

## Composition of the European Economic and Social Committee and the ECSC Consultative Committee

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## Composition of the European Economic and Social Committee and the ECSC Consultative Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) consists of representatives of the various categories of economic and social activity in organised civil society, in particular representatives of producers, farmers, carriers, workers, dealers and craftsmen, professional occupations, consumers and representatives of the general public.

When it was established, the Committee consisted of 101 members [Article 194 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and Article 166 of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom)].

The number of members of the Committee has increased following each enlargement of the European Communities. On 1 January 1973, on the occasion of the first enlargement (Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom), the number was raised to 144. The second enlargement (Greece), on 1 January 1981, entailed the appointment of 12 new members, and, on 1 January 1986, the Committee was supplemented by a further 33 members (the third enlargement, to include Spain and Portugal). Following the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden, on 1 January 1995, the Committee comprised 222 members.

The 2001 Treaty of Nice, which entered into force on 1 February 2003, stipulated that the number of members of the Committee should not exceed 350. Declaration No 20 on the enlargement of the EU, annexed to the Treaty of Nice, provided for a linear adjustment in the number of seats, whereby the existing EU Member States would keep the same number of seats after the enlargements to 25 and 27 Member States. The number of Committee members was increased to 317 following the enlargement of 1 May 2004 to include 10 new Member States. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007 brought this number to 344, with the following distribution (Article 12 of the Act of Accession):

Austria	12
Belgium	12
Bulgaria	12
Cyprus	6
Czech Republic	12
Denmark	9
Estonia	7
Finland	9
France	24
Germany	24
Greece	12
Hungary	12
Ireland	9
Italy	24
Latvia	7
Lithuania	9
Luxembourg	6
Malta	5
Netherlands	12
Poland	21
Portugal	12
Romania	15
Slovakia	9
Slovenia	7

Spain	21
Sweden	12
United Kingdom	24

In the same way as the Constitutional Treaty, the Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007 and not yet in force, does not amend the maximum number of advisers, set by the Treaty of Nice at 350. However, the number of members for each Member State is no longer laid down by the Treaty; instead, it is stipulated that the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt a decision determining the Committee's composition, which shall be reviewed at regular intervals by the Council to take account of economic, social and demographic developments within the Union (Article 2, Point 246 of the Treaty of Lisbon).

### **Appointment**

Members of the EESC, known as advisers, are appointed by the Council for a term of four years. They may be reappointed.

As a result of the modifications made by the Treaty of Nice, the Council adopts by qualified majority the list of members drawn up in accordance with the proposals made by each Member State. Previously, each Member State submitted to the Council, which decided unanimously, a list containing twice as many candidates as there were seats allotted to its nationals.

The Council consults the Commission regarding the proposals made by the Member States. It may also seek the opinions of European organisations which represent the various spheres of economic and social activity concerned by the Community's activities.

### **Status of the members**

EESC members may not be bound by any mandatory instructions. They carry out their duties in complete independence, in the general interest of the Community.

In the performance of their duties, and during the course of their travel to and from the venues for meetings, members and deputies of the Committee enjoy the customary privileges, immunities and facilities, in accordance with Article 11 of the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Communities.

### **The end of the members' mandate**

The mandate of EESC members expires at the end of the four-year term, as fixed by the Council, at the moment that the Committee is replaced.

The mandate ends on resignation, removal from office, death, *force majeure* or should an incompatibility arise.

The duties of an EESC member are incompatible with those of a member of a government, of a national parliament, or of one of the Community institutions. A member may belong neither to the Committee of the Regions nor to the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank, nor may he/she be an official or other servant of the Communities.

### **The ECSC Consultative Committee**

The composition of the ECSC Consultative Committee had certain distinctive features.

Unlike the EESC, it was a joint body in that it comprised equal numbers of producers, workers and consumers and dealers (Article 18 of the ECSC Treaty).

Originally, the ECSC Consultative Committee consisted of 51 members — the Treaty provided for no fewer than 30 members and no more than 51. The ECSC Consultative Committee has increased in size progressively, following the accession of further Member States to the Community. The number of members, as a result of changes introduced in 1995, must be no fewer than 84 and no more than 108. For its last term, 2001–2002, it had 108 members.

Members of the ECSC Consultative Committee were appointed by the Council by a majority decision taken by its members, for a two-year term. Moreover, the appointment procedure did not involve the Member States: the Council designated the organisations representing producers and workers, between whom the seats to be filled were divided. The organisations were asked to draw up lists with twice the number of candidates as there were seats to be allotted. Appointments were made on the basis of these lists.

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