

European Union member state

The European Union (EU) is a made up of twenty-seven member states. It was established as the European Economic Community in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome and has undergone many changes since, most notably in 1992 by the Maastricht Treaty.

Since 1957 new accessions have raised the number of member states, and powers have expanded. As a result, the EU can be described as both a supranational and an intergovernmental body. The combined economy of the EU is the largest in the world with a nominal GDP of €11.6 (US\$15.7) trillion in 2007.

The EU has a single market between member states with a common trade policy, a Common Agricultural/Fisheries Policy, and a regional development policy. It introduced a common currency, the euro, which has been adopted by thirteen member states. Since 1993, the EU has developed a limited Common Foreign and Security Policy, and co-operation in police and judicial matters.

Important EU institutions and bodies include:

The European Commission,
the European Parliament,
the Council of the European Union,
the European Council,
the European Court of Justice
and the European Central Bank; as well as a number of specialised agencies working in varied fields. Citizens of EU member states are also EU citizens. EU citizens directly elect the European Parliament every five years. EU citizens can freely invest, live, travel, and work in other member states (with some temporary restrictions on new member states). Passport control and customs checks between most member states were abolished in the Schengen Agreement.

European Parliament (Europarl or EP)

MEPs :

A Member of the European Parliament (English abbreviation MEP) is a member of the European Union's directly-elected legislative body, the European Parliament. MEPs are the European Union's equivalents of a country's national legislators, known in the United Kingdom as MPs, hence the term Euro-MP is used colloquially in English. Another term is Euro-deputy, more common in countries like France, Italy, Spain or Portugal. For a list of the current members see [Members of the European Parliament 2004-2009](#).

When Parliament was first established, MEPs were appointed by member states in national delegations. Since 1979, however, MEPs have been elected by direct universal suffrage. Each country establishes their own way of electing their MEPs.

Elections in the European Union

Since January 1, 2007, there have been 785 MEPs. (It was agreed that after the elections in 2009, there would be at most 750 MEPs, and each member state would have at least five and at most 99.) Elections occur once every five years, on the basis of universal adult suffrage. There is no uniform voting system for the election of MEPs; rather, each member state is free to choose its own system, subject to three restrictions:

- The system must be a form of proportional representation, under either the party list or
- Single Transferable Vote system.
- The electoral area may be subdivided if this will not generally affect the proportional nature of the voting system.

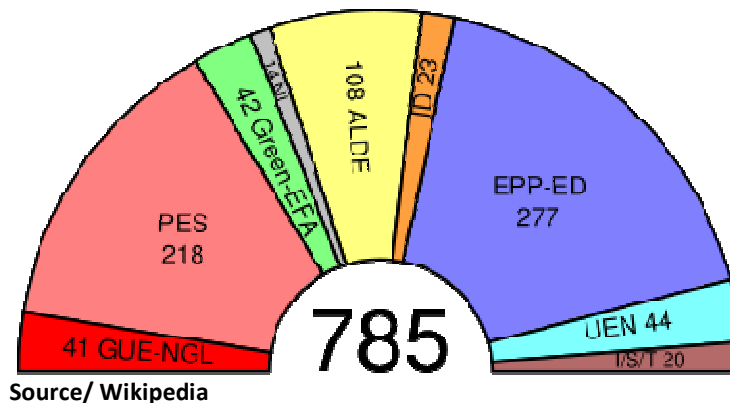
Any election threshold on the national level must not exceed five percent.

The allocation of seats to each member state is based on the principle of degressive proportionality, so that, while the size of the population of each country is taken into account, smaller states elect more MEPs than would be strictly justified by their populations alone.

As the number of MEPs granted to each country has arisen from treaty negotiations, there is no precise formula for the apportionment of seats among member states.

No change in this configuration can occur without the unanimous consent of all governments.

The most recent elections to the European Parliament were the European elections of 2004, held in June of that year. They were the largest simultaneous transnational elections ever held anywhere in the world, since nearly 400 million citizens were eligible to vote.



- ❖ **European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL)** is a socialist and communist political grouping within the European Parliament. The period 2005-2007 it had (41) MEPs.
- ❖ **The Party of European Socialists (PES)** is a European political party comprising 33 national parties. Its members are social democratic, socialist and labour parties from every EU state and Norway. With 218 members the PES's Socialist Group is the second largest group in the European Parliament with (218) MEPs from 25 different European Union Member States.
- ❖ **The European Greens – European Free Alliance (Greens-EFA)** (The Greens – European Free Alliance; Greens – EFA) This group consists of two distinct European political parties - the European Green Party and the European Free Alliance (EFA). The EFA consists of parties representing stateless nations. These parties are civic nationalists and regionalists, broadly of the centre and centre-left. It had (42) MEPs.
- ❖ **Non-Inscrits are Members of the European Parliament** who do not sit in one of the political groups .It had (14) MEPs.
- ❖ **The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe(ALDE)** It is an alliance between two European political parties: The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party and the European Democratic Party. It is a political group in the European Parliament, the EU Committee of the Regions, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. In these groups, there are assorted independents It had (108) MEPs.
- ❖ **The Independence/Democracy Group(ID)** in the European Parliament was set up on 20 July 2004. It incorporates EU-critics, eurosceptics and eurorealists. The main goals of the Group are to reject the Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe and to oppose all forms of centralisation. Some members within the group, notably the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), advocate the complete Iwithdrawal of their country from the EU. The group's leaders are Nigel Farage (UKIP) and Jens-Peter Bonde (June Movement) It had (23) MEPs.
- ❖ **The European People's Party EPP-ED)** (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats is a political group in the European Parliament. It comprises the European People's Party and the non-party subgroup European Democrats (not to be confused with the centrist European Democratic Party). The abbreviated name is EPP-ED Group. It had (277) MEPs.

- ❖ **The Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN)** is a nationalist and generally euro-sceptic party grouping with seats in the European Parliament. It is attached to the broader Alliance for Europe of the Nations organization. It had (44) MEPs.
- ❖ **Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS)** is a political group in the European Parliament composed of 23 members from European parties variously described by their political adversaries as far right and extremely nationalist. A common political charter for the group was signed on 9 January 2007. It had (20) MEPs.




The 27 member-states of the European Union

Year	History of EEC/EU membership	Total
1957	 Belgium  France ^[26]  Germany ^[26]  Italy  Luxembourg  Netherlands	6
1973	 Denmark ^[26]  Ireland  United Kingdom	9
1981	 Greece	10
1986	 Portugal  Spain	12
1995	 Austria  Finland  Sweden	15
2004	 Cyprus  Czech Republic  Estonia  Hungary  Latvia  Lithuania  Malta  Poland  Slovakia  Slovenia	25
2007	 Bulgaria  Romania	27

As members are allocated seats according to population

Flag	State	Official name	Accession	Population	Capital	MEPs
	Austria	Republic of Austria	01 January 1995	8,169,929	Vienna	18
	Belgium	Kingdom of Belgium	25 March 1957	10,274,595	Brussels	24
	Bulgaria	Republic of Bulgaria	01 January 2007	7,679,290	Sofia	18
	Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus	01 May 2004	835,000	Nicosia	6
	Czech Republic	Czech Republic	01 May 2004	10,256,760	Prague	24
	Denmark	Kingdom of Denmark	01 January 1973 ²	5,368,854	Copenhagen	14
	Estonia	Republic of Estonia	01 May 2004	1,415,681	Tallinn	6
	Finland	Republic of Finland	01 January 1995	5,157,537	Helsinki	14
	France	French Republic	25 March 1957	59,765,983	Paris	78
	Germany	Federal Republic of Germany	25 March 1957 ¹	83,251,851	Berlin	99
	Greece	Hellenic Republic	01 January 1981	10,645,343	Athens	24

	Hungary	Republic of Hungary	01 May 2004	10,075,034	Budapest	24
	Ireland	Ireland	01 January 1973	4,234,925	Dublin	13
	Italy	Italian Republic	25 March 1957	58,751,711	Rome	78
	Latvia	Republic of Latvia	01 May 2004	2,366,515	Riga	9
	Lithuania	Republic of Lithuania	01 May 2004	3,382,041	Vilnius	13
	Luxembourg	Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	25 March 1957	448,569	Luxembourg	6
	Malta	Republic of Malta	01 May 2004	397,499	Valletta	5
	Netherlands	Netherlands	25 March 1957	16,318,199	Amsterdam	27
	Poland	Republic of Poland	01 May 2004	38,625,478	Warsaw	54
	Portugal	Portuguese Republic	01 January 1986	10,084,245	Lisbon	24
	Romania	Romania	01 January 2007	21,698,181	Bucharest	35
	Slovakia	Slovak Republic	01 May 2004	5,422,366	Bratislava	14
	Slovenia	Republic of Slovenia	01 May 2004	1,932,917	Ljubljana	7

	Spain	Kingdom of Spain	01 January 1986	44,708,964	Madrid	54
	Sweden	Kingdom of Sweden	01 January 1995	9,090,113	Stockholm	19
	United Kingdom	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	01 January 1973	60,201,000	London	78

