Annexure

The European Parliament (EP) is the first institution at a supranational level that carries a name familiar to EU from national political systems. While the EP might sound familiar, it is quite different from national parliaments. If the role played by and the powers available to the EP in the Community have changed constantly ever since the foundation of the ECSC, these changes have also steadily increased its influence within the EU.

There have been relatively few major institutional reforms since the Common Market was established in 1957. One of the main early reforms was the establishment of a single institutional structure for the three distinct Communities the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community in July 1967. This provided a common structure for the hitherto separate Councils and Commissions (or their equivalents) for the three Communities. Another significant reform was the introduction of the co-operation procedure, the dramatic increase in Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) and the reduction of unanimous voting in the Council of Ministers as a result of the Single European Act in 1987. This made it possible to adopt some 280 measures required for completion of the single market in 1992, which might otherwise have been impossible or considerably delayed because of the application of national vetoes. Other major reforms have concerned the role of the European Parliament (EP).

These include the introduction of direct elections in 1979 and the increase in the powers of the EP in legislative decision-making procedures in 1987, 1993 and in the Amsterdam Treaty. These reforms were largely an attempt to remedy the so-called "democratic deficit" in EC law-making procedures. At the IGC that led to the adoption of the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty) in 1993, the complicated co-decision procedure was introduced which gave the EP an ultimate right of veto in certain circumstances. The "democratic deficit" was taken up again at the 1996-97 IGC. Again the EP benefited from the reforms in so far as the Treaty now allows for a number of new areas of Community competence that include a greater role for the EP. It also replaces almost all decisions made under the co-operation procedure with a simplified co-decision procedure. Other reforms have been made to internal institutional
practices and procedures that have not required Treaty amendments, but have been effected by changes to the Rules of Procedure of the institutions, and, increasingly, by means of Codes of Conduct and Interinstitutional Agreements. Examples include the Inter-institutional Agreement of 13 October 1998 on the legal bases and implementation of the budget; the Inter-institutional Agreement of 29 June 1998 on budgetary discipline and improvement of budgetary procedures and the Inter-institutional Agreement of 20 December 1994 on an accelerated working method for official codification of legislative texts.

Important milestones in this regard have been the extension of its budget powers in (1975), the introduction of the first direct elections (1979), the introduction of the cooperation procedure (1986) and the introduction of the codecision procedure (1992), as well as considerable expansion of this codecision procedure into other areas of application since the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The Treaty of Amsterdam records two reform measures in a Protocol on the Institutions with the Prospect of Enlargement of the European Union:

Article 1

At the date of entry into force of the first enlargement of the Union, notwithstanding Article 157(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Community, Article 9(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community and Article 126(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, the Commission shall comprise one national of each of the Member States, provided that, by that date, the weighting of the votes in the Council has been modified, whether by reweighting of the votes or by dual majority, in a manner acceptable to all Member States, taking into account all relevant elements, notably compensating those Member States which give up the possibility of nominating a second member of the Commission. The Protocol also provides for a future IGC to consider more extensive reforms to the Commission and Council.
Article 2

At least one year before the membership of the European Union exceeds twenty; a conference of representatives of the governments of the Member States shall be convened in order to carry out a comprehensive review of the provisions of the Treaties on the composition and functioning of the institutions. The next IGC will no doubt revisit and build upon earlier proposals for the future structure of the Union and the Cologne European Council on 3-4 June is expected to set the scene for this debate.

Article 189(b) of the TEU on the 'co-decision procedure' gave the EP a greater role in the decision-making process, but no amendment was made to Article 145. To remedy what the EP saw as an ever-increasing democratic deficit, it adopted a resolution on 16 December 1993 calling for the existing comitology arrangements to be revised to give the Parliament a scrutinising and amending role in the delegation of implementing powers under acts adopted by co-decision. The EP has continued to fight for a greater role in the comitology process.

Other changes have also been introduced with the Treaty of Nice. The role of the EP as a co-legislator together with the Council of Ministers were further expanded and strengthened.

Following illustration provides a comprehensive overview of the way in which the EP is organized and st The main characteristics of the EP can be summarized thus: The European Parliament is a multi-national chamber undergoing constant change; it features ideological differing political groupings from across the member states and national differences nationality of the MPs from the individual member states.

As with the other institutions addressed so far, the European Parliament also demonstrates significant functional differentiation. And, finally, the incredibly close links and intensive cooperation with the Commission, often against the commission, should also be emphasized. It shows that the EP is composed of cross-national parties, such as the European People's Party and European Democrats (EPP-ED), which with 279 MPs currently represents the most powerful grouping in the Parliament, and the Party of European Socialists (SPE/E) with 199 MPs. This illustration also shows you the number of MPs sent by each of the member states.
4.1 Country Wise Representation in European Parliament


The Parliament's 20 standing committees are incredibly important for the work of the EP and its influence (see the overview provided by the illustration below). During their 5 years in office, those members of the European Parliament who are active in the committees are able to acquire a great deal of specialist knowledge. This specialist knowledge not only enables them to follow the work being carried out by the Directorates General, the Commission and the Council of Ministers, it also enables them to bring more influence to bear than the official description of their responsibilities would suggest. Another important aspect in this respect is their close cooperation with the respective Commission departments and with transnational and national associations.
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**Internal affairs**
- BUDG - Committee on Budgets
- CONTE - Committee on Budgetary Control
- ECON - Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
-EMPL - Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
- ENV - Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
- ITRE - Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
- IMCO - Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection
- TRAN - Committee on Transport and Tourism
- REGI - Committee on Regional Development
- AGRI - Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
- PECH - Committee on Fisheries
- CULT - Committee on Culture and Education
- JURI - Committee on Legal Affairs
- UBE - Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- AFCO - Committee on Constitutional Affairs
- FEMM - Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- PETI - Committee on Petitions

**External affairs**
- AFET - Committee on Foreign Affairs
- DROI - Subcommittee on Human Rights
- SEDE - Subcommittee on Security and Defence
- DEVE - Committee on Development
- INTA - Committee on International Trade

**Graph: 4.2 (Committees of European Parliament to Deal EU Affairs)**

One of the EP's main ambitions is to become an equal co-player with the Council of Ministers in the decision-making process. EP proposals to successive IGCs have stated this aim, which has been met with varying degrees of success. The introduction of the codecision procedure in the TEU (Article 189b) gave the EP its most influential position to date. Co-decision was introduced in a number of significant areas, notably the internal market. Under the TEU it was an extremely complex procedure, although this has been simplified by the Amsterdam Treaty under new Article 251. Co-decision brought in a
procedure. The following is one commentator’s assessment of the role of the EP in co-decision and its potential use under Amsterdam. The Amsterdam Treaty transfers a number of areas currently subject to the cooperation procedure to co-decision, thus potentially increasing the EP’s scope for using its power of veto. It is impossible to predict the extent to which the EP might use its powers in this process. It could be argued that while the potential for greater EP influence certainly exists, empirical evidence so far does not indicate that it has exerted this influence very often.

The simplification of co-decision under Amsterdam might lead to greater use of the conciliation procedure, whereas there is currently perhaps more incentive to reach agreement without convening the conciliation committee and thus prolonging the process. The EP’s assent is now needed before sanctions can be imposed on a Member State (Amsterdam Article 7) and the EP must also give its approval of the nomination by Member States of the Commission President, as well as other members of the Commission. An EP Working Document by the Directorate General for Research gave a mixed view of the outcome for the EP in the Amsterdam Treaty; the outcome of the 1996/97 IGC for the EP was somewhat ambiguous. In particular, the parliamentary ambition of enlarging the codecision procedure was not fully successful, although 23 new cases were introduced. The budgetary division between obligatory and non-obligatory expenditures was not overthrown, as requested by Parliament. The EP did not receive any formal rights in changes of the TEU and as other considerable examples it did not obtain any specific titles in the common agricultural policy and in the second pillar.

On the other hand the simplification of the codecision procedure was a major achievement according to the Parliament’s demands. The new procedure for investiture of the Commission, the incorporation of the social protocol into the ECT and the new title on employment policy were other examples of new powers for the Parliament. Summarising these outcomes, the success of the IGC is respectable. Of course, not every demand was fulfilled and the EP still lacks substantial rights in the institutional development of the EU. However, in comparison with former IGCs, the European Parliament has increased its role in system development, both in its participation in the IGC and in the results achieved by the conference.