

Glossary:European Union institutions (EUI)

Statistics Explained

The **European Union institutions** , sometimes abbreviated as **EUI** , comprises three main [European Union \(EU\)](#) institutions:

- The [European Parliament \(EP\)](#) , which represents EU citizens and is directly elected by them;
- The [Council of the European Union](#) , which represents the individual Member States;
- The [European Commission \(EC\)](#) , which seeks to uphold the interests of the Union as a whole.

The European Union (EU) is not a federation like the United States, nor is it simply an organisation for co-operation between governments, like the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) ; it is, in fact, unique. The countries that make up the EU (its Member States) remain independent sovereign nations but they pool their sovereignty in order to gain the strength and world influence none of them could have on their own. Pooling sovereignty means, in practice, that the Member States delegate some of their decision-making powers to shared institutions they have created, so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level.

The EU's [decision-making process](#) in general and the [co-decision procedure](#) in particular involve the three main institutions. This 'institutional triangle' produces the policies and laws that apply throughout the EU. In principle, it is the Commission that proposes new laws, but it is the Parliament and Council that adopt them. The Commission and the Member States then implement them, and the Commission ensures that the laws are properly taken onboard.

Two other institutions have a vital part to play: the [Court of Justice](#) upholds the rule of European law, and the [Court of Auditors](#) checks the financing of the Union's activities.

The powers and responsibilities of these institutions are laid down in the Treaties, which are the foundation of everything the EU does. They also lay down the rules and procedures that the EU institutions must follow. The Treaties are agreed by the presidents and/or prime ministers of all the EU countries, and ratified by their parliaments.

Further information

- [Europa - EU institutions and other bodies](#)

Related concepts

- [Council of the European Union](#)
- [European Commission \(EC\)](#)
- [European Parliament \(EP\)](#)
- [European Union \(EU\)](#)