



European Commission



May 2019

A more democratic Union

TOWARDS A MORE UNITED, STRONGER AND MORE DEMOCRATIC UNION

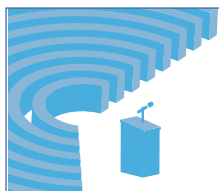


‘For the first time, a direct link has thereby been established between the outcome of the European Parliament elections and the proposal of the President of the European Commission... It has the potential to insert a very necessary additional dose of democratic legitimacy into the European decision-making process.’

Then candidate for European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, 15 July 2014

A COMMISSION PRESIDENT WITH A MANDATE FROM CITIZENS

Jean-Claude Juncker was the first Commission President to be elected through the ‘spitzenkandidaten’ process, where European political parties chose in advance their preferred candidate for the post and campaigned for his or her election. This pan-European process helped to bring the leaders of the EU Institutions closer to voters and closer to national political priorities. It strengthened the connection between the three institutions and helped them to agree common priorities, enhancing efficiency, effectiveness and democratic legitimacy.



Members of the Commission have taken part in over **2,000 debates** in the European Parliament since November 2014



Members of the Commission have had over **900 meetings with national Parliaments** since November 2014

The Juncker Commission has also built a close bond with national parliaments and the European Parliament. Over the past four years, Commissioners made more than 900 visits to national parliaments across Europe and took part in over 2,000 European Parliament debates.



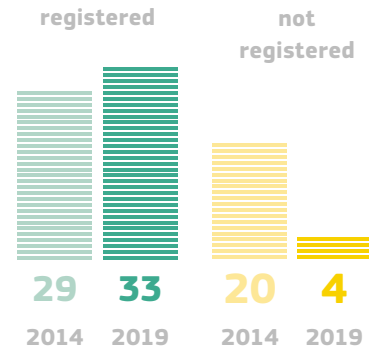
A GREATER SAY FOR CITIZENS IN POLICY-MAKING

Shaping legislation

When one million citizens take the time to support a proposal for legislation, the European Commission must listen. In total, this Commission registered 33 Citizens' Initiatives, 14% more than the previous Commission. The **European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)** is a tool which has more wind in its sails since the start of the Juncker Commission. The Commission discusses every request at political level and takes a flexible approach to allow the maximum number of initiatives to be registered to encourage citizens' use of this valuable tool.



More European Citizens' Initiatives registered



The Juncker Commission has turned the promise of **European Citizens' Initiatives** into reality, proposing legislation based on a European Citizens' Initiative for the first time, with the revision of the EU Drinking Water Directive



Our proposal will:

- Improve access to water for all
- Upgrade drinking water standards
- Increase transparency to empower consumers
- Help the fight against plastic waste

Making legislation

The Juncker Commission has **opened up the policy-making process**, with citizens now able to give their opinion at every stage, from before the pen is taken up until after the Commission lays down its pen and sends proposals to the legislators. The Commission has made it possible for citizens to shape EU policy through:

- ▶ enhanced transparency on early ideas
- ▶ extended public consultations on draft legislation
- ▶ online feedback tools to review existing laws



The Better Regulation Portal: a dedicated new web portal for providing feedback on EU policy



- 75,000** monthly visits
- Almost 980** Commission texts published for feedback
- 15,000** comments received so far

The Commission reaches out to citizens directly more often, through regular visits to Member States and by organising **citizens' dialogues** – which are town hall style meetings bringing together voters with Members of the Commission, Members of the European Parliament, national governments, local and regional authorities and civil society representatives. Under the Juncker Commission, almost 1.600 citizens' dialogues have taken place across the EU. Almost 190,000 people have now taken part directly, with millions more reached through media and social media coverage.

Citizens' dialogues in numbers

Since January 2015, as of 26 April 2019

close to
1,600
dialogues



190,000
participants



over **580** cities
in **27** Member States



288
million people reached
on traditional media



39
million impressions
on social media



1,6 million
people watched
live webstreaming

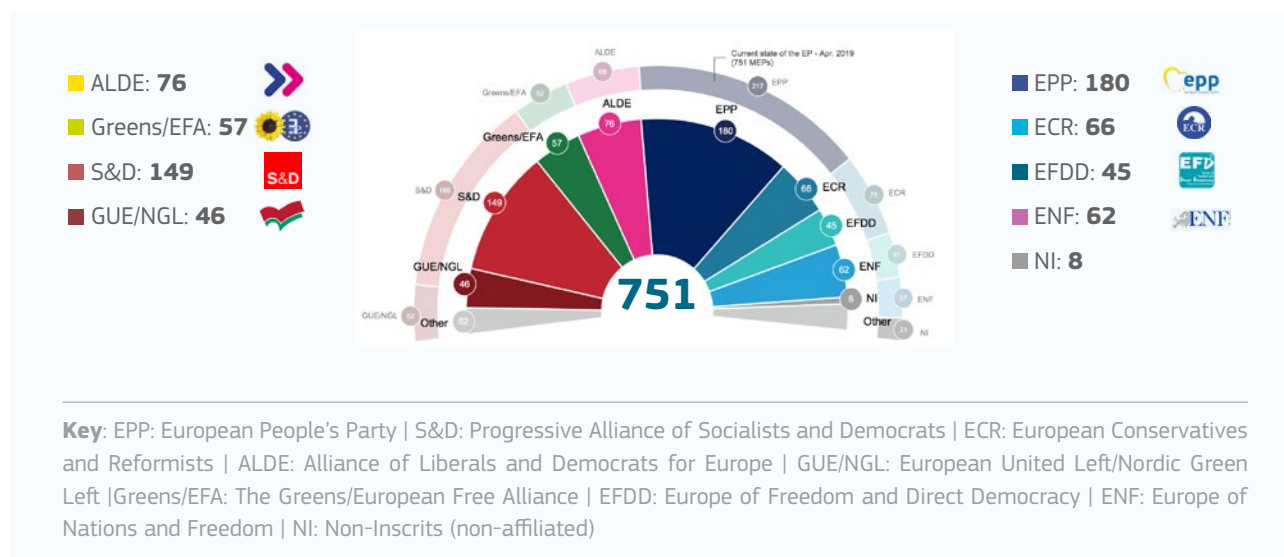


NEW FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES

The manipulation of European citizens' personal data for electoral gains is a reality. The Cambridge Analytica revelations only demonstrate the depth of the risk posed by modern technologies to the electoral process. Personal data must be protected and European citizens also have the right to know who stands behind online political advertising.

The EU has tightened the rules on European political party funding. Those parties that breach data protection rules can be subject to new sanctions, which could amount to 5% of the annual budget of the European political party or foundation concerned. In addition, the EU agreed to revise the rules for funding of European political parties, making the link between European parties and their national parties more transparent. For instance, the rules make funding dependent on the national parties displaying the political programme and logo of their European party on their websites. This way Europeans know exactly who they are voting for in the European elections.

The European Parliament is currently composed of eight political groups.



Source: European Parliament

IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY RULES FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

The Juncker Commission committed to **enhanced transparency** from day one. One of the Commission's first decisions was to make public all contacts between interest representatives (lobbyists) and the Commissioners. The introduction of this new system has made it easy for the public to see who is seeking to influence policy. As President Juncker said at the start of his mandate, we are throwing open the windows and doors of the Commission so the public can see what we are doing. This is why today there are almost 12,000 organisations and individuals registered in the Transparency Register, 5,000 more than when President Juncker took office.



All **meetings** of lobbyists with Commissioners, their staff and Director-Generals are now **made public online**.

The Commission has also adopted a new **code of conduct** for Commissioners, with the explicit agreement of the European Parliament. The new code of conduct sets clearer rules and even higher ethical standards and introduces greater transparency in a number of areas. This concerns for example Commissioners' travel expenses which are now being published online.

With the new code of conduct, President Juncker has also delivered on his proposal to allow Commissioners – all of them experienced and high-calibre politicians – to participate in the European elections campaign without having to take a leave of absence as in the past. Of course, when campaigning, Commissioners must continue serving European citizens by fully delivering on their institutional commitments.

