



PECUCS

Participation of European Citizens
in the Union's Climate Strategy



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The European Council and the political stance on environmental issues

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DIPARTIMENTO DI GIURISPRUDENZA

The European Council

- It was born in parallel, but outside the Community's institutional structure, from the practice of summit meetings between the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, which from 1961 until the early seventies were held without a regular frequency, to discuss issues relating to the life and development of the Communities.



The European Council

- This practice found its first formalization at the Paris summit in December 1974, in which the Heads of State and Government decided to meet as the «European Council», together with their ministers of foreign affairs and representatives of the Commission (the president and one of the vice-presidents), periodically (three times a year) and under the chairmanship of the Head of State or Government holding the presidency of the Council of the Communities

The European Council

- prior to the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Council was not placed within the institutional system in the proper sense.
- The Treaty of Lisbon included the European Council in its own right among the institutions of the Union art. 13 TEU and Articles 235 and 236 TFEU).

The European Council

- Its role is to define the general political direction and priorities of the European Union, necessary to its development
- It has no legislative functions

The European Council

According to art. 15 TEU, it's composed by:

- the Heads of State or Government of the Member States. The participation of the Head of State or Government depends on national rules (for example, for Italy it is the Head of Government, for France the President of the Republic).
- its President
- the President of the Commission.
- the High Representative for Foreign Affairs participates in the work, without being part of it.

The European Council

- it meets twice a semester when convened by the President, the latter may convene extraordinary meetings if the situation so requires.
- As regards the voting procedure, it is decided by consensus, except in cases where the treaties provide otherwise.



The European Council

- The President is elected by the European Council by a qualified majority for a period of two and a half years, renewable once (art. 5 TEU) and **preclusive of any national mandate**.
- The President is entrusted with the task of presiding over and animating the work of the European Council.
- He must ensure the preparation and continuity of its work, in cooperation with the President of the Commission and on the basis of the work of the Council “General Affairs”, endeavour to facilitate cohesion and consensus within the institution
- It must submit a report to the European Parliament after each of the meetings of the European Council.

The European Council

- It is up to the President to ensure the external representation of the Union for matters relating to the common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to (and therefore coordinating with) the powers entrusted to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.
- represents the Union at summits between Heads of State or Government.

The European Council

- it has a political direction function in the sector of the common foreign and security policy and in the sector of the common security and defense policy, since it is expressly established, in art. 22 TEU, that it defines the interests and strategic objectives of the Union's external action, as well as issues that have security implications

The European Council

- In his conclusions adopted on 20th March 2025 it underlined the need to boost competitiveness, strengthen the Single market, promote quality jobs and ensure successful twin transitions, in line with the agreed climate objectives.
- Stressed the strategic importance of the oceans, in the context of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss;
- Called for all efforts at EU and Member States level to be stepped up in order to protect EU citizens and businesses from high energy costs, secure the supply of affordable and clean energy and build a genuine Energy Union before 2030.
- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/03/20/european-council-conclusions-20-march-2025/>