



Europe's political institutions

Council of Europe International pan-European organisation based in Strasbourg, comprising 46 member states in Europe. The Council of Europe aims to promote democracy and protect human rights and the rule of law in Europe. Four main bodies: Council of Ministers, Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of Regions and Local Authorities and the Conference of NGOs. www.coe.int www.coe.int/en/web/inqo	European Council Regular meeting (at least twice a year) of the heads of state or governments from the 27 member states of the European Union for the purpose of planning Union policy. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-council_en European Union (EU) The EU currently has 27 members that have delegated some of their sovereignty so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level. No country has ever joined the EU without first belonging to the Council of Europe. https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en
Parliamentary Assembly The deliberative body of the Council of Europe, composed of 318 representatives (and the same number of substitutes) appointed by the 47 member states' national parliaments. https://pace.coe.int/en/	European Parliament The parliamentary body of the European Union which comprises 751 European Members of Parliament of the 27 European Union countries, elected by universal suffrage. www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en
European Commission of Human Rights Until November 1998, this international body examined the admissibility of all individual or state applications against a member state in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights; it expressed an opinion on the violation alleged in applications found to be admissible in cases in which no friendly settlement is reached.	European Commission The executive organ of the European Union, based in Brussels, which monitors the proper application of the Union treaties and the decisions of the Union institutions. https://ec.europa.eu/info/index_en
European Court of Human Rights Based in Strasbourg, this is the only truly judicial organ established by the European Convention on Human Rights. It is composed of one Judge for each State party to the Convention and ensures, in the last instance, that contracting states observe their obligations under the Convention. Since November 1998, the Court has operated on a full-time basis. www.echr.coe.int	International Court of Justice Judicial body of the United Nations, which is based in The Hague. Court of Justice of the European Communities Based in Luxembourg and ensures compliance with the law in the interpretation and application of the European Treaties of the European Union.
European Convention on Human Rights Treaty by which the member states of the Council of Europe undertake to respect fundamental freedoms and rights.	Universal Declaration of Human Rights Adopted by the United Nations in 1948 in order to strengthen the protection of human rights at international level.