

## Interview with Jacques F. Poos: the committees of the European Parliament (Sanem, 16 April 2004)

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[Étienne Deschamps] You mentioned the committees that you belonged to. Again, who establishes these committees, their powers and their composition? Is this something that varies from one term to another, or is it fixed? Is there systematically one committee for human rights issues and another one for the environment? How are these things managed from one term to another?

[Jacques F. Poos] Parliament fixes the number of committees categorically and lays down their powers. There are at present 19 committees with a certain number of Members. There are small committees and large committees. The largest is the Committee on Foreign Affairs, which has more Members than the Luxembourg Parliament, just to give you an idea. There are small committees that have fewer Members and need — it is a tiresome job; I recall an instance in 1999, but it will happen again this June because certain countries covet posts in one committee rather than another. There will have to be arbitration, to be carried out by the political groups — the political groups that have 18 candidates for posts in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, whilst there are only 9 places available. They have to vote and make a choice. Then, of course, there are the substitute Members, who are able to satisfy a certain number of legitimate interests. Each Member in a committee has a substitute who can take part in all the meetings. He can also vote in the place of a colleague, a member of the group, who is absent when the vote is called. As a substitute, he has practically the same rights as a full Member: he can address a meeting, he can ask questions. Therefore you can practically double the number of Members in a group: there is always one Member and one substitute Member.