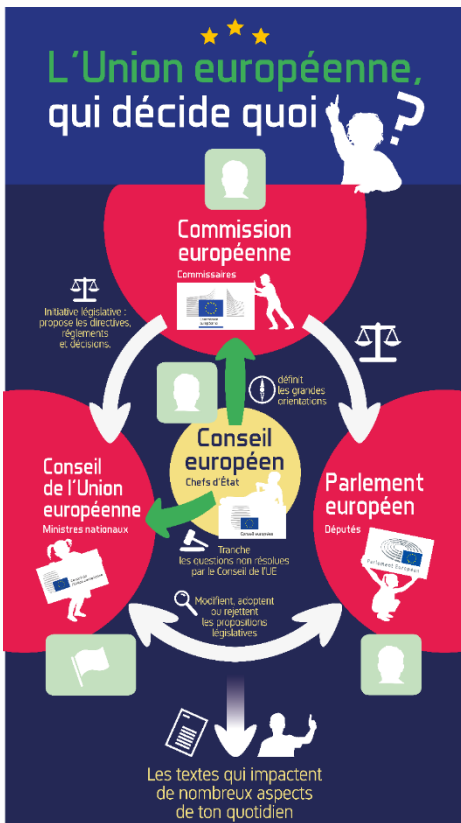


THE EUROPEAN UNION, HOW DOES IT WORK?

The functioning of the European Union (EU) is defined by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the Treaty on EU (TEU). They define who is competent, between the States and the EU, depending on the fields. Indeed, the Member States maintain their sovereignty in certain fields.



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WHO IS THIS “BRUSSELS WHO REQUIRES US TO...”?

Brussels is made up of four main institutions: the **European Commission**, comprised of a college of commissioners of the 28 members, appointed in advance by the European Council, including a President, proposed by the European Council and approved by the European Parliament; the **European Parliament**, comprised of 751 members of parliament; and the **Council of the EU** (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”), which convenes the 28 ministers concerned depending on the theme. These three institutions form the “institutional triangle”. The **European Council** (heads of State/government) establish the main policy orientations.

Each institution defends different interests: the Commission the general interest of the EU; the members of parliament the interests of European citizens; the Council, the interests of the Member States. The goal: to find a compromise between these interests, for the benefit of the European citizen.

AND HOW ARE LAWS ADOPTED?

The decision-making process described above **is divided among four institutions**. The European Council provides the main impetus. Only the **European Commission** can propose laws: this is the "**legislative initiative**". The proposed law is submitted to the European Parliament which amends the text or not, then proposes it to the Council which adopts it or not. A "legislative shuttle" is set up between the Parliament and the Council, with a conciliation committee in case of disagreement. If the disagreement persists, the proposed law is rejected. This is the "ordinary legislative procedure". It is used for 90% of legislative proposals; 75% are adopted at first reading.

HOW IS JURISDICTION DIVIDED BETWEEN THE EU AND THE MEMBER STATES?

- ▶ **Exclusive jurisdiction: only the EU legislates** in these fields and adopts binding acts. Those concerned are the Customs Union, competition, monetary policy, common trade policy, common fisheries policy and entering into trade agreements in certain conditions.

- ▶ **Shared jurisdiction:** the **Member States** can act if the EU decides against exercising its power. The fields concerned include agriculture, certain aspects of social policy, energy, the environment or research.
- ▶ **Supporting jurisdiction** in order to coordinate actions between the various **Member States**. Concerned fields: culture, education, the youth and industry. The acts in these fields cannot aim to achieve legislative and regulatory harmony among the Member States.

AND WHERE DO CITIZENS COME IN?

The citizens have a say! The Commission regularly launches **public consultations** on a broad variety of subjects, which you can participate in individually; thanks to European citizenship (refer to: *How can I, a citizen, participate in European decisions?*), citizens can **petition** the European Parliament; the **European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)** also exists for asking the Commission to legislate on a specific issue. Members of the European Parliament regularly travel to their constituencies once a month, which can serve as an opportunity to meet them! And of course, you can **vote during the European elections** in May 2019, to elect the members of parliament that match your vision of the EU. National elections are also important, as the Member States are involved in directing European policies! As such, there are tools that you and your fellow citizens can get a hold of! (Refer to: *How can I, a citizen, participate in European decisions?*)

The functioning of the EU in brief

3 institutions form the "institutional triangle"

751 members of the European parliament

27 Commissioners + 1 President

90% of the legislation is adopted via the "ordinary legislative procedure"

Division of decisions between the States and at European level depending on fields