



The European Council



[The European Council](#)

The European Council is where the leaders of the member states of the EU meet. Starting as informal meetings between country leaders of the European Community in 1961, the meetings have become more formal over the years, culminating in the Treaty of Lisbon in which they got the status of an official institution of the EU, being called the European Council, not to be confused with the Council of the EU in which government ministers meet.



Composition

The European Council is composed of the Heads of State or Government of the member states, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The meetings are called Summits and are chaired by the President of the European Council.

Powers and functions

The European Council is the guiding body of the Union. It defines the overall policy goals of the Union. It also serves for strategic decision making, economic coordination and is an architect in constitutional affairs. A less obvious and unofficial function is that of European socialization: by having the leaders of each country rub elbows multiple times a year, cohesion is created.

Decision making

Decision making in the European Council is done by consensus. This often leads to package deals, wherein compromises are made on various issues at the same time.