



# THE INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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## Abstract

The institutional architecture of the EU was inspired by the US Constitutional principle of 'checks and balances' whereby the legislative, executive and judicial powers are shared among several institutions to prevent concentration of power. Being a supranational organisation, the EU has also divided powers vertically in order to represent the interests of different electorates, that is the European citizens (represented in the European Parliament), the Member States (European Council and Council of the European Union), and the Union itself (European Commission). The aim of this complex system is not decision-making in itself, but rather the search for consensus, which the Union seeks to enable by offering a structure that allows to manage conflicts and facilitate arrangements among Member States. With the aim of promoting the wellbeing, security and interests of its citizens, the EU mainly intervenes in the following domains: economic, agricultural, environmental, trade, security and foreign policy.

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