A quick look at Parliamentary committees
The European Parliament is the only directly elected European Union institution.

The 751 Members of the European Parliament represent the EU’s 500 million citizens.

They are elected once every five years by voters from across the 28 Member States.

Parliament’s political and legislative work is carried out by 20 standing committees and two sub-committees, each of which elects a chair and up to four vice-chairs.

At the start of a new legislature, Parliament decides which Members will sit in which committees on the basis of the preferences expressed by them. It is a key decision as it will determine in which field they will focus most of their efforts.

Committees play a crucial role in policy-making as they are responsible for preparing Parliament’s positions, notably on new legislative proposals.

24 languages

The Members of the European Parliament represent all European citizens. Each MEP has the right to speak in the official language of his or her choice. Parliamentary documents are published in the 24 official languages of the EU.
The European Commission draws up legislative proposals, which it puts forward to the European Parliament and the Council.

Within Parliament, legislative work is based on two main events: meetings of parliamentary committees and plenary sessions.

1. The parliamentary committees carry out Parliament’s in-depth work. They examine legislative proposals, amend them and vote on them during their monthly meetings. The parliamentary committees then submit their report to Parliament as a whole.

2. Parliament adopts the text of the legislative proposal at its plenary session.

Once agreement is reached between Parliament and the Council, the legislative act is published in the Official Journal.

It is then transposed into national legislation, and applies to all European citizens.

The ordinary legislative procedure puts the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on an equal footing. It covers a wide range of areas, such as economic and monetary affairs, immigration, energy, agriculture, fisheries, transport, the environment and consumer protection.

Actually, the vast majority of European laws are adopted jointly by the European Parliament and the Council.
The budgetary procedure

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament reinforced its budgetary powers and now decides on the entire annual budget of the European Union with the Council. But it is Parliament that has the final say.

In matters such as foreign policy and human rights, Parliament has a key role to play. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy regularly consults it on the main aspects and basic choices of the EU’s common foreign, security and defence policies.

Parliament’s consent is needed for any enlargement of the EU and for the conclusion of trade and other international agreements with non-EU States. Preparatory work is done by the committees.

MEPs also devote considerable energy to human rights issues and the promotion of democratic values around the world. The award of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is the annual highlight of Parliament’s work in this area.
Every month, one to two weeks are set aside for **committee work**. During committee meetings MEPs discuss legislative and non-legislative reports, propose and vote on amendments and follow up on negotiations with the Council.

Committees actively contribute to the legislative agenda-setting, for example, by giving input before the adoption of the Commission’s annual Work Programme. They exert an important role in the oversight of EU activities by monitoring the correct use of the EU budget and the correct implementation of adopted legislation and international agreements.

They also organise hearings with experts and scrutinise other EU institutions and bodies. In fact, before a new European Commission can be elected, all new commissioners-designate have to be assessed by the parliamentary committees that deal with their respective portfolios.

On any given subject, committees appoint an MEP from their ranks as **rapporteur** to steer the whole decision-making process in view of the adoption of Parliament’s position on the matter.

The draft report presented by the rapporteur can be modified following the adoption of amendments tabled by MEPs. The original text and the amendments, including compromise amendments agreed by political groups, are then voted by the full committee. The report adopted by the committee is then submitted to the plenary for approval.
Parliament may also set up committees of inquiry and special committees such as the one set up on tax rulings and other measures similar in nature or effect, and the one on organised crime, corruption and money laundering.

The size of committees varies significantly, from 25 members for legal affairs and constitutional affairs to 73 members for foreign affairs during the 2014-2019 parliamentary term. Their composition always reflects the weight each political group has in Parliament as a whole.

The European Parliament takes the lead in promoting transparency and openness. Committee meetings are streamed live on Parliament’s website and can be watched at all times.

Debates - live on internet
Parliamentary committees meet once or twice a month in Brussels. Their debates are public. The majority of meetings are broadcast live on the internet, and are also available as video on demand (VOD).
FOLLOW EP LIVE ON: WWW.EUROPARL.EUROPA.EU/EP-LIVE/

Expertise support
Committees receive independent advice and written expertise (studies, briefings, in-depth analyses, and other texts) from Parliament’s different research services, such as the policy departments.
Workshops and panels are organised with the aim of enabling MEPs to put questions to, and exchange views with, experts on subjects associated with parliamentary business or subjects of current interest.
SEE ALL EXPERTISE DOCUMENTS: WWW.EUROPARL.EUROPA.EU/SUPPORTING-ANALYSES

Fact Sheets on the European Union
The Fact Sheets provide a straightforward and concise overview of the European Union's institutions and policies and of the role that Parliament plays in their development.
SEE ALL FACT SHEETS: WWW.EUROPARL.EUROPA.EU/FACTSHEETS/
All committees and subcommittees

AFET
Foreign Affairs

DROI
Subcommittee on Human Rights

SEDE
Subcommittee on Security and Defence

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
Find out more about committees on: www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en