer with debate

Questions for oral answer with debate are dealt with during plenary sittings, and are included in the day's agenda ([Rule 128](#) of the EP's Rules of Procedure).

Such questions are put to the Council of the EU or to the European Commission. These questions may be tabled by a Parliament committee, a political group, or 40 Members. The Conference of Presidents decides whether, and in what order, questions are placed on the agenda, and they may be followed by a resolution.

However, there might be oral questions that do not have an answer. In fact, as foreseen in this rule, "questions not placed on Parliament's agenda within three months of being submitted shall lapse."

Questions for Question Time

Questions for Question Time are asked during the period set aside for questions during plenary sittings ([Rule 129](#)).

Question Time is a thematic session of questions during a Plenary. Each Question Time is held in the part-sessions for duration of 90 minutes on one or more specific horizontal themes to be decided upon by the Conference of Presidents one month in advance of the part-session.

Two or maximum three Commissioners with portfolios related to the chosen topic(s) are invited to participate by the Conference of Presidents.

Specific question time may also be held with the Council, with the President of the Commission, with the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and with the President of the Eurogroup.

Questions for written answer

Questions with a request for a written answer ([Rule 130](#) and [Rule 131](#)) may be put by any MEP (or by a group of MEPs) to the President of the European Council, the Council, the Commission or the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The content of questions is the sole responsibility of their author(s), and a MEP can submit a maximum of five questions per month. During the 2009-14 parliamentary term, MEPs tabled 58.840 written questions.

The questions for written answer are submitted to the President of the EP. Doubts concerning the admissibility of a question are settled by the President, who shall base the decision on the provisions of the [Annex III to the Rules of Procedure](#) and on the provisions of these Rules of Procedure in general. The questioner shall be notified of the President's decision.

The questions which require an immediate answer but not detailed research (priority questions) shall be answered within three weeks from notification to the Institution concerned, and each Member may table one priority question each month.

Non-priority questions shall be answered within six weeks of notification to the Institution concerned.

Also a maximum of six questions per month by any Member may be put to the European Central Bank through the Chairman of the Committee responsible.

Accessing questions and answers

Questions are published and are searchable (by keyword, date, etc.) on the EP's plenary subpage "[Parliamentary questions](#)". There is also an option to scroll through the "[Most recent questions with answers](#)" on the same webpage.

Questions and answers are also available on the EP [Register of Documents](#), which has several search options in order to find oral questions and "answers for Question Time", for example per year, per political group or per topic.

Until 2004, parliamentary questions and the European Commission's written answers were translated into all official EU languages. Given budgetary constraints, the Commission and the Parliament have gradually reduced the amount of translations. Today, parliamentary questions and answers are available in English and in the language of the MEP who submitted the question.

Do you have any questions on this issue or another EP-related concern? Please use our [web form](#). You write, we answer.

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