

COMMITTEE GUIDE

EP



European Parliament

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CCBMUN **XXIII**

Contents

1. Presidents' Letter

2. Committee Information

- I. History
- II. Structure of the EP

3. Topic 1: *Admitting new nations into the European Union*

- I. History/Context
- II. Current Situation
- III. Key Points of the Debate
- IV. Guiding Questions
- V. Bibliography

4. Topic 2: *Tackling Corruption in the European Parliament*

- I. History/Context
- II. Current Situation
- III. Key Points of the Debate
- IV. Guiding Questions
- V. Bibliography



1. Presidents' Letter

Dear Delegates,

We are Daniel Cano and Juan Sebastián Uribe, presidents of the European Parliament committee for this version of CCBMUN. We've known each other for a little over 2 years at this point, and we both have vast experience in MUN, adding up over 20 models between us. Across these models, we have won various prizes such as best delegate, outstanding delegate and more. We also have previous experience as presidents and hope to make this model one to remember.

The European Parliament is an important world institution affecting the lives of many people, but it can sometimes be regarded with apathy by voters who do not see it as a significant part of their lives. It has been criticised for being too bureaucratic, lacking in transparency and prone to corruption. Despite all this, its decisions have far-reaching effects on millions of people, and we hope that you will find it fascinating to step inside this institution for CCBMUN XXIII.

Regarding our topics on EU expansion and corruption inside the Parliament, please remember, we are here to support you delegates at all times. If you have any queries regarding the procedures or topics of this committee, we are more than welcome to help you. Having said that, we hope that this upcoming CCBMUN will be a truly memorable experience for you as delegates as well as for ourselves as presidents, where hopefully you will all be able to develop both academically and socially.

Best regards,

Daniel Cano & Juan Sebastián Uribe
EP Chair
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Committee Information:

I. History

In 1945 Germany surrendered after 6 years of war. The Second World War, and the devastation across Europe that it had caused, brought European leaders to realize the urgency for stability and peace within the continent. This in turn led to certain initiatives that were aimed at preventing future conflicts through international cooperation. In 1951, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, and Belgium united in order to create an international organization known as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) that hoped to unite their key industries under a common management. This approach, denominated the Schuman plan, had the purpose of completely avoiding war between the six member countries by integrating their economies.

This integration was a success, and led the countries to sign the Treaties of Rome (1957), which created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom); The treaty fomented economic integration and standardization between nations, eventually culminating with the creation of a common monetary system (euro), which laid the foundation for more integration within Europe.

With the acceleration of European cooperation, so grew the need for a stronger institution to lead and oversee the programme. And so the European Parliamentary Assembly was formed; its inaugural session was held in Strasbourg in 1958 and marked a landmark in European politics. It would later be called the European Parliament, and from the outset it was composed of appointed legislators from the member states. The Assembly grew and was given increasing powers. Later, it implemented the member state population-direct elections in 1979.

Today, the European Parliament is an important EU democratic institution with over 400 million citizens, and is an influential participant in the determination of European policy and law. The evolution from wartime cooperation to complete parliamentary democracy proves the EU's unshakeable commitment to the agendas of peace, prosperity, and respect for the rule of democracy.



After the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, Europe noticed that the political, social and cultural differences between European nations complicated trade and cooperation, and could lead to conflict further on. Due to this, the nations of Europe signed the Maastricht Treaty, which officially created the European Union, a supranational organization dedicated to collaboration and dialogue between all European nations.

Even though plans for a European organization originated after the First World War, the Maastricht Treaty, along with the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties, helped officially create the modern European Union (EU) with its currency, the Euro.

II. Structure of the European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) is one of the two legislative bodies of the European Union, along with the Council of the EU. Composed of 720 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from different backgrounds and nationalities, the Parliament aims to provide fair and extensive representation for the 27 member states of the European Union.

As already stated, the European Parliament comprises 720 MEPs for the current 2024 - 2029 legislative term. These members are divided into 8 “Political Groups” which support varying interests and sectors of society and the economy. Their structure is as follows:

- Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) 188 MEPs
- Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (136 MEPs)
- Patriots for Europe Group (84 MEPs)
- European Conservatives and Reformists Group (78 MEPs)
- Renew Europe Group (77 MEPs)
- Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (53 MEPs)
- The Left Group in the European Parliament - GUE/NGL (46 MEPs)
- Europe of Sovereign Nations Group (25 MEPs)



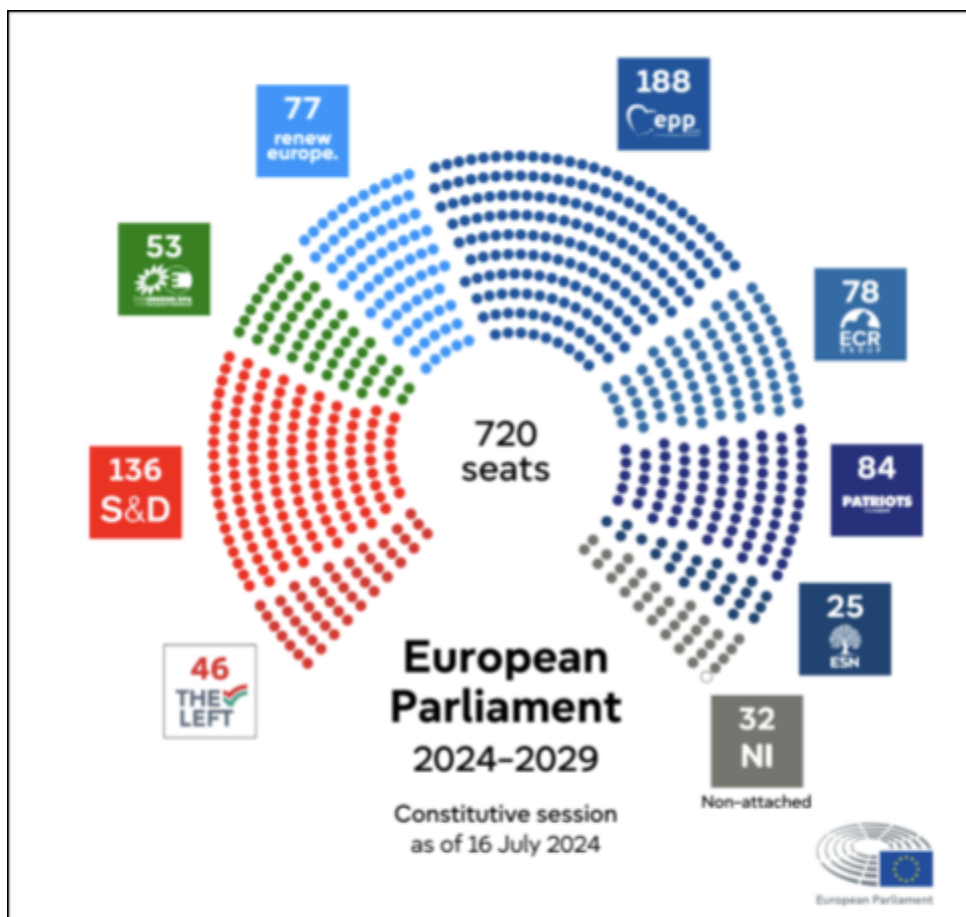


Figure 1: Distribution of Seats in the EU (European Parliament, 2020)

The remaining 32 MEPs are unaligned to any party, and it is important to note that each group has their own chair, bureau, and secretariat, which give them a higher number of alliances and more voting power in Parliament sessions.

The image contains all political groups, their distribution in the Parliament, and their position in the political spectrum, with groups like “The Left Group in the European Parliament” being on the left side of the chamber. The “Europe of Sovereign Nations Group” is the rightmost group in the chamber, besides those members who are non-attached.

Topic 1: Admitting new nations into the European Union

I. History/Context

As stated earlier, the first countries to join together to form a European institution were France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, and Belgium. On the map below, the accession years of other nations can be seen.

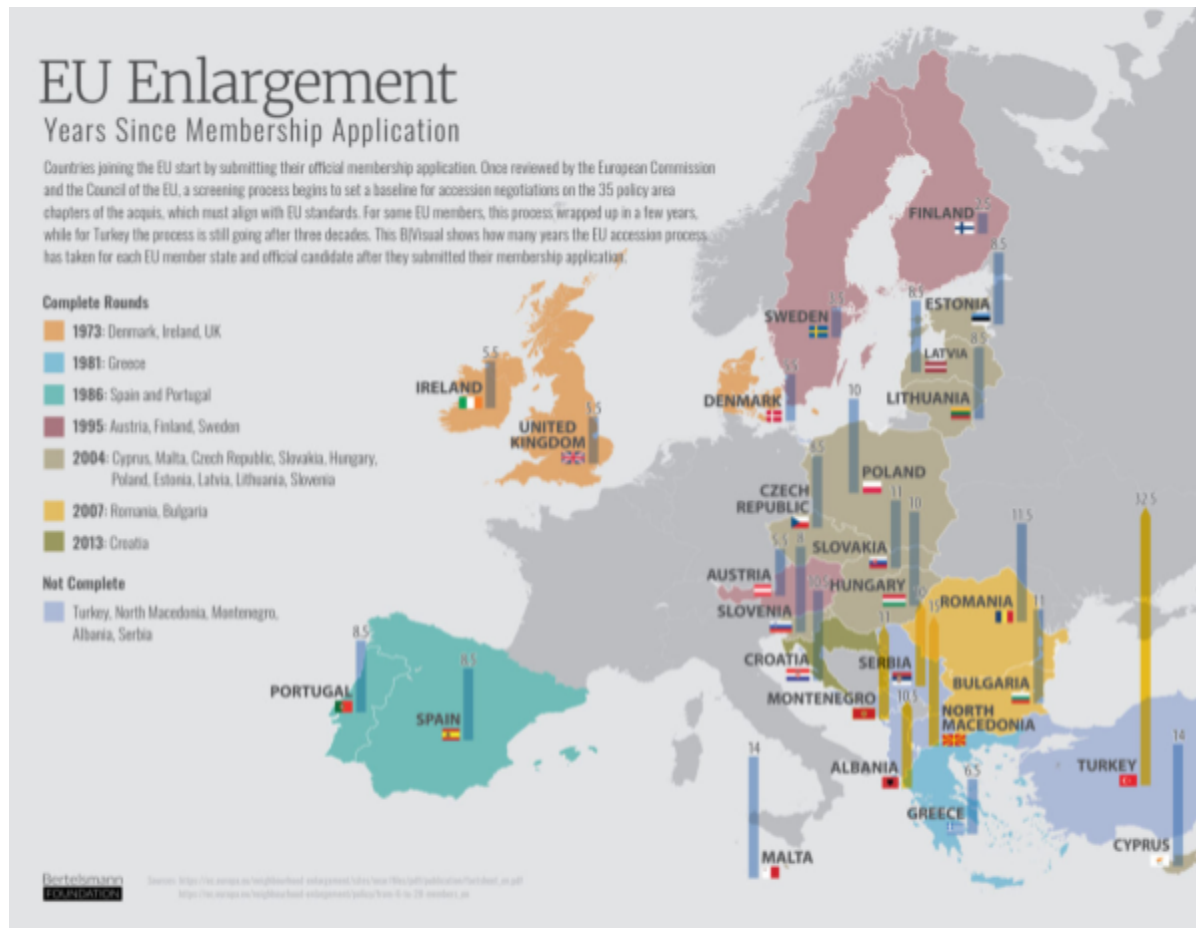


Figure 2: Timeline of EU membership (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2019)

The accession histories of the European Union have differed considerably across candidate nations, reflecting their particular political, economic and regional issues. For example, some countries applied for entry to strengthen their democratic institutions after dictatorships, whilst others joined to help with their economic transformation from



communist states. The most recent states to become part of the European Union are Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia.

Croatian entry is an example of a linear, yet long, entry process to the European Union. It filed its application to join the EU in 2003 and received candidate status in 2004. The official entry negotiations commenced in 2005 and ended with the December 2011 entry



Figure 3: Croatia is the latest addition to the EU, being incorporated in 2013. (European Parliament, 2022)

treaty signature. There was overwhelming public support in the country, and in the January 2012 referendum, 66% voted in support of Croatia's entry into the union. Therefore, it officially became the 28th member state on 1st July 2013, the first one since 2007. One of the reasons that it took so long to gain entry was because of a conflict it had with Slovenia regarding its border, which had to be resolved prior to entry. Another problem was the fact that it joined in the context of

economic troubles due to the 2008 Great Recession, which European markets had not yet fully recovered from.

All the countries have had different paths to joining the European Union, and they have all come during different enlargement plans the EU has carried out. It is important to note that while Croatia's entry represents a proper procedure for admission, and is the most recent and relevant example of EU enlargement, the process has proved to be flexible and nuanced for other nations. As an example, the most significant enlargement took place in the year 2004, with ten Central and Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic States all being part of one massive enlargement after the Cold War. Slovenia, one of the Yugoslav republics like Croatia, joined in the year 2004 as the very first EU member state in the Western Balkans to join the EU. In the year 2004, Malta and Cyprus joined, despite the political complexities caused by the division of Cyprus. Such entries in the past created precedents and examples, which influenced further bargaining, such as in the case of the enlargement and integration of Croatia's as well as Türkiye's accession to the EU.

Türkiye's application for accession has been far more difficult, and has still not been resolved. Türkiye was announced as a candidate state in 1999 and commenced formal

talks in 2005. Although huge efforts were made by Türkiye to catch up with the Copenhagen political criteria through constitutional changes and legislative changes, it was not considered enough by the European Union members. This eventually led to Türkiye's process getting blocked, despite multiple meetings between both parties aiming to renew accession talks, as depicted in the image.



Figure 4: Numerous talks about Türkiye's future in the EU have failed to reopen negotiations. (Cidob, 2021)

The long-standing Cyprus conflict was the most significant challenge to entering the EU. After invading the island in 1974, Türkiye has still not recognized the Republic of Cyprus and currently occupies the northern part of the island. It has, therefore, been subjected to suspension of negotiations on many chapters. Besides the longstanding disputes over democracy and the rule of law, political debates within the EU regarding Türkiye's political trajectory, migration pressures, and

perceived cultural and religious differences have further cooled enthusiasm for its accession. In response, several member states have instead proposed alternative frameworks, such as enhanced strategic partnerships or modernization of the Customs Union, rather than full membership. As a result, the relationship between Türkiye and the EU has become increasingly complex, and there is widespread doubt over whether Türkiye's accession will ever materialize.

Some nations waiting to be granted accession to the European Union, including Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia, are already NATO members. NATO membership gives these states important security advantages that can boost their EU accession procedures. As NATO members, the governments enjoy collective defence commitments, improved cooperation in the area of armed forces and improved political stability. NATO membership also raises their importance in European and transatlantic security, giving them more credibility and prestige as future EU members. NATO membership strengthens defence, counter-terrorism, and crisis management cooperation, firmly anchoring these states in Europe's security system and potentially boosting their chances of joining the EU.

On the other hand, there are cases such as Ukraine. Ukrainian accession to the EU would create the risk of confrontation with Russia, as well as rising tensions between the EU and Russia. Ukrainian convergence with the West, including accession to the EU and NATO,

has been seen by Russia as an immediate strategic threat. Ukrainian accession to the EU would be adding additional political, economic and security ties to the West, and could trigger added Russian military and political reactions. This would contribute to existing volatility in Eastern Europe, given the history of Russian tendency towards military action and opposition to NATO and EU enlargement along its borders. While Ukraine's accession to the EU would strengthen its independence and economic prospects, it could also add instability to an already volatile geopolitical environment.

II. Current Situation

To become a member of the European Union, a nation needs to complete various steps that guarantee its effective integration into the EU's economic, social and political system.



Figure 5: Map of the Current European Union (AnnaMap.com, 2015)

Firstly, an aspiring member must first formally submit a membership application to the European Council and European Parliament, where most of the application process will take place. After receiving the application, the Council and Parliament will then pass the request on to the European Commission in order for them to analyse the eligibility of the candidate for joining the Union. During this time, all EU member states will be notified of



the application, and asked to approve it. If a member does not approve, the application may be rejected, frozen or renegotiated.

If all member states approve, and the European Commission deems the applicant nation able to fulfil all membership requirements, the negotiations begin. Here, legislative bodies of the EU such as the Parliament and Council tailor the integration process for the applicant, negotiating the terms and conditions of the possible admission into the union. These conditions include the extent of funding provided and received from the EU, the extent of political participation in its legislative bodies, and the timeline for *acquis* implementation. *Acquis* refers to EU law, policies, and principles as a whole. Adopting the *acquis* is essential to procure peace and cooperation within the Union.

After the negotiations have concluded, the time frame agreed on during the negotiations begins. During this time, the soon-to-be member state must integrate their political, social and economic institutions into the EU system. After the implementation time is over, the Parliament investigates the integration and, if deemed adequate, an accession treaty is prepared. This treaty must then be approved by the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Commission, and be signed by the applicant nation. Then, on the date outlined in the accession treaty, the applicant nation officially becomes a member of the European Union.

Currently, there are nine states seeking EU membership; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine. All of these countries have formally applied to join the European Union, but each faces its own complications in the admission process. The role of the European Parliament is to evaluate each application and to determine whether the country would be a viable member of the European Union. Whilst each of these applications has its own unique circumstances and moves in its own political timeline, applications can be separated into two main groups: the Western Balkans and the Association Trio. There are also two separate, unique applicants, which are Türkiye and Ukraine.

As stated above, most of these new applications come from the Western Balkans. Nations such as Albania, Montenegro, and Serbia are the closest to reaching EU membership, as negotiations are almost concluded, and these states have already started to develop the necessary infrastructure and economic conversion to join the EU. These three countries are predicted to join the Union between 2028 and 2032, though recently, Bulgaria has blocked sections of the applications, further delaying the incorporation of these nations.



Other Balkan nations in the application process include North Macedonia, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are undergoing preliminary screening by the European Commission in order to decide their feasibility as EU members before beginning formal negotiations.

Kosovo's situation is complex, as five EU member states: Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania, and Greece: do not recognize its independence from Serbia. This makes the prospect of granting Kosovo candidate status highly divisive within the Union. The issue is even more delicate given Kosovo's tense relations with Serbia, a country that is already well advanced in its own EU accession process.

The Western Balkans are of special interest to the EU, since bringing some nations closer could risk renewed conflict and division in a region with a history of political tensions. Kosovo submitted its application in 2022, but hasn't been able to progress, due to the fact that 5 member nations do not even recognize it as an independent nation. Here, MEPs must weigh individual, national and political opinions in order to decide the fate of these Balkan nations in the EU. Most of these nations enjoy broad support within the European Union and are widely expected to join. Others, such as Türkiye, face significant obstacles due to international tensions, highlighting the strict and demanding nature of the EU admission process.

Next are the three applicants, referred to as the "Association Trio". These nations, namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, submitted their applications for membership in 2022, and are currently being screened by the European Committee in order to begin negotiations. All three nations have already started their integration efforts and exhibit great interest in joining the European Union.

However, recent conflicts in the region, such as the Russo-Ukrainian War, have not only delayed their application efforts, but also raised alarm about the unwanted consequences of admitting too many applicants into the Union. This could upset the historical balance of power and antagonize nations such as Russia or China, which could cause a conflict if left unchecked. Due to this, the Union must start to scrutinize the nations granted applicant status, as one of the main causes for the armed conflict in Ukraine has been their prolonged interest in joining the Union.

Finally, as already covered in past sections, Türkiye's application remains frozen since 2018, as concerns regarding human rights, democratic government, and the ongoing conflict with Cyprus all present obstacles for the peaceful integration of Türkiye into the



EU. Türkiye shares many complications with Kosovo, as existing conflicts with member states delay the application process and may hinder the democratic purpose of the Union. Keeping Türkiye's application frozen may incite hostility and directly impede the purpose of the application process, but granting membership may degrade institutions in the Union.

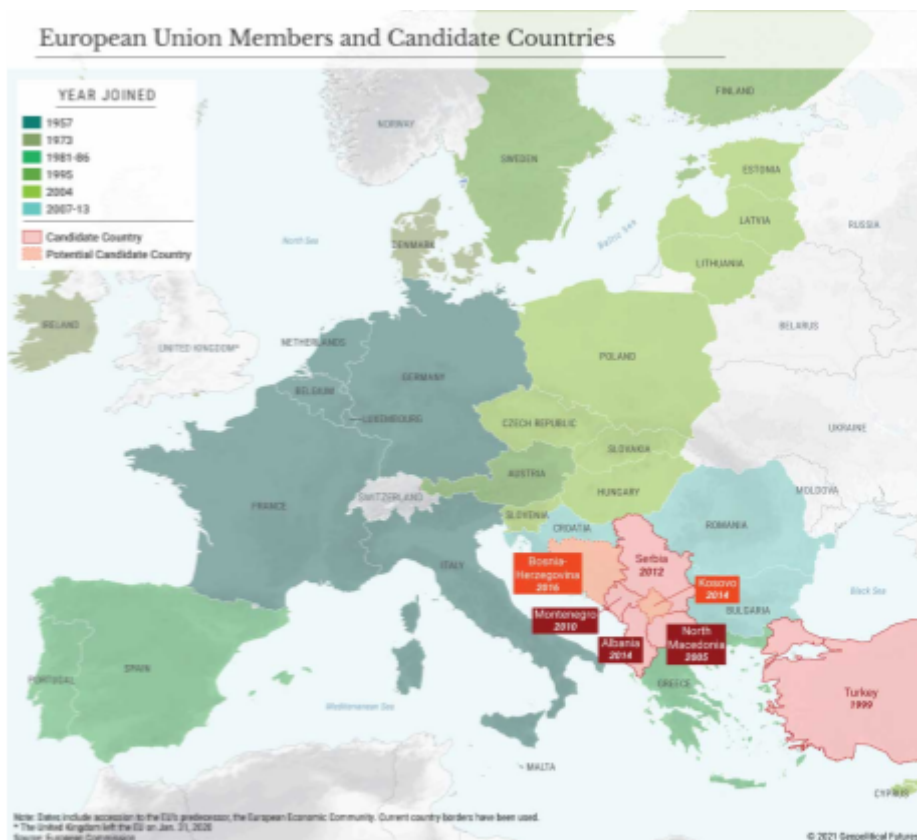


Figure 6: The Balkan States are some of the latest applicants to the EU (Geopolitical Futures, 2021)

In general, political groups aligned with the centre-left and centre-right support EU enlargement. Mainstream parties such as the EPP and S&D view modernization and expansion as essential for maintaining peace, cooperation and prosperity in Europe. By contrast, parties on the political extremes, such as The Left and Patriots for Europe, argue that enlargement risks placing additional strain on existing institutions and could undermine the Union's goals. This balance is necessary, and is the whole purpose for the existence of different political groups, which can represent the various interests within the European population. This is, in part, one of the reasons why EU admissions take so long, as most of the relevant voting needs to be unanimous. This, though difficult, provides

a safeguard against corruption or bribery, which could damage the core principles of democracy in the EU.

In conclusion, MEPs must consider the influence of their nation, political party, and individual knowledge in order to make the best decision that represents the European public. As previously noted, a nation being admitted into the EU may well destabilize the balance of power in the region, leading to conflict. Therefore, it is essential that the Parliament not only consider individual or short-term impacts for these applications. Many processes within the Union, such as the economy, the political systems and the power grid, depend on the European Union being stable and free of conflict. While some applicants may enhance the purposes of the EU, some may have unexpected negative consequences, which are Parliament's responsibility to assess. It is clear that every application process will be different, but this committee needs to focus on clarifying the main prerequisites of EU accession, as well as resolve ongoing processes with complications, such as Ukraine, Türkiye, and Kosovo's.

III. Key points of the debate

- Past accession processes such as Croatia or Cyprus
- Whether it is necessary for the European Union to expand
- The blocked process of Türkiye
- Bias of the accession processes
- Effects of NATO alliance on application processes
- Risk of certain countries joining and sparking conflict

IV. Guiding questions

1. What level of influence does your MEP hold within the European Parliament? Do they hold any special roles with the EP?
2. What is the position of the country your MEP represents regarding the accession process of other countries to the European Union?



3. What is the position of your MEP regarding the accession process of other countries to the European Union? Is it aligned with that of their country's government?
4. Does your MEP come from a country which has recently had an accession process, such as Croatia or Bulgaria? If so, how has integration into the EU affected the country?
5. What mechanisms can ensure that candidate countries meet democratic, economic, and human rights standards before accession?
6. Should Türkiye's stalled accession process be revived, terminated, or renegotiated under new terms?
7. Should the EU introduce stricter or more flexible criteria for membership in light of recent global challenges?
8. Should restrictions be put on newly integrated countries for a set period of time after they enter the EU? If so, what sort of restrictions should there be?

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Topic 2: Tackling Corruption in the European Parliament

I. History/Context

Since the creation of the European Parliament, various scandals have arisen, coming from many areas. Things like internal crises, shady diplomacy and public outrage have happened in the past and continue to cause problems. As the European Parliament is one of the most important organizations of the EU, it's essential that it is shielded against corruption and bribery. The importance of the decisions made in parliament make it a prime target for those looking to override the actual system.

It is significant to clarify that not all kinds of corruption include the consent of all members. However, secondhand benefits obtained by certain MEPs, such as preferential travel, luxurious accommodation, or any other unapproved lavish indulgence, may indicate the development of outside connections and subsequent bias. This may gravely affect decision-making and policy development within the European Parliament.



Figure 1: The hypocrisy of "caviar diplomacy": How Azerbaijan still manages to avoid European sanctions. (European Stability Initiative, n.d)

One example of this is what is known as the "Caviar Diplomacy", employed by Azerbaijan during the 2000s and 2010s. This involved the practice of inviting European politicians and public figures to Azerbaijan and then showering them with gifts, glamour, and caviar: hence the name. Even though not strictly bribery or corruption, this practice did provide an unfair advantage in European Policymaking, with an

Azerbaijani, Ilham Aliyev, being elected president of the Council of Europe and endangering the principles of European democracy. It should be noted that no MEP was directly involved in illegal dealings in this issue.

According to the “Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament with respect to financial interests and conflicts of interest”, no MEP is allowed to receive gifts worth more than 150 Euros. Not reporting such gifts to the President of the Parliament may be considered bribery or corruption, and the MEP may be prosecuted accordingly. Therefore, MEPs must be mindful of their income and spending, as any unaccounted-for goods or services may indicate some form of corruption.

In addition to these guidelines, the OLAF, or European Anti-Fraud Office, was created in order to regulate and oversee all monetary transactions to and from the Union, preventing fraud, influence trafficking or bribery. Nonetheless, these efforts have been insufficient to solve the problem, as scandals are still emerging in the EU today, and new organizations and guidelines need to be developed promptly.



Figure 2: OLAF, the EU's anti-corruption office (European Council, n.d)

Many laws and policies have been passed within the Parliament in order to combat the aforementioned influence trafficking, but most have proven ineffective. Azerbaijan still manages to avoid sanctions or limitations from the EU regarding accusations of serious

human rights violations, even when other countries, such as Türkiye, are being constantly sanctioned by the EU for similar circumstances. Therefore, this shows how effective influence trafficking can be, and highlights the insufficient job Parliament has executed to provide fair and transparent treatment in all situations.

Directives regarding this topic were passed in 2017 in order to tackle this and other types of corruption. The Whistleblower directive and Directive 1371, to name a few, not only facilitate the criminalization and prosecution of MEPs who accept bribes, but also protect, physically and legally, those individuals which decide to inform on fraudulent activity regarding EU institutions. Since the deployment of these directives, fraud and corruption have decreased substantially, but many allegations, such as Qatargate (see below), remain a present question about the credibility and legitimacy of the European Parliament.

Another initiative by the EP in order to combat political dishonesty was the creation of the EPPO (European Public Prosecutor's Office), which specializes in investigating and prosecuting any illegal activity that goes against the predisposed EU budget. Things like



bribery, fraud, and money laundering within the EU are regulated by the EPPO, which also oversees financial institutions and operations in the EU legislative bodies, such as the EP and the Council of the European Union.

Although many attempts at solving this have been made, it is evident that the corruption scandals have been a great issue of the European Parliament and the European political landscape as a whole. Even though the union promotes equality and homogeneity throughout the continent, the varying penalties for bribery and corruption between nations make it very hard for these international crimes to be properly tracked, judicialized, and penalized. Due to this, many recent addresses and efforts, such as the annual “State of the Union,” have covered the issue of political dishonesty in Europe, and highlighted Parliament’s resolve to develop clear and effective guidelines once and for all. This could put an end to the influence trafficking and fraudulent activities going on in these European organizations.



Figure 3: European Public Prosecutor's Office (Schickler, J, 2024)

For the purposes of this topic, the term corruption may be utilized instead of political dishonesty due to its relevance and importance in discussing the topic. And while corruption is a narrow term regarding the exchange of currency, services, favours, or other goods in exchange for positive advocacy, political dishonesty may apply to all forms of bribery and corruption, such as the aforementioned caviar diplomacy.

II. Current Situation

Systemic bribery, lobbying for benefits, and receiving of gifts have been found to be engaged in by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on a large scale, often in exchange for political favours or lobbying for foreign governments. The bribery has given rise to calls for far-reaching ethics reform that have gained momentum over recent years, but critics believe that the response has been largely cosmetic and not sufficient to remove this culture of impunity.

One of the higher-profile scandals, which was named “Qatargate”, erupted in December



2022. The story involved bribery of MEPs and their relatives with cash, gifts, and other incentives from the governments of Qatar, Morocco, and Mauritania to advocate for these countries' interests in the European Parliament. More than €1.5 million in cash was seized during raids carried out by Belgian police on a string of individuals and dozens of offices



Figure 4: Qatar's Corruption Rocks EU Offices (Euronews, 2023)

and homes of high-ranking MEPs. The scandal ended with Eva Kaili, who was Vice President of the European Parliament at the time, being arrested when her father was caught attempting to flee with a suitcase of hundreds of thousands of euros. Kaili was subsequently stripped of parliamentary immunity and suspended from political groupings.

Another recent scandal to have hit the European Parliament was the report of up to 15 serving and former MEPs receiving gifts from the Chinese technology giant Huawei in March 2025. The gifts reportedly ran from phones and football tickets to cash transfers and trips to China, and were received in exchange for political positions and lobbying on behalf of Huawei. Huawei has strong links to the Chinese government, and has been accused of spying in a number of countries around the world.

Five lawmakers have come under investigation by Belgian prosecutors: Maltese Socialist MEP Daniel Attard, Bulgarian centrist MEP Nikola Minchev, and Italian centre-right MEPs Salvatore De Meo, Fulvio Martusciello, and Giusi Princi. Belgian authorities have formally requested that the European Parliament lift their parliamentary immunity to allow the investigations to proceed. However, the request concerning Giusi Princi was later withdrawn after prosecutors acknowledged that she was not implicated in the case. Huawei has denied corruption, but the issue has raised new questions over Parliament's vulnerability to outside influence.

Compared to other major scandals, the response to Qatargate has been widely seen as inadequate. Instead of implementing strong reforms such as stricter rules on accepting

gifts, tighter controls on outside work, and better protection for whistleblowers, Parliament introduced only weak measures that failed to tackle corruption effectively.

The repeated scandals highlight the urgent need for stronger oversight and accountability to rebuild public trust in the institution. The growing number of corruption cases, along with deeper concerns about how effective Parliament's internal checks really are, and whether its members are willing to hold each other accountable, have further damaged its reputation. As new investigations and revelations continue to emerge, pressure is mounting for Parliament to carry out meaningful reforms and to fully cooperate with law enforcement in order to promote transparency and restore integrity.

The European Parliament has time and again failed to learn lessons from past corruption scandals such as Qatargate, by leaving loopholes intact and setting the stage for the next scandal to burst. Despite the size and public outrage in the wake of Qatargate, exposing how MEPs were allegedly receiving money and favours from governments in foreign countries in an effort to shape EU policy. Parliament has so far not come forth with sweeping reforms to seal its structural deficiencies. Rather, efforts have too often been focused on superficial reforms that do not address root causes of corruption and culture of impunity among MEPs.



Figure 5: The European Parliament aiming to end corruption from within. (Parker, J, 2023)

One of the key lessons that has been overlooked in all this is the necessity for robust independent monitoring and enforcement arrangements. Despite introducing improvements, including stricter rules of lobby transparency and compulsory disclosure of assets, the European Parliament fell short of enacting proper deterrents and independent investigations of MEP conduct. Above all, Parliament failed to pursue effective penalties for unethical conduct, nor did it create an independent body in charge of investigating and

penalizing misconduct. Lack of scrutiny has enabled instances of conflicts of interest and misconduct to operate with relative freedom.

A second neglected lesson is the need to ban or closely cap gifts, side work and post-parliament work that invite undue influence. The EU Parliament has not yet prevented MEPs from accepting gifts or lucrative side work with groups featured on the EU lobby register, so real and perceived conflicts of interest persist. Companies lobby the Parliament in order to try to influence how MEPs, their assistants, or committees draft, amend, or vote on laws, regulations, and policies so that the company can benefit from these decisions. For more information about the side jobs that MEPs take whilst working in Parliament, please follow the link: [Conflict of interest concerns raised over MEPs' second jobs.](#)

Proposals for a compulsory “cooling-off” period to prevent former MEPs from moving into lobbying roles straight away have not been implemented in full, so the so-called “revolving door” is still in motion. This term refers to the movement of individuals, particularly former MEPs, from public EU institution positions into positions in the private sector, primarily into lobbying roles as mentioned above. This means that the former MEPs can use their contacts and insider information for the benefit of a particular company. An example of this is Holger Krahmer who was formerly on the environment committee with oversight of automotive legislation, and who moved into a senior lobbying role at Opel Group, a car manufacturing firm, in 2017.

Recent scandals, such as the bribery claims made about Huawei, mirror the dynamics of the Qatargate scandal, showing how little has changed. Transparency and consistent lobbying rules across EU institutions are still lacking. Qatargate exposed the European Parliament’s weak oversight of interactions between MEPs and lobbyists or foreign governments, as well as the absence of a single, unified lobbyist register for all EU bodies. These regulatory gaps allow external actors to exert undue influence through opaque channels, as seen in Qatargate and other scandals involving foreign interests. Although there have been some steps toward tightening anti-corruption rules and improving transparency, they remain insufficient, leaving the institution exposed to future abuse.

Parliament has also failed to deal with a culture where unethical behaviour often goes unpunished. When MEPs break the code of conduct, sanctions are rare, and many attempts to improve transparency are blocked. By not enforcing rules properly, Parliament gives the impression that misconduct is not serious, which damages citizens’ trust in the institution.



Corruption and bribery occur in different institutions of the European Union, including the European Commission (EC). Currently, the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has been accused of corruption with respect to contracts for COVID-19 vaccines, “Pfizer gate”. You can read more about it by following the link: [Von der Leyen Commission loses COVID vaccine transparency case ahead of crucial vote](#). The European Parliament is responsible for holding the EC to account for its actions.



Figure 6: The EU Against Corruption Campaign
(Ruiter, E.D, 2025)

The European Union, and particularly the European Parliament, must weigh the costs and benefits of taking stronger action against MEPs whose integrity has been compromised. On one hand, stricter regulations could help expose those who do not prioritize the public interest. On the other hand, such measures may require significant financial resources and could ultimately yield little result. Safeguarding the privacy and dignity of lawmakers is also essential, as many honest MEPs may

view this approach as a potential “witch hunt” within the Union. Still, with current measures proving insufficient to curb corruption in the EU, it is clear that new strategies must be adopted. Ultimately, it falls to the MEPs themselves to determine how best to achieve this and to confront those who seek to undermine democracy from within.

III. Key points of the debate

- The economic implications of corruption within the EP
- Benefits external countries or companies gain by influencing law making within the EU
- Lack of accountability or punishment for MEPs who take part in corruption
- The revolving door effect; possible fixes and prevention methods



- Benefits the MEPs gain by not addressing corruption and prohibiting it strictly
- How efficient the measures taken after Qatargate have been in terms of preventing corruption
- Conflicts of interest when MEPs have jobs or links with private companies
- Possible changes in legislation and/or procedures to tackle corruption

IV. Guiding questions

1. Has your MEP been involved in any corruption scandals such as Qatargate? In what way have they been involved?
2. What nation does your MEP represent? What anti-corruption policies have been applied in your nation that could be useful for the European Parliament?
3. What does your MEP personally believe regarding the corruption scandals in the European Union?
4. Which political group does your MEP belong to? And what are the perspectives and proposed solutions of this party?
5. What concrete measures has your MEP proposed or supported to enhance transparency and reduce corruption within the European Parliament?
6. In light of the Qatargate and Huawei lobbying scandals, what safeguards does your MEP support to prevent undue foreign influence in EU policy making?
7. Would your MEP support suspending or expelling members under investigation before a conviction? Or do they prioritise due process?

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