

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Following the creation of the EEC and Euratom, the ECSC Common Assembly was expanded to cover all three Communities. With 142 Members, [the Assembly met for the first time in Strasbourg on 19 March 1958 as the 'European Parliamentary Assembly'](#), changing its name to 'European Parliament'; on 30 March 1962.

The first President of the EP was Robert Schuman (March 1958 - March 1960). Currently Hans-Gert Pöttering is a President of the EP.

Before direct election MEPs were appointed by each of the Member States' national parliaments. All Members thus had a dual mandate. The first direct elections by direct universal suffrage of the MEPs took place in 1979. The elections took place in nine member states with a turnout of 63 per cent.

The first extension of Parliament's budgetary powers has been under the Treaty of Luxembourg (1970). A second treaty on the same subject, strengthening Parliament's powers, was signed in 1975. The Single Act enhanced Parliament's role in certain legislative areas (cooperation procedure) and made accession and association treaties subject to its consent.

The Maastricht Treaty (1992) introduced the co-decision procedure in certain areas of legislation and extending the cooperation procedure to others. It gave Parliament the power of final approval over the membership of the Commission, which was an important step forwards in Parliament's political control over the European executive.

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) extended the co-decision procedure to 32 legal bases and reformed the procedure, putting Parliament as co-legislator on an equal footing with the Council.

The Nice Treaty (2000) extended the co-decision procedure to 37 legal base.

Currently the EP consists of 785 MEPs from 27 member states, a result of a total of five waves of enlargement. It works with 23 official languages, representing the interests of 492.8 million people.

The mandate of the current MEPs expires in June 2009. Next elections for the European Parliament will be held in the summer of 2009.

According to the Treaty of Lisbon due to be ratified by the Member States, the EP will have 750 MEPs plus its President. The Treaty extends the co-decision to 85 legal bases and to be called 'ordinary legislative procedure'. It proves a possibility to revoke delegated legislation.

The European Commission President will be elected by EP on basis of proposal of European Council that takes into account the elections of the European Parliament

National parliaments will have greater opportunities to be involved in the work of the EU, in particular thanks to a new mechanism to monitor that the Union only acts where results can be better attained at EU level (subsidiarity).

Together with the strengthened role for the European Parliament, it will enhance democracy and increase legitimacy in the functioning of the Union. One million citizens from a number of Member States will have the possibility to call on the Commission to bring forward new policy proposals.