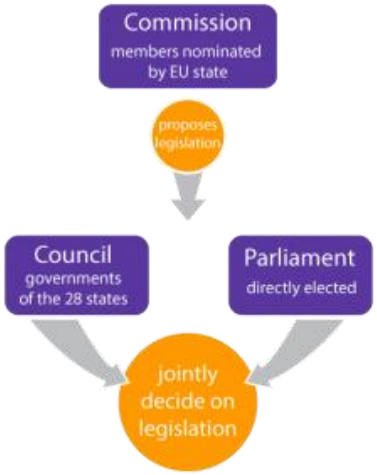
THE INSTITUTIONAL TRIANGLE

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union are the three central legislative institutions of the European Union and are often referred to as the EU's 'institutional triangle'. They are not the only institutions that have a role in EU decision-making but they are the three most important.

All three play an integral part in the legislative and decision-making process of the EU, but in different ways.



A key thing to remember about these three institutions is that they represent different interests in the EU bureaucracy.

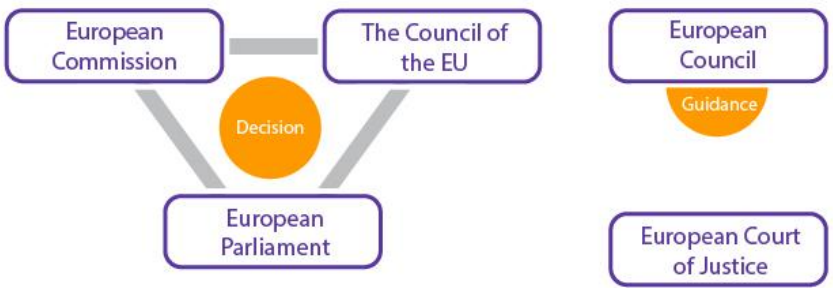
Put simply:

- The **European Commission** represents the interests of the **EU as a whole**.
- The **European Parliament** represents the interests of **European Citizens**.
- **The Council of the European Union** (often referred to as just the Council or the Council of Ministers) represents the **member state governments**.

There are other EU institutions we should also consider:

- The **European Council** gives the impetus and directions to European integration
- The **Committee of Regions & The Economic and Social Committee** are advisory bodies
- The **European Court of Justice** settles disputes

The EU institutional structure could therefore be represented like this:



Source: Introduction to the Study of the European Institutions – University of Portsmouth