

## European Commission

The European Commission is the EU's **politically independent executive arm**. It is alone responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, and it implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

### What does the Commission do<sup>1</sup>?

- Proposes new laws

The Commission is the sole EU institution tabling laws for adoption by the Parliament and the Council that:

- protect the interests of the EU and its citizens on issues that can't be dealt with effectively at national level
- get technical details right by consulting experts and the public
- Manages EU policies and allocates EU funding
  - sets EU spending priorities, together with the Council and Parliament
  - draws up annual budgets for approval by the Parliament and Council
  - supervises how the money is spent, under scrutiny by the Court of Auditors
- Enforces EU law
  - together with the Court of Justice, ensures that EU law is properly applied in all the member countries
- Represents the EU internationally
  - speaks on behalf of all EU countries in international bodies, in particular in areas of trade policy and humanitarian aid
  - negotiates international agreements for the EU

### How does the Commission work?

- Strategic planning

The President defines the policy direction for the Commission, which enables the Commissioners together to decide strategic objectives, and produce the annual work programme.

- Collective decision making

Decisions are taken based on collective responsibility. All Commissioners are equal in the decision-making process and equally accountable for these decisions. They do not have any individual decision-making powers, except when authorized in certain situations.

The Vice-Presidents act on behalf of the President and coordinate work in their area of responsibility, together with several Commissioners. Priority projects are defined to help ensure that the College works together in a close and flexible manner. Commissioners support Vice-Presidents in submitting proposals to the College. In general, decisions are made by consensus, but votes can also take place. In this case, decisions are taken by a simple majority, where every Commissioner has one vote. The relevant Directorate-General (headed by a Director-General, answerable to the relevant Commissioner) then takes up the subject. This is usually done in the form of draft legislative proposals. These are then resubmitted to the Commissioners for adoption at their weekly meeting,

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<sup>1</sup> [https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-commission\\_en#:~:text=The%20Commission%20is%20the%20sole,with%20effectively%20at%20national%20level](https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-commission_en#:~:text=The%20Commission%20is%20the%20sole,with%20effectively%20at%20national%20level)

after which they become official, and are sent to the Council and the Parliament for the next stage in the EU legislative process.