

Information Guide



European Commission

A guide to the European Commission, with hyperlinks to further sources of information within European Sources Online and on external websites

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Introduction

The [European Commission](#) is the civil service of the European Union. Whilst the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament represent the interests of the Member States and citizens respectively, the European Commission represents Community interests.

The Commission's role is officially set out in Article 17 of the [Treaty on European Union](#) (TEU); the [Europa website](#) offers this brief description:

The European Commission is one of the main institutions of the European Union. It represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole. It drafts proposals for new European laws. It manages the day-to-day business of implementing EU policies and spending EU funds.

The European Commission is the EU's executive body. It represents and upholds the interests of Europe as a whole. It drafts proposals for new European laws. It manages the day-to-day business of implementing EU policies and spending EU funds. The Commission also makes sure that everyone abides by the European treaties and laws.

The current Commission took office on 10 February 2010 and will serve until 31 October 2014. It is headed by President [José Manuel Barroso](#), who manages a team of 27 other Commissioners, each with responsibility for one or more of the 40-plus policy-specific departments (known as Directorates-General or DGs) and shared Services into which the current Commission is divided.

History

Originally, each Community had its own executive: a High Authority for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) of 1951, and a Commission for each of the two Communities set up by the Treaties of Rome in 1957 - the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC). The 1965 'Treaty Establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities' (the 'Merger Treaty'; text available via the [Archive of European Integration](#)), which took effect on 1 July 1967, merged the ECSC High Authority, and the Commissions of the EEC and EAEC into a single European Commission. (The term 'European Commission' was introduced in November 1993 as an alternative form of the official name 'Commission of the European Communities' and - as the 'Communities' have been replaced by the 'Union' - is now used in the Treaties).

The ECSC Treaty expired on 23 July 2002, 50 years after its entry into force (see [Summaries of EU legislation](#)). Following the Protocol attached to the Treaty of Nice, Member States of the ECSC transferred the assets and liabilities of the ECSC to the European Union.

The first Commission President was Walter Hallstein, who served from 1958 to 1967 and did much to promote the Commission's authority and independence. Arguably the best-known Commission President was Jacques Delors, whose tenure (1985-1995) raised the Commission's profile and encompassed a number of significant developments, including the advent of the Single Market, the Single European Act, the Treaty on European Union, German reunification, the accession of Austria, Finland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, and the setting in motion of the moves towards a Single Currency.

The Commission headed by Delors' successor, Jacques Santer, resigned on 15 March 1999, following a critical report by a Committee of Independent Experts set up by the

European Parliament: [First report on allegations regarding fraud, mismanagement and nepotism in the European Commission](#).

The next Commission, under President [Romano Prodi](#), formally took office on 14 September 1999. Its term of office was due to finish on 31 October 2004, but it was asked to stay on for another three weeks in a caretaker position, as the incoming Commission President José Manuel Barroso had not had his proposed Commission approved by the European Parliament. Barroso made three changes to his initial team and the new College of Commissioners took office on 22 November 2004, having been approved by the European Parliament on 18 November.

The term of office of the original Barroso Commission was scheduled to end on 31 October 2009. At the June 2009 European Council, EU leaders unanimously agreed to nominate Mr Barroso for a second term as President (see [Presidency Conclusions](#)). His nomination was approved by the European Parliament on 16 September, but the appointment process was delayed because of ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. The 'Barroso II' Commission finally took office on 10 February 2010, with a mandate until 31 October 2014 (for more details, see the 'Appointment' section below).

Role

Details of the Commission's role are given in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Consolidated versions of both were published in [Official Journal C115](#) of 9 May 2008 and again in [Official Journal C83](#) of 30 March 2010 (the latter included 'those rectifications which were adopted up to the time of publication' and also the text of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union). The most recent versions were published in [Official Journal C326](#) of 26 October 2012.

Articles 13-19 of the [Treaty on European Union](#) set out provisions concerning the EU institutions. Article 13 identifies the European Commission as one of the Union's institutions. Article 14 specifies that it is the European Parliament that elects the President of the Commission.

Under Article 15, the President of the Commission is a member of the European Council, and the High Representative participates in its work. The President of the Commission is - with others - responsible for ensuring the preparation and continuity of the work of the European Council.

Article 17 specifically refers to the Commission which, under Article 17(1) is required to:

promote the general interest of the Union and take appropriate initiatives to that end. It shall ensure the application of the Treaties, and of measures adopted by the institutions pursuant to them. It shall oversee the application of Union law under the control of the Court of Justice of the European Union. It shall execute the budget and manage programmes. It shall exercise coordinating, executive and management functions, as laid down in the Treaties. With the exception of the common foreign and security policy, and other cases provided for in the Treaties, it shall ensure the Union's external representation. It shall initiate the Union's annual and multiannual programming with a view to achieving interinstitutional agreements.

Article 17(2) confirms that legislation can usually be adopted only on the basis of a Commission proposal.

Article 17(3) states that the Commission's term of office is five years and that

Commissioners 'shall be chosen on the ground of their general competence and European commitment from persons whose independence is beyond doubt.' It also requires the Commission to be 'completely independent', with Commissioners neither seeking nor taking instructions 'from any Government or other institution, body, office or entity.' Members of the Commission are also to 'refrain from any action incompatible with their duties or the performance of their tasks.'

Despite the reassurances given to Ireland at the June 2009 European Council (see [Presidency Conclusions](#)), Article 17(4) of the Treaty of Lisbon requires that, from 1 November 2014, 'the Commission shall consist of a number of members, including its President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, corresponding to two thirds of the number of Member States'. There is, however, an option for the European Council to alter that number.

Article 17(5) states that Commissioners:

shall be chosen from among the nationals of the Member States on the basis of a system of strictly equal rotation between the Member States, reflecting the demographic and geographical range of all the Member States. This system shall be established unanimously by the European Council in accordance with Article 244 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Also included in Article 17 is a description of the main tasks of the Commission President, who is to:

- (a) lay down guidelines within which the Commission is to work;
- (b) decide on the internal organisation of the Commission, ensuring that it acts consistently, efficiently and as a collegiate body;
- (c) appoint Vice-Presidents, other than the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, from among the members of the Commission.

The President is also given the authority to ask a member of the Commission to resign (including the High Representative).

Article 17(7) sets out the procedure for appointing the Commission President and other members of the Commission, while Article 17(8) confirms that the Commission is responsible to the European Parliament, and that the Parliament may censure the Commission, thus forcing it - en masse - to resign.

Amongst the [Declarations](#) annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon are two concerning Article 17 of the TEU. Declaration 10 requires that 'when the Commission no longer includes nationals of all Member States, the Commission should pay particular attention to the need to ensure full transparency in relations with all Member States' and also that the Commission should ensure that the position of Member States with no Commissioner 'is addressed by appropriate organisational arrangements.' Under Declaration 11, representatives of the European Parliament and of the European Council are to arrange for consultations to take place on the backgrounds of candidates for Commission President.

Article 18 concerns the appointment, position and role of the and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. He [sic] is to conduct the Union's common foreign and security policy, and the common security and defence policy and is to contribute to the development of them. The High Representative also presides over the Foreign Affairs Council, while at the same time being a Vice-President of the Commission and ensuring 'consistency of the Union's external action'. Within the Commission, the High Representative is responsible for external relations and for coordinating other aspects of the Union's external action.

A European External Action Service is established under Article 27. The Service is to assist the High Representative and is to 'work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States'.

Under Article 48, the Government of any Member State, the European Parliament or the Commission may submit to the Council proposals for the amendment of the Treaties. Article 49 requires the Commission to be consulted on applications from countries wishing to join the EU.

In the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) (TFEU), Part six addresses institutional and financial provisions, with Chapter 1, Section 4 (Articles 244-250) setting out provisions on the Commission.

Article 244 sets out the principles for choosing members of the Commission, under Article 17(5) of the Treaty on European Union:

- (a) Member States shall be treated on a strictly equal footing as regards determination of the sequence of, and the time spent by, their nationals as members of the Commission; consequently, the difference between the total number of terms of office held by nationals of any given pair of Member States may never be more than one;
- (b) subject to point (a), each successive Commission shall be so composed as to reflect satisfactorily the demographic and geographical range of all the Member States.

Article 245 requires Members of the Commission to refrain 'from any action incompatible with their duties', while Member States are to respect the independence of Commissioners and 'not seek to influence them in the performance of their tasks.' Commissioners are prohibited from engaging in any other occupation, 'whether gainful or not', while they are in office and must undertake 'to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance, after they have ceased to hold office, of certain appointments or benefits.'

Under Article 246, any vacancy caused by resignation, compulsory retirement or death is to be filled for the remainder of the Member's term of office by a new Member of the same nationality, although where the remainder of the Member's term of office is short, the vacancy need not be filled (except in the cases of the Commission President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy). Article 246 also addresses the possible mass resignation of Commissioners, in which eventuality 'they shall remain in office and continue to deal with current business until they have been replaced, for the remainder of their term of office, in accordance with Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union.' In the case of serious misconduct, Article 247 enables the Court of Justice to order the compulsory retirement of the Commissioner concerned.

Making reference to both Articles 18(4) and 17(6) of the Treaty on European Union, Article 248 allows the Commission President to organise the Commission and - if necessary - 'reshuffle the allocation of ... responsibilities during the Commission's term of office.'

Article 249 requires the Commission to adopt Rules of Procedure ('to ensure that both it and its departments operate'); see Commission Decisions [2010/138/EU, Euratom](#), [2011/737/EU, Euratom](#) and [Summaries of EU legislation](#)) and to publish each year a general report on the activities of the Union (see [General Report](#) pages).

Decisions made by the Commission are to be taken by a majority of its Members (Article 250).

Articles 293-299 deal with the Commission's involvement in the legislative process.

Elsewhere in the TFEU, the Commission's wide-ranging responsibilities are set out. Examples include: reporting every three years on the application of provisions on citizenship and non-discrimination (Article 25); proposing duties under the Common Customs Tariff (Article 31); consulting management and labour on EU social policy (Article 154); proposing action to assist third countries requiring urgent financial assistance (Article 213); promoting cooperation with international organisations, including the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (Article 220).

The role of the Commission and related issues were summarised in the [Governance Statement of the European Commission](#) of 30 May 2007, which in part reads:

The mission of the European Commission is to promote the general interest of the European Union. It does so by participating in the decision-making process, in particular by presenting proposals for European law, by overseeing the correct implementation of the Treaties and European law, and by carrying out common policies and managing funds.

Under the [Europe 2020](#) initiative, the Commission is responsible for monitoring progress towards Europe 2020 headline targets. It must also produce an annual growth survey and assess individual Member States' medium-term budgetary strategies as set out in their Stability and Convergence Programmes.

Work programme

In recent years, each new Commission has set out its strategic objectives early in its five-year term. Those for 2005-2009 were issued in January 2005 as 'Europe 2010: A Partnership for European Renewal Prosperity, Solidarity and Security' ([COM\(2005\)12](#)).

The strategic objectives were followed by an 'Annual Policy Strategy' (APS) for each year, giving more detail of specific actions. The APS for 2010 was adopted on 18 February 2009 as [COM\(2009\)73](#). With a new Commission due to take office, the APS noted that it would be for the next Commission to review policy priorities in the light of its strategic objectives, and to turn them into an operational programme when drawing up its 2010 Work Programme.

That 2010 Work Programme was adopted on 31 March 2010 as [COM\(2010\)135](#) (subtitled 'Time to act'). The first to provide a multiannual overview, it is to be reviewed each year by the Commission, with the aim of:

setting new annual strategic initiatives and adapting the multi-annual strand where appropriate in the light of new circumstances.

The 2010 Commission Work Programme (CWP) translated the priorities of the September 2009 [Political guidelines for the next Commission](#) into concrete actions (see also Press Release [IP/09/1272](#)).

The 2011 CWP ([COM\(2010\)623](#); see also [Annexes](#) and Press Release [IP/10/1399](#)) was the first to be adopted under a new programming cycle agreed in the 20 October 2010 [Framework Agreement](#) 'on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission', which requires the two Institutions to cooperate in accordance with a timetable annexed to the Agreement. Amongst the requirements are that the

Commission's Work Programme is to be accompanied by a list of legislative and non-legislative proposals for the following years, and that:

Each year in the first part-session of September, a State of the Union debate will be held in which the President of the Commission shall deliver an address, taking stock of the current year and looking ahead to priorities for the following years. To that end, the President of the Commission will in parallel set out in writing to Parliament the main elements guiding the preparation of the Commission Work Programme for the following year.

That first 'State of the Union' address was given by Commission President José Manuel Barroso on 7 September 2010 to the European Parliament (see Press Release [SPEECH/10/411](#) and [State of the Union Address 2010](#) page).

The second State of the Union address was made on 28 September 2011 (see Press Release [SPEECH/11/607](#) and [State of the Union address 2011](#) page). In it, President Barroso said:

At the end of our mandate, in 2014, it will be exactly a century since the Great War broke out on our continent. A dark period which was followed by the Second World War, one of the most dramatic pages in the history of Europe and the world. Today such horrors are unimaginable in Europe, largely because we have the European Union. Thanks to the European vision, we have built a guarantee of peace in our continent through economic and political integration. That is why we cannot allow this great work to be placed in jeopardy. It was a gift from previous generations. It will not be our generation that calls it into question. And let us be clear: if we start to break up Europe, if we start to backtrack on Europe's major achievements, we will doubtless have to face the risk of fragmentation.

Presented to the European Parliament on 12 September 2012, the third State of the Union address included a call for a 'Decisive Deal for Europe' (see [State of the Union address 2012](#) page) intended to:

project our values, our freedom and our prosperity into the future of a globalized world. This Decisive Deal would be an expression of Europe's determination to reform together, to maintain the integrity of the Union and show the irreversibility of the euro. A deal that "requires the completion of a deep and genuine economic union, based on a political union."

The Commission Work Programme (CWP) 2012 translated the political guidelines and September 2011 State of the Union address into action points, giving a multiannual overview of the Commission's work and helping other EU institutions and stakeholders plan their work with the Commission. The 2012 CWP was adopted on 15 November 2011 as [COM\(2011\)777](#) ('Delivering European renewal'). According to the introduction:

In drawing up this Commission Work Programme for 2012 the Commission has juggled the need to respond to urgent new needs that become apparent as a result of the crisis, and the ongoing need to work on structural issues where policy-makers, investors and citizens rely on the Commission to look beyond the immediate and help shape a prosperous and sustainable Europe for the future. Most of the new initiatives set out in the annexes to this CWP are focused on this long-term perspective – they add to or will help to put in place the legal framework needed to draw the full benefits from the EU's scale in building and sharing sustainable growth, high levels of employment and a fair society across the EU. This is the goal of a wide range of initiatives to promote competitiveness, help address the social costs of the crisis, and drive recovery towards a sustainable future. It is also the core objective of EU spending policies, through

the new generation of programmes put forward by the Commission to last until 2020.

Adopted on 23 October 2012 as [COM\(2012\)629](#) (see also Commission's [Key documents](#) page), the CWP for 2013 echoed much of what was said in the 2012 Programme, stating:

Today's absolute imperative is to tackle the economic crisis and put the EU back on the road to sustainable growth. This is the number one task for this generation of Europeans. It calls for a Europe able to compete in the global economy, reshaped to seize the opportunities of the future. It requires the stable macroeconomic environment which true economic and monetary union can bring. It needs a step change in the economy, to release the many strengths Europe can bring to bear in tomorrow's economy of high innovation and high skills. This demands changes to the business environment in the Single Market; it requires that the huge potential of Europe's networks and of the IT revolution is fully exploited; it calls for new skills and help so that those shut out of the labour market today can make their contribution; and it must be shaped by the needs and opportunities of resource efficiency. These are long-term challenges calling for a concerted effort from all sections of society – but in all cases, the EU contribution is a precondition for success.

The Commission sends monthly reports to the other institutions on progress with the Work Programme and an overview of the Commission initiatives remaining until the end of each year.

In his [fourth State of the Union](#) address, delivered on 11 September 2013, President Barroso called on:

all those that care about Europe, whatever their political or ideological position, wherever they come from, to speak up for Europe.

Major Commission initiatives must be accompanied by impact assessments in the form of 'roadmaps'. Prepared by the relevant DGs (see the [2011 roadmaps](#) page), roadmaps are prepared for:

- legislative proposals with significant economic, social or environmental impacts
- non-legislative initiatives which define future policies (e.g. White Papers, action plans, expenditure programmes)
- certain implementing measures (known as 'comitology items') which are likely to have significant impacts.

The Work Programme is implemented at Directorate-General level, with each DG adopting its own version of the work programme in the form of an [Annual Management Plan](#) (AMP). Progress towards meeting the objectives set in the AMP is monitored by each DG in an [Annual Activity Report](#) (a 'Synthesis of the Commission's management achievements' has been published annually since 2006; the report for 2010 was adopted as [COM\(2011\)323](#); the 2011 report was adopted on 6 June 2012 as [COM\(2012\)281](#) (Synthesis Reports are also available via the [Key documents](#) page).

Details of the Commission's activities and publications are brought together on the [European Commission at work](#) website, which has sections on 'Strategy' ([Setting objectives and priorities](#)), 'Day-to-day' ([Making decisions](#)) and 'Outcome' ([Reviewing results](#)); it also includes a [diagram](#) of the strategic planning and programming cycle).

Structure and composition

The European Commission is managed by a 'college' of European Commissioners, one of whom is President of the Commission. Prior to joining the Commission, Commissioners will usually have held senior positions in national parliaments or governments. Commissioners are nominated for a renewable five year term in line with the European Parliament's term of office (an innovation introduced by the 1993 Treaty on European Union).

Prior to the 2004 enlargement, there were 20 Commissioners - two from each of the five larger Member States (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom) and one each from all the other Member States. From 1 May 2004, Commissioners from the 10 new Member States were added, each shadowing the portfolio of an existing Commissioner. For a brief period, therefore, there were 30 Commissioners.

The Treaty of Nice set a limit of one Commissioner per Member State, starting with the 2004 Barroso Commission. Current provisions are set out in Article 17(4) of the [Treaty on European Union](#):

The Commission appointed between the date of entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and 31 October 2014, shall consist of one national of each Member State, including its President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who shall be one of its Vice- Presidents.

From 1 November 2014, Article 17(5) states that the Commission:

shall consist of a number of members, including its President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, corresponding to two thirds of the number of Member States, unless the European Council, acting unanimously, decides to alter this number.

However, at the June 2009 European Council, when there were concerns that Ireland would reject the Treaty for a second time, EU leaders, having 'carefully noted the concerns of the Irish people' agreed that 'a decision would be taken ... to the effect that the Commission shall continue to include one national of each Member State' (see [Presidency Conclusions](#)).

Under [European Council Decision 2013/272/EU](#) of 22 May 2013 'concerning the number of members of the European Commission', from 1 November 2014, the Commission will:

consist of a number of members, including its President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, equal to the number of Member States.

That Decision is to be reviewed:

in sufficient time in advance of either the appointment of the first Commission following the date of accession of the 30th Member State or the appointment of the Commission succeeding that due to take up its duties on 1 November 2014, whichever is earlier.

Appointment

By introducing a confirmation procedure involving the European Parliament, the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty of Amsterdam changed the way in which the Commission is appointed. Further changes were made by the Treaty of Nice, which

entered into force on 1 February 2003, and which applied the new procedure to the 2004-2009 Commission.

Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, Article 17(7) of the [TEU](#) sets out the procedure for appointing the Commission President and other members of the Commission:

Taking into account the elections to the European Parliament and after having held the appropriate consultations, the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall propose to the European Parliament a candidate for President of the Commission. This candidate shall be elected by the European Parliament by a majority of its component members. If he does not obtain the required majority, the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall within one month propose a new candidate who shall be elected by the European Parliament following the same procedure.

The Council, by common accord with the President-elect, shall adopt the list of the other persons whom it proposes for appointment as members of the Commission. They shall be selected, on the basis of the suggestions made by Member States ... The President, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the other members of the Commission shall be subject as a body to a vote of consent by the European Parliament. On the basis of this consent the Commission shall be appointed by the European Council, acting by a qualified majority.

Portfolios are allocated to nominee Commissioners by the President. The relevant Committee of the European Parliament questions individual Commissioners-designate on their suitability to hold a particular post. Whilst MEPs may reject an individual candidate, they must elect the Commission en masse. If a nominee is rejected (as happened in 2011 with Bulgaria's original nominee - see Press Release [20100115STO67368](#)) a replacement must be found from the same Member State.

On 16 October 2012, the Commission announced that John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumers, was resigning with immediate effect following an investigation by OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office, into a complaint made in May 2012 by the tobacco producer Swedish Match (see Press Releases [MEMO/12/788](#)) and [5/2012](#)).

Mr Borg's nomination was approved by the European Parliament on 21 November and he was formally appointed new Commissioner for Health and Consumers by the Council on 28 November 2012 (see Press Releases [20121116IPR55761](#) and [16920/12](#)). Mr Borg was appointed until 31 October 2014, when the current Commission's term ends. In the period between Mr Dalli's resignation and Mr Borg's appointment, Vice President Maros Sefcovic briefly held the Health and Consumers portfolio.

European Commission 2004-2009

The team of Commissioners-designate nominated by José Manuel Barroso were subject to individual [hearings](#) before the relevant committees of the European Parliament between 27 September and 8 October 2004. Each committee asked questions relevant to their specific area of policy. In addition, prior to these hearings, candidates had to fill out a [questionnaire](#) to assess their personality and experience and their ideas about the future of the EU. During these hearings the Italian nominee was rejected by the Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee and MEPs also stressed their dissatisfaction with other members of Barroso's team.

Mr Barroso therefore revised his team and a [second round](#) of parliamentary hearings was

held on 15-16 November 2004. That proposal was approved by the European Parliament on 18 November, allowing the new Commission to take up office on 22 November 2004, some three weeks later than originally envisaged. During this period the Prodi Commission stayed in office in a caretaker capacity.

European Commission 2010-2014

José Manuel Barroso was nominated as President for a second term; his appointment was agreed by EU leaders at the June 2009 European Council (see [Presidency Conclusions](#)) and approved on 16 September 2009 by the European Parliament (see Press Release [20090911IPR60583](#)).

The nomination process for the other 26 Commissioners was delayed until its legal basis was clarified, following ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. On 27 November 2009 - with the Treaty due to enter into force on 1 December - Mr Barroso nominated the team for his second term, spanning 2010-2014. Announcing the names of the Commissioners-designate (see Press Release [IP/09/1837](#)) President Barroso said:

On the basis of the nominations by the Member States, I have sought to design a College which can generate fresh ideas and new momentum on the biggest challenges we face in Europe today. This College will implement the political guidelines that I presented to the European Parliament. I am confident that this College will be decisive in steering Europe towards recovery and a sustainable social market economy that works for the people. I have put together a strong Commission to fill the enhanced role of Europe, including on the world stage, provided by the Lisbon Treaty. One of the key tasks of this College will be to give life to the new opportunities provided by the Lisbon Treaty.

On 4 December 2009, the European Council adopted Decision [2009/950/EU](#), appointing Catherine Ashton to a new post created by the Treaty of Lisbon: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Under the Treaty, the High Representative is also a Vice-President of the Commission.

Between 11-19 January 2010, the European Parliament held hearings of the Commissioners-designate. A vote on the full Commission was scheduled for 26 January, but opposition to the candidate from Romania, Rumiana Jeleva, saw her nomination withdrawn. The hearing of her replacement, Kristalina Georgieva, took place on 3 February (see Press Releases [20100115STO67368](#), [20100128STO68176](#)).

A vote on the full Commission was then held on 9 February 2010, with MEPs electing the new European Commission by 488 votes to 137, with 72 abstentions (see Press Release [20100209IPR68680](#)). On the same day, the European Council adopted [Decision 2010/80/EU](#), appointing the European Commission for the period 10 February 2010 to 31 October 2014.

The 27-member Commission initially appointed included nine women and 14 members of the previous Barroso Commission (the 14 are: Barroso, Ashton, Reding, Almunia, Kallas, Kroes, Tajani, Šefčovič, Potočnik, Rehn, Piebalgs, Vassiliou, Šemeta, De Gucht).

There are seven Vice-Presidents, including the Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton. The order of precedence of the Vice-Presidents is: Catherine Ashton, Viviane Reding, Joaquín Almunia, Siim Kallas, Neelie Kroes, Antonio Tajani, Maroš Šefčovič .

The Members of the Commission and their portfolios for 2010-2014 are:

[José Manuel Barroso](#) (Portugal)

President of the European Commission ([Secretariat-General](#), [Legal Service](#), [Bureau of European Policy Advisers](#) (BEPA; the Bureau 'provides a bridge between the European Commission and outside thinking about politics and policies in the European Union')

[Catherine Ashton](#) (United Kingdom)

Vice-President, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy ([European External Action Service](#), [High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy](#))

[Viviane Reding](#) (Luxembourg)

Vice-President, Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship ([DG Communication](#), [DG Justice](#), [Publications Office](#))

[Joaquín Almunia](#) (Spain)

Vice-President, Competition ([DG Competition](#))

[Siim Kallas](#) (Estonia)

Vice-President, Transport ([DG Mobility and Transport](#))

[Neelie Kroes](#) (Netherlands)

Vice-President, Digital Agenda ([DG Connect](#))

[Antonio Tajani](#) (Italy)

Vice-President, Industry and Entrepreneurship ([DG Enterprise and Industry](#))

[Maroš Šefčovič](#) (Slovakia)

Vice-President, Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration ([DG Informatics](#), [DG Human Resources and Security](#), [Office for Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements](#) (Paymaster Office), [Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels](#), [Office of Infrastructure and Logistics in Luxembourg](#), [Historical Archives](#))

[László Andor](#) (Hungary)

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion ([Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#))

[Michel Barnier](#) (France)

Internal Market and Services ([DG Internal Market and Services](#))

[Dacian Cioloș](#) (Romania)

Agriculture and Rural Development ([DG Agriculture and Rural Development](#))

[Tonio Borg](#) (Malta; replaced John Dalli, 28 November 2012)

Health and Consumer Policy ([DG Health and Consumers](#))

[Maria Damanaki](#) (Greece)

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries ([DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries](#))

[Karel De Gucht](#) (Belgium)

Trade ([DG Trade](#))

[Štefan Füle](#) (Czech Republic)

Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy ([DG Enlargement](#))

[Máire Geoghegan-Quinn](#) (Ireland)

Research, Innovation and Science ([DG Research and Innovation](#), [Joint Research Centre](#))

[Kristalina Georgieva](#) (Bulgaria)
International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response ([DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection](#))

[Johannes Hahn](#) (Austria)
Regional and Urban Policy ([DG Regional Policy](#))

[Connie Hedegaard](#) (Denmark)
Climate Action ([DG Climate Action](#))

[Janusz Lewandowski](#) (Poland)
Financial Programming and Budget ([DG Budget](#))

[Cecilia Malmström](#) (Sweden)
Home Affairs ([DG Home Affairs](#))

[Günther Oettinger](#) (Germany)
Energy ([DG Energy](#))

[Andris Piebalgs](#) (Latvia)
Development and Cooperation ([DG EuropeAid](#))

[Janez Potočnik](#) (Slovenia)
Environment ([DG Environment](#))

[Olli Rehn](#) (Finland)
Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro ([DG Economic and Financial Affairs](#),
[Eurostat](#))

[Algirdas Šemeta](#) (Lithuania)
Taxation and Customs Union, Audit and Anti-Fraud ([DG Taxation and Customs Union](#),
[European Ant-Fraud Office](#), [Internal Audit Service](#))

[Androulla Vassiliou](#) (Cyprus)
Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth ([DG Education and Culture](#),
[DG Interpretation](#), [DG Translation](#))

Organisation

The role of the Commission President (currently [José Manuel Barroso](#)) is to 'provide forward movement for the European Union and to give a sense of direction both to his fellow Commissioners and, more broadly, to the Commission as a whole.' The President 'calls and chairs meetings of the Members of the Commission, and can assign responsibility for specific activities to them or set up working groups'.

He also represents the Commission in European Council meetings, in major debates of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, and in meetings of the G8.

Commissioners meet together once a week, usually every Wednesday in Brussels, but during the European Parliament's plenary sessions, the Commission meets in Strasbourg on Tuesday. (Each Tuesday afternoon when the European Parliament is in plenary session in Strasbourg, there is a [Question Hour](#), during which the Commission President is questioned by MEPs.)

At the [Commission's weekly College meetings](#) each agenda item is presented by the Commissioner responsible for that issue. Both agendas and minutes are published on

Europa (see the [Register](#) and at 'Type/Year/No' choose 'OJ' (agendas) or 'PV' (minutes) from the first the drop-down box; e.g. [Minutes](#) of the 1910th meeting of the Commission, on 17 March 2010). Decisions are taken by majority vote.

Each Commissioner has overall responsibility for the work of one or more Directorates-General or Services. To assist them, each has a small 'cabinet' - a group of officials working in his/her private office. Following concern over the composition and influence of cabinets, each now comprises only six members, and is expected to include at least three different nationalities. Within each DG, policy-making is the responsibility of individual Directorates.

The rules of procedure of the European Commission are set out in [Commission Decision 2010/138/EU, Euratom](#) as revised by [Commission Decision 2011/737/EU, Euratom](#) (see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

There is no formal rule that states that the Commission reflects the political composition of the European Parliament but it is seen as a growing trend; it is also seen as important that the 'College of Commissioners' includes a significant proportion of women (in 1999, the European Parliament's [Resolution on the resignation of the Commission and the appointment of a new Commission](#) insisted 'that the number of new women Commissioners increase substantially in the new College of Commissioners').

The Barroso Commission which took office in November 2004 had seven female members out of the total of 25 - at 28% the highest proportion ever. That was later eclipsed when Commissioners from Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007, taking the figure to 10 women of a total 28 Commissioners - i.e. 37%. The Barroso II Commission has nine women - i.e. 33%.

Directorates-General and Services

The Commission is the largest of the EU Institutions. According to the [Human Resources Key Figures Card 2012](#) there were 33,033 staff employed by the Commission on 1 January 2012 (compared to 32,949 2011 on 1 June 2011; see also [Staff figures](#) page).

The Commission is divided into Directorates-General (DGs) and Services, further divided into directorates and units. Their number and titles can vary, as each new President tends to re-organise the Commission as he sees fit (there has never been a female Commission President). Each DG and Service is headed by a Director-General (or someone with a similar title) who is accountable to a Commissioner. With more departments than Commissioners, some Commissioners are responsible for more than one DG or Service. The [Governance Statement of the European Commission](#) provides further details of how the Commission works in practice.

On its [website](#), the Commission lists the following [Departments and services](#):

Departments (DGs)

- [Agriculture and Rural Development](#) (AGRI)
- [Budget](#) (BUDG)
- [Climate Action](#) (CLIMA)
- [Communication](#) (COMM)
- [Communications Networks, Content and Technology](#) (CNECT)
- [Competition](#) (COMP)
- [Development & Cooperation - EuropeAid](#) (DEVCO)
- [Economic and Financial Affairs](#) (ECFIN)
- [Education and Culture](#) (EAC)

- [Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#) (EMPL)
- [Energy](#) (ENER)
- [Enlargement](#) (ELARG)
- [Enterprise and Industry](#) (ENTR)
- [Environment](#) (ENV)
- [Eurostat](#) (ESTAT)
- [Health and Consumers](#) (SANCO)
- [Home Affairs](#) (HOME)
- [Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection](#) (ECHO)
- [Human Resources and Security](#) (HR)
- [Informatics](#) (DIGIT)
- [Internal Market and Services](#) (MARKT)
- [Interpretation](#) (SCIC)
- [Joint Research Centre](#) (JRC)
- [Justice](#) (JUST)
- [Maritime Affairs and Fisheries](#) (MARE)
- [Mobility and Transport](#) (MOVE)
- [Regional and Urban Policy](#) (REGIO)
- [Research and Innovation](#) (RTD)
- [Secretariat General](#) (SG)
- [Service for Foreign Policy Instruments](#) (FPI)
- [Taxation and Customs Union](#) (TAXUD)
- [Trade](#) (TRADE)
- [Translation](#) (DGT)

Services

- [Bureau of European Policy Advisers](#) (BEPA)
- [Central Library](#)
- [European Anti-Fraud Office](#) (OLAF)
- [European Commission Data Protection Officer](#)
- [Historical archives](#)
- [Infrastructures and Logistics - Brussels](#) (OIB)
- [Infrastructures and Logistics - Luxembourg](#) (OIL)
- [Internal Audit Service](#) (IAS)
- [Legal Service](#) (SJ)
- [Office For Administration And Payment Of Individual Entitlements](#) (PMO)
- [Publications Office](#) (OP)

DG Climate Action, DG Energy, and DG Mobility and Transport are relatively new (the splitting of energy and transport was announced in mid-2009). Details of those - and of changes to other DGs - were given in Press Release [IP/09/1837](#) (see also [Commission directorates-general and services: official titles](#)).

Relations with other institutions

The Commission is answerable to the European Parliament which has the power to dismiss it by a censure motion (vote of no confidence). The Commission is represented at all sessions of the European Parliament.

On 26 May 2005 a [Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission](#) was endorsed. The agreement covered key questions, such as how the Parliament approves new Commissioners, how the Commission President deals with potential conflicts of interest and ensures greater transparency on expert groups which advise the Commission. It also included a commitment for regular meetings between the Parliament's Conference of Presidents and the Commission President or Vice-President.

On 9 February 2010, Parliament adopted a [Revised Framework Agreement](#), which includes 'a guarantee that the Commission will apply the basic principle of equal treatment for Parliament and the Council' and implementation of the 'special partnership' between Parliament and the Commission through a number of arrangements, including ensuring that 'the President of the Commission will have a regular dialogue with the President of the European Parliament on key horizontal issues and major legislative proposals' and that Parliament's President will be invited to attend meetings of the Commission.

In 2001, the Commission concluded Protocols on co-operation with both the [European Economic and Social Committee](#) (EESC) and the [Committee of the Regions](#) (CoR). The current [EESC Protocol](#) was signed on 22 February 2012, and the most recent [CoR Protocol](#) on 16 February 2012.

Administrative reform

On taking office in September 1999 President [Romano Prodi](#) declared administrative reform to be a top priority and he appointed [Neil Kinnock](#) as Commission Vice-President responsible for Administrative Reform. The urgent need for action had been underlined by the publication in September 1999 of the second report from the Committee of Independent Experts - [Analysis of current practice and proposals for tackling mismanagement, irregularities and fraud](#) - following allegations of corruption and nepotism in the Santer Commission.

In March 2000, the Commission adopted a White Paper 'Reforming the Commission' (COM(2000)200 - [Part I](#) and [Part II](#)), containing wide-ranging ideas for reforming budget and planning procedures, financial control and staff policy. At the end of October 2001, the Commission decided to introduce changes to its staffing and careers policies (see Press Release [IP/01/1514](#) and [Reforming the Commission](#) page).

A progress report in February 2004 ([COM\(2004\)93](#); see also Press Release [IP/2004/177](#)) showed that the Commission had successfully acted on 95 out of the 98 modernisation commitments listed in the March 2000 White Paper. By the end of 2005, the Barroso Commission confirmed that the measures necessary to complete the reforms had been enacted. The December 2005 'Progress report on the Commission reform beyond the reform mandate' ([COM\(2005\)668](#); reviewed developments in the different sectors and outlined areas for further action (see also Press Release [IP/05/1677](#)).

The [European Commission Civil Service](#) website provides information on [Efficiency](#) initiatives within the Commission and on [Ethics and conduct](#).

Speaking on the theme 'Ethics and the European Commission' on 7 March 2013 (see [SPEECH/13/201](#)), Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič identified the following values and principles promoted at the Commission:

- Independence: this means acting solely serving the public interest away from any instruction coming from outside the institution
- Impartiality: no bias when deciding and a fair and equal treatment in all cases
- Objectivity: a thorough analysis of the facts, of the legal background prior to any conclusion or decision
- Loyalty: loyalty to the Commission, always, at all levels of action

- Respect: for the reputation of the institution and also for others working in it

Location

The Commission is based primarily in Brussels. Its headquarters in the Berlaymont building was closed between 1992 and 2004 for renovation and removal of asbestos, during which time Commissioners and Commission staff were located in different parts of the city. As the new 2004-2009 Commissioners took up their posts in the Autumn of 2004, they moved into a completely refurbished Berlaymont building (see Press Release [MEMO/04/207](#)). Other European Commission staff work in Luxembourg and in the Commission's Representations (in the EU Member States) and Delegations (in third countries).

The Commission's central postal address and telephone number are:

European Commission
200 rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Tel: 00 322 299 1111

A [Commission Directory](#) was launched in 2004 to provide contact details for all officials working in the European Commission, including full postal address, telephone and fax numbers. The Directory is one of a number of resources included on the Commission's [Contact](#) page. There are also [mailing instructions](#) for addressing correspondence to staff of the European Commission, and information on [visiting the Commission](#).

Information sources in the ESO database

Find updated and further information sources in the ESO database:

[2.6 European Commission](#) [general information]

- [Key Source](#)
- [Legislation](#)
- [Policy-making](#)
- [Report](#)
- [News source](#)
- [Periodical article](#)
- [Textbook, monograph or reference](#)
- [Background](#)

[2.6.a European Commission: Programmes](#)

[2.6.b European Commission: President and Commissioners](#)

[2.6.c European Commission: Personnel and organisational issues](#)

Further information sources on the internet

Overview

- European Commission
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About the European Commission](#)
 - [European Commission at work](#)
 - [Infringements of EU law](#)

- [The members of the Barroso Commission \(2010-2014\)](#)
 - [Commission President](#)
 - [Departments and services](#)
 - [European Commission Civil Service](#)
 - [Commission Directory](#)
 - [Contact page](#)
 - [Contact guide by Commission activity](#)
 - [EU Local offices and information points](#)
 - [Representation in the UK](#)
 - [Delegations to Third Countries](#)
 - [Visit the Commission](#)
 - [EU Newsroom](#)
 - [Audiovisual Service](#)
 - [EU Tube](#)
 - [Access to documents](#)
 - [Archives](#)
 - [Central Library](#)
- Europa
 - European Union institutions and other bodies: [European Commission](#)
 - Glossary
 - [European Commission](#)
 - [Composition of the European Commission](#)
 - [President of the European Commission](#)
 - [Confirmation of the European Commission](#)
 - [Institutional balance](#)
 - [Right of initiative](#)
 - [Comitology](#)
 - [Monitoring the application of Community law](#)
 - [Committees and working parties](#)
 - European Parliament
 - [Fact Sheets](#)
 - [The European Commission](#)

Treaty revisions and the European Commission

- Europa
 - Summaries of EU legislation
 - The Amsterdam Treaty: a Comprehensive Guide: Institutional Matters: [European Commission](#)
 - Treaty of Nice: A Comprehensive Guide: Institutional Questions: [The European Commission](#)
 - Treaty of Lisbon: [Efficient and modern institutions](#)

Law and policy making

- European Commission
 - Secretariat-General
 - [Relations with other institutions and bodies](#)
 - [Application of EU law](#)
 - Summaries of EU legislation
 - [Rules of Procedure of the European Commission](#)
 - DG Communication
 - [Press releases](#) (RAPID database)

The texts of EU legislation relating to the European Commission as an institution can be found in EUR-Lex:

Adopted legislation: EUR-Lex: [Directory of European Union legislation in force](#) (see section 01.40.40)

Proposed legislation: EUR-Lex: [Directory of European Union legislation in preparation](#) (see section [01.40.40](#))

Trace the progress of proposed legislation or other initiatives in the following databases:

- European Commission: PreLex
[Homepage](#). Add subject or COM doc reference in a [standard search](#) or in an [advanced search](#) either choose 'Fields of activity' and select 'Institutions' and/or 'Administration and Staff Regulations', or choose 'Activities of the institutions' - 'Adoptions by the Commission'.
- Court of Justice of the European Union: InfoCuria
[Homepage](#): in 'Names of parties' box insert 'commission'. Select dates if required. Hit 'Search' at top or bottom of page.
- European Parliament: Legislative Observatory (OEIL)
[Homepage](#): Carry out a [Search](#): from the right-hand menu choose 'Commission DG' and select appropriate sub-heading.

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