

Operation of the European Commission

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Decision-making

Commission decisions are taken: (a) in meetings, or (b) by written procedure, or (c) by delegation procedure.

(a) Meetings.

As a general rule, the Commission meets at least once a week on Wednesday mornings and another whenever necessary. The agenda for the meetings are drawn up on Monday afternoons by Heads of Cabinets in meeting. The Commission is convened by the President. Members of the Commission must attend all meetings. The number of Members who must be present for the deliberations to be valid is equal to the majority of the number of Members specified in the Treaty.

The Commission establishes its priorities and adopts an annual work programme every year, taking into account the political guidelines laid down by its President. With particular reference to this programme, the President establishes the agenda for each meeting.

The Commission takes decisions on the basis of a proposal from one or more of its Members, and it holds a vote if a Member so requests. The decisions are adopted if a majority of the number of Members specified in the Treaty vote in favour.

The meetings are not open to the public: debates and votes are confidential.

Unless otherwise decided, the Secretary-General attends the meetings. If a Commission Member is absent, his *Chef de cabinet* (Head of his Private Office) may attend the meeting and speak on the absent Member's behalf. The Commission may decide to hear any other speaker.

Minutes are drawn up for every meeting.

(b) Written procedure.

The agreement of the Commission Members on a proposal submitted by one or more Members may be recorded by written procedure, provided that the proposal has been approved by the directorates-general directly concerned and has been endorsed by the Legal Service.

Any Commission Member may ask for the proposal to be debated by submitting a reasoned request to the President.

A proposal to which no Commission Member has objected by the expiry of the time-limit laid down for a written procedure stands adopted by the Commission. Proposals adopted are recorded in a daily note, which is referred to in the minutes of the next Commission meeting.

(c) Delegation procedure.

While upholding the principle of collective responsibility, the Commission may empower one or more of its Members to take clearly defined management and administrative measures on its behalf and, in particular, acts preparatory to a decision to be taken by the Commission. It may also instruct one or more of its Members to adopt the definitive text of an act or of a proposal to be submitted to the other institutions, the substance of which has been defined during its deliberations.

The decisions adopted are recorded in a daily note, which is referred to in the minutes of the next Commission meeting.

In principle, such delegated responsibilities may not be sub-delegated.