

# The EU legislative process

1

The Commission proposes a new law and sends it to the European Parliament and to the Council.

The Commission has the exclusive right to initiate a legislative process by proposing a draft of legislation to the other institutions. The proposal is forwarded simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council but also to all National Parliaments and, where applicable, to the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee. They are all asked to provide opinions to the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission.

2

The proposal is assigned to a Rapporteur in the European Parliament and to a Working Party of the Council.

The European Parliament process starts when the responsible committee elects a member of the European Parliament to act as their rapporteur, to be in charge of preparing a report of the Parliament's proposed changes to the Commission's text.

At the same time, the Council discusses the Commission's proposal within working parties. They consist of experts from the member states and chaired by the member state holding the six monthly Presidency of the Council meetings.

3

Vote of the Rapporteur's report and COREPER's work

The report prepared by the rapporteur is discussed, amended and voted on within the responsible parliamentary committee. The committee's report, amending the Commission's proposal and the amendments proposed by other relevant parliamentary committees, are then debated and voted on a plenary session.

Simultaneously, the working parties report to the representatives of the member states, COREPER, which prepares the decisions to be adopted by the Council of Ministers. They present a common 'negotiated' position, which is finalised taking into account the European Parliament position.

4

Interinstitutional negotiations ('trilogues')

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission often organise informal meetings (called trilogues) to seek the conclusion of an agreement at first reading 'negotiated'. The aim is to try to mediate and adjust the amendments to create compromise texts, often assisted by the Commission.

5

Co-legislators reach a compromise.

After the Council has formally adopted its position at first reading, it is sent to the Parliament, which has four months to react. The procedure for the second reading generally follows the same rules and practices of the first reading, with the difference that the text to be amended is the Council position at first reading and not the Commission's proposal. Amendments from the Parliament are allowed only in areas where the Parliament and the Council have differences of opinions. It is not allowed to modify the parts of the text that have already been voted on.

6

The proposal becomes law.

The final legislative act is signed by the Presidents and Secretaries-General of the European Parliament and of the Council. Then it is published in the Official Journal after legal control and translation in all EU official languages. The national process to transpose the European legislation into national law can then formally start.