

## **Glossary – Online Course on EU Institutions**

**EU Institutions** – a set of institutions outlined in Art. 13 of Treaty on European Union. The EU institutions comprise: The European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Commission, The Court of Justice of the European Union, The European Central Bank, The Court of Auditors.

**Intergovernmentalism** – the approach to European Integration, which emphasises the role of the nation states in the integration and policy-making process. It argues that the states are the only actors able to produce strong enough impulses for deeper integration. According to the intergovernmental school, all the integrative moves are possible, because they are beneficial to all the governments.

**Supranationalism** – the approach to European Integration that is close to the federalist view, according to which the power of the Member States is curbed by the European institutions. This means that the EU institutions (or at least not all of them) constitute the arenas of political struggle between the individual member states. Instead, they overcome the national boundaries and focus on pan-European political issues.

**Legitimacy** – the way in which people accept the political power over them, consider it ‘rightful’ and are ready to obey it.

**Input legitimacy** - refers to the participatory quality of the process leading to laws and rules as ensured by the ‘majoritarian’ institutions of electoral representation.

**Output legitimacy** - is concerned with the problem-solving quality of the laws and rules, and has a range of institutional mechanisms to ensure it.

**EU citizens** – the European Union citizens are the people holding citizenship of one of the EU Member States. It is therefore a secondary and auxiliary form of citizenship, which is dependent of the national one.

**The HR/VP** – the abbreviation for the post of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission. This is one of the top level political posts in the EU. The HR/VP is in charge of the EU Foreign and Security Policy and coordinates all EU external actions.

**The EEAS** – stands for the European External Actions Service and constitutes the EU diplomatic corps. It is headed by the HR/VP and provides EU diplomatic representation to all areas in the world.

**COREPER II** – stands for the Committee of Permanent Representatives. It constitutes one of the most important preparatory and advisory bodies for the Council. It consists of the Member States’ Ambassadors to the European Union. They are responsible for preparation and negotiations of countries’ positions that are later debated on the Council level.

**COREPER I** – Contrary to the intuition it is a preparatory and advisory body on a lower level than COREPER II. It consists of the deputies of the Member States’ Ambassadors to the European Union and also deals with preparation and negotiations of countries’ positions.

**The Council Presidency** – a 6-month period during which one of the EU Member States is in charge of almost all of the Council proceedings. This includes chairing the meetings, coordination of negotiations and organisational issues.

**Foreign Affairs Council** – one of the Council configurations that deals with foreign affairs. It consists of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Member States. It differs from the other configurations, as it is always chaired by the HR/VP (not by a representative of a country holding the Presidency) and a special Political and Security Committee is tasked with preparing its proceedings.

**Ordinary Legislative Procedure (formerly known as co-decision procedure)** – under this decision-making procedure the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union co-decide on Commission's legislative proposals. Most EU laws are now adopted this way.

**EU common policy** – a policy area within which EU Member States have delegated all or part of their competencies to the EU institutions.

**Directorate – General (DG)** – an administrative department within the European Commission responsible for a specific field of expertise or area of policy. Each DG is headed by a Director General who reports to the European Commissioner responsible for a corresponding policy area.

**European civil servants** (also referred to as “Eurocrats”) – a generic term describing an overall administrative staff employed in the EU institutions and its organisational bodies. European civil service is based on the European continental bureaucratic model, which means that it is highly regulated and hierarchised. Since 2003 the recruitment to the EU civil service is handled by the European Personnel Selection Office, which is an interinstitutional office responsible for selecting staff to work for all EU institutions.

**The Treaty of Lisbon (also known as Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union)** was signed in 2007 (came into force in 2009) and represents an international agreement between the EU Member States upon which the European Union is based. The Treaty of Lisbon has substantially amended and revised the previous EU Treaties by giving the EU full legal personality, clarifying the powers of the Union, establishing a formal withdrawal procedure, enhancing the role of the European Parliament in the policymaking process, formally recognizing the European Council as an EU institution, to name a few. For more information please see: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/5/the-treaty-of-lisbon>

**Spitzenkandidaten (also known as the “top candidates”)** – candidates for the position of the President of the European Commission proposed by largest political groups in the European Parliament.

**Member of the European Parliament** – a politician directly elected to the European Parliament for a term of 5 years. Every MEP holds parliamentary immunity that guarantees that she/he cannot be exposed to arbitrary, political persecution and cannot be subject to any form of inquiry, detention or legal proceedings because of opinions expressed or votes cast in her/his capacity as MEP.

**Parliament's Rules of Procedure** – an internal document of the European Parliament that outlines detailed rules that govern the proceedings and the inner-workings of the Parliament.

**Conference of Presidents** – a key political body operating within the structure of the European Parliament. It consists of the President of Parliament and the chairmen of all political groups. The Conference takes decisions on the organisation of the Parliament's work and matters relating to legislative planning including the composition and competence of committees, committees of inquiry and joint parliamentary committees, standing delegations and ad hoc delegations. Other relevant responsibilities of the Conference cover matters relating to relations with the other institutions and bodies of the European Union and with the national parliaments of Member States as well as non-member countries and with non-Union institutions and organisations.

**The Bureau** – a political body operating within the structure European Parliament. It consists of the President of the European Parliament, the 14 Vice-Presidents and 5 Quaestors. The Bureau is responsible for setting up the Parliament's preliminary draft budget and handles all administrative, staff and organisational affairs.

**College of Quaestors** – political body operating within the structure of the European Parliament responsible for administrative financial matters directly concerning Members of European Parliament and their working conditions (e.g. availability of general and administrative services or equipment). There are 5 Quaestors and they are elected by the Parliament for a term of 2,5 years.

**The Conference of Committee Chairs** - a political body operating within the structure of the European Parliament that works for better cooperation between the Parliamentary Committees. The Conference consists of the chairmen of all standing and temporary committees and may produce recommendations to the Conference of Presidents on the committees' work and agendas for plenary sittings.

**Conference of Delegation Chairs** – a political body operating within the structure of the European Parliament comprised of the Chairs of all standing interparliamentary delegations. It makes recommendations to the Conference of Presidents on the delegation's work and is responsible for unobstructed functioning of interparliamentary delegations and delegations to the joint parliamentary committees.

**The Qualified Majority Vote (QMV)** – Is one of the voting procedures used in the Council for the decisions in the ordinary legislative procedure. The QMV is reached when the legislative proposal has the support of at least 55% of the member states that represent at least 65% of the EU population.

**Consensual Decision Making** – is a process of reaching a decision in the most possible inclusive and representative manner. It does not include any voting and assures that all the parties are agreeing to the chosen solution. It requires a lot of time and preparation to reach a consensus. This process is often used in the EU, especially in cases when unanimity of the Member States is needed.

**Simple Majority Vote** – is a voting procedure used in all the EU institutions, mainly for internal and procedural rules of functioning. It requires a majority of those voting (e.g.13 votes for/against a legislation out of 24 MEPs present). Please note that there also so-called

absolute majority, which requires the majority of the members of an organization (e.g. European Parliament), not just of those who present during the voting session.

**Vote of confidence (also known as Vote of investiture)** – is a vote in which MEPs decide, with majority of votes cast, whether to support the new College of Commissioners. The vote is taken during a plenary session after hearings with candidates for the positions of European Commissioners.