

Court of Justice of the European Union

The Court of Justice of the European Union consists of three courts: the Court of Justice (the highest court in the European Union in matters of EU law, created in 1952 and composed of 28 Judges and eight Advocates General), the General Court (created in 1988 as the Court of First Instance) and the Civil Service Tribunal (created in 2004). Since their establishment, approximately 15,000 judgments have been delivered by the three courts.

Address: Rue du Fort Niedergrünwald, L-2925 Luxembourg.
Website: <http://curia.europa.eu>
President of the Court of Justice: Koen Lenaerts (Belgium).
President of the General Court: Marc Jaeger (Luxembourg).
President of the Civil Service Tribunal: Sean Van Raepenbusch (Belgium).

European Court of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors was established by a treaty of 22 July 1975 which took effect on 1 June 1977. It consists of 28 members (one from each member state) and was raised to the status of a full EU institution by the 1993 Maastricht Treaty. It audits the accounts and verifies the implementation of the budget of the EU.

Address: 12, rue Alcide De Gasperi, L-1615 Luxembourg.
Website: <http://eca.europa.eu>
Email: eca-info@eca.europa.eu
President: Klaus-Heiner Lehne (Germany).

European Central Bank

The European System of Central Banks (ESCB) is composed of the European Central Bank (ECB) and 28 National Central Banks (NCBs). The NCBs of the member states not participating in the euro area are members with special status; while they are allowed to conduct their respective national monetary policies, they do not take part in decision-making regarding the single monetary policy for the euro area and the implementation of these policies. The Governing Council of the ECB makes a distinction between the ESCB and the 'Eurosystem' which is composed of the ECB and the 19 fully participating NCBs.

Members. The 19 fully participating National Central Banks are from: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. The other nine EU members (those which do not use the euro as their currency) have special status.

Functions. The primary objective of the ESCB is to maintain price stability. Without prejudice to this, the ESCB supports general economic policies in the Community with a view to contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Community. Tasks to be carried out include: i) defining and implementing the monetary policy of the Community; ii) conducting foreign exchange operations; iii) holding and managing the official foreign reserves of the participating member states; iv) promoting the smooth operation of payment systems; v) supporting the policies of the competent authorities relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions and the stability of the financial system.

The ECB has the exclusive right to issue banknotes within the Community.

Organization. The ESCB is governed by the decision-making bodies of the ECB: the 25-member Governing Council and the Executive Board. The Governing Council is the supreme decision-making body and comprises all members of the Executive Board

plus the governors of the NCBs forming the Eurosystem. The Executive Board comprises the president, vice-president and four other members, appointed by common accord of the heads of state and government of the participating member states. There is also a General Council which will exist while there remain members with special status.

Address: Grossmarkthalle, Sonnemannstrasse 20, 60314 Frankfurt am Main, Germany.
Website: <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb>
Email: info@ecb.europa.eu
President: Mario Draghi (Italy).

Other EU Structures

European Investment Bank (EIB)

The EIB is the financing institution of the European Union, created by the Treaty of Rome in 1958 as an autonomous body set up to finance capital investment furthering European integration. To this end, the Bank raises its resources on the world's capital markets where it mobilizes significant volumes of funds on favourable terms. It directs these funds towards capital projects promoting EU economic policies. Outside the Union the EIB implements the financial components of agreements concluded under European Union development aid and co-operation policies. The members of the EIB are the member states of the European Union, who have all subscribed to the Bank's capital. Its governing body is its Board of Governors consisting of the ministers designated by each of the member states, usually the finance ministers.

Address: 98–100 Blvd Konrad Adenauer, L-2950 Luxembourg.
Website: <http://www.eib.org>
President and Chairman of the Board: Werner Hoyer (Germany).

European Investment Fund Founded in 1994 as a subsidiary of the European Investment Bank and the European Union's specialized financial institution. It has a dual mission that combines the pursuit of objectives such as innovation, the creation of employment and regional development with maintaining a commercial approach to investments. It particularly provides venture capital and guarantee instruments for the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In 2002 it began advising entities in the setting up of financial enterprise and venture capital and SME guarantee schemes.

Address: 37B avenue J. F. Kennedy, L-2968 Luxembourg.
Website: <http://www.eif.org>

European Data Protection Supervisor

The European Data Protection Supervisor protects those individuals whose data are processed by the EU institutions and bodies by advising on new legislation and implications, processing and investigating complaints, and promoting a 'data protection culture' and awareness. The present incumbent is Giovanni Buttarelli (Italy).

Address: Rue Montoyer 30, B-1047 Brussels, Belgium.
Website: <http://www.edps.europa.eu/EDPSWEB>
Email: edps@edps.europa.eu

European Ombudsman

The Ombudsman was inaugurated in 1995 and deals with complaints from citizens, companies and organizations concerning maladministration in the activities of the institutions