



The banner features three logos at the top: the European Union flag, the ESSEDRA logo (with icons of a person, a leaf, and hands), and the Slow Food logo. Below the logos are the text 'This project is funded by the European Union', 'ESSEDRA Environmentally Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Rural Areas', and 'Slow Food® a project implemented by'. The main title 'Introduction to EU and CAP policy decision making process' is in white on a green background. Below it, 'ESSEDRA Policy Advocacy Event Sofia, 8-9 November 2013' is in red. At the bottom left is the logo for the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism, and on the right is a photograph of a green hillside with a herd of cows.

This project is funded by the European Union

ESSEDRA
Environmentally Sustainable Socio-Economic
Development of Rural Areas

Slow Food®
a project implemented by

**Introduction to EU and CAP policy
decision making process**

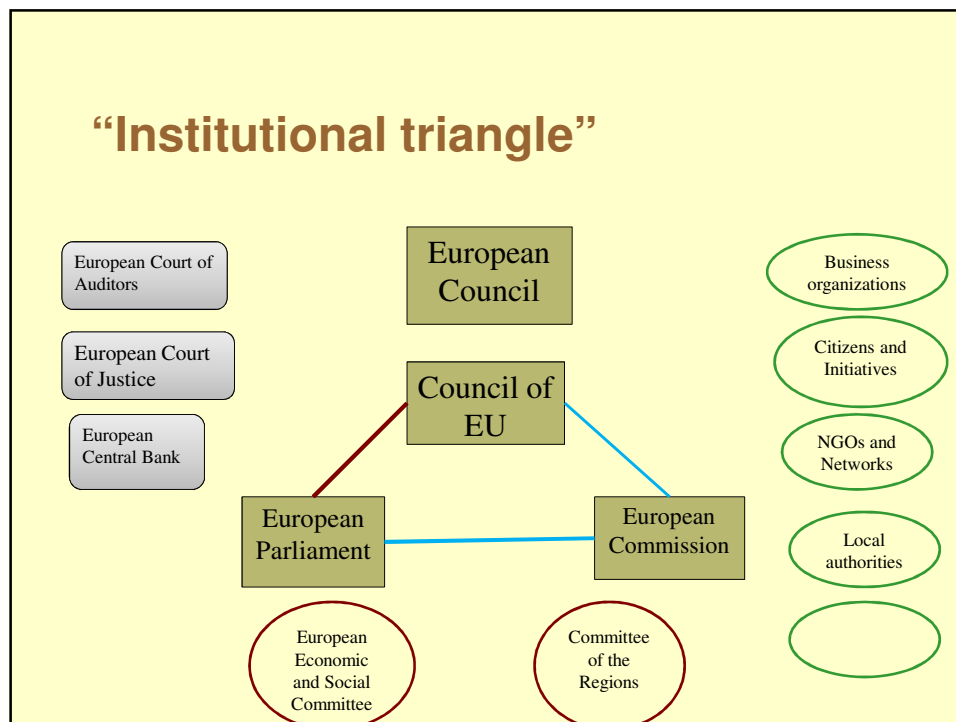
ESSEDRA
Policy Advocacy Event
Sofia, 8-9 November 2013

EUROPEAN FORUM ON
NATURE CONSERVATION
AND PASTORALISM

EU Decision making process

Institutions involved:

- *European Parliament*
- *European Council*
- *Council of the EU*
- *European Commission*
- *Court of Justice of the EU*
- *European Central Bank*
- *European Court of Auditors*



The European Council

<http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-institution.aspx?lang=en>

- Permanent president – The European Council elects its president by qualified majority. The president’s term of office is two and a half years, renewable once
- **Not exercising legislative functions**
- Consists of Heads of Governments/States
- 2 times each semester;
- Defines EU priorities (Agenda 2020, MFF, etc.)

The Council of the EU (The Council)

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/council?lang=en>

- Key decision making institution in the EU
- Representatives of the MS on ministerial level who is empowered to speak in the name of the Government and to take obligations on its behalf
- There are ten Council configurations, covering the whole range of EU policies.
- The General Affairs Council, which is usually attended by foreign ministers or European affairs ministers, makes sure that the various Council configurations are working consistently with one another and makes the preparations for European Council meetings

The Council's remit

- It adopts legislative acts (Regulations, Directives, etc.), in many cases in "co-decision" with the European Parliament;
- It helps coordinate Member States' policies, for example, in the economic field;
- It develops the common foreign and security policy, on the basis of strategic guidelines set by the European Council;
- It concludes international agreements on behalf of the Union;
- It adopts the Union's budget, together with the European Parliament.

The Presidency of the Council

- The EU's 28 Member States take it in turn to chair the Council for a period of six months each. During this six-month period, the Presidency chairs meetings at every level, proposes guidelines and draws up the compromises needed for the Council to take decisions
- 2014 – Greece and Italy

COREPER (COMite des REpresentants PERmanent)

- Introduced by the Treaty
- Objective is to reach agreement in order to be adopted by the Council
- Consists of permanent representatives of the MS or their deputies
- Over 50 meetings per year

Qualified majority

1. Majority of member states 15 MS on a proposal made by Commission, otherwise 19 MS
2. Majority of voting weight 260 out of 352
3. Majority of population 62% (only applies upon request by a MS)

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/council/voting-calculator?lang=en>

The European Parliament

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room>

- Members directly elected
- Elected for 5 years (2009-2014)

Powers and rights:

- Together with the Council, the Parliament adopts or amends proposals from the Commission. Parliament also supervises the work of the Commission and adopts the European Union's budget.
- MEPs (754 members) organized in political groups;
- The consent procedure gives Parliament the right of **veto**.

The European Commission

- Proposes new initiatives;
- Ensures the application of the treaties and the measures adopted by the institutions
- Proposes legislative acts
- Assess the potential economic, social and environmental consequences
- Seeks stakeholders' opinion – NGOs, local authorities, civil society and expert groups

The Court of Justice of the EU

http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_7024/

- Ensures that "the law is observed" "in the interpretation and application" of the Treaties
- Reviews the legality of the acts of the institutions of the European Union,
- Ensures that the Member States comply with obligations under the Treaties, and
- Interprets European Union law at the request of the national courts and tribunals

European Central Bank

- Performs the functions of EURO central bank

The European Court of Auditors (ECA)

<http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/ecadefault.aspx>

- The starting point for ECA audit work is the EU's budget and policies, primarily in areas relating to growth and jobs, added value, public finances, the environment and climate action;
- ECA controls whether the financial operations are :
 - Documented correctly;
 - In compliance the rules and acts for costs optimization, no matter where the funds are absorbed
- It is used by the EC, EP and the Council as well as by the Member states

ECA reports

- **Annual reports** on the EU budget and the European Development Funds. They mainly comprise the annual statements of assurance, but also cover performance issues. The annual reports are published in November each year.
- **Specific Annual Reports**— on the annual financial audits of the EU's agencies, joint undertakings and other decentralised bodies.
- **Special Reports** - setting out the results of ECA's selected performance and compliance audits of specific budgetary areas or management topics
- **Opinions** on legislative proposals with an impact on EU financial management.

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.home>

EESC has been a consultative body of the European Union since 1957

- Opinions on EC legislative proposal;
- Opinions on its own initiative

Membership - broad range of economic, social and cultural groups of interests

- Employers
- Workers and
- Various interests (e.g. farmers, consumers, environment protectors, family organizations, NGOs, etc..)
- 353 members

Committee of the Regions

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Pages/mission-statement.aspx>

353 Members from the 28 Member States of the European Union, representing local and regional authorities ;

6 [commissions](#) covering competences in the following policy areas based on the EU Treaties:

- Employment, vocational training, economic and social cohesion, social policy, health.
- Education and culture.
- Environment, climate change, energy.
- Transport and trans-European networks.
- Civil protection and services of general interests.

Civil associations and NGOs

- European institutions interaction with citizen's associations, NGOs, businesses, trade and professional organizations, trade unions, think tanks, etc. is constant, legitimate and necessary for the quality of democracy, for their capacity to deliver adequate policies, matching needs and reality.
- **Transparency register since 2011**
- <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/info/homePage.do?locale=en#en>

Transparency register

- More than 5400 members;
- It provides citizens with a direct and single access to information about who is engaged in activities aiming at influencing the EU decision making process, which interests are being pursued and what level of resources are invested in these activities,
- It offers a single code of conduct

EU Decision making procedure (1)

The ordinary legislative procedure:

- EC submits the legislative proposals
- EP together with the Council approve the proposals
- EC implements the legal acts

In the mean time:

- EC consults the stakeholders
- Open public consultations are done

http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm

Procedure... (2)

- The national parliaments of the member states can submit written opinion if they consider that a certain issue will be better dealt with at national level, than at the EU level
- ECA, ECB submit opinions
- EESC and CR submit opinions

Procedure (3) ..

- The EP and the Council review the proposals by the Commission and propose amendments
- If the Council and the EP cannot agree on the amendments, there is a second reading .
- During the second reading the EP and the Council can still propose amendments
- The EP has the power to veto a legislative proposal if they cannot reach an agreement with the Council

Procedure (4) ..

- When the EP and the Council reach an agreement the legislative proposal can be adopted.
- If they cannot reach an agreement there is a **Conciliation procedure**

Conciliation:

- The representatives of the EP, the Council and the EC have six weeks to reach an agreement and to approve the joint text
- On the last reading the legislative proposal can be blocked by EP or the Council

Positions and opinions should be..

- Short, clear, focused on the subject;
- Positive and professional tone
- Well structured, no mistakes
- Based on the latest version of the proposal
- Showing clearly the links with the existing legal acts and strategies
- Addressing the competencies of the respected institution at national or European level

Positions and opinions (2)

- Introduction paragraph - short description of the problem and the procedure
- Followed by comments on the whole document/procedure:
- Only when those are really important
- It is better to focus on the positive sides of the documents before starting with proposals for improvement

Positions and opinions (3)

- Specific proposals
 - Short justification
 - Clear formulation of the proposal
- Concluding paragraph - opportunities for future cooperation on the respective issue
- Contact details of the person in charge