


Powers and responsibilities of the European Parliament

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Powers and responsibilities of the European Parliament

Originally, the powers of the European Parliament were not the same for each of the three European Communities.

Under the terms of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the only power entrusted to the Common Assembly was the power of scrutiny over the executive body, the High Authority.

According to the first two articles of the Convention of 25 March 1957 on certain institutions common to the European Communities, parliamentary prerogatives were to be exercised by a single assembly, the European Parliamentary Assembly, which would subsume and replace the Common Assembly.

The Treaties of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) conferred greater powers on the Assembly, authorising it to exercise both powers of deliberation and scrutiny. It enjoys, more or less comprehensively, the traditional powers of a parliament: legislative, budgetary and supervisory.

The European Parliament traditionally played a consultative role in the drafting of Community acts. As European integration developed, the Assembly was called upon to intervene in the exercise of budgetary power (the Treaties of 1970 and 1975 amended certain budgetary provisions). The 1986 Single European Act strengthened the consultative powers of the European Parliament, and the 1992 Treaty on European Union increased its powers significantly. The European Parliament has three fundamental powers:

- the power to legislate,
- the power of the purse,
- the power to monitor the executive.

In addition, the European Parliament enjoys powers under the second and third pillars of the European Union. As well as the powers that it exercises together with the other Community institutions, the European Parliament plays a unique role in examining petitions submitted by any EU citizen and in appointing the European Ombudsman.