



# Glossary of terms

## EU Political System

Term	Meaning
Agenda-setting	the process through which key issues are identified and recognised, thereby entering the political agenda
Candidate Country	Countries that have formally applied for EU membership but are not yet members
Comitology	an intricate committee system based on intense intergovernmental discussion between the Commission and member states representatives on technical details, in order to come up with the necessary administrative acts.
competence	capacity provided by the Treaty to produce mandatory outputs in a specific policy area.
COREPER	The Permanent Representatives Committee or Coreper (Article 240 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - TFEU) is responsible for preparing the work of the Council of Ministers. It consists of representatives from the EU countries with the rank of ambassador to the European Union and is chaired by the EU country which holds the Council Presidency.
Council of Ministers	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.
Decision	binding only on their recipients, i.e. those to whom they are addressed (e.g. an EU Member State or an individual company) and are directly applicable.
Decision-making	When problems enter the agenda and are seriously taken into consideration, actors formulate and decide over alternative proposals for their solutions. This stage follows the decision-making procedures of the political system
Directives	binding legislative acts that sets out a goal that must be achieved by Member States, without however identifying the means through which achieve those goals. This means that it is up to individual Member States to devise their own laws on how to reach the required goals. The Directive, therefore, is binding, but it only establishes the objective and leaves member states free to decide the administrative policy tools to achieve these goals.
Enlargement	the accession of new member states to the Union. By joining the EU club in 2013, Croatia is the youngest member state.
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. The Commission oversees the implementation of EU law.



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 Parliament	The only directly elected EU body. 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.
European political party	made up of three main components: the political groups, the transnational federations, and the national parties.
Exclusive competence	pertain to all those areas in which the EU alone is able to legislate and adopt binding acts. In these areas, Member States are able to do so themselves only if empowered by the EU to implement these acts
Executive power	It has two dimensions. The bureaucratic dimension, which is the power to apply the law and generally entrusted to bureaucracy, and the strategic dimension, which is the power of guidance and political direction which is held by governments
Frame	the way you structure reality and look at a particular issue
fused powers systems	legislative and executive powers are somehow 'fused' in terms of mutual dependence as well as due to the fact that they stem from the same unique election.
Governance	the body of rules, procedures and practices that relate to the way powers are exercised in the EU.
High politics route	issues that - due to their strategic nature and high value for the strategic survival of the system- enter the agenda 'from the above'. Issues that follow a high politics route are for instance those pertaining to security, defence, foreign policy. In this case, the agenda-setting is a top-down process embedded with political value and strategic considerations
implementation	the moment when decisions are actually executed and implemented. This means that during this phase, we move from decisions to real deeds
Interest groups	interest groups carry out their activity not through electoral competition, but through <u>lobbying</u> , i.e. the activity of trying to persuade and influence political authorities in Brussels in order to advance the interests of the group and its members. For this purpose, they are made by professionals seeking to identify 'access points' to European institutions.
Judiciary power	power owned by the judicial branch to apply and interpret laws, as well as to resolve disputes
Legislative power	power to legislate and make laws and is generally exercised by Parliaments
Low politics route	concerns issues that are more technical rather than strategic and that, therefore, due to their nature, enter the agenda 'from below' in much slower process. Health, consumers, environment are all examples. In this case, the agenda-setting is a 'bottom-up' technical process where key actors are policy experts, interest groups, the European Commission and its working groups debating in forums and policy networks.
Member State	Any state that successfully completes its accession negotiations and signs the accession Treaty with all individual EU countries.



opinion	instrument that allows the institutions to make non-binding statements, without imposing any legal obligation.
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.
Political parties	an organised group of people similar political aims and opinions, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected through public vote.
parliamentary system	a system where executive and legislative powers are dependent on each other, both in terms of selection and removal.
Political Agenda	The list of issues that receive the attention of the government
Political groups	are the component of the European political party inside the European Parliament. for a political group to be formed it is necessary to have a minimum of 25 MEPs coming from at least the 25% of Member States (7 countries). Political groups are organised according to ideology and not nationalities of MEPs.
Political System	The system of interaction in any society through binding or authoritative allocations is made.
Politics	The use of political power. Positions with government responsibilities, that is, the roles that produce binding decisions
Policy	public actions for governing public topics and problems.
Policy-making	process -in terms of actors and activities- to literally 'make policies'
Polity	the civil and political society inside the political system, i.e. the group of people with a collective identity, a common institutional system, rules and authorities within specific boundaries
Presidential system	system where legislative and executive powers are 'separated'. This means that the two powers are mutually independent and that therefore they cannot influence the selection or removal of the other.
principle of conferral	The EU can only act within the limits of the competences that the Member States have conferred upon it in the Treaties.
Principle of proportionality	the content and scope of EU action may not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.
Principle of subsidiarity	in the area of its non-exclusive competences, the EU may act only if — and in so far as — the objective of a proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, but could be better achieved at EU level.
process of international political integration	consensual transfer of authority by several national states to a supranational body, which will then exercise that authority.
Recommendation	acts produced in the context of supporting competences, as a tool to orient the Member States and have no binding force.
Regional Integration	The process of overcoming barriers that divide neighbouring countries, by entering into an agreement to upgrade cooperation, create common rules and institutions, as well as jointly manage shared resources and assets.
Regulation	binding legislative acts that must be automatically applied in their entirety and in all their elements across the EU. They are complex and exhaustive documents, containing in the text all the details for their correct application. They indicate the objectives and the administrative policy tools to achieve them. Regulations must be applied automatically and directly by all member states without the need of transposition into the national law.



Representative subsystem	the role of this sub-system is to represent citizens' voices, interests and demands, by making sure that they can be properly 'represented' in the political arena and heard by policy-makers
Schengen Agreement	signed on June 14, 1985, is a treaty that led most of the European countries towards abolishment of their national borders, to build a Europe without borders known as "Schengen Area". Currently 22 Member States and 4 non-EU countries (Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland) are part of the Schengen area.
Shared competences	those competences that are shared by both the EU and the Member States, which are thus able to legislate and adopt legally binding acts. However, the Member States can exercise their own competence only where the EU does not exercise, or has decided not to exercise, its own competence.
<u>Spitzenkandidat</u>	process or system of the 'lead candidates'. This means that each political group in the European Parliament puts forward a lead candidate for the presidency of the European Commission and if obtains the majority of seats in European elections, its proposed lead candidate might become the new proposed President of the Commission.
Support competence	those where the EU can only intervene to support, coordinate or complement the action of Member States. In particular, they refer to all those policy areas in which the EU cannot issue binding acts but can only produce political documents with which it can orientate the policies of the Member States, without however making these guidelines mandatory
Supranational political system	the consensual transfer of authority by several national states to a supranational body, which will then exercise that authority
System	a regularly interacting or interdependent group of elements that, while maintaining their own properties, form a unified whole
Transnational federations	If political groups represent the European party 'inside the institutions', i.e. inside the EP, the transnational federations represent the European party 'outside the institutions'. More specifically, the transnational federations are extra-parliamentary organizations of national political parties from several EU Member States, that share political affinity and that cooperate with each other.
Trilogue	the practice of informal meetings involving representatives of the Commission, the Council and MEPs in order to facilitate the reach of an agreement in shorter times -already before or during the first reading- in order to avoid the convocation of the Conciliation Committee.
Venues	the 'institutional' places in which decisions on policy are taken