

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Motto: "Unit in Diversity"

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Europe's reconstruction began after the World War II. The Marshall aids which financial bases were drawn up by the Organization for European Economic Cooperation founded in 1948 was the important device of this. This organization was expanded by the plan of the Union of the French-German coal and steel production in 1950, and it turned into the basis of the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community. This international agreement was ratified in April 1951, in Paris, in the capital of France by Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. The foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community opened the road towards the integration in divided Europe hit by the war. What's more among the foundational parties there were former enemies. By the '50s Europe was divided into an eastern and a western block by the cold war but during these years neither in the western half of the continent was formed single resolution of the future.

In Rome, in March 1957, the initiating countries realised the time was come to tighten their cooperation. European Economic Community (EEC) was created by the sign and acceptance of the Treaty of Rome, and informally it was called "Common Market". Few years later in 1962 there was cooperation in the agricultural sphere — the common agricultural policy — it which the agriculture were raised to the level of the community politics. The political cooperation got stronger among the six member states: the so called Luxembourg Compromise provided veto for the member states in case the community decision would threat the vital interests of one of the countries. So this economic and political integration formed cooperation of the member states and the customs union was announced in 1968 by "The Six". The integration steps may seem to be long but it is necessary to take it into consideration that these were originated from the free will and free cooperation intention of the member countries, and longer debates, reconciliations of interests preceded the decisions in all questions according to the spirit of the European democracy. Thus Europe created the bases of a new international cooperation system.

After long preparatory negotiations, on 1st of January in 1973 Denmark, Great Britain and Ireland joined European Economic Community. Particularly Great Britain's inclination was very important in this decision, partly because the island was watching the political steps of the continental Europe always with mistrust and sometimes with suspiciousness from time to time. The decision of Great Britain for joining the integration was motivated by his economic interests as the emphasis was on the coordination of economic interests in the story of the European Community so far.

Beside the economic decisions from 1974 the claim was formulated increasingly more and more vigorous for forming a common European political headline. So the members of the community decided that the interested head of states and governments meet regularly in The European Council. European Regional Development Fund was formed in the interest of the additional deepening of the economic cooperation in 1975 which supports African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, too. The more and more closer economic cooperation requested the stability of currency of the member states so the necessity of the formation of a common currency was drawn up. European Monetary System was born from this aim in 1979 which basis becomes the ECU (European Currency Unit). At the same time the member states hold the election of the European Parliament which principle is that all countries sent his representatives general, direct, and secret way of voting to the European Parliament.

Meanwhile the community was enlarged. In 1981 Greece, in 1986 Spain and Portugal joined the integration.

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The changes of the 1989-90s — the changing of the regime in Eastern-Europe — made the member states rethink the idea of Europe. It was stated in 1992 in the Maastricht Treaty.

In 1992 Maastricht the European Economic Community was transformed into European Union, which cooperation is based on three pillars:

- cooperation of the European Community in the field of the single market, the transport, the market competition, the single currency, the labour, the education, the culture, the public health, the consumption, the research, the environment protection, the agriculture etc;
- the possibility of common actions in the field of foreign- and security policy;
- a police and judicial cooperation between the member states for internal security.

Austria, Finland and Sweden became members of the Union in 1995 but the candidate Norway rejected the joining by referendum. Thus fifteen countries belonged to the integration. The Amsterdam Treaty was signed in 1997 and came into existence in 1999 which regulated the civil rights, the conditions of security and cooperation, and confirmed the democracy in the member states of the Union.

In 1999 a decision was born on the single currency, the euro, which was become to use from the 1st of January in 2002. Thirteen countries announced their intention to join in 2000. Ten states met the conditions as the result of the differential treatment. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the Union in 2003 in Athens. So from the 1st of May in 2004 the integration consists of twenty-five member states.

The earlier fifteen member states 380,3 million inhabitants and \$ 9570 billion GDP (GDP per capita: \$25 166) but the joining ten new member states 74,8 million inhabitants and \$851,5 billion GDP (GDP per capita \$11 382)¹ brought himself into the integration.

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In 1950 German lowland politicians have suggested to establish a parliamentary assembly for control of the community's governing body. The Treaty of Paris gave minimum powers to the institution which was formed by delegated representatives of national parliaments. The founders agreed that a strong parliament established at Community level would have curtailed the legislature's powers of the Member States. Perhaps it could appear as a kind of alternative in opposition of the structure of nation-state. The initial limited operation is only spread out a consultation and control role, there was not mentioned to fill a classic parliamentary roles- legislation, legitimating, etc. From the first meeting in 1952, the Assembly and later the European Parliament fought a fierce battle to expand the powers. The most important requirements were that the delegation would create a body as to become a body with direct elections resulting. This effort was gained after more than twenty years. Members adopted a resolution on 30th of March 1962² that use the name "Parliament" instead of General Assembly.

Establishing the customs union of the Community redefined the budget of the integration and according to the first in 1970 and the second fiscal contract in 1975 it could not be accepted without the consent of the representatives. So it won a mandate for the first time that together with the council became decision-makers. The cause of the understanding of the Council was not possible the decision-making competence of the directly elected representatives, but rather because of the Member States failed to agree on a uniform election system. The leaders of the member countries agreed on the direct election of parliamentary representatives as a result of the debates and compromises in the EC summit in

¹ Népszabadság, 2004. április 30. p. 2.

² Laczkóné Tuka Ágnes: Európai Parlament – egy különleges transznacionális szervezet
Politikatudományi Szemle, 2004. 1-2. sz.

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July in 1976. So the first time in 1979³, then in every five years there are Euro-parliament elections, practically each Member State has a different system. The EU parliament is a unicameral parliament where the representatives win their mandate with direct voting.

The increase the manpower of the euro- representatives are below:

January 1958	142
January 1973	198
January 1979	410
January 1981	434
January 1986	518
January 1994	567
January 1995	626
June 2004	732 ⁴

According to the Nizza Treaty it changed into 736 in 2009.

Members' term of office is five years, general, secret and proportional elections or in regional level (in Belgium, Italy and Great Britain) or at the national level (in Austria, Denmark, Spain, France, Luxembourg, etc), or possibly mixed scheme (in Germany) obtained out their term. Every 18 years of age citizen has the right to vote, and can not be any discrimination among the electorates. It is interesting that in Belgium, Greece and Luxembourg voting is compulsory. Since 1993 when the Maastricht Treaty came into existence, the Union's citizens, if they live in another EU country, then they can vote in their country of residence.

The Euro-MPs per country in 2004, a change in 2009 under the Treaty of Nice and the turnout in elections held in 2004:

COUTRYS	PEOPLE	%
Belgium	24, (22)	no data
Czech Republic	24, (22)	29%
Denmark	14 (13)	39,4%
Germany	99, (96)	40%
Estonia	6, (6)	26,7%
Greece	24, (22)	70%
Spain	54, (50)	46%
France	78, (72)	42%
Ireland	13 (12)	50,2%
Italy	78, (72)	59%
Cyprus	6, (6)	71,2%
Lithuania	9 (12)	39,4%
Latvia	13, (8)	41%
Luxembourg	6, (6)	no data
Hungary	24, (22)	38%
Malta	5, (5)	82%
Netherlands	27, (25)	39%
Austria	18, 17	40%

³ Navracsics Tibor: Európai belpolitika, Korona Kiadó, Bp., 1998

⁴ Id. mű: p. 102.

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Poland	54, (50)	20,7%
Portugal	24, (22)	37%
Slovenia	7, (7)	26%
Slovakia	14, (13)	20%
Finland	14, (13)	41%
Sweden	19 (18)	29,2%
Great Britain	78, (72)	41,2% ⁵
Romania	-, (33)	
Bulgaria	-, (17)	

The last elections held in 2004 also demonstrated that the indifference and discontent citizens voted. Even the half of the electives went to the electoral polls. What could be the cause of indifference? In response, we can mention that the parliament does not have strong powers, such as national legislatures. What it actually has, is only enforced indirectly. Perhaps an answer can be that the Union representatives will not deal with real problems of the Union, but operate for their own political survival, arguing on semblance problems. And also arise in that the real political centre is the Committee for which the Parliament is not a lot of impact. The majority of decisions still remain intergovernmental.

The election also confirmed that the voters intended domestic political purposes for their votes as a "war" on the national governing forces. Governor forces of the Austrian and Dutch are drawn about the results than the government parties were defeated. But the anti-EU parties added to the parliament, such as Polish Self-Defence Party, or other Euro sceptic parties. The enlarged and the Parliament of the Union of 25 member countries has been politically colourful, and divided. The status of the euro-MPs (immunity, incompatibility etc) is similar to that of members of parliament of each Member State. The house rules give orientation for this. It is not always incompatible with the existence of a dual mandate when a MP is a member of both the European and the national parliaments. On the other hand it is no longer dominant which state elected the representative, as he will appear in the judicial work linked political party. The MPs belong to parties - such as socialist people's party, liberal, etc. - and to non-national fractions. The house rule strengthens that, the operation and equipment supply is installed to the party's fraction. It also encourages independent representatives to join party fractions. The Euro-MPs — seems — indeed to have surpassed the national belief, and even the traditionally opposing political forces are surprisingly often vote together. The most hardworking MPs of the previous cycle (1999-2004) were the Netherlands and Luxembourg while the Irish and the Italians were the least diligent.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PARLIAMENT

The structure consists of the following key elements:

- party fractions
- committees
- senior officials
- office
- Conference of Presidents

Party fractions

In the European Parliament- similar to the national legislature- the fractions are the basic unit within which the MPs conduct their activities. Since the establishment of the parliament the principle is applied that the more representatives of the countries form a group, the less representative can form it. Today the fraction has to contain representatives from several

⁵ Népszabadság, 2004. július 14

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states, but one MP can only belong to one fraction of all. If a group is created by politicians of two states, then at least 23 people, if three state representatives, then 18 people, and if four or more state representatives sit in one fraction, it needs to be a minimum of 14 members.⁶ Of course, independent representatives also work in the parliament; they do not belong to a single fraction. In fact, one of the three political groups has emerged according to operation so far, the Christian Democrats, socialists and liberals. They have already been involved in the work since the formation of parliament and usually these three fractions are the largest, too. Nowadays their activity is moving forward fluently, the searching and forming of consensus has determining importance.

The manpower of fractions from 1999 to 2004:

	1999	2004 ⁷	2009
European People's Party	232	278	265
European Democrats			
Party of European Socialists	175	199	184
Liberals and Democrats	53	67	84
Alliance for Europe			
European United Left	50	39	35
North Green Left Party			
Greens / European Free Alliance	45	41	55
Union for Europe of the Nations	22	27	-
Democracy and Diversity of Europe	17	-	30
Independents	32	15	28
Other	-	66	56
<i>Total</i>	<i>626</i>	<i>732</i>	<i>736</i>

The formation of the fraction is announced by the President of the parliament indicating the name of the members of the group name, the group name, and the elected presidency of the fraction. The new President of the fraction will be the member of the Conference of Presidents. It is relatively easy to create a political group and representatives also have the option to join another political group or independents. This often happens in the European Parliament, so the group size can vary inside a cycle.

Before voting in the plenary session political parties according to their political ideology examine the reports of the parliamentary committees and often submit amendments. In addition to they have a significant role to determine the agenda of the plenary sessions, and to choose the current questions which are the basic of the agenda of the meetings. In general the fractions have a major role in organizing of working, in addition to that: they identify working areas of the committees, they get the opportunity to comment, influence commission of the rapporteur⁸ they have self-administration and budgets.

The work of the MPs is determined by the principle of free mandate, meaning no one can reject them. This affects the votes, there is no mandatory discipline, a MP can vote for the other fraction, perhaps his vote may be determined by national origin.

Parliamentary Committees:

The Parliament can create permanent, temporary, and committees of inquiry. The number of permanent committees is 17. All committee appoint a president and 1-3 vice presidents (their presidency control the committee) and also has a

⁶ Laczkóné Tuka Ágnes: id. mű: p. 57.

⁷ Népszabadság 2004. július 20. p. 3.

⁸ One representative's duty is always the preparation and writing of committee reports. He is the rapporteur of the topic. The Rapporteur is chosen by the Committee on the basis of the political negotiation between groups selected. Other committees can be involved in shaping the report, then they have to identify a Rapporteur

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secretariat.

The parliamentary committees:

- Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy Committee
- Budget Committee
- Committee on Budgetary Control
- Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee
- Economic and Financial Committee
- Legal and Internal Market Committee
- Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy Committee
- Committee of Employment and Social Affairs
- Environment, Health and Consumer Protection Committee
- Agriculture and Rural Development Committee
- Fisheries Committee
- Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee
- Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport Committee
- Development and Co-operation Committee
- Constitutional Affairs Committee
- Women's rights and gender Equality Committee
- Petitions Committee.

The committees responsible for:

- Form an opinion on the matters to be discussed in parliament session, proposals
- Participate in legislative work
- Monitor and report to the commissioners
- Initiate investigations
- To cooperate with the Commission DGs
- Creating connections to lobbying organizations
- Collaborate with national jurisdictions "sister committees"
- To receive the representatives of motions, proposals for decision

The political fractions appoint members of the committee and they are elected on the plenary sessions. The committees have to reflect the political and national composition of the parliament. But of course, a large fraction -the people's party, the socialist-influence the Commission's allocation of seats. The committees are well-functioning labour unions, their precise and accurate presentation include the referred legislation environment, the list of the support / opposition representatives and minority opinions.

The executive officers of parliament. The President, Vice-Presidents and Quaestors. The Office.

The Presidents of the European Parliament:

Robert SCHUMAN	1958-1960
Hans FURLER	1960-1962
Gaetano MARTINO	1962-1964
Jean DUVIEUSART	1964-1965
Victor LEEMANS	1965-1966
Alain POHER	1966-1969

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Mario SCELBA	1969-1971
Walter BEHRENDT	1971-1973
Cornelis BERKHOUWER	1973-1975
Georges SPÉNALE	1975-1977
Emilio COLOMBO	1977-1979
Simone VEIL	1979-1982
Pieter DANKERT	1982-1984
Pierre PFLIMLIN	1984-1987
Lord PLUMB	1987-1989
Enrique Baron CRESPO	1989-1992
Egon KLEPSCH	1992-1994
Klaus HANSCH	1994-1997
José Maria Gil ROBLES	1997-1999
Nicole FONTAINE	1999-2002
Pat COX	2002-2004
Josep BORELL	2004-2007
Hans –Gert POETTERING	2007-2009 ⁹

At present the Presidents of the European Parliament is Jerzy BUZEK until the summer of 2012.

The President, the Vice-President and Quaestors are elected for half of the five-year parliamentary term, for two and a half years. Thus in the half part of the cycle new officers are elected. The President directs the activities of the parliament and organizes a significant proportion of its activity. He presides over the plenary meetings, office meetings and the Conference of Presidents. He represents the parliament in all international matters and other international forums. His work is helped by employees under his own personal support team. The task of Vice-presidents, 14 are chosen, are coordinating and protocol. The parliament elects five people for Quaestors. The Quaestors deal with administrative and financial matters directly affecting the MPs.

The Office (Büro) is the directorate of organizational operation of the Parliament. It is responsible for the implementation of the budget, as well as administrative, personnel and organizational affairs. It comprises the President and the Vice President. The Quaestors take part with consultative rights in the work of the Office. It makes decisions by majority vote, in case of tied vote, the vote of the President decides.

Conference of Presidents

The President, the chairmen of the factions, and two representatives with powers of advisory who do not belong to any political groups consist of to the Conference of Presidents. Its decisions must be taken only by consensus. Its tasks include defining the political agenda and meeting time, before the most important decisions conduct the necessary consultations, prepare decisions, budget proposals coordination, personal decisions based preparation, determine the competence and the members of the committees and parliamentary delegations in number and the division of the chamber meetings in the council. It plans and discusses the Parliament's annual legislative program; monitors the development of intra-EU inter-institutional relations, runs the structure of the house committee.¹⁰

⁹ European Parliament

Európai Parlament Tájékoztatási Irodája, Bp. 2003.p. 43.

¹⁰ Its task is similar more or less to the task of the Committee of the Hungarian Parliament

PARLIAMENT'S POSITION

The European Parliament seats in Strasbourg and holds the plenary session not only in this city but also in Brussels and Luxembourg. This has historic reasons. These are the three cities where the European institutions have been since their creation. Strasbourg as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation in Europe became the seat of the Council of Europe. Since 1952 the European Parliament holds meetings in the vast majority. In the 1997 Protocol to the Treaty of Amsterdam is stated: "The European Parliament seat in Strasbourg where the twelve plenary sessions, including the budget session are hold. Additional plenary sessions are located in Brussels. The European Parliament shall meet in Brussels. The European Parliament Secretariat and offices remain in Luxembourg". However from practical considerations a certain number of officials and the European Parliament's political groups of staff work in Brussels. The twelve-week sessions means one week and five-days a week. The plenary sessions are effective only if at least one-third of the euro members are present.

Nearly 3 500 employees work under the direction of the General Secretariat to carry out the Parliament's work effectively. The staffs are selected on the basis of competitions in all EU countries. The political groups also have a team of employees. The Parliament provides office space equipped to the representatives both in Brussels and Strasbourg. The representatives have the right to maintain their own office, which will be reimbursed. In addition to the Parliament pays its staff members as well. The members of the legislature may apply secretaries, advisers, assistants to assist in their work. Each representative gets a fixed amount, which he manages and determines the number of employees. The languages of all member countries can be used as the official, so a significant proportion of the staff is translators and interpreters. In the last legislative cycle, the operation of the Parliament cost 2,5 Euros per year and per person for the inhabitants of the Union, or it absorbed 1% of the Union's total budget.

The authority of the Parliament:

The authority of the European Parliament has been growing since its formation. From the beginning advisory authorization - The Council could have applied the will of Parliament, but it wasn't compulsory - until the present days, when it is entitled to significant authorities.

Its „rise” in competence is only relative as it can only make its decisions with other institutes. As every parliament, the European Parliament has decision competency in several fields:

- legislator authority
- budget authority
- control authority

The legislator authority:

The Parliament makes the legislation of the Union with the Council. The ordinary legislation process is the co – decision. It makes the decision of the Parliament and the Council to be the same weight, and so they together decide the bills of the Commission. The support and the final approval of the Parliament are necessary. The European Parliament can never make an act on its own, so its authority is not as protected as the national parliaments' authorities are.

The legislation usually takes the following the process:

The European Commissions presents a proposal to the Parliament in the matter of a question. A parliamentary committee with the proper authority in the case has the task to make a report and to select the rapporteur, who presents it. The proposal is also sent to other committees for their opinion. When these committees have formed their opinions in the current subject, they hand it to the selected committee – The representatives and committees asked for their opinion can send modification proposals made by rapporteur to the report layout, that later the acting committee accepts with modifications. – The political fractions examine the report according to their own orientations.

Finally the report is discussed during the plenary meeting. At this time the acting committee, the political fractions or the limited number of representatives can present modification proposals. The Parliament decides by voting

The co-decision:

This method has on, two or possibly three readings. It serves the purpose to strengthen the work relationships between the European Parliament, the Council, members of the legislation and the European Commission.

- The European Commission presents a proposal
- The European Parliament makes its standpoint according to the report of the Committee acting in the matter: - in most of the cases it changes the Committee's suggestion with modifications. This is the first reading of the act layout.
- The Council of Ministers accepts the modifications made by the Parliament, and so the proposal can be considered accepted, or the Council modifies that, with the final goal of making the common standpoint. – With the suggestion of the acting committee, The European Parliament announces the second reading: with the votes of the absolute majority of the representatives it approves, declines or perhaps modifies the Council's opinion.
- The committee considers the suggestions and modifications of the Parliament and sends modified proposal forth the Council of Ministers. The Council can accept those modifications which were accepted by the qualified majority of the committee, but can only change it with unanimous voting.
- In the absence of consensus between the Parliament and the Council, a conciliatory committee calls the members of the Council and delegation of the European Parliament together for a maximum of six weeks. The composition of the delegation mirrors the composition of the legislation, made if fifteen representatives and its leader is parliamentary vice president. The reporter representative is always a member of it.
- In most of the cases the two sides come to a conclusion in form of a joint proposal.
- In a third reading the legislation is asked to validate this agreement. If they could achieve no conclusion, then the proposal is rejected.

THE BUDGETARY POWERS

The budget of the Union for expenditures has two parts. The so-called mandatory spending chapter serves the financing of the common agricultural policy. In this context, the European Parliament has the right to submit proposals in principle. If you want to constitute a change in the items, you can do so for the Council. If the proposal would increase the minimum amount of expenditure, the Council must support it by two-thirds majority. If the Parliament proposes a reduction in mandatory spending item, the Council can veto it by a two-thirds majority vote.

In relation to the non-compulsory expenditure the Parliament has full powers. The process is similar to the first: the Parliament proposes an amendment to the Council on items; the Council can reject the qualified votes. Then the Parliament can insist on its original proposal, and by the ratio of an absolute majority vote, make it part of the budget. The Council, in this case is not so "powerful" than mandatory spending.

The Parliament's budgetary power in practice reflects his political priorities. Each year in December, the Parliament sets out the following year's budget. The budget will come into force when signed by the Speaker of Parliament. Since 1986, the annual budget is the part of a longer-term finance of the draft. The Budget Committee shall prepare the budget proposal in consultation with other committees. The Parliament and the Council as a general rule, in two readings between May and December, discusses budget proposals of the European Commission in order to be able to convert their common position. The Parliament can refuse the budget proposal then the process must start again. Of course both the Council and the Parliament focus on cooperation.

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The composition of the budget in 2003:¹¹

- 46% agricultural subsidies
- 34,2% Structural Funds
- 6,1% internal policy purposes (research, social interaction, etc.).
- 5,5% maintain of institutions (1% for the operation of parliament)
- 8% use outside the EU (2,8% the preparation of expansion, support for candidates)

The budget is given by own resources of the member states after mutual agreement after consulting the European Parliament. The budget cannot exceed the 1,27% of the EU's total gross national product.

The sources consist of the following:

- One, calculated amount under the national economic development of the different member states
- A fixed percentage of VAT imposed on goods and services throughout the Union
- Duties collected in the Union's external borders,
- Other sources, eg. benefit from trade with Non-EU countries.

Parliament checks the implementation of the budget subject to the reports of the European Court of Auditors. In this work the Budget Committee is the main facilitator. Particular attention is paid to the various fund appropriations for the treatment, to prevent abuse.

Control function:

Ever since it was formed the Parliament has been striving for the expansion of its control activity. The body exerts democratic control over all the activities of the community. This process is similar to the corresponding jurisdiction of national parliaments, but it takes a long time for it to be complete. The control function can basically be linked to the executive power, i.e. to the Committee. It also has to be mentioned that the European Council also has executive functions, since the real "top organization" of the EU is the Council. In fact, controlling the Council which consists of national delegates is a lot more problematic than controlling the Committee. The members of the Committees lose their national affiliation and represent communal interests. For the facilitation and success of the control the Parliament may set up examining boards. It has already done several times and it is going to apply more. Often – due to enlargements. The Council presents the proposal for the president of the Committee to the Parliament. The Parliament decides for the candidate by secret vote and a simple majority.¹² The mandate of the Committee's President is for five years. If the representatives do not support the election of the Candidate, a might not vote for his person, then the Council has to put candidate. This is not an easy task for head of states and prime ministers of member states. There after the elected – president designates the commissioner candidates for the particular function (according to the present rule one country one commissioner). The commissioner candidates (27 people) are heard by the competent special committees of the Parliament, one candidate may be heard by more committees, too. The committees form their views about the personality of the candidates but they do not have a right of veto. The Parliament decides about the whole of the committee on one occasion with a simple majority vote. They cannot vote about a single commissioner candidate condemnatory only about the whole committee. Therefore in the case of the constitution and the acceptance of the Committee background deals, faction agreements, and the standpoint of special committees are extremely important. In 2004 a political battle emerged around the Italian candidate of the Barroso Committee- Rocco Buttiglione- as a consequence of which voting was post-

¹¹ European Parliament, id mű p. 22.

¹² On the 22 July 2004 the Parliament voted about José Manuel Durao Barroso, Portugal candidate president. 711 MPs voted from the 732. 413 voted 'yes', 251 voted 'no', 44 votes were invalid or handled the voting paper without voting. He followed Romano Prodi in this function.

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poned with the withdrawal of the Italian candidate and with putting forward a new one a new one the Parliament voted for the new committee elected for five years. Due to this fact the Parliament did not get legitimacy in time and the mandate of the new committee could only come into force after three weeks late.

As for the Council, it can be mentioned that the Secretary of state of the current president country make a speech at the Parliament's plenary session at the beginning of the cycle, drafts his plans and six months later- when the mandate is over- gives an account of what has been done. The members of the Council often take part in the Parliamentary sessions.

Motion of no confidence: motion of no confidence can be submitted by the support of the Parliament's representatives clear majority. 2/3 of the representatives' votes are needed for its success. In this case the Committee has failed. No Committee has failed so far during the history of the Union but the chance is there. The Parliament supervises the operation of the Committee, examines the reports submitted by the Committee which are in connection with legislation, budget, execution, and other policies.

A certain number of representatives, one of the factions or special committees can ask the Committee and the Council questions. They are discussed during debates in legislature.

Debates close with passing reductions. The Parliament is familiar with the institution of the "immediate questions' hour" where they ask the Committee and the Council a series of questions. The representatives can also ask the above mentioned institutions questions in writing and they receive replies to them in writing, too. The Board of the Council submits its program and bi-annual report to the European Parliament.

The European Parliament exerts a growing influence in the political community as a whole. One of the important segments is the Union's common foreign and security policy. The Treaty on European Union put the dimension of security into the foreign policy. A decision was taken to organize and set up a European rapid reaction military force in order to the community can more often exert to control over the prevention and liquidation of trouble spots in Europe.

The Council seeks the views of Parliament in the most important foreign policy issues and consults the policy followed. It makes regular contacts with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy High Representative within the framework of committee in foreign affairs, human rights, security and defence policy. This post is taken by currently Javier Solana¹³, Spanish politician. The Parliament last political debates in major international developments and decisions, these are closed by decisions, and they have major impact on the Union's common foreign policy.

For the acceptance of international treaties, conventions and the adaptation of new countries to the Union is needed the unanimous resolution of the members of the Parliament. Enlargement Commissioner of the Committee has to fully inform the representatives from the state of negotiations, for this it can issue recommendations, which should be considered.

The European Parliament has always paid great attention to the overall protection of human rights. Both the guide of the community's internal and the EU's external relations are defined by the situation of the human rights. Several times it happened that the Parliament did not support the cooperation of trade and financial with states where human rights have suffered violated. The Union under the Cotonou Convention, which concluded with 77 African and Caribbean countries, insisted on a "democracy paragraph," that contained the secure of human rights. In 1988 Parliament decided on the establishment of Saharov fee, in which every year it reward persons and groups who have formed a stand-out defence of human rights.

The European Parliament is one of the most important institutions of the United States in the EU. Its history so far has been the story of continuous power gain. At the beginning they met as a deliberative body, and gradually came to the legislation and the implementation of the extensive powers of control.

¹³ Solana was the foreign minister of Spain before this position.

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

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In the first time it met as a delegation body and today its members are directly elected in the member states, made up of representatives with legitimacy. Today it compacts 'euro fathers' of twenty-seven states and is known the further enlargement. It can be predicted that in the future will continue the broadening of its power, and more and more will approach the powers of national parliaments, even if this process will not be spectacular and fast.

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