European Parliament press tool kit

This press tool kit includes useful contacts, an overview of European Parliament’s composition, work and achievements, links to background notes, graphics and public opinion data.

It is designed to help journalists covering Parliament’s activities to quickly find relevant, up-to-date information and easily navigate Parliament's websites.

Top priorities 2020

The section FOCUS highlights Parliament’s current political top priorities.
Parliament's ninth term 2019-2024

The new Parliament held its constituent session on 2 July 2019. It adapted its composition on 1 February 2020 following the UK withdrawal from the EU.

On 3 July 2019, David Sassoli (S&D, IT) was elected with 345 votes as the new President of the European Parliament for two and a half years.

MEPs elected David Sassoli (S&D, IT) as the President of the Parliament on 3 July. They also elected the 14 Vice-Presidents and the five Quaestors of the House and decided on the number and composition of Parliament’s standing committees.

Parliament currently has 20 committees and two subcommittees. The composition of the committees can be found on the Parliament’s committees’ websites.

- Who chairs the committees?
- Are there other committees?
- Who coordinates the committees' work?
What are political groups and how are they formed?
What are the requirements to form a political group?
How are political groups funded?
Who are the political group chairs and how are they elected?
Who are the political group coordinators in committees and how are they elected?
How are the credentials of new MEPs verified?

Detailed information on elections of the President and committee chairs, requirements to form political groups and the composition of EP governing bodies, are available here.

Parliament after Brexit

On 1 February, following the withdrawal of the UK from the EU, Parliament’s composition changed from 751 MEPs to 705 MEPs. Of the UK’s 73 seats, 27 have been redistributed to Ireland, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania, Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, Slovakia, Finland, Croatia, Estonia.

See the break-down of seats per country and per political group here.

The mandates of additional MEPs, elected in the 2019 European elections, were opened as of 1 February. The new MEPs (link below) and their appointment to the committees were announced at the opening of the plenary session on 10 February.

Parliament elected the new Commission
Member states nominated Ursula von der Leyen (EPP, DE) as a candidate for the post of Commission President, taking into account the European election results. Parliament elected the new Commission President on 16 July 2019 by an absolute majority (half of the component members plus one). Read more.

Public hearings of Commissioner-designate

The 26 Commissioners-designate were proposed by the member states and Commission president-elect Ursula von der Leyen. Before winning the approval of Parliament on 27 November, the candidates’ suitability for the job was assessed in individual public hearings in the competent EP committees.

Detailed information and videos of the hearings are available on the Commissioners-designate hearings 2019 website

Read more about the commitments of Commissioners-designate made during the hearings.

Further information

- MEPs per country
- EP Research briefing: Political groups in the European Parliament
- EP Research briefing: 10 things to watch in 2020
- New MEPs February 2020
The next EU long-term budget

Parliament and member states need to agree in 2020 on adequate financing to fulfil the EU’s goals in the next seven years.

The budget of the EU is used to implement the European Union’s programmes and projects on the ground, in the member states and beyond, for regional development, agriculture and research policies and much more. It is agreed every seven years in the form of a multiannual financial framework (MFF).

The EU budget is primarily an investment budget and cannot run a deficit, which makes it unique. Around 93% of the EU budget directly benefits citizens, regions, cities, farmers, universities and businesses. Common investment triggers efficiency gains and helps member states save public money in many areas.

Read more on Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe 2019-2025.

The future of Europe is at stake

The current MFF (2014-2020) runs out on 31 December, so a new long-term budget is needed for the next seven years (2021-2027).
The EU’s member states (the Council) decide on the size of the budget and its priorities on the basis of a proposal by the European Commission. They must, however, reach an agreement with the European Parliament, which has a right of veto.

Negotiations are usually lengthy and difficult. The future of Europe is at stake: whether the EU can do more, the same or less to support the EU’s citizens, regions, cities, farmers, universities and businesses, to fight climate change, boost the economy and jobs and do much more.


The Council, so far, has not been able to agree on a common position.

Check the MFF Q&A and a structured list with the most important links for complete and up-to-date information.

**Parliament’s position on the MFF (expenditure): the EU budget needs to fulfil citizens’ expectations**

In a nutshell, the European Parliament wants a post-2020 budget that ensures the continuity of the EU’s main policies, like the regional and agricultural policies. Priority areas like research, digitalisation, support for young people (Erasmus+, youth employment) and for SMEs should be boosted. Recent endeavours, such as addressing the investment gap in the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis, migration and security, should be financed with fresh means, i.e. not at the expense of other programmes.

**Fighting climate change** is a central challenge. Parliament has recently called (in its October 2019 resolution) for climate mainstreaming in the EU budget to be further stepped up, to guarantee sufficient resources allowing a just transition to a carbon-neutral economy.

Based on a bottom-up assessment of the resources needed to meet objectives in each EU policy area, Parliament estimates that the new MFF should be set at 1.3% of EU-27 GNI. The EU Commission proposes 1.11%, mainly by proposing cuts in agricultural and cohesion policies.

View the Commission’s proposal and the EP position in a comparative factsheet:

**The 2021-2027 EU long-term budget (MFF) in figures**

**Parliament’s position on Own Resources (revenue)**

The EU budget is financed by three main sources of revenue: traditional own resources (customs duties and sugar levies), the own resource based on a harmonised base of value added tax (VAT), and the own resource linked to member states’ GNIs, which plays the role of balancing the budget. Currently, the bulk of revenue (around 68% in 2017) is a GNI-based and
a VAT-based resource.

**The EP advocates maintaining existing own resources and progressively introducing new ones.** GNI-based direct contributions from EU member states should be reduced accordingly.

Parliament underlines that it “will not give its consent to the MFF without an agreement on the reform of the EU own resources system”. Expenditure and revenue should thus be treated as a single package. It further insists on the abolition of all rebates from which some member states benefit.

In November 2018, Parliament adopted its position on the reform of the EU’s system of own resources along with the one on the 2021-2027 MFF in their MFF interim report. It confirmed their position after the European elections in October 2019.

**Members of the EP's negotiating team for the next MFF and Own Resources reform:**

Johan Van Overtveldt (ECR, BE), Chair of the Committee on Budgets

Jan Olbrycht (EPP, PL), MFF co-rapporteur

Margarida Marques (S&D, PT), MFF co-rapporteur

José Manuel Fernandes (EPP, PT), Own Resources co-rapporteur

Valérie Hayer (RENEW, FR), Own Resources co-rapporteur

Rasmus Andresen (Greens/EFA, DE)


**Further information**

- All you need to know about the new long-term budget (MFF Q&A)
- Check latest updates in a structured list with the most important links
- European Parliamentary Research Service Blog on the MFF & New Own Resources
- Recent MFF-related press releases
- Committee on Budgets
European Parliament's achievements 2014-2019

Directly elected representatives decided on numerous laws to improve and protect citizens' environment, jobs and health.

In addition to adopting rules and regulations, MEPs discussed and set the political agenda in key debates with national and international leaders, investigated areas of concern, assessed the need for action and initiate revisions of laws and new rules.

MEPs assess the work of the EU Commission, keep track of how EU laws are implemented in member states and hold powerful institutions and organisations to account, in particular where fundamental rights come under threat. Close to citizens’ concerns, they use their right – and duty - of scrutiny to check the results of EU policies on the spot, monitor (and vote on) negotiations for international agreements and veto Commission acts when necessary. Read FAQ on the work of MEPs.

Legislative decisions 2014-2019
Almost 1000 legislative proposals by the Juncker Commission have been discussed, improved and most have been concluded successfully after negotiations with the Council since the 2014 elections. Major legislative decisions during Parliament’s 8th term:

- Flight security: Parliament backs use of Passenger Name Records (PNR)
- MEPs clamp down on wasteful use of plastic carrier bags
- Opening up the online payments market, to reduce fees and fraud risks
- MEPs’ green light for Paris climate agreement to trigger its entry into force
- MEPs put an end to opaque card payment fees
- End of roaming: final hurdle cleared
- WiFi4EU: New EU scheme for free internet access
- Data protection reform - Parliament approves new rules fit for the digital era
- Online shopping: “geo-blocking” to end in December 2018
- Corporate governance: MEPs vote to enforce tax transparency
- Japan: MEPs back EU-Japan free trade agreement
- Audiovisual media directive update
- Copyright reform
- Work-life balance for parents and carers
- Limits on CO2 emissions of cars
- Single-use plastics reduction
- Energy efficiency

Read more about the power of the European Parliament: Examples of EP impact during the 2014-2019 legislative term

Get the full picture: step-by-step lawmaking in all policy areas since 2014.

Free multimedia packages are available to download for AV and online media on many legislative topics (click on name to access a wealth of videos and photos) such as:

PNR, Whistle blowers, Network and information security /Cybersecurity, Fight against terrorism, Plastics bags, Single use plastics, Climate change, Car emissions and others.

Investigating and initiating new rules

To prepare the way for legislative changes, Parliament voted on resolutions that channel the concerns and expectations of the citizens they represent into new Commission proposals and trigger revisions of existing laws.

Examples: EP calls for whistle-blower protection, longer lifetime for products, fairer prices for farmers. All Parliament’s resolutions and initiatives

When scandals or abuses of potentially large-scale impact emerged (such as Luxleaks, Panama Papers, carmakers’ cheating on emissions, pesticide authorisations), Parliament set up special committees to conduct in-depth investigations, inquiries and hearings by MEPs to hold those in charge to account. Their findings and detailed recommendations feed into new Commission proposals.
Examples: TAX3, EMIS, PEST, TERR, PANA

**EU budget vote and control**

Parliament and Council share the budgetary authority for the European Union’s annual budget. Parliament also has a say in the EU’s long-term budget, the *multiannual financial framework*, which needs its approval to take effect. It also checks how the annual budget is spent and then grant, postpone or withhold approval for each EU institution’s budget management.

**Scrutiny**

MEPs in all of Parliament’s committees also kept a close eye on how EU laws are implemented and how they affect citizens’ lives. They held the EU Commission to account for its executive work and how EU money is spent. Fact-finding missions and ad-hoc delegations gathered evidence on the spot to assess thoroughly before deciding on further steps to be taken.

Examples: Visits to refugee camps in Turkey (*video*); delegations to investigate on rule of law in Malta and Slovakia

MEPs also *question the Commission* in writing on urgent matters, sometimes followed by a resolution tabled in plenary session by political groups.

Where needed, Parliament vetoed Commission decisions (in delegated and implementing acts) when MEPs considered that the executive had overstepped its powers.

Examples: sugar in baby food, energy drinks, Cadmium

**State of the Union debates**

Once a year, MEPs take stock of the work accomplished by the Commission in the past twelve months and discuss the challenges ahead in the "State of the Union" plenary debate with the Commission president in autumn.
International treaties

Furthermore, MEPs followed the Commission’s negotiations of international treaties closely and issued detailed resolutions to allow for more transparency and for Parliament to be more closely involved ahead of any final deal which needs its consent (i.e. approval or rejection vote) before entering into force.

Examples: BREXIT, TTIP, CETA

Citizens’ petitions

Parliament’s Petitions Committee has registered more than 6 400 petitions since July 2014, and dealt with citizens’ complaints, requests, and observations by citizens on the application of EU law. The committee serves as a mediator between petitioners and member states in order to resolve a specific problem. Petitions are sometimes followed up in plenary session through debates, oral questions and resolutions.

Examples: fight precarious employment practices in the EU, the rights of persons with disabilities, non-discrimination of minorities in the EU, children’s rights

Further information

EP Research analysis: Mapping the cost of Non-Europe 2019-2024
Unfinished business: the top ten issues awaiting final agreement (EC)
End-of-term assessment of the work of the Juncker Commission
Surveys in all member states

Parliament regularly issues Eurobarometer surveys on public opinion, monitoring citizens’ expectations, concerns and political priorities.

A dedicated series of Parliament Eurobarometer surveys is gauging Europeans’ interest in the 2019 elections and their opinions on the European project. Detailed post-election analyses will complete this series to improve understanding of European citizens’ voting behaviour.

Press Service, Directorate General for Communication
European Parliament - Spokesperson: Jaume Duch Guillot
Press switchboard number (32-2) 28 33000
2018/19 surveys show overall growing support for the EU

The 2018/2019 Eurobarometer surveys confirmed citizens' steadily growing support for the European Union. Carried out amongst more than 27,000 people from 28 member states, they revealed that

- 62% of citizens believe that their countries' EU membership is a good thing, whilst over two-thirds of respondents (68%) are convinced that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU. This is the highest score ever measured since 1983.
- 66% of European respondents would vote for their country to remain a member of the EU (a majority in all member states) and only 17% would contemplate leaving, with 17% undecided.

Political expectations and priorities

Parliament’s autumn Eurobarometer survey asked citizens which political issues the European Parliament should deal with as a matter of priority. Nearly every third respondent (32%) wants Parliament to address combating climate change as its biggest priority. The fight against poverty and social exclusion (31%), combating terrorism (24%) as well as tackling unemployment (24%) follow in the average EU ranking of citizens' priorities. Read more.

Compare with Spring Eurobarometer survey

Compare with September 2018 survey

Compare with April 2018 survey

Eurobarometer also offers a full review of the European and national election results here.

Eurobarometer survey methodology

European Parliament and EU Commission surveys are carried out with the same methodology, to allow for direct comparability and observation of trends. They use face-to-face interviews with around 27,000 respondents in all 28 EU member states, drawn from the general population aged 15 years or more.

The survey sample mirrors the socio-demographic set-up of each member state and is statistically fully representative.

For each survey, the following information is made available:

- the main report (EN only on publication date, all 23 languages later on),
- complete socio-demographic and results annex,
- national factsheets on the main results for each member state (in English and national language),
- aggregated Excel data files, and
- a SPSS file with the full raw data set (available on request).
What Europe does for me

Detailed information on EU’s impact on individual citizens’ lives and local communities can be found on a multilingual website developed by the European Parliament’s Research Service.

The interactive, multilingual, ‘What Europe Does For Me’ online website, put together by the European Parliamentary Research Service, presents hundreds of easy-to-read, one-page notes giving examples of the positive difference that the EU makes to people’s lives. Users can easily find specific information about what Europe does for their region, their profession or their favourite pastime.

1 400 localities covered

Around 1 800 one-page notes are available to read, share or reuse as online pages or as PDF files. They are organised in two main categories on the website. In the first section, ‘In my region’, users can find information about their region by selecting the place where they and their family live or work. This section covers over 1 400 localities in every part of the European Union.
400 snapshots of EU action for citizens

In the section ‘In my life’, users can select from 400 ‘one-pagers’ how the EU affects, for example, families, health care, hobbies, travel, security, consumer choices and social rights. A series of podcasts in a growing number of languages is also available for this section.

What’s next?

In the third section, with longer briefing papers on EU policies ‘in focus’, outlines some of the achievements of the last parliamentary term, and the outlook for the future, with a special focus on public opinion and citizens’ concerns and expectations of EU action.

Citizens’ App: Europe in the palm of your hand

This mobile application helps citizens to discover what the EU has done, is doing and plans to do. It is searchable, shareable, can be personalised and is available in twenty-four languages. It can be downloaded for free from the App Store and Google Play.

Further information

What Europe does for me
#EUandME - videos and stories about the tools and opportunities the EU provides for its young citizens to pursue their interests (EC)
InvestEU - real-life stories of how EU investments have made a difference near (EC)
EUProtects - ordinary heroes working together on the ground to protect the citizens (EC)
Test your EU knowledge: online quiz
Ask EP
FAQ on the European Parliament
European elections results

On 23-26 May 2019, over 200 million Europeans in 28 EU member states voted in the European elections, resulting in turnout increasing from 42.61% in 2014 to 51% in 2019.

The dynamic and interactive website www.election-results.eu offers overall European election results, including national breakdowns, the composition of all outgoing European Parliaments since 1984, breakdowns by national parties and political groups since 1979 and all results at national level since 2009. In addition, the site offers information on trends in European elections, for example on gender balance.

- The comparative tool can compare data between different elections.
- A widget can tailor the website to your needs. It will publish historical results of European elections on your website and provide live results.
- Download datasheets in open data formats (json, xml and csv) and graphic image formats (jpg and png).

European elections days - photos and videos free for download
Following parliament’s work: from committee week to plenary part-session

Parliament’s services provide a number of tools and information services to help follow the work in committees and during plenary part-sessions.

Covering plenary sessions

Parliament sits for twelve plenary sessions in Strasbourg and a number of mini-sessions in Brussels each year. The 2020 calendar can be found here.

During the week before each Strasbourg part-session, parliament’s press service publishes a briefing newsletter on the main topics on the agenda and holds a press briefing with Parliament's group spokespersons on Friday at 11.00 in the Anna Politkovskaya press room in Brussels. A pre-session briefing takes place at 16.30 on the Monday of the session in the Daphne Caruana Galizia press briefing room in Strasbourg. Political group leaders regularly hold press briefings in the Strasbourg press room on Tuesdays. All briefings are webstreamed and registered.

During plenary sessions, the press service issues alerts and press releases, a number of them in all EU languages, which are available on the Parliament’s pressroom webpage and organises press conferences, which can be watched via webstreaming. To receive the newsletter briefing, press releases and alerts via email, sign up on the News Subscription Services.

Press officers are at your service in the Parliament’s press room during the part-session ahead of the vote and to explain the outcome of the vote immediately after. They can be contacted via email and telephone - according to language and policy area.

Parliament’s press service Twitter account @EuroParlPress will provide the most up-to-date information about the session.

Parliament’s plenary webpage provides the agenda, texts and amendments tabled, voting lists and vote results as well as live streaming and video recordings of the part-session. Alternatively, the sessions can also be watched via the Europe by Satellite webpage.

Ahead of the session, a number of parliamentary services also prepare background materials on the topics. The European Parliament’s Research Service prepares briefings on legislative proposals that are scheduled to be voted on and Parliament’s News page offers a selection of interviews with lead MEPs and articles on topical issues as well as infographics. The Multimedia Centre provides further video and photo materials free of charge.

Each legislative proposal is registered and tracked in the publicly available Legislative Observatory, where relevant documents for each stage of the procedure and names of MEPs
steering the legislation through parliament can be found. The Legislative Train is another useful tool for tracking draft legislation.

Information on how the EU affects citizens and regions can be found on the page What Europe does for me. Collections of graphs, charts, tables and maps with statistical data organised by subject can be found on the EPRS Graphics Warehouse page.

Covering discussions and votes in committees

Before they are debated and voted on in plenary, legislative proposals, resolutions and own-initiative reports are scrutinised and voted on in parliamentary committees.

In the week before committee meetings are convened (see parliamentary calendar), Parliament’s press service sends out information on the highlights of the upcoming week, which is also available on the News page. You can sign up for the mailing list here.

There is a press briefing on Mondays of such weeks at 11.00 in the Anna Politkovskaya press room in Brussels (Spaak building), which is webstreamed.

A press officer will also alert media via email and Twitter about the key issues on the committee’s agenda, as well as send press releases and press conference information following votes in committee.

The committee-specific press service Twitter accounts can be found here.

Contact details of the press officers for specific policy areas are available on the Parliament’s Press room webpage.

Committee webpages have the list and contact details of its members, agendas, meeting calendar and other meeting documents such as texts and amendments tabled, voting lists, names of rapporteurs and committee coordinators and press releases related to votes in committees, hyperlinks to the webstreaming of the meetings and studies conducted at the request of the committee.

Background materials are available via EP services ahead of votes in committees, on the EPRS web page as well as EP News page.

Accreditation

To access Parliament’s premises and to use the rooms and resources available to them, journalists need to be accredited. Click here to access the application.

Detailed information on accreditation is available on the Parliament’s Press room webpage, under Media accreditation.
Audiovisual services and multimedia content

Parliament offers a wide range of free, up-to-date multimedia tools and services to help media cover its activities.

This includes streaming and embedding options; cameras and studios can also be provided for TV and radio stations.

Multimedia content

A wealth of high-quality, ready-to-use multimedia content - from press releases and news stories to videos, infographics, photos and photo galleries is available for journalists. You can find an overview in the brochure European Parliament reporting made easy - Multimedia products and services available to journalists.

Furthermore, daily news and more is made available as podcasts in all official languages.

Audiovisual services

Parliament provides live transmission of plenary and committee meetings, available via satellite and online, both in broadcast and web quality. They are available at the Multimedia Centre.

It also offers services and facilities such as TV and radio studios, ENG crews, stand-up positions and photo reportages. Media can find all the information they need here (click on “Services”).
Background information

The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) provides independent and objective background information and insights on all policy areas for a broad audience. EPRS studies, briefings, and fact sheets are available on the EPRS webpages and on a mobile application.

The Graphics warehouse offers a free-to-use collection of graphs, charts, tables and maps with statistical data (to be credited to the European Parliamentary Research Service). The images are based on statistical information from sources mentioned on the graphic.

Short videos on how the European Parliament and the EU work.
Useful contacts for journalists covering the European Parliament’s activities

Press officers in Parliament and all member states (EP liaison offices) cover all policy areas and can help with media enquiries on Parliament’s work.

Spokesperson’s service

The Spokesperson’s service provides information on institutional issues and responds to enquiries about Parliament’s rules, procedures, finances and administration. For responses to the most frequently asked questions and myths, see the recently updated FAQs.

Jaume DUCH GUILLOT
EP Spokesperson and Director General for Communication

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(+32) 2 28 43000 (BXL)</th>
<th>(+33) 3 881 74705 (STR)</th>
<th>(+32) 496 59 94 76</th>
<th><a href="mailto:jaume.duch@europarl.europa.eu">jaume.duch@europarl.europa.eu</a></th>
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Delphine COLARD
EP Deputy Spokesperson and Head of the Spokesperson’s Service

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<th>(+32) 2 28 43383 (BXL)</th>
<th>(+33) 3 881 64123 (STR)</th>
<th>(+32) 498 98 44 85</th>
<th><a href="mailto:delphine.colard@europarl.europa.eu">delphine.colard@europarl.europa.eu</a></th>
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Press service

Press officers in Parliament and all member states (EP liaison offices) cover all policy areas and can help with media enquiries on Parliament's work. They draft and disseminate alerts and press releases on debates and votes, organise press conferences and seminars, and brief journalists. Contact details per country and policy area.

Press-briefings, press releases and the weekly agenda are online in the Press room section of Europarl.eu. Follow latest news on @EuroparlPress.

Press officers in Brussels, Dublin, London and Valletta (Malta)
Natalie Kate KONTOULIS  
Press Officer  
(+32) 2 28 43562 (BXL)  
(+33) 3 881 74005 (STR)  
(+32) 470 88 37 82  
natalie.kontoulis@europarl.europa.eu

Jack MOLONEY  
Press officer Dublin liaison office  
(+353) 1 605 7933 (IE)  
(+33) 3 881 74828 (STR)  
(+353) 86 088 0902  
jack.moloney@ep.europa.eu

Anna ZAMMIT VELLA  
Press officer Valletta liaison office  
(+356) 2 123 5075 (MT)  
(+33) 3 88 1 78120 (STR)  
(+356) 994 382 81 (MT)  
anna.zammit@europarl.europa.eu

Further information  
Contact details of press officers of political groups