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The Bundestag and Europe

The European Union and
European affairs in Parliament

European Union

Important dates in 2007

(Other entries in the calendar of the German presidency can be viewed at www.eu2007.de)

1 January
to 30 June: German presidency of the EU Council

to 31 December: European Year of Equal Opportunities

Accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union

Introduction of the euro in Slovenia

22 January
to 23 January: Meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council

Day of EU projects in schools as part of the German presidency

29 January
to 30 January: Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council

30 January
Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin) Council

12 February
to 13 February: Meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council

15 February
Meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

to 16 February: Meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council

16 February
Meeting of the Education, Youth and Culture Council

19 February
Meeting of the Competitiveness Council

20 February
Meeting of the Environment Council

22 February
to 23 February: Meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

26 February
to 27 February: Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council

27 February
Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin) Council

5 March
to 6 March: Meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council

8 March
to 9 March: European Council summit

19 March
to 20 March: Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council

22 March
to 23 March: Meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

25 March
Fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

Special European Council of the Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States in Berlin to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome

27 March
Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin) Council

30 March
to 31 March: Informal meeting of EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs at Gynnich, by Cologne

16 April
to 17 April: Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council

19 April
to 20 April: Meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council

23 April
to 24 April: Meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council

7 May
to 8 May: Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council

8 May
Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin) Council

9 May
Europe Day of the European Union

13 May
to 15 May: Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) in Berlin

14 May
to 15 May: Meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council

21 May
to 22 May: Meeting of the Competitiveness Council

24 May
to 25 May: Meeting of the Education, Youth and Culture Council

to 27 May: Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union in Bratislava

30 May
to 31 May: Meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

5 June
Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin) Council

7 June
to 8 June: Meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

11 June
to 12 June: Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council

12 June
to 13 June: Meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council

18 June
to 19 June: Meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council

21 June
to 22 June: European Council summit

28 June
Meeting of the Environment Council

1 July
to 31 December: Portuguese presidency of the EU Council

18 October
to 19 October: Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States

13 December
to 14 December: European Council summit in Brussels



The Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States (the European Council) in Brussels on 15 June 2006.

The German presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2007

Focus on the Constitution, climate change, energy and the economy

It could be a last goodbye – provided Germany can achieve all of its aims for the presidency of the EU Council. If the German Government manages to do everything on its agenda, Germany's tenure of the presidency in the first half of 2007 will be its last under the present system. This will depend on the reactivation of the stalled process of establishing a Constitution and on the adoption of the new presidency provisions contained in the present draft Constitutional Treaty.

Instead of the current six-monthly rotation of the presidency among the Member States, a President of the European Council elected for a term of two and a half years would chair the summits of the Heads of State or Government. The rotating presidency would also be a thing of the past in the field of foreign policy, as the External Relations Council would meet under the chairmanship of the EU Minister for Foreign Affairs. A rotating presidency would only be retained for the other configurations of the Council. How that system would be organised and the frequency and order of rotation will have to be determined in due course.

In 2007, however, Germany's presidency of the EU Council will still be subject to the customary rules. This means that, for the next six months, Germany will chair the summit meetings of the Heads of State or Government as well as the ministerial meetings of the Council in Brussels and will largely set the agenda for the summits and for the work of the Council. This prominent formal position lends greater weight to Germany's political initiatives. Progress on the constitutional issue will surely be its foremost project.

No one expects Germany to achieve a breakthrough in the crisis surrounding the Constitutional Treaty by the end of June. Following the Union's self-imposed 'period of reflection', the main aim will be to set the political tone in a way that restores a sense of direction to the present confused situation. Germany's objective is a political declaration at the end of its presidency in which the Member States of the EU agree on a way to break the deadlock.

Other priorities of the German Presidency are protection of the climate, security of energy supply and the Lisbon Strategy, through which the EU seeks to reform itself into the world's most competitive economic area. The EU summit in the spring of 2007 will address this matter by reviewing the current situation. In addition, there will be a huge increase in the daily workload of government. Ministers will have to devote additional time to the preparation of their respective Council meetings, for, besides trying to safeguard national interests, they will have to reconcile the interests of all the other Member States in order to arrive at acceptable compromises. The same applies to the German Permanent Representative to the EU, who will make the preparations for the ministerial meetings. Such coordination efforts, designed to advance pending legislative proposals and bring them to fruition, are likely to require the greatest input of resources.

If, contrary to all expectations, the Constitutional Treaty does not enter into force, it will be some time before Germany presides again over the EU Council, since all the slots up to and including the first half of 2020 have already been allocated to other Member States.
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Holders of the Council presidency until 2020

(if the present procedure is not replaced by the arrangements laid down in the Constitutional Treaty)

2007	January to June July to December	Germany Portugal
2008	January to June July to December	Slovenia France
2009	January to June July to December	Czech Republic Sweden
2010	January to June July to December	Spain Belgium
2011	January to June July to December	Hungary Poland
2012	January to June July to December	Denmark Cyprus
2013	January to June July to December	Ireland Lithuania
2014	January to June July to December	Greece Italy
2015	January to June July to December	Latvia Luxembourg
2016	January to June July to December	Netherlands Slovakia
2017	January to June July to December	Malta United Kingdom
2018	January to June July to December	Estonia Bulgaria
2019	January to June July to December	Austria Romania
2020	January to June	Finland

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The European flag flies alongside the flag of the Federal Republic of Germany in front of the Reichstag building.

The Bundestag and European integration

Success as a challenge

The German Bundestag has done everything in its power to promote European integration since the process began in the 1950s. Since 1949, Members of the Bundestag from all parties have seen convergence within Europe as an opportunity to satisfy the desire for peace and prosperity. Yet the very success of this policy makes it more essential than ever before for the German Parliament to maintain its position and its influence in today's increasingly interwoven fabric of supranational politics.

Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, once asserted that 80 of economic legislation was adopted at the European level. That was in the early nineties, when the European Economic Community was just setting out to create the single market. The European Union now has a legislative role in the fields of justice, home affairs and legal policy, national budgetary policies are determined to a great extent by the EU Stability Pact, and EU law even influences the rules governing recruitment of the German armed forces. The Europe of the Treaties of Rome, which were signed 50 years ago, has become a comprehensive political integration project, and its competence extends into many areas of people's lives.

The influence of the European tier of government on almost every sphere of everyday life is unmistakable, even if, on closer inspection, the proportion of federal legislation adopted on the basis of European prescripts is perhaps not so high as it appears from the Brussels perspective. The bulk of the decisions that directly affect the lives of the German population, whether in the realms of health, taxation, employment or pensions, to name but a few key policy areas, continue to be made in Berlin. In addition, there are many areas in which the European Union merely establishes a framework which the German legislature subsequently fleshes out and applies by virtue of national laws and regulations.

Although the Bundestag has consented to the transfer of powers to the European Union, European legislation still presents it with formidable challenges, for the need to transpose an ever-increasing number of provisions of EU law in national legislation raises the question of the extent to which Member States are free to shape their own policies. Parliamentary scrutiny of government activity can also be undermined if a national government is able to cite the need for compromise with the other EU Member States in order to circumvent the dictates of its own national parliament. Conversely, the government's negotiating position in the Council can be strengthened if it secures parliamentary backing prior to Council meetings.

The role of the Bundestag in lending democratic legitimacy to political decisions is and will remain crucial. Even though there is now direct representation of the people at EU level through the European Parliament, the powers of the latter remain far short of those traditionally vested in parliaments. As a rule, the European Parliament only plays a full part in the legislative process in respect of matters that do not require a unanimous decision of the Council. Unlike a national parliament, it does not possess full budgetary powers, nor is it elected on the basis of uniform procedures. For this reason, it is no wonder that Germans continue to regard the Bundestag as the place where their political wishes are represented.

The Federal Constitutional Court, for example, in its judgment of 1993 on the Maastricht Treaty, stated that, since German voters exercise their right to participate in the democratic legitimation of the institutions and bodies entrusted with the exercise of sovereignty primarily by electing the German Bundestag, the Bundestag must also decide on Germany's membership of the European Union and on its preservation and development.

Norbert Lammert, President of the Bundestag, with José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission.



Plenary chamber of the German Bundestag with the federal and European flags.

Right to information

How does the Bundestag perform this mission? Is there sufficient focus on European matters in the Bundestag? And can Parliament exert influence in key areas of the Federal Government's policy on Europe? Even before the Maastricht Treaty transferred responsibility for monetary policy and many aspects of economic policy, and hence a degree of national sovereignty, to the European Union, the Bundestag had been considering how it could retain its influence in the European institutions. Indeed, such reflections date back to the founding of the European Communities. In its act ratifying the Treaties of Rome, for instance, the Bundestag was already emphasising its right to be kept up to date on European affairs by the Federal Government.

In the early years, the communication process was relatively straightforward. Before 1979, when the European Parliament was directly elected for the first time, the German representatives in the European Parliament were Members of the Bundestag with a dual mandate, which guaranteed the flow of information between the national and European levels. In addition, proposals from Brussels were already being examined in those early years by the specialised committees of the Bundestag. This was not, however, an entirely satisfactory arrangement. By the early 1970s, the volume of proposals was already increasing sharply, and Members of the Bundestag were complaining that it was almost impossible to make a distinction between the important and the unimportant. Moreover, procedures were cumbersome, and the relevant plenary resolutions were often adopted long after the Council had made its final decision.

The first direct election of the European Parliament in 1979 marked the end of the dual mandates. Although the Federal Government was already required to keep Parliament informed,

the close personal link had been extremely conducive to a steady flow of information. The Bundestag looked for new interfaces to compensate for the loss of this link. Its first step was to set up a commission on European affairs, which, like a study commission, could present reports to the whole House. This solution, however, proved to be inadequate, for the commission was not sufficiently integrated into the parliamentary structure; in particular, it was not empowered to submit recommendations for resolutions to the House.

In 1991, the 12th Bundestag appointed a Committee on the Affairs of the European Communities to monitor the negotiations on amendments to be made to the Treaties for the purpose of creating the European Union and establishing economic and monetary union. The mandate of the Committee, like those of the Committee on Petitions, the Committee on the Rules of Procedure and the Budget Committee, transcended departmental boundaries. Here too, however, weaknesses came to light. A particular problem lay in the fact that the Committee only assumed responsibility for a matter if it fell outside the ambit of all the other specialised committees. Consequently, although the Committee on Community Affairs was involved in discussing recommendations for resolutions on matters relating to Europe, it was never once given primary responsibility for the process of obtaining a parliamentary decision on a proposal presented to the Bundestag.

Protecting areas of competence

Today's Committee on the Affairs of the European Union, which was first appointed in 1994 for the 13th electoral term, is closely linked with the ratification process for the Maastricht Treaty. Chiefly at the instigation of the federal states – the Länder – Article 23 of the Basic Law (Grund-

The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe provides for greater involvement of national parliaments.



Meeting of the EU Affairs Committee in the Europasaal of the German Bundestag.

gesetz) was established as the constitutional basis for the involvement of the Bundestag and Bundesrat in matters concerning the European Union. The Länder were particularly concerned that the transfer of powers to Brussels would erode their own sphere of activity. The Protocol on Subsidiarity appended to the Maastricht Treaty is essentially one of the fruits of this debate.

Accordingly, under Article 23 of the Basic Law, the Bundestag can adopt resolutions which are politically binding on the Federal Government in its conduct of negotiations in Brussels. The Bundestag can delegate this power to the EU Affairs Committee under Article 45 – a unique procedure for the Bundestag, where all other resolutions are adopted in plenary. In actual fact, both the Bundestag and the EU Affairs Committee have made limited use of this right. The Committee has largely restricted itself to resolutions on procedures for the further development of the EU and EC Treaties.

If the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe enters into force, a procedure will be available for the first time enabling the Bundestag, together with the other national parliaments, to defend its own powers against EU encroachment; this procedure is known as 'subsidiarity monitoring'.

During the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, the Bundestag also pressed the Federal Government for a greater say in matters concerning the EU and adopted the legal basis for an agreement. The Agreement signed by the German Bundestag and the Federal Government in September 2006 on cooperation in matters concerning the European Union provides a new basis for active parliamentary involvement in this field. The agreement extended the obligation of the Government to provide information and increased the weight of parliamentary opinions. Nevertheless, it remains a permanent task of the Bundestag to safeguard the position assigned to it by the Basic Law in the increasingly close-woven network of supranational politics.

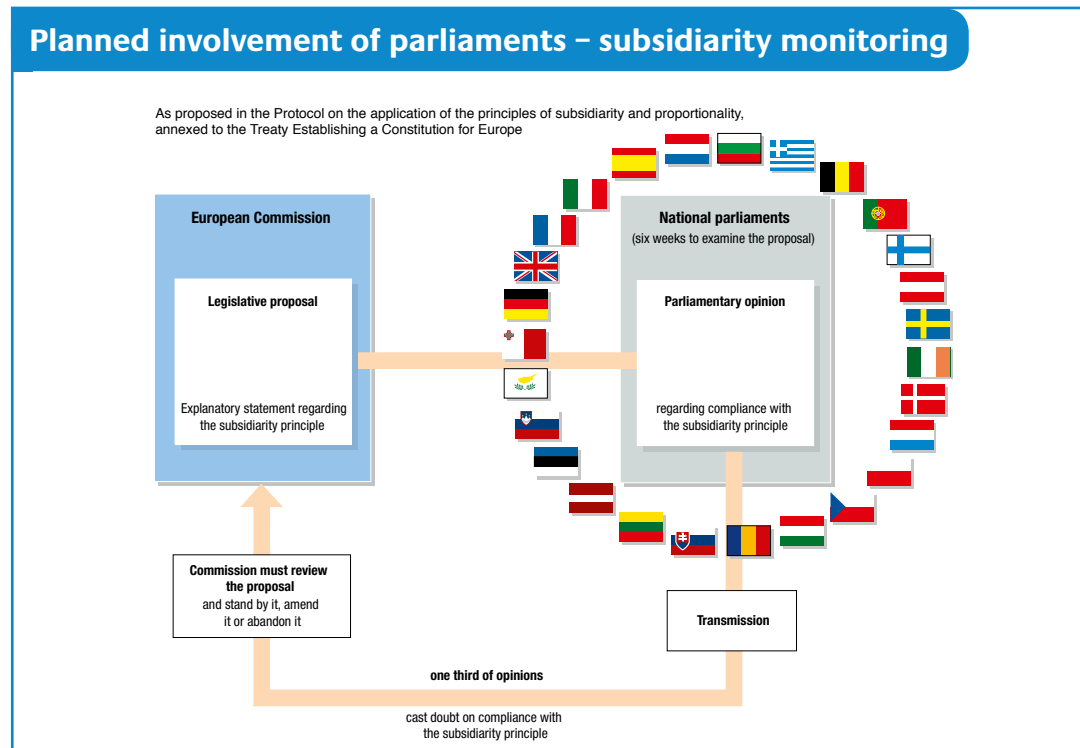
Subsidiarity monitoring in the Constitutional Treaty
Planned rules governing parliamentary involvement

Not only is the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe the first instrument to set out clear principles for the division of powers between the European and national tiers of government; it also defines a procedure whereby national parliaments are to be more fully involved than hitherto in the legislative process in the EU. Two of the protocols annexed to the Treaty deal with these matters, specifying that national parliaments are to be fully informed, and will henceforth be directly informed by the European Commission, about consultation documents such as Green Papers and White Papers and about legislative proposals.

The purpose of the new procedure is to lend authority to the subsidiarity principle, which is fundamental to the European Union. This principle requires decision-making and the formulation of rules to be devolved wherever possible to subordinate tiers of government, whether these be nation states, regions, municipalities or other entities. It means that the EU only acts in cases in which particular objectives, because of their scope or implications, cannot be achieved at a lower level and can therefore be most effectively

attained at the level of the Union. Under the new procedure, national parliaments, or individual chambers of national parliaments, would have six weeks from the notification of a proposed initiative to express the opinion that the proposal was incompatible with the subsidiarity principle. This infringement claim could also be presented jointly by two or more national parliaments. Each national parliament would have two votes, which would be split between the chambers in bicameral systems. This means that the Bundestag and the Bundesrat in Germany would each have one vote.

If the number of unfavourable opinions corresponded to at least one third – or, in the case of legislative proposals in the field of justice and home affairs, one quarter – of the total number of votes allocated to national parliaments, the European Commission would have to review the proposal. It might then revise the proposal, abandon it altogether or stand by it. If the proposal were not amended to the satisfaction of the national parliaments, they would be able to bring an action before the European Court of Justice through their respective Member States.



Chronology

The Bundestag and European integration

1949 The Basic Law and the Council of Europe

Only three days separate the adoption of the Basic Law and the birth of the Council of Europe, the continent's oldest international political organisation. In London on 5 May 1949, ten European States signed the Statute of the Council of Europe, in which they agreed to set up a Council of Europe with a view to achieving greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising their common ideals and principles and facilitating their economic and social progress. Three days later, on 8 May, the Parliamentary Council adopted the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany. In the first sentence of its preamble, this new constitution proclaimed the will of the German people "to serve world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe". The first German Bundestag constituted itself on 7 September of the same year and voted on 15 June 1950 for the accession of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Council of Europe. German delegates took part in the Council's Consultative Assembly for the first time



Council of Europe: signing of the founding statute in 1949.

on 7 August 1950. Five years after the end of the war, a handshake between the leader of the German delegation, Hermann Pünder (CDU/CSU), and Winston Churchill symbolised Germany's acceptance into the European family.

1950 The Schuman Plan and the ECSC

On 9 May 1950, the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, held a press conference to deliver a government policy statement in which he presented a proposal "that Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework

Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman.



of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe". This, explained Schuman, was intended as a first step on the way to a European federation. Thus was born the Schuman Plan, which is regarded today as the visionary signal that launched the process of European integration. For this reason, the ninth of May is celebrated annually in the EU as Europe Day. A short time later, on 18 April 1951, Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the Paris Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The first President of the High Authority was the Frenchman Jean Monnet, whose preliminary reflections had formed the basis of the Schuman Plan and who was to become the first honorary citizen of Europe in 1976. In July 1952, the Bundestag elected 18 representatives to the first Common Assembly of the ECSC, which held its constituent sitting in Luxembourg on 10 September 1952.

1957 The Treaties of Rome

With the conclusion of the Treaties of Rome the integration process moved up a gear. Following the failure of preceding attempts to establish a European Defence Community and a European Political Community, the six members of the ECSC opted for the economic route. In the Capitol in Rome on 25 March, they signed the treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). This effectively marked the birth of the European Communities, although this designation dates from the Merger Treaty of 1967, which brought the EEC, Euratom and the ECSC under a single institutional structure. The EEC, with its aim of a common market and a customs union (completed in 1968), had a particularly dynamic impact on the integration process. A Council, comprising government ministers, took the decisions in the EEC, and these were implemented by a Commission, whose first president was a German Christian Democrat, Walter Hallstein, appointed in 1958. The Bundestag was



Signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957.

quick to spot the danger arising from the fact that legislatures were not sufficiently integrated into this supranational structure, and in Article 2 of its act of 27 July 1957 ratifying the Treaties of Rome it imposed an obligation on the Federal Government to keep the Bundestag and Bundesrat informed prior to any decision affecting the domestic law of the Federal Republic.

1979 Direct election of the European Parliament

Until the first direct elections to the European Parliament, the Members of the German Bundestag elected the German Members of the European Parliament from their own ranks. In other words, dual membership was initially the norm. Although there had been several initiatives for direct election since 1958, it was not until 20 September 1976 that the Council took the decisive step of adopting the Act concerning the election of the representatives of the Assembly by direct universal suffrage. This was a further step towards the establishment of a people's representative body in the true sense of the term, following the introduction in 1970 of parliamentary participation in the budgetary process. In March 1978, the Bundestag adopted the European Elections Act (Europawahlgesetz), and one year later it adopted the Members of the European Parliament Act (Europaabgeordnetengesetz), which regulates the legal status of Germany's MEPs. From 7 to 10 June 1979, the voters of Europe went to the

polls. Electoral turnout in Germany was 65.7%. In the first electoral term Germany no longer had any MEPs who were also Members of the Bundestag. The Common Assembly established by the founding treaties was developing into a real parliament, but its link with the Bundestag had been loosened and would have to be restructured.

Demonstrators call for a stronger European Parliament.



Chronology

The Bundestag and European integration

1983 New interfaces with Europe

How were exchanges between the Bundestag and the European Parliament to be organised? After a commission appointed by the Bundestag's Council of Elders had launched initial deliberations on cooperation between the two assemblies, a Commission on European Affairs was appointed at the start of the 10th electoral term in 1983.

Constituent meeting of the Commission on European Affairs in 1983.



This was an entirely new type of body, in which 11 Members of the Bundestag and 11 MEPs, all vested with equal rights, discussed the principles of Community policy as well as matters relating to coordination between the national and European institutions. Its procedures were modelled on those of a study commission. Coordination was sorely needed, with the number of Community proposals steadily rising and the personal link having been severed by the elimination of dual mandates. Of 2,506 proposals presented by the European Commission between July 1980 and 1986, only 256 were the subject of a recommendation for a parliamentary resolution. A total of 167 proposals had already entered into force when they were discussed in committee. Following a review begun in 1987, the Commission on European Affairs was not reappointed and was succeeded in 1991 by a Committee on the Affairs of the European Communities, comprising 33 Members of the Bundestag and 11 German MEPs with participatory rights.

1992 The Maastricht Treaty

In December the Bundestag approved the Maastricht Treaty on European Union by 543 votes to 17. This brought Germany a vital step closer to the aim expressed in the preamble to the Basic Law of serving world peace in a united Europe, as Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl said before the parliamentary vote. The preceding signing of the Treaty by the Member States on 7 February represented the most comprehensive adjustment yet of the Community treaties. The overarching European Union was founded, and the political element of the integration process was upgraded. For example, the co-decision procedure now allowed the European Parliament to enact legal instruments jointly with the Council. A common foreign and security policy (CFSP) was established, and economic and monetary union was enshrined in the EC Treaty. As part of the ratification process, Articles 23 and 45 of the Basic Law were amended, making a united Europe a national aim and creating a legal basis for the involvement of the Bundestag and Bundesrat in

EU matters as well as prescribing the establishment of a parliamentary EU Affairs Committee. In its judgment of 1993 on the Maastricht Treaty, the Federal Constitutional Court emphasised that the peoples of countries belonging to a union of states legitimise the sovereign responsibilities of that union through their national parliaments.

The Maastricht summit of the European Council at the end of 1991.



1994 The EU Affairs Committee and electoral law

In December 1994, at the beginning of the 13th electoral term, the time had come for the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union to be constituted as prescribed by the new Article 45 of the Basic Law. There was also a change in the Rules of Procedure of the Bundestag, with a new Rule 93a regulating the functions and working methods of the EU Affairs Committee, which was to enjoy certain 'privileges', in that it could deliver opinions to the Federal Government on behalf of the Bundestag and table amendments in plenary to motions for resolutions presented by other specialised committees. Under its first chairman, the finance and economics expert Norbert Wiczorek (SPD), the committee comprised not only 39 Members of the Bundestag but also eleven Members of the European Parliament with participatory rights. Earlier, in March 1994, the Bundestag had adopted an amendment to the European Elections Act, whereby nationals of other EU countries living in Germany would be entitled to vote in European elections, beginning



The EU Affairs Committee during the 13th electoral term.

with the fourth direct election of the European Parliament in June 1994. The European Parliament elected as its president (speaker) the German Social Democrat Klaus Hänsch, who was a staunch advocate of wider co-decision powers for the European Parliament.

2004 Eastward enlargement and a Constitution

This was the year when European integration advanced with giant strides, as the eastward enlargement of 1 May brought ten new Member States, with a combined population of some 75 million, into the European Union. In June 2004, 345 million people in 25 countries were eligible to elect the European Parliament. The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe was then completed in the summer, and the signing ceremony took place in Rome on 29 October 2004. Since December 2001, a Convention on the Future of Europe had been meeting under the chairmanship of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former President of the French Republic, to draft the constitutional treaty. It gives national parliaments a greater say in European affairs. "For the first time, we can prevent the EU from overstepping its powers", said the Chairman of the EU Affairs Committee, Matthias Wissmann (CDU/CSU), in February 2005, when the Treaty was being debated in the Bundestag. Provision is made for the possibility of registering an objection for

non-compliance with the subsidiarity principle in cases where EU proposals encroach on the competence of national parliaments. Following the 'no' votes in the constitutional referendums in France and the Netherlands, the European Council decided on a pause for reflection and extended the ratification period.

Guest in the Bundesrat: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.





Left: the Berlaymont Building in Brussels, main seat of the European Commission. Above right: the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Below right: the Justus Lipsius Building in Brussels, seat of the Council of the EU.

Structure and institutions of the EU

Unique anatomy

The European Union is an entirely unique political entity: based on international treaties and evolving organically by means of amendments to the treaties and enlargements, it combines both international and supranational characteristics.

The dimensions of tractor seats, the curvature of bananas or the estimated demand for breeding rabbits – there does not seem to be any area of activity, however obscure, to which EU rules do not apply. For this reason, many people regard Europe as a secretive bureaucracy in which officials dream up laws that are foisted willy-nilly on an unsuspecting population. At the same time, the demands made of the EU are enormous. It is expected to guarantee food safety, fight terrorism and play a greater role in the field of foreign and security policy.

Many misunderstandings are quickly resolved if we reflect on the path that the European integration process has followed to date. The European project did not begin with the political unification of the founding states of the European Communities but with their economic integration. After the customs union and the common agricultural policy, the single market and the single

currency were the most comprehensive Community projects and remain so to this day. Since the adoption of the Single European Act in the mid-1980s, laws establishing common rules or minimum standards within the internal market have been the most numerous items on the agendas of Parliament, the Council and the Commission. In the tripartite structure of the EU, the domain of economic and financial policy is assigned to what is known as the ‘first pillar’, based on the treaties establishing the European Communities (the EC and Euratom Treaties; the ECSC Treaty expired in 2002). Accordingly, regulations or directives relating to this policy area which are adopted by the legislative institutions are, strictly speaking, ‘EC laws’, because they relate to the contractual framework of the European Communities within the overall structure of the EU.

While the common market has become a reality and almost all legislation relating to it

is subject to majority voting, foreign and security policy – the second pillar of the EU structure – and justice and home affairs policy, the penal aspects of which form the third pillar, are still being developed. There are still only a limited number of military operations and units under EU command, and the Member States’ diplomatic services continue to exist alongside each other. In the field of justice and home affairs, the granting of visas is the only matter that can be decided by a majority vote. In matters concerning cross-border criminal prosecution or asylum and immigration policy, on the other hand, decision-making by consensus remains the norm.

Interinstitutional cooperation within the EU is not entirely comparable with its national equivalent. Although the triad of the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the Commission of the European Communities is reminiscent of national structures with two legislative chambers and a government, the relationships between the institutions are different. The Commission, as the body that initiates and executes EU legislation – an inherently supranational role – sees itself more as a mediator between national interests than as an executive with a political mandate. The European Parliament, elected by the citizens of the Member States, shares its legislative powers with the Council. However, it is weaker than a national parliament and cannot adopt any EU law against the wishes of the national governments, acting through the Council. Lastly, the intergovernmental Council, in which the specialised ministers of the Member States meet to deliberate with their counterparts and outline their national interests, combines legislative with executive functions.

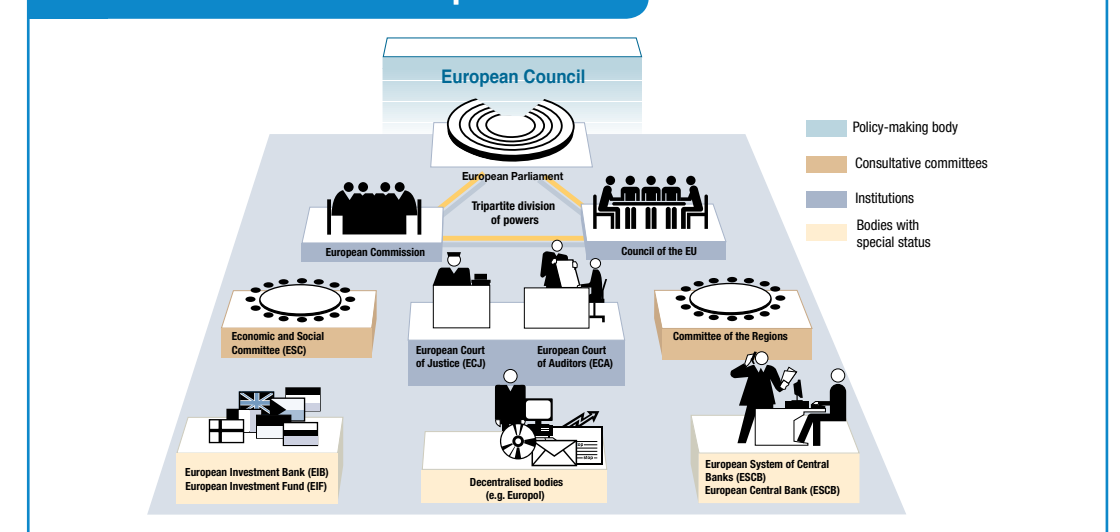
In contrast to the national level, where policies are heavily influenced by the daily ebb and flow of current affairs, the legislative initiatives of the EU are subject to long-term planning. A draft directive or regulation is usually part of a broader legislative programme. These programmes are often contained in White Papers, which the Commission presents and which the Council and Parliament then discuss. As a rule, a White Paper is preceded by a document known as a Green Paper, in which the problem is explained and on which interested members of the public are invited to comment. Such a process often takes a number of years.

The designations of the European institutions also contribute to confusion. On the one hand there is the Council of the European Union, also known as the Council, where the Member States participate in the legislation of the European Union, and on the other hand the European Council, in which the Heads of State or Government and the President of the Commission meet to establish the political guidelines for the activity of the EU.

Whereas politics in Germany is chiefly conducted through debate between the Government and the Opposition, policy-making in the European Union is characterised by a more complex distribution of powers. Consensus and compromise are even more dominant factors than in Germany. The European Parliament can only influence legislation if the two major political groups act together. At the same time, Parliament regards the Commission as its main ally against the Member States, which are often inclined to pursue their respective national interests.

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The institutions of the European Union



Institutions of the EU: the European Parliament

The representative assembly of the European people

The European Parliament consists “of representatives of the peoples of the States brought together in the Community”, as laid down in the Treaty of Rome back in 1957. It is the world’s largest multinational parliament and is in many other respects a unique representative assembly.

Since 1979, the citizens of the European Union have been electing their Parliament by universal suffrage and secret ballot, the most recent elections having taken place in 2004. Although the voting is governed by national electoral regulations, the Member States have agreed on some common rules, namely the voting age of 18, secret ballots and equality of men and women. In Germany, the European franchise extends to all citizens who are entitled to vote in elections to the Bundestag as well as to other citizens of the Union who are normally resident in Germany.

Since the accession of Romania and Bulgaria on 1 January 2007, 785 Members of the European Parliament, including 99 from Germany, have been representing the 480 million inhabitants of Europe. The number of seats allocated to each of

the Member States is determined by their respective population figures. The European Parliament is the only institution of the European Union that meets and deliberates publicly as a matter of principle. Its work is performed in three different seats, located in the three cities where the European institutions were chiefly based when they were originally founded: plenary sittings and budgetary sittings take place in Strasbourg, and additional short part-sessions are held in Brussels, as are meetings of the parliamentary committees. The Secretariat-General and parts of the administration, on the other hand, are based in Luxembourg. In addition, the European Parliament maintains information offices in all Member States.

Within Parliament, the Members form multinational political groups. In other words, they do not meet as national delegations but on the basis of their party-political allegiance. In this sixth electoral term of the European Parliament, Members from more than 100 national parties make up seven political groups, while some are not attached to any group. The main groups are that of the European People’s Party

(Christian Democrats) and European Democrats and the Socialist Group in the European Parliament. About 30% of the 785 MEPs are women – almost twice as many as in the first directly elected European Parliament of 1979. There are 20 official languages, all with equal status, into which every official document has to be translated and for which interpreters are available at sittings and meetings.

The European Parliament has developed, especially by virtue of the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice, from a consultative assembly into a parliament with legislative and budgetary powers and with powers of scrutiny. The adoption of the Treaty of Amsterdam also gave it the right to initiate legislative acts. Acting jointly with the Council, Parliament adopts European legal instruments, such as directives and regulations, which are initially proposed by the European Commission. All parliamentary decisions and opinions are published in the Official Journal of the European Union. Parliament can adopt a motion of censure on the Commission. For the motion to be adopted, it must secure a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, representing an absolute majority of all MEPs. The Commission must then tender its resignation.

Day-to-day parliamentary scrutiny is carried out through the permanent committees, of which there are currently 20 plus two subcommittees, through numerous non-permanent committees and committees of inquiry, through parliamen-

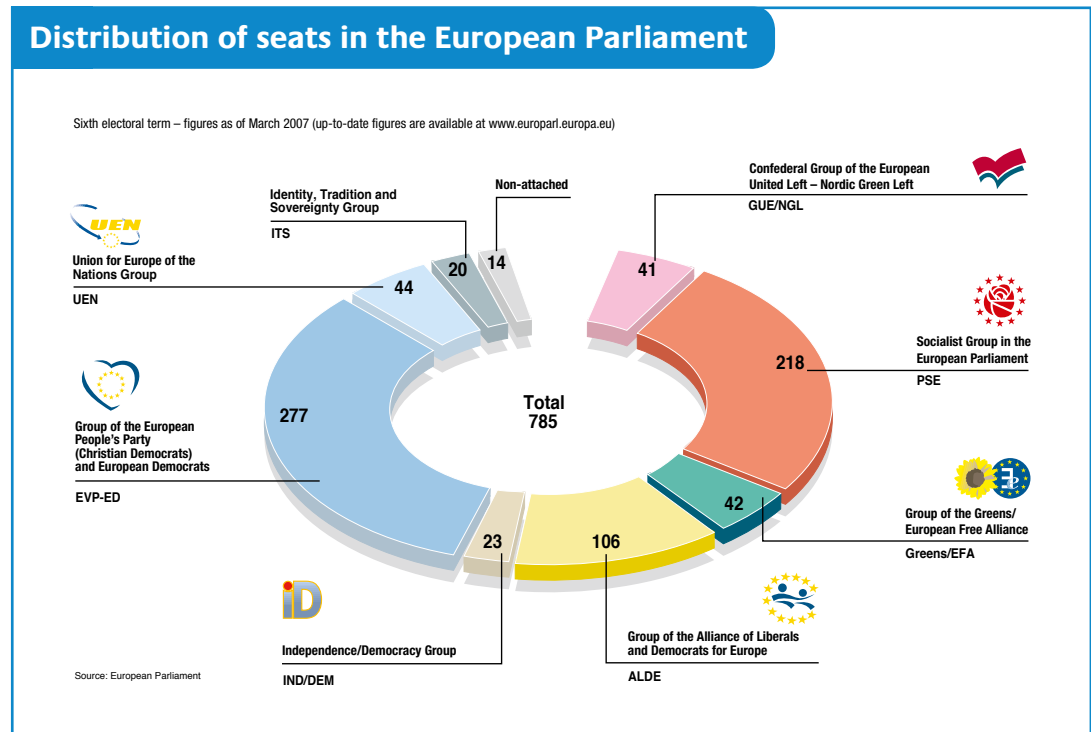
Malta	5	Belgium	24
Estonia	6	Greece	24
Luxembourg	6	Portugal	24
Cyprus	6	Czech Republic	24
Slovenia	7	Hungary	24
Latvia	9	Netherlands	27
Ireland	13	Romania	35
Lithuania	13	Poland	54
Denmark	14	Spain	54
Finland	14	France	78
Slovakia	14	Italy	78
Bulgaria	18	United Kingdom	78
Austria	18	Germany	99
Sweden	19		

tary questions to the Council or the Commission and through Question Time.

The European Parliament is committed to a ‘People’s Europe’. Members of the public can not only present their concerns to Parliament in the form of a petition, as is the case with the Bundestag and other parliaments, but can also approach the European Ombudsman, who examines complaints from individuals about Community institutions and bodies and tries to find appropriate solutions. Many of the complaints received by the Ombudsman relate to administrative delays, a lack of transparency or refusal of a request for access to information.

www.europarl.europa.eu

Plenary sitting of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.



Institutions of the EU: the Council of the European Union

Legislator with executive powers

The Council of the European Union, known simply as 'the Council', is the assembly of the Member States and the centre of power in the EU. It is here that the specialised ministers represent their national governments in the interests of the Member States.

The Council does not exist as a single permanent group. Its composition varies according to the policy area under discussion. At the present time there are nine formations: the foreign ministers meet in the General Affairs and External Relations Council, the finance ministers in the Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin) Council, the environment ministers in the Environment Council, and so on. Even though each formation of the Council deals primarily with its own portfolio, any matter can, in theory, be the subject of discussion and decision-making at any Council meeting. Meetings of the Council are chaired by the minister of the Member State holding the presidency. Every six months a new Member State takes over on the basis of a fixed rota. The Council Presidency represents the EU in its external relations and generally sets out its own priorities in the Council's work programme. It also has an important role to play in negotiating compromises on legislative proposals and other projects.

The Constitutional Treaty, which has not yet entered into force, would abolish this rotation system, and the Council, to be renamed 'Council

of Ministers', would be led by a president elected for a term of two and a half years. This innovation is intended to bring greater continuity to the work of the institution. The Eurogroup, in which the economics and finance ministers of the eurozone countries meet, already has a chairman who is elected for a two-year term.

In the institutional system of the EU, the Council has a dual role. It is the legislator of the EU, a function it normally performs jointly with the European Parliament. All directives and regulations must be adopted by the Council, acting either unanimously or by qualified majority, depending on the prescribed procedure. At the same time, the Council has an executive role, particularly in the field of foreign and security policy, where it can take and implement decisions independently of the European Parliament. The ministers are assisted by a Secretariat-General, headed by the Secretary-General and High Representative for the CFSP. Specialised work on proposals presented to the Council is coordinated by civil servants from the Member States in more than 300 working groups. Ministerial meetings are prepared by the Member States' permanent representatives to the EU and their deputies. These Committees of Permanent Representatives (Coreper I and Coreper II) pre-adopt some 80% of EU laws, which are then adopted formally without debate at ministerial meetings.

www.consilium.europa.eu

A meeting of the Council of the European Union.



The Commissioners of the European Commission and its President, José Manuel Barroso.

Institutions of the EU: the European Commission

Initiator and executive

The European Commission is both an initiator and an executive institution of the EU. It enjoys the sole right to initiate legislative proposals in many areas, it administers the budget, and it monitors compliance with EU law.

The institution, headed by the President of the Commission, is led by the college of Commissioners, comprising a national of each Member State. The college was increased from 20 to 25 members as part of the eastward enlargement. The members of the Commission are appointed in several stages. First of all, the President of the Commission is appointed on the basis of a nomination made by the Heads of State or Government of the EU. Once the appointment has been confirmed by the European Parliament, the President selects the team of Commissioners by agreement with the Member States. The entire college must then submit to a vote of approval in Parliament before the Commission is finally appointed by the Council. The Commission's term of office is five years.

As with a national government, the Commissioners are responsible for particular specialised areas, but there is no strict departmental principle. This means that most decisions have to be taken by the college as a whole at its weekly meeting or by means of circulars.

Structurally, the administrative machinery is based on the French model. Under this system, it is the Commissioners' principal private secre-

taries, the 'chefs de cabinet', who prepare the weekly Commission meetings rather than the heads of the administrative directorates-general. At the same time, the directors-general who head the administration enjoy a relatively high degree of autonomy.

Some 20,000 civil servants and clerical employees work in the directorates-general and the other departments. This corresponds roughly to the size of the administration of a small to medium-sized German city. The translation and interpreting services alone account for about 2,700 of the Commission staff. Despite the Commission's wide range of tasks, staffing levels are generally cut extremely fine.

In its role as 'guardian of the Treaties', the Commission oversees the observance and implementation of the European treaties. Besides its largely exclusive right to initiate legislative proposals and its execution of the budget, it is also empowered to enact administrative provisions. This is generally done through a procedure known as 'comitology', whereby representatives of the Member States are involved in the work on these provisions through about 250 separately established specialised committees. Since 2006 the role of the European Parliament in this domain has been considerably strengthened.

In recent years, the Commission has delegated more and more administrative responsibilities to agencies distributed around the Member States.

www.ec.europa.eu

Institutions of the EU: the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors

Judicature and cost control

The European Court of Justice

The Court of Justice is perhaps the most underestimated institution of the EU. In many cases, in fact, it is the Court that has established the authority of European law as enshrined in the European treaties. Time and again, the judges in Luxembourg have set out comprehensive interpretations of the rules laid down in the treaties. One example is the 1979 judgment on free movement of goods, in which the Court ruled that Member States must not make demands of an imported product that it is not required to satisfy in its country of origin. The Court of Justice, comprising one judge from each Member State and eight advocates-general, only deals directly with disputes involving the EU institutions and the Member States. In addition, national courts may request a preliminary ruling from the ECJ on proceedings in which EU law is involved. Many of the cases tried by the ECJ are actions for treaty infringements, in which the



Seat of the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

Commission seeks a ruling that a Member State has defaulted on a contractual obligation to transpose EU law into national legislation. If the Court finds against the Member State, and the Member State fails to comply with the terms of the judgment, the Commission may apply to the Court for the imposition of monetary penalties. www.curia.europa.eu

The European Court of Auditors

Like the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Auditors is also based in Luxembourg. The Court has 27 members, corresponding to the number of Member States. These members are elected for a six-year term of office by the European Council after a parliamentary hearing and are not bound by orders. The members elect one of their number to serve for three years as President of the Court. Hubert Weber, from Austria, currently holds that office. The members are assisted by a staff of about 550 employees, of whom slightly more than 200 are auditors. The Court of Auditors tends to be thought of as the quiet institution. It is not part of the legislative process in the EU, is not a judicial body and cannot impose sanctions. Nevertheless, in its auditors' reports the Court has often sharply criticised the budgetary management of the EU in areas such as agriculture or transport



Seat of the European Court of Auditors in Luxembourg.

policy and called for reforms. The Court's audit reports are also the basis on which Members of the European Parliament can call the Commission to account and demand scrupulous administration of the budget. www.eca.europa.eu

The European Treaties

(The text of the treaties can be found at www.europa.eu/abc/treaties/index_en.htm)

1951: Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)

In Paris on 18 April 1951, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. The ECSC was the first supranational organisation in the history of Europe. Its aim was to create a common market in coal and steel in order to promote the economic development of its Member States. The Treaty expired in 2002 after having been in force for 50 years.

1957: Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and Treaty Establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

By signing the Treaties of Rome on 25 March 1957, the Member States of the ECSC founded the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). The chief aim of the EEC was to create a common market by establishing a customs union. In the Euratom Treaty, the Member States agreed on rules governing nuclear research and the civilian use of nuclear energy.

1965: Merger Treaty

The Treaty Establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities, which was signed on 8 April 1965 and entered into force on 1 July 1967, merged the ECSC, the EEC and Euratom into the European Communities and reformed their structures. A joint Council and a joint Commission and administration were henceforth responsible for all three Community policies.

1986: Single European Act

The Single European Act made the first major changes to the Community treaties. It provided for the gradual realisation of the single market, changes to decision-making procedures to make the Communities more effective and greater Community responsibility in areas such as research, technology and the environment. The Single European Act was signed on 17 and 28 February 1986 in Luxembourg and The Hague and entered into force on 1 July 1987.

1992: Treaty on European Union

The Maastricht Treaty, signed on 7 February 1992, represented the second and most comprehensive revision of the Community treaties to date. Among the main innovations were the creation of the EU as an overarching organisation comprising three pillars, namely the European Community (EC), the common foreign and security policy and cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs. The powers of the European Parliament were strengthened. The Treaty entered into force on 1 November 1993.

1997: Treaty of Amsterdam

The remit of the Community was once again extended by the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on 2 October 1997. The subjects of asylum, visas and immigration were integrated into the EC Treaty, the Schengen Agreement was incorporated into the Treaties, a new title was inserted on the subject of employment, and responsibilities were extended in the fields of social, environment, health and consumer-protection policy and in the sphere of foreign and security policy. The Treaty entered into force on 1 May 1999.

2001: Treaty of Nice

The planned enlargement of the EU required a new reform of the Treaties. The main changes effected by the Treaty of Nice, which was signed on 26 February 2001 and entered into force on 1 February 2003, relate to voting by qualified majority and the weighting of votes in the Council as well as the appointment and role of the President of the European Commission. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which the Heads of State or Government proclaimed in Nice, was not an integral part of the Treaty.

2004: Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe

On 29 October 2004, the Constitutional Treaty was signed. Its aim is to make the EU more effective and transparent. To enter into force, the Treaty must be ratified either by Parliament or by referendum in each of the Member States. By October 2006, 15 countries had approved the Treaty. It was rejected in referendums in France and the Netherlands. It is not yet clear whether and when the ratification process can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.



A host of diverse intersections: the federal and European flags in front of the Reichstag building are reflected in a glass facade.

European-affairs policy in parliamentary practice

Influence through cooperation

The involvement of national parliaments and their role in the architecture of Europe was recognised in the European constitutional debate, if not before, as an issue with important implications for the future of the European Union. In practice, early and comprehensive information is indispensable if the German Bundestag is to perform its tasks of shaping and scrutinising policy. In this way the cooperative principle expressed in the Basic Law, whereby the pursuit of policy on European affairs is the joint responsibility of the Bundestag and the Federal Government, is put into practice.

Greater future participation of national parliaments in European affairs is designed to bring Europe closer to the people and reduce the oft-lamented lack of legitimacy and democracy in the EU. A particular problem is posed by the phenomenon of 'deparliamentarisation' of politics at the European level: the continuing integration process has deprived national parliaments of legislative powers without transferring them in the same measure to the European Parliament.

The basis for the pursuit of a policy on Europe in the parliamentary system of government of the Federal Republic of Germany is Article 23 of the

Basic Law, which governs cooperation between the Federal Government and the Bundestag. Paragraph 3 of that article states that, before participating in legislative acts of the European Union, the Federal Government shall provide the Bundestag with an opportunity to state its position and that the Federal Government shall take the position of the Bundestag into account during the negotiations. Details are regulated by a law – the Act on Cooperation between the Federal Government and the German Bundestag in Matters concerning the European Union. This is the one and only instance in which relations

between the Federal Government and the Bundestag are regulated by a federal law.

This special case makes it clear that policy on Europe is jointly pursued by the Federal Government and the Bundestag. The cooperation between the two organs of the Constitution is remarkable in that it does not take place within a relationship marked by rivalry but in one that may be far more accurately described as 'scrutiny through cooperation'. This underlines the great importance that the Basic Law attaches to European Union and to a united Europe. The cooperative model benefits both parties: the Bundestag is able to make its position clear at a fairly early stage and can thus influence the stance of the Federal Government and its conduct of negotiations. The Federal Government, for its part, can run its ideas past the Bundestag at a similarly early stage in a sort of feasibility test.

The keystone of this structure is the obligation of the Federal Government to keep the Bundestag informed of matters concerning the European Union. To enable the German Bundestag to participate appropriately and competently, Article 23 requires the Federal Government to inform it 'comprehensively and at the earliest possible time'. This communication process is one of the main keys to the exercise of parliamentary scrutiny.

Shaping and scrutinising policy

The autumn of 2006 saw the entry into force of a new agreement on cooperation in the field of EU affairs between the Bundestag and the Federal Government. The agreement, based on the new section 6 of the Act on Cooperation between the Federal Government and the German Bundestag in Matters concerning the European Union, is the main factor in the improved aptitude of the



Early awareness of developments within the EU: Chancellor Angela Merkel at a European Council summit.

Bundestag for dealing with EU matters. In particular, the agreement extends the implementing provisions, specifying more clearly how the Government is to fulfil its obligation to keep the Bundestag informed. The number of policy areas to which the information requirement applies and, above all, the number of notifiable project and document categories have been increased.

In future, information from all areas of EU policy will be made available to the Bundestag in documentary form. This now includes information on the common foreign and security policy and the European security and defence policy, on measures in the field of police and judicial cooperation, on trade policy, on bilateral and multilateral international agreements between the Federal Republic of Germany and Member States of the EU and on the latest political developments by virtue of the political early-warning system. Besides official Commission documents, preparatory papers will also be transmitted. Moreover, the Bundestag will henceforth be updated about all the major Council bodies before and after their meetings.

The right of the Bundestag to be given an 'opportunity to state its position' on matters concerning Europe has hitherto been a potential source of conflict, for it depended, of course, on the Federal Government having fulfilled its obligation to provide comprehensive information as early as possible. Even before the conclusion of the new agreement, the Bundestag was able to authorise the EU Affairs Committee to deliver its opinion to the Federal Government on behalf of the House.

Needless to say, the influence of the Bundestag in matters European stands or falls with the fate of the opinion it delivers. Article 23 of the Basic Law merely requires the Federal Government to 'take the position of the Bundestag into account'. The new agreement now speci-

Representatives of the Commission are regular guests at meetings of the EU Affairs Committee.





No scrutiny without information:
files containing EU documents.

fies that the Federal Government shall base its negotiations in the Council on the position of the Bundestag. The Government may, however, deviate from that position for reasons of foreign or integration policy. It is politically incumbent on the Federal Government to explain any such deviation to Parliament.

Transposition of EU legislation

The Member States of the European Union must align their legal systems with the precepts of EU legislation, in other words both the primary legislation laid down by the Member States in the European Treaties and the secondary legislation enacted by the EU institutions. This alignment is generally carried out by means of laws or statutory orders, competence to enact these being determined by the provisions of Articles 70 et seq. of the Basic Law, which regulate the distribution of legislative powers. Among the instruments of secondary EU legislation, directives play a particularly important role. In contrast to regulations, which are valid throughout the EU, are binding in all their parts and apply directly in every Member State, only the declared aims of directives are binding on the individual Member States. It is up to the authorities within each Member State to choose the form and means of implementation.

Unlike regulations, which are designed to standardise legal provisions, directives are merely intended to harmonise them. Accordingly, directives have to be transposed into national law. If this has to be done by means of a law, the transposing act is subject to exactly the same rules as any other national legislative bill in the Bundestag. This means that a lead committee is responsible for deliberations on the bill. There is, however, one special aspect of the transposi-

tion requirement that poses problems for the Bundestag, namely the fact that Parliament cannot alter the substance of a directive but is still politically accountable to the people for the transposing act.

In the transposition of a directive, in other words, the Bundestag only has as much creative scope as the directive permits. This highlights how important it is for the Bundestag and the other national parliaments to be involved in the European legislative process from an early stage.

As a rule, the EU Affairs Committee conducts a twice-yearly review of the transposition of directives into German law. In connection with the presentation of Commission's annual report on the application of Community law, the Federal Government is required to inform the committee of the adoption of EU directives and of the intended transposition method. In addition, it is required to keep the committee informed of any cases in which transposition deadlines are exceeded; in particular, such information must include the reasons for the delay and details of measures taken to resolve the problem.

This form of parliamentary scrutiny is very important, because the EC Treaty provides for a specific regime of sanctions for failure to transpose directives, a regime that even authorises the European Court of Justice to impose monetary penalties on Member States.

Reform ideas

The role of national parliaments in the architecture of the European Union and in European legislation has been increasingly central to a wide range of reform ideas over the past few years. The procedure of subsidiarity monitoring (see page 5) made it an essential element of the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. The new agreement between the Bundestag and the Federal Government on information and participation performs an important function in helping to pave the way for the Bundestag to fulfil its future responsibility in the field of European affairs.

Genesis of an EU law

Legislation in the EU is a long-term business. There is scarcely a piece of draft legislation that is not the fruit of extensive preliminary study and consultation. The following are the main stages in the genesis of an EU directive or regulation.

1. Consultation: As a rule, legislative processes in the EU begin with extensive consultation of interested groups. In documents known as Green Papers, the European Commission describes a problem or situation which it believes ought to be regulated at the European level. To this end, it presents various options and invites interested parties to express their views. Most submissions come from associations and civil society. National parliaments seldom deliver an opinion at this stage.

2. Programme: As a result of this consultation process, the Commission presents a White Paper, in which it describes in fairly specific terms the instruments with which it intends to address the problem. Such White Papers generally contain a catalogue of measures in which the planned regulatory initiatives are listed. These White Papers are debated by both the European Parliament and the Council, which adopt appropriate resolutions or decisions. The Bundestag can also deliver an opinion and thereby influence the position of the Federal Government.

3. Proposal: If the legislative programme proposed in the White Paper is accepted by the European Parliament and the Member States, the Commission presents its proposals for a directive or regulation. These are transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council. The Federal Government forwards the proposals to the Bundestag. Since September 2006, the Commission has also been sending its proposals direct to the national parliaments.

4. Legislative procedures: The Commission's proposal is then discussed by the European Parliament and by the ministers of the national governments in the Council. The actual procedural steps and the extent to which the European Parliament is involved – ranging from mere consultation to the exercise of equal co-decision rights – depend on the type of procedure. The Bundestag may exert influence on the Federal Government by means of resolutions adopted by the House or by its EU Affairs Committee.

5. Transposition: Once a European law is adopted, the next step is its transposition, or transformation into national law, in the Member States. This does not apply to European regulations, which are subject to automatic incorporation. In the case of directives, on the other hand, Germany must transform them into national law within a specified period. The legislative bodies are free to choose the means of transposition. The substance of a directive can be transformed into national law together with other instruments as part of a comprehensive reform package, or it can be converted point for point into a national statutory instrument. Except in cases where responsibility for transposing a particular directive lies with the Länder, the Bundestag also plays a decisive role in the selection of the means of transposition. The committee responsible for guiding the bill through the Bundestag discusses the proposed German implementing act. Its recommendation for a plenary resolution may contain amendments to the draft bill. Finally, the law – like all federal laws – must be adopted by the Bundestag. Some categories of law also require the consent of the Bundesrat.

Example: Directive on particulate matter
The public are often confronted with rules and regulations based on EU directives. One such example is the Directive on particulate matter, which made the headlines in 2005. How did it come about?

In 1993, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the Fifth Community Environment Action Programme, a multiannual EU programme in the field of environment policy. The Programme made the first reference to recommendations for long-term air-quality objectives.

In 1996, the EU adopted the Air Quality Framework Directive. The national authorities were to draw up clean-air plans.

In 1999, the first daughter directive was adopted; among its provisions were prescribed limits for fine airborne particles.

The year 2000 saw the adoption of a second daughter directive laying down maximum values for benzene and carbon monoxide.

In 2002, both daughter directives were transposed into German law by virtue of amendments to the Federal Pollution Control Act (Bundesimmissionsschutzgesetz).

In 2005, the limit values for particulate matter, sulphur dioxide and lead entered into force.

Legislative procedures in the EU

The EC Treaty determines which decision-making procedure is applied in any given case. **Co-decision** has developed into the main legislative procedure in the European Union. In this procedure, Parliament and the Council, vested with equal rights, collaborate on the adoption of a legal instrument. In the co-decision procedure, no proposal can become law against the wishes of Parliament. The procedure was first applied in November 1993 and is now used in decision-making on 75% of legislative proposals.

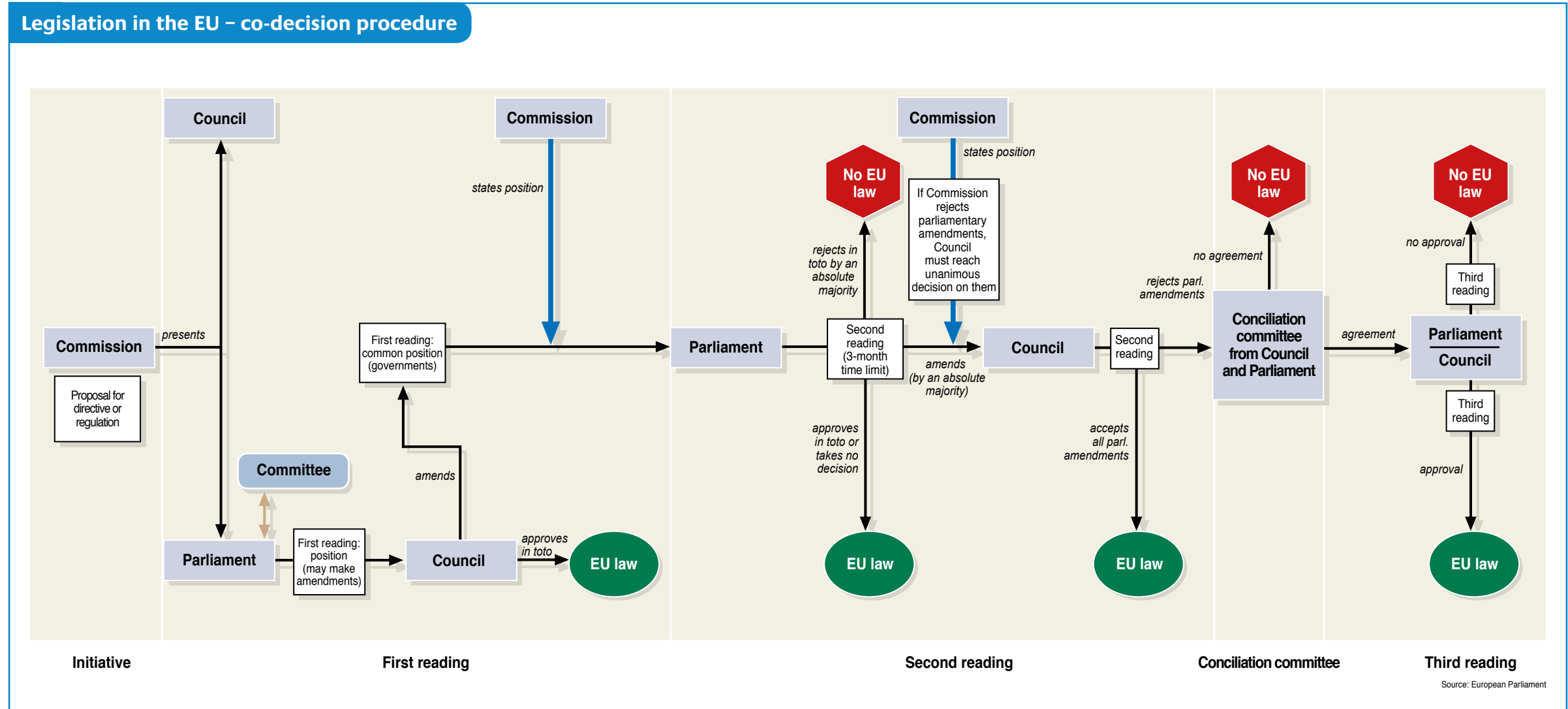
In the **consultation procedure**, the oldest legislative procedure, the Council must consult Parliament but is not bound by its opinion. It is rarely used now. The **assent procedure**, whereby Parliament has a right of veto, as it were, applies in special cases, such as agreements with countries outside the EU. In the **cooperation procedure**, involving the Council and Parliament, the Council has the final say. This procedure has declined in importance with the increased use of the co-decision procedure.

Legal instruments

Regulations apply directly in the Member States and are binding in all their elements. There is therefore no need for them to be transformed into national law by the Member States, which distinguishes them from directives. They are particularly applicable as a means of setting hard and fast requirements, as in the establishment of uniform technical standards or the specification of monetary percentage rates to regulate matters such as VAT issues in the realm of telecommunications.

Directives are addressed to the Member States, committing them to the pursuit of a particular objective. A deadline is set for transposition of the directive, although the way in which

the objective is to be achieved in practice is left to the discretion of each Member State. The Member States are required to transpose directives in a sufficiently unambiguous and transparent manner by means of binding measures. Individual rights arising from the directive must be recognisable enough to be actionable. If a Member State does not transpose a directive in accordance with its spirit or in good time, the Commission can institute proceedings and bring an action before the European Court of Justice. In certain cases, members of the public can also advert directly to the directive in the event of non-transposition and even claim damages.



The EU Affairs Committee

Special integrative function

The German Bundestag plays an active role in both the preparation of EU legislative proposals and in their implementation. Core responsibility for these efforts lies with the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union, set up by the Bundestag pursuant to Article 45 of the Basic Law.

Of the 22 permanent specialised Bundestag committees, only four are explicitly referred to in the Basic Law. This constitutional status means that they must be appointed in every legislative term and therefore guarantees their continuity. The Committee on the Affairs of the European Union is one of these four bodies. That alone, however, does not define the special role of the EU Affairs Committee, for Article 23 of the Basic Law also prescribes joint decision-making by the Federal Government and the Bundestag in matters concerning the European Union. Although all parliamentary committees in the German Bundestag are competent, as a matter of principle, to discuss European affairs within their respective areas of responsibility, the EU Affairs Committee is the integrative cross-cutting committee at the

heart of the political decision-making process on Europe.

The EU Affairs Committee is always given primary responsibility when fundamental issues relating to European integration are on the political agenda, regardless of whether the subject is institutional reform, amendment of the basic treaties, enlargement of the EU or cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments.

Since it cuts across departmental portfolios, the EU Affairs Committee has special responsibility for European proposals that affect several different policy areas but are not clearly assignable to any particular one. An example is the Financial Perspective, which is the name given to the revenue estimates and expenditure appropriations that the EU draws up for several years in advance.

The routine activities of the Committee are governed by the task of scrutinising the Federal Government in matters concerning the European Union. The Federal Government is required to inform the German Bundestag comprehensively and at the earliest possible time of all EU projects

that might be of interest to the Federal Republic of Germany. The Committee also invites decision-makers from the European institutions to its meetings in Berlin in order to inform itself of the latest developments.

Like all of the Bundestag committees, the EU Affairs Committee reflects the party balance in the German Bundestag. It comprises 33 members from the five parliamentary groups in the German Bundestag. In addition, there are 16 Members of the European Parliament who have participatory rights, which means that they are non-voting members of the committee who can take part in its deliberations. This serves to guarantee close cooperation between the German and European Parliaments.

Special powers

The EU Affairs Committee, like the other committees of the German Bundestag, makes decisions in preparation for plenary sittings. There is, however, one difference: if a plenary sitting of the Bundestag cannot be convened quickly enough and the President of the Bundestag authorises extraordinary meetings of the committee, it can also exercise the rights of the Bundestag, take decisions on behalf of the House and deliver opinions to the Federal Government. In this way, the Committee can make clear the position of the German Parliament on legislative proposals made by the European Union and lend parliamentary legitimacy to government positions on behalf of the Bundestag.

Unlike other parliamentary committees, the EU Affairs Committee can also table amendments in plenary to a recommendation for a resolution which has been made by the specialised committee entrusted with primary responsibility for a particular matter.



Matthias Wissmann, Chairman of the Committee.

In addition, the EU Affairs Committee maintains close contacts with the committees responsible for EU affairs in the national parliaments of the older and newly acceded EU Member States and of the applicant countries as well as with the European Parliaments. These contacts are maintained through the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), whose meetings bring together representatives of these committees from the national parliaments and Members of the European Parliament. The opinions delivered by COSAC, however, only have the status of recommendations and do not bind the various parliaments. In the first half of 2007, during the German presidency of the Council, the EU Affairs Committee will host COSAC XXXVII jointly with the Bundesrat Committee on European Union Affairs.

Committee on the Affairs of the European Union

Chairman: Matthias Wissmann (CDU/CSU)
Vice-Chairman: Kurt Bodewig (SPD)

The Committee has 33 members: The CDU/CSU group provides 12 of these members, the SPD 12, the FDP 3, The Left Party 3 and Alliance 90/The Greens 3. In addition, there are 16 German Members of the European Parliament with participatory rights.

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The EU Affairs Committee at work.



Europe Division and Brussels Liaison Office

Network for information

In May 2006, the Working Group on Parliamentary Scrutiny of European Affairs and on Subsidiarity Monitoring (Aufbaustab Europa), which had previously been under the direct authority of the Secretary-General of the Bundestag, was reconstituted as the Europe Division (Referat Europa). The Division was entrusted with responsibility for the newly created German Bundestag Liaison Office in Brussels.

These institutions are intended to help the Bundestag to play a fuller part in European affairs while helping to reduce the information and monitoring deficits in that field. Their activities are designed to obtain the most comprehensive and up-to-date information about EU projects and to form and maintain the information network required for that purpose. The aim is to achieve a flexible system of 'real-time' parliamentary monitoring so that the Bundestag can respond as soon as possible, taking account of changing circumstances in the deliberations within the EU, while there is still time to influence European legislation. To this end, all available information – from the European institutions, the federal government ministries or the German Permanent Representation to the EU, from the Länder, the Bundesrat, the national parliaments of the other EU Member States, from special-interest groups and from scientists and academics – will be collated to assist the Members of the Bundestag in their political work. A particularly important contribution to efficient scrutiny of government policy on European affairs will be made by substantive and procedural information and suggestions designed to enable the Bundestag to influence current discussion processes at an early stage. This is why vital importance is

The European Quarter with Luxembourg Station in Brussels.



The Grand Place in the centre of Brussels.

attached to the establishment of a comprehensive early-warning system.

The new German Bundestag Liaison Office in Brussels is crucial to the effectiveness of an early-warning system. The decision to set up the liaison office was adopted unanimously by the German Bundestag on 12 May 2005. The main purpose of the liaison office is to scan the legislative horizon at an early stage with the aid of a wide-ranging network of links to information sources in the institutions and bodies of the EU, the representative missions of the Länder, the Permanent Representation to the EU and special-interest groups. This network can provide information that will serve as a basis for focused parliamentary activity and create the conditions for timely and effective cooperation with the Federal Government, MEPs and other players involved in the formation of the collective political will of the EU. The office, established in the immediate vicinity of the European Parliament at the start of 2007, is staffed by members of the Bundestag administration and personnel of all the political groups. The gathering of relevant information on the technicalities and timetables of all current EU projects goes hand in hand with a desire to provide information and suggestions for the deliberation process within the parliamentary committees – relating, for example, to the prioritisation of politically important EU proposals. The entire range of services provided by the liaison office will be available first and foremost to the parliamentary groups, the specialised committees and the appointed authors of parliamentary reports (rapporteurs).

Contact details for the Europe Division (Division PA 1) and the Brussels liaison office can be found on page 39.



International relations of the Bundestag



Members of the Jordanian Parliament in the visitors' gallery of the Bundestag.

International relations of the Bundestag

Parliamentary friendship groups

At the start of each electoral term, the German Bundestag appoints bilateral and multilateral parliamentary friendship groups, whose task is to nurture contacts with the national parliaments of one or more partner country or countries.

An individual Member of the Bundestag may belong to a maximum of five friendship groups. The membership of these groups often reflects a special interest in relations with a particular country, which may derive from existing personal contacts or from the focus of a Member's work in the field of foreign policy. The primary aim of the parliamentary friendship groups is to maintain a continuous intensive dialogue with other parliaments in order to exchange information and opinions and to share experience as well as to deepen interparliamentary relations. To this end, the groups host parliamentary and political delegations from their partner countries, hold talks with ambassadors, meet representatives of civil society and take part in discussion panels and conferences. Many of the foreign parliaments have corresponding friendship groups. Depending on the partner country or region, the subjects discussed at meetings with German friendship groups vary quite widely. While discussions with

European partners often focus on support for European integration and on enlargement of the EU, in cases where parliamentary democracy is in its infancy in a partner country the main purpose is to assist the democratic forces in establishing stable parliamentary structures. Since the members of parliamentary friendship groups are not so tightly bound by diplomatic constraints as the government, they can state their case more openly, even on difficult and sensitive issues such as human rights. In this 16th electoral term there are 51 parliamentary friendship groups, a Berlin-Taipei Friendship Circle and special commissioners for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and with Moldova. Since many of the multilateral groups cover entire regions, such as Central America, West and Central Africa or the ASEAN countries, this means that the Bundestag maintains relations with almost all of the world's national parliaments. To intensify these contacts, the friendship groups can send delegations for talks in their respective partner countries and invite their counterparts to visit Germany in return.

www.bundestag.de/htdocs-e/international_relations

Conference of Speakers and Presidents of European Parliamentary Assemblies

Presiding officers of parliaments throughout the world are responsible for the administrative, organisational and technical matters that arise in the running of a modern parliament. The President of the Bundestag regularly attends meetings with his counterparts from other countries in the frameworks of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the G8 and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. These permanent consultations help to ensure that parliamentary life, which has an inherently national focus, takes on an international dimension. The ongoing development of conceptions of parliamentary democracy becomes a collective process. The annual meeting of the parliamentary presiding officers from the Member States of the EU is known in Euro-jargon as the "small" speakers' conference, while the biennial meeting of speakers and presidents from the 46 Member States of the Council of Europe is known as the "big" speakers' conference. The President of the European Parliament

takes part in both conferences. Invitations to both conferences are also extended to the speaker or president of the second chamber of bicameral parliaments, which means that chambers such as the Bundesrat in Germany and Austria, the British House of Lords and the Eerste Kamer in the Netherlands are also represented.

www.eu-speakers.org

The Conference of the Speakers of EU Parliaments in Budapest, 2005.



Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC)

The Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees is a parliamentary body at EU level. It comprises representatives of the European-affairs committees from the national parliaments of the EU Member States as well as representatives of the European Parliament. The body is the fruit of a conference of parliamentary

speakers and presidents from the EU Member States and the European Parliament that was held in May 1989, and its purpose is to strengthen the role of national parliaments. COSAC meets once every half-year as a rule for one and a half days. It is organised by the national parliament of the Member State holding the rotating presidency of the EU Council. The conference in the first half of 2007 will be hosted jointly by the German Bundestag and the Bundesrat. Originally

COSAC meeting in Vienna, 2006.



created as an informal forum, COSAC was upgraded on the adoption of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. The Protocol on the role of national parliaments in the European Union, which was annexed to the Treaty, specified that COSAC "may make any contribution it deems appropriate for the attention of the institutions of the European Union". It can examine proposals relating to the establishment of an area of freedom, security and justice and present its views on Union legislation, particularly as regards the application of the subsidiarity principle.

www.cosac.eu

Parliamentary assemblies

Parliamentary foreign policy

Although foreign policy has traditionally been a government responsibility, the increasingly close interaction between states and international organisations makes it more incumbent than ever on national parliaments to play an active role on the international stage.

The Basic Law lays down that the Bundestag is to appoint a Committee on Foreign Affairs and thereby involve itself in matters of foreign policy. The need to promote democracy and human rights, peace, stability and intercultural dialogue also makes it increasingly imperative for parliaments and international organisations to establish and maintain contacts and to share their experience with each other. In these areas, parliaments play an important role as disseminators of information to civil society.

These tasks in the realm of parliamentary foreign policy are performed in the parliamentary assemblies of various international organisations. In Europe, such bodies include the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU).

The process of internationalisation demands particular vigilance on the part of national parliaments. The more decisions are taken internationally, the more powers will accrue to national governments, making it all the more difficult for

national parliaments to exercise effective scrutiny. For example, if heads of government have taken unanimous decisions, a national parliament is almost automatically put under pressure to consent to the decision, which may have resulted from some very hard bargaining.

The parliamentary assemblies integrate parliaments into decision-making processes and provide excellent independent forums for parliamentarians from all parts of the world to engage in dialogue, share experience and exchange views. Moreover, in many cases they also serve as incubators for new ideas and new areas of political action. Back in the early 1990s, for instance, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly was already postulating the need to involve the countries of the former Eastern bloc in future security strategies.

The Bundestag sends delegations with Members of Parliament from all political groups to parliamentary assemblies, which normally take place once or twice a year. Committees are formed to discuss points of detail; the full assembly debates, passes resolutions and adopts declarations. The results are intended to influence not only the work of national parliaments but also that of governments.

**www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/internat
(Interparliamentary organisations)**

In 2004 the Bundestag played host to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.



Seat of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

Pioneering work for Europe

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

In 1949 the Council of Europe was founded with the aims of safeguarding the peace and unity of Europe and promoting cooperation among European States. It was the first intergovernmental political organisation established in Europe after the Second World War. Alongside the Committee of Ministers, which can adopt binding decisions by unanimity, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) acts as a generator of initiatives and a consultative body.

Its work is characterised by tough negotiating and lively debates, covering all aspects of European issues other than defence policy. When the Assembly is in session, the Representatives deal with topical issues and social problems that require pan-European action. The Assembly is also frequently described as the 'democratic conscience' of Europe.

With delegations from the 46 Member States of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly is the largest political forum of its type in Europe. The Assembly comprises 315 Representatives and the same number of substitutes. Each Member State, depending on its size, sends between two and eighteen Representatives to the quarterly plenary part-sessions. The work of the Assembly plays a vital part in efforts to achieve the aims of the Council of Europe. Its initiatives guide the work of the Committee of Ministers and have led to a number of interna-

tional conventions in areas such as human rights, promotion of the rule of law, protection of people's social and economic rights and the preservation of cultural identity and diversity in Europe. To date the Council of Europe has formulated some 200 conventions. The best-known of these is the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), which was adopted in 1953.

The contribution of PACE to the achievement of the aims of the Council of Europe, however, is not confined to the European level. Its Representatives also pass on ideas to national parliaments, thereby initiating political processes. Another important function of the Assembly lies in its implementation of the monitoring procedure, which means that it checks whether Member States are fulfilling the obligations they assumed on accession.

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The Palais d'Iéna in Paris, seat of the Assembly of WEU.



Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Copenhagen.



Sitting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Paris, May 2006.



112th general assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Manila, capital of the Philippines, in 2005.

Western European Union (WEU)

The Assembly of WEU is the only European inter-parliamentary body with contractually enshrined powers in the field of security and defence policy. It was founded in 1954 along with Western European Union, and today it serves primarily as a platform for discussions among national parliamentarians on matters relating to the European security and defence policy (ESDP) of the EU. Besides the ten full member countries, 27 other European countries send a number of delegates commensurate with the size of each country to the Assembly, which comprises some 400 members. At its twice-yearly sessions in Paris, the Assembly discusses the activity reports compiled by the Council of WEU and the reports from its own committees and formulates recommendations to the Council and submits an annual report on security and defence issues. In the Maastricht Treaty, the EU requested WEU “to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications”. The Assembly has adopted the additional designation “Inter-parliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly” to emphasise its role as a parliamentary monitor of EU activities in this area.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

In 1990 the Heads of State or Government of the Participating States in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) expressed their wish to establish a Parliamentary Assembly. One year later, the Madrid Declaration established the Assembly as a formally independent component of the CSCE. Since then, its 317 parliamentarians from the 56 Participating States have been meeting to adopt recommendations and initiate measures designed to enhance the security of Europe. In 1995, the OSCE was created as the successor organisation to the CSCE, since the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe had led to a change in its function. The OSCE works for stability and security throughout Europe by promoting close cultural and economic cooperation among the Participating States. It takes part in conflict prevention and management, monitors respect for human and civil rights and supports the establishment and development of democracy. In order to perform these tasks, the delegates to the Parliamentary Assembly participate in election-observation missions, symposia and regional conferences in addition to their parliamentary work.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly differs from the other interparliamentary bodies. It was created in 1955 as the North Atlantic Assembly, a legally independent organisation of parliamentarians working in the field of security and defence policy; in other words, it is not an official NATO institution founded by the governments of the member countries. In the course of time, however, wholehearted cooperation has developed between NATO and the Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly sees itself as a link between the interests of the national parliaments and the NATO institutions. Its aim is to promote cooperation among the governments of member countries in security and defence matters so that they can contribute to peacekeeping and crisis management. At the half-yearly sessions, more than 300 delegates from the 26 member and 13 associate-member countries of NATO discuss topical issues with security implications. Even before 1989, the Assembly maintained contacts with parliamentarians from countries of Central and Eastern Europe, thereby making an important contribution to opening NATO to new members and realigning its remit.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the oldest and the only worldwide association of parliamentarians. Its history stretches back to 1889, when it was founded for the purpose of bringing members of parliaments together and influencing governments with a view to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This made it a parliamentary forerunner of the League of Nations and the United Nations. The IPU promotes experience-sharing and exchanges of views between parliamentarians and campaigns for a better understanding of the working methods of representative institutions. In this way, it serves to propagate the parliamentary ideal. Through numerous projects, it supports the consolidation of young democracies and promotes respect for the human rights of members of parliament. At its Assemblies, it examines current problems, adopts resolutions on them and calls on national parliaments to address the issues concerned. Individual parliamentarians are not IPU members; its membership consists entirely of national parliaments, although the latter do send a certain number of delegates. At the present time, the IPU has 143 member parliaments and seven associate members, whose representatives meet in Assembly twice a year.

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OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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Inter-Parliamentary Union

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www.ipu.org



EMPA sitting in Rabat, 2005.

Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)

The aim of EMPA is to support the Barcelona Process in the parliamentary domain. The process was launched in 1995, since when it has been the institutional framework for the Mediterranean policy of the EU. It is based on political, econom-

ic, social and cultural cooperation on a basis of equality among the participating countries with a view to promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean region.

The membership of EMPA, which was set up in 2004, comprises parliamentarians appointed by the parliaments of the EU Member States, the European Parliament and the parliaments of the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean. EMPA has 240 members – 120 from the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean and 120 from the national parliaments of the EU Member States and the European Parliament. It meets once a year to discuss current political, economic and social issues relating to the Mediterranean region. The long-term aim is the establishment of an EU-Mediterranean free-trade area by 2010.

www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

For centuries, the countries bordering the Baltic Sea coast have maintained trade links, out of which has grown a common cultural identity. To promote cooperation, parliamentarians from all the Baltic coastal countries formed the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in 1991. It functions as a discussion forum and regards itself as a parliamentary enhancement to the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. Through joint and coordinated efforts, it pursues such goals as the resolution of environmental problems, the prevention of shipping accidents and the establishment of uniform maritime safety standards.

At the annual conferences, delegates debate topical issues and draw up proposals for presen-



Members of the Standing Committee, 2006.

tation to the Council of the Baltic Sea States, to the governments of the member countries and to national and regional parliaments.

www.bspc.net

Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Pabsec)

PABSEC sitting in Tirana, 2005.



Founded in 1993 as the parliamentary arm of the BSEC, the organisation for economic cooperation in the Black Sea region, Pabsec pursues the aim of promoting economic, political and cultural cooperation among the peoples of the region with a view to making the Black Sea region, as part of the new architecture of Europe, into an area of stability, prosperity and peace. The Parliamentary Assembly comprises 70 parliamentarians, drawn from all eleven countries of the BSEC. The European Parliament and the parliaments of France, Germany and Israel have been granted observer status.

www.pabsec.org



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for Europe and the
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The European Ombudsman

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www.publications.europa.eu

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Autonomous EU bodies

European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR)

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www.ear.europa.eu

European Agency for the Management of Operational Borders (Frontex)

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European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)

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European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA)

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European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (EMA)

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European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

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European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

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www.emcdda.europa.eu

European Railway Agency (ERA)

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European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)

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www.eumc.europa.eu

European Training Foundation (ETF)

Villa Gualino
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www.etf.europa.eu

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

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European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)

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European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

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European Environment Agency (EEA)

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Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO)

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Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market – Trade Marks and Designs (OHIM)

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www.oami.europa.eu

Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CdT)

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European Police College (CEPOL)

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European Police Office (Europol)

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Fax: (+32) 2 732 7370
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www.europa.saarland.de

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INFORMATION MATERIAL

Publications and CD-ROMs on the work of the German Bundestag are published by the Public Relations Division. The wide range of material includes the new brochure on the international relations of the German Bundestag (in German) as well as the Facts and Insights brochures and the Insights and Outlook leaflet in various languages.



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Requests for basic information material in English may be made online on the following web page:
www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/info/basic_english

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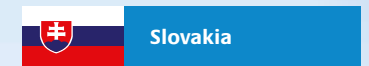
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www.psp.cz

Forthcoming elections in EU Member States

2007

4 March	Estonia	4 years
18 March	Finland	4 years
22 April/6 May	France (presidential)	5 years
16 May	Netherlands	4 years
by 17 May	Ireland	5 years
10 and 17 May	France (parliamentary)	5 years
24 June	Belgium	4 years

2008

Spring	Greece	4 years
Spring	Malta	5 years
Spring	Spain	4 years
Autumn	Lithuania	4 years
Autumn	Romania	4 years
Autumn	Slovenia	4 years



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www.coe.int

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www.worldbank.org

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www.imf.org

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Homepage of the German
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Homepage of the European
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A German citizens' initiative
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Website of the European
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initiative

25 March 2007

Fifty years of the Treaties of Rome



In 2007, Europe will be celebrating a special birthday. On 25 March 1957 in Rome, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Treaty Establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). These treaties laid the foundations for the process of European unification and thus for today's European Union. Official events and public celebrations will take place throughout the EU to mark the Jubilee. On 25 March 2007, the European Council will gather in Berlin for an extraordinary summit of the Heads of State or Government. Web pages created specially for the occasion provide information on all aspects of the Jubilee: www.50-jahre.eu

1 January 2007

Accession of Bulgaria and Romania



On 1 January 2007, another two countries of the former Eastern bloc, Bulgaria and Romania, acceded to the European Union. The accession negotiations were completed in December 2004, and the Treaty of Accession was signed in April 2005. These accessions increase the population of the European Union by about 29 million. A total of some 480 million EU citizens live in what has now become a 27-member Union, reaching to the shores of the Black Sea. The European Commission provides information on the enlargement process on a dedicated website at: www.ec.europa.eu/enlargement



International conference entitled 'Bulgaria and Romania before accession to the EU', held in the Bundestag in June 2006.

EU enlargements, 1957 to 2007

Since the signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957, a total of 21 countries have acceded to the union of European States. The territory of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) was also added as a result of German reunification in 1990.

1957: Founding members, signatories of the Treaties of Rome

Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands

1973: Northward enlargement

Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom

1981: Southward enlargement I

Greece

1986: Southward enlargement II

Portugal and Spain

1990: Reunification of Germany

Accession of the territory of the former GDR

1995: Northward and eastward enlargement

Austria, Finland and Sweden

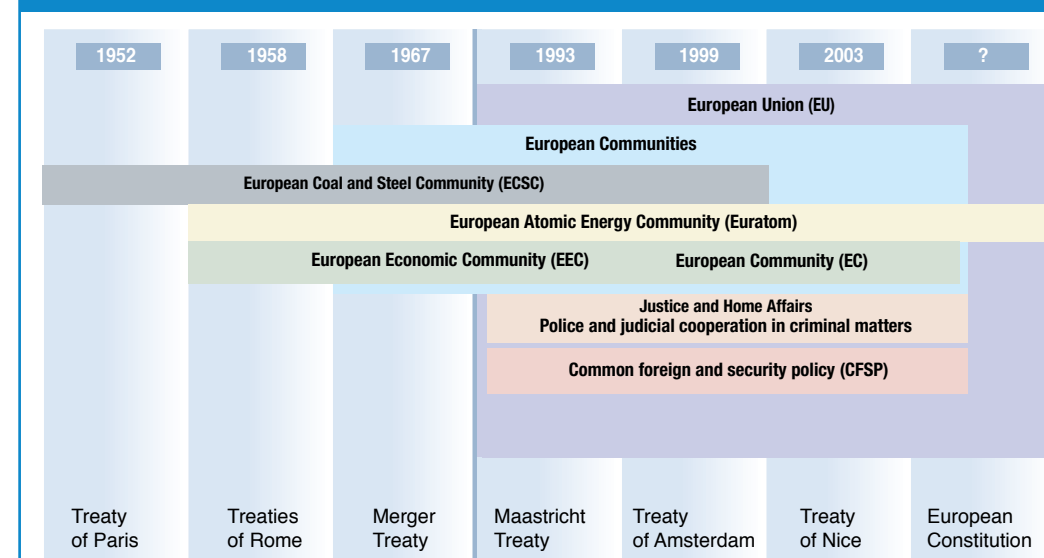
2004: Eastward enlargement I

Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia

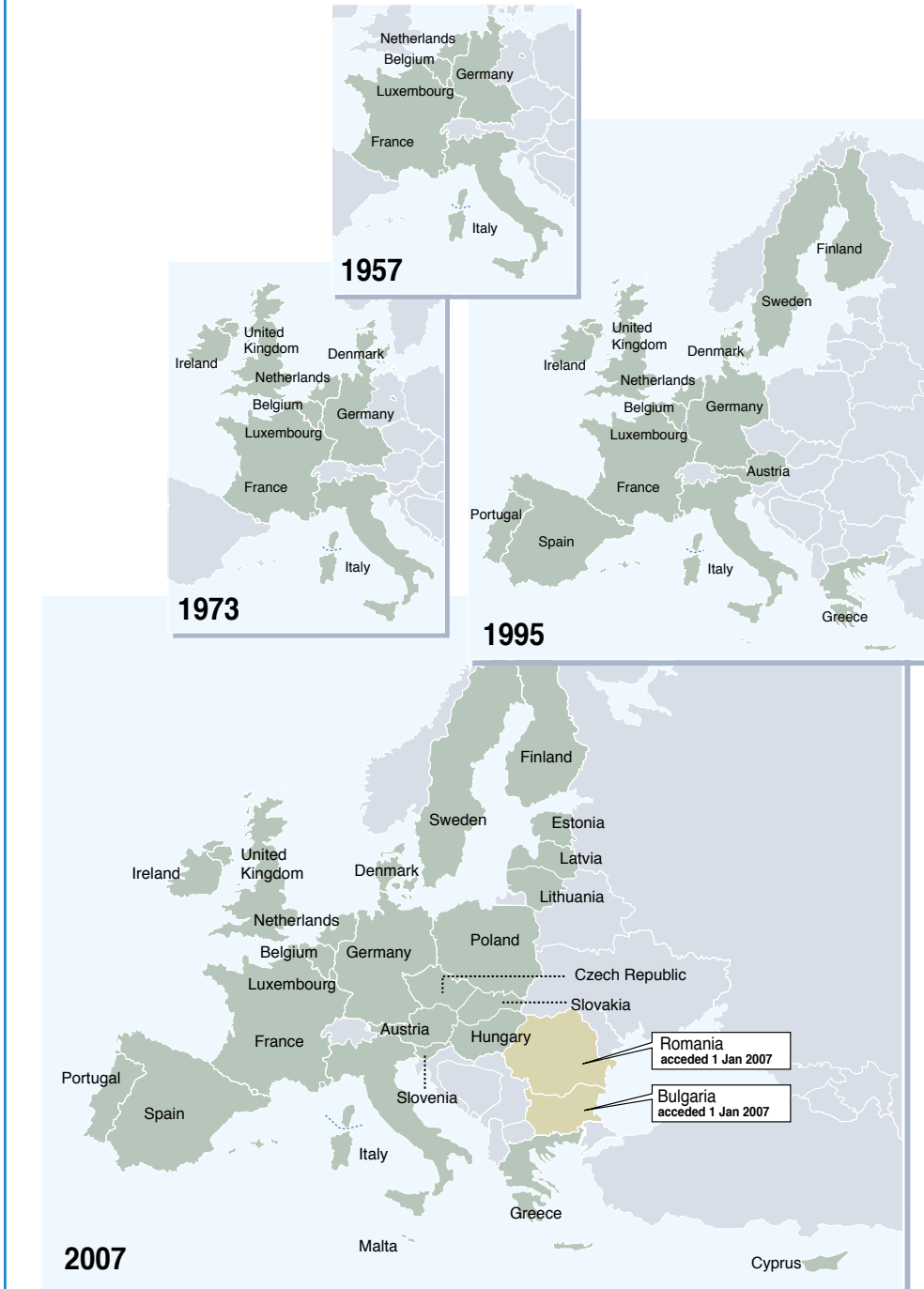
2007: Eastward enlargement II

Bulgaria and Romania

Towards the European Union – treaties and structures



Development of the European Union – Member States



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