



## Glossary of terms

# Introduction to European Union Law

Term	Meaning
Comitology	Procedures through which the European Commission adopts implementing acts, with the assistance of committees of representatives from EU countries.
Council of the European Union	One of the EU's main decision-making bodies. Includes ministers from the 28 EU Member States, and it is the institution where these Member States agree on EU legislative acts and coordinate policies.
Customs union	Includes standardised rules that are applied in a uniform manner by all 28 EU customs administrations. There are no customs duties at the EU Customs Union's internal borders. All goods circulate freely within the customs union area, whether they are made in the EU or imported from outside.
Directive	Legal act which establishes the objectives to be achieved but leaves it to the national authorities to decide on how these objectives should be achieved.
Delegated acts	Adopted by the European Commission after consulting with representatives of the Member States. Delegated acts amend non-essential elements of legislative acts.
Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)	EMU involves the coordination of economic and fiscal policies, a common monetary policy, and a common currency -the euro.
Enlargement	The process whereby new countries join the EU.
Euro area	Comprises the EU countries that have adopted the euro as their currency.
European Central Bank	The central bank, which conducts monetary policy in the euro area. Its primary objective is to maintain price stability, i.e. to safeguard the value of the euro. In addition, the ECB, in cooperation with the national supervisors, carries out banking supervision in the euro area and in other participating Member States.
European Commission	Comprises 28 Commissioners including its President. It acts in the EU's general interest with complete independence from national governments. It has the right of initiative to propose laws in a wide range of policy areas. It also has the right to adopt non-legislative acts. The Commission oversees the implementation of EU law. It executes the EU's budget.
European Council	Comprising the Heads of State or Government of the EU countries, it provides the impetus, general political guidelines and priorities for the EU's development.
European Court of Auditors	It checks that EU revenue and spending (including that of bodies created by the EU and external bodies managing EU funds) is legal and regular. It ensures that financial management is sound.
European Court of Justice	The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) is the EU's judicature. It has two branches – the Court of Justice and the General Court.



<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
European Parliament	The only directly elected EU body and one of the largest democratic assemblies in the world. Its Members represent the EU's citizens and are elected once every 5 years directly by voters. It adopts EU legislative acts jointly with the Council of the EU.
EU Treaties	Binding intergovernmental agreements – they are concluded among all Member States. During the years, the Treaties have been amended a number of times in order to reflect the challenges and new tasks in front of the EU and its Member States.
Implementing acts	Acts that support the implementation of the rules or criteria already established in the basic legislative act, without modifying the rights or obligations stemming from them and without making further policy choices. Implementing acts are adopted by the European Commission through the comitology procedure after consulting with experts from Member States.
Institutional balance	The principle of institutional balance implies that each EU institution has to act in accordance with the powers conferred on it by the EU Treaties, in accordance with the division of powers.
Legislative acts	Legally binding acts of general application adopted by the ordinary or special legislative procedures by the Council of the EU and the European Parliament.
Member State	Any state that successfully completes its accession negotiations and signs the accession Treaty with all individual EU countries.
Ordinary legislative procedure	The joint adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU of a legislative act on a proposal from the European Commission.
Regulation	Legal act which contains generally applicable rules and should be applied apply in full in all Member States.