

European Parliament Committees

MEPs spend most of their time working on committees debating and amending legislation before it is voted on. Each committee is made up of MEPs from each political group dependent on their size.

When a piece of legislation has been finalised, it is voted on by all 751 MEPs during a plenary session of the whole parliament.

The European Parliament has the following committees, Foreign Affairs - Human Rights - Security and Defence - International Development - International Trade - Budgets - Budgetary Control - Economic and Monetary Affairs - Employment and Social Affairs - Environment, Public Health and Food Safety - Industry, Research and Energy - Internal Market and Consumer Protection - Transport and Tourism - Regional Development - Agriculture and Rural Development - Fisheries - Culture and Education - Legal Affairs - Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs - Constitutional Affairs - Women's Rights and Gender Equality - and Petitions.



How can your MEP help you?

If you have specific questions or points to make about legislation before the Parliament, then you can contact your MEP.

An MEP has the ability to use his or her platform in the European Parliament to raise awareness. Formal questions can be tabled to the European Commission, the EU's civil service, which they are required to answer.



"A growing number of people believe that Europe cannot go on as it is. They do not believe that the choice is between 'more Europe' and 'no Europe'. They want a better Europe: a Europe that allows our nation states to cooperate freely, not a one size fits all superstate; a Europe which embraces the future – not one that

lives in the past; a Europe to meet the challenges of the 2050s, not the problems of the 1950s."

Syed Kamall is the leader of the European Conservatives and Reformists, the 3rd largest of 8 political groups in the European Parliament. He represents London and sits on the Economic and Monetary Affairs and International Trade Committees.

Ways to contact Syed:

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SYED KAMALL'S POCKET GUIDE

TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

What is the European Parliament?

The European Parliament is the largest transnational democratic institution made up of 751 MEPs, who represent around 500 million citizens from 28 different Member States.

The Parliament sits in Brussels and Strasbourg. Part of the Parliament's secretariat is also based in Kirchberg, Luxembourg.

The official seat of the Parliament is in Strasbourg, but its main work takes place in Brussels. Thus the European Parliament Members and staff have to travel 12 times a year for the 4 day Strasbourg plenary session.

Conservative MEPs have been campaigning for years to end the 'Strasbourg Circus', which costs tax payers approximately £150 million every year.

Although in the past it was merely consulted on legislative matters, since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, successive treaties have granted the European Parliament power to co-legislate with the Council of Ministers - representing the 28 governments of the EU - in more areas of EU law. This means it has a real ability to influence your lives, through the introduction of new laws, ranging from light bulb efficiency to how you buy a mortgage from a bank.

Critics point out that well under half of European voters (43.9%) bothered to vote for their MEPs in the last elections held May 2014. In the UK it was barely a third (34.19%). Furthermore, those who did vote were usually expressing a view about their national governments, rather than making a positive choice about the future of the EU.

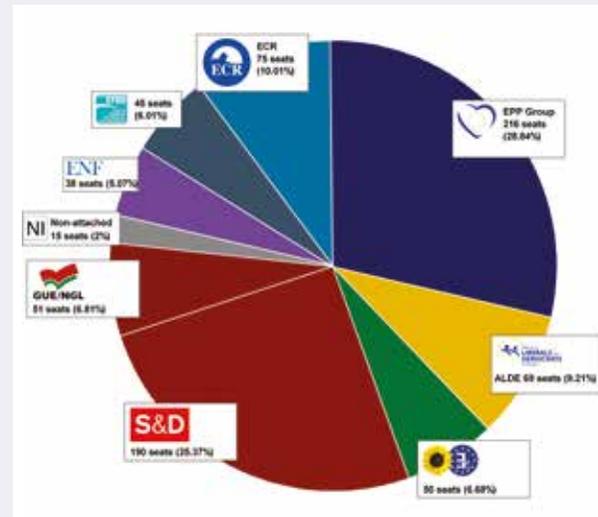
Where do MEPs come from?

MEPs are elected once every 5 years in elections taking place simultaneously across the EU. In the UK, MEPs represent a region, whereas in some other countries, MEPs represent the country as a whole.

Each Member State is allocated a certain number of MEPs depending on the size of a country's population. For this reason, Germany has the largest number of MEPs (96) with UK not far behind (73).

How do MEPs work together?

In the European Parliament, MEPs sit in different political groups depending on the political party they belong to in their home country. There are currently 8 groups, spanning the ideological spectrum.



Britain's Conservative MEPs sit in the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) as does the Ulster Unionist Party. Labour MEPs belong to the Socialists and Democrats Group (S&D) whilst the one remaining Liberal Democrat MEP sits with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE). UKIP MEPs are part of the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group (EFDD). The Green Party, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru are all part of the Greens/European Free Alliance Group (VERT/EFA). The Sinn Féin representative sits with the Confederation of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) and the Democratic Unionist Party MEP is not attached to any political group.

How does the EU make law?

