

A Europe that delivers: Commission presents ideas for a more efficient European Union



European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** said today: *“With the Bratislava Roadmap, the Rome Declaration and now the Leaders’ Agenda, Europe has rightly been focused on creating a Union that delivers concrete and tangible results for its citizens on the issues that matter to them. We must continue on this path. I have always said that form should follow function – now is not the time for long discussions of institutional reform or Treaty change. There are, however, a number of steps we can take to make our work even more efficient in delivering on our key priorities. There are many options but the goal must be one and the same: creating a Europe that delivers.”*

Lead Candidates: Building on the 2014 “Spitzenkandidaten” experience

The 2014 election process strengthened the relationship between the three EU institutions and improved the efficiency of their work. It helped them to align themselves around a common work programme for the five year mandate. This is what enabled the Juncker Commission to work in a more political way and concentrate on where the Union delivers the best results, leaving the rest to Member States.

In his 2017 State of the Union Address, President Juncker said that the 2014 ‘lead candidate’ experiment should continue. Today, the European Commission is setting out how the process can be improved on the basis of the current Treaties while respecting the balance between the EU institutions and among the Member States. This includes calling on **political parties to make an earlier choice of the lead candidates, before the end of 2018, and for an earlier start to the campaign.** This would give voters more opportunity to identify with the candidates and the political programmes they stand for.

The Commission is also recommending the link **between national parties and European parties be made more visible.** Political parties at national level should boost transparency about the European parties they are affiliated to, for example by using their logos in campaign and ballot material. They should also position themselves clearly on important European issues and express their intention for participating in political groups in the European Parliament and their choice for European Commission President.

Composition of the European Parliament and the European Commission

Leaders in the European Council have to decide – on the basis of a proposal from the European Parliament – on **the composition of the European Parliament for the 2019-2024 term** and what to do with the seats left vacant by the UK.

One option is to reserve a number of these seats for a **transnational constituency**. Whilst in a recent Resolution (from 7 February), the European Parliament voted not to call for the creation of a transnational constituency, it did leave the door open for future debates. A number of Member States have recently expressed support for this idea, whereas others have expressed their disagreement with its establishment. A transnational constituency could strengthen the European dimension of the election by giving candidates the possibility to reach more citizens across Europe. On the other hand, parliamentarians normally represent and communicate closely with the voters who elected them on a local or national level, both for reasons of accountability and to be able to raise concerns of their constituents. The Commission is sympathetic to the idea of transnational lists, but this will require unanimous agreement of the Council, and changes to electoral law in all 27 Member States in the next year to be applied for the 2019 elections.

The College of Commissioners currently consists of 28 members, one from each Member State – in line with a Decision of the European Council from 22 May 2013. Before the next European Commission is appointed, leaders will have to decide whether to maintain the principle of one Member from each Member State, or to make the Commission smaller. A smaller executive would in theory be more efficient in its operation, easier to manage and would allow a more balanced distribution of portfolios. But a smaller Commission would also mean that some Member States would not be represented at the political level of the institution, and would lose the advantage of maintaining a direct political communication channel with their citizens and national authorities.

A Double-Hatted President for the Commission and Council

In his State of the Union speech in 2017, President Juncker first suggested the idea of a double-hatted President. A single person holding the two offices of President of the European Council and President of the European Commission could make the structure of the Union more efficient. This is possible under the current Treaties. A dual appointment does not require merging the two institutions. The President of the European Commission is already a Member of the European Council, and neither of the two Presidents vote in the European Council; their role is to advise, bring input from the work of their services, help to build bridges and map out common ground.

Citizens' Dialogues

The European Commission regularly organises Citizens' Dialogues with Members of the Commission, the European Parliament, national governments, local and regional authorities and civil society representatives. Almost 500 of these interactive public debates have been held in 160 locations since 2012, and the Commission will increase their frequency between now and the European elections in May 2019, with a target of reaching around **500 more events**. The Commission also welcomes the initiatives of individual Member States to organise their own national conversations with citizens on the future of Europe and is ready to offer its support where it can, for example by linking the process to the online consultation on the future of Europe which could remain open until 9 May 2019. The Commission will share the benefits of its

experience with Member States.

Background

Today's proposed ideas and options are a direct follow-up to the [European Commission's report \(from 8 May 2015\) on the 2014 European Parliament elections](#) which pledged to identify ways of further enhancing the European dimension and the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process, and to examine further, and seek to address, the reasons for the persistently low turnout in some Member States.

For more information

[Communication: A Europe that Delivers: Institutional options for making the EU's work more efficient](#)

[Recommendation: on enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the 2019 elections to the European Parliament](#)

[European Commission Report on the 2014 European Parliament elections](#)

[2018 report on European and municipal elections](#)

Factsheets:

- Options for making the European Union's work more efficient
- The composition of the European Parliament and European Council – what to expect in 2019
- The birth of the 'Spitzenkandidaten' and the 2014 European election campaign
- Dialogue with citizens ahead of the European elections
- New rules for making the 2019 European elections more transparent
- A double-hatted President?
- Visits and meetings of Members of the Commission with national Parliaments since the beginning of the mandate