How European Democracy works in practice and who decides what - both formally and informally

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Three Main EU Institutional Actors

- **Commission**
  Technocrats fr Member-States, appt'd by Council w EP approval
  - (Spitzenkandidat?) +Comm President
  Represents overall EU interests, acts in Public Interest

- **Council**
  Member-state leaders indirectly elected by national citizens
  Represents national governments, acts in National Interest

- **European Parliament** (EP)
  Legislative Representatives directly elected by citizens in MS
  Represents EU citizens/, organized in political parties
  Acts in public interest or political interest?

- **Influence by citizens:** Opportunities in all three venues

Legislative process begins with **Commission**

- **Commission initiates legislation**
  - Altho Council/EP can request legislative proposals

    95% of laws ordinary legislation

    80% legislation decided in Commission!
- **Process of development** (in each Directorate-General)

    Junior civil servant bg process
  - consulting, hearings w experts, lobbies, interest groups
  - Industry predominates

    But Comm welcomes public interest groups/civil society
  - Access/influence depends on org
    - From int'l, trans-nat'l vs nat'l—eg., environment vs immigration
  - Trust/cooperation key to on-going influence
- Once **have legislative proposal**, goes to College of Commissioners

Commission then sends proposal to

Council

- European Council
  - \+ Councils of Ministers
  - 10 configurations, e.g., Gen affairs, ECOFIN, Agrifish, EMPL, ENV. Justice/Home
- 150 working groups w experts
  - Coreper (MS reps/ambassadors)
- When agreed, send to Council
  - Meets in secret
  - If agreed (vote by QMV), goes to
- TRILOGUES
  - 1st, 2nd (conciliation), 3rd reading

Parliament

Divided by Parties
  - Many diff groupings, e.g., EPP, Soc/Dem, ECR, Greens, Left,
- Legislation sent to committee
  - Rapporteur fr pol group to which file attributed
  - Chair elected by committee
- When agreed, goes to EP vote, then TRILOGUES
  - Chair + rapporteur lead negoti's
  - Other parties not rep'd
- 1st, 2nd (conciliation), 3rd reading

IF no influence from Inside, exert pressure from **OUTSIDE**

- **Protest in the streets**
  - by economic interests (e.g., farmers)
  - by civil society / social movements
    - (e.g., vs. Bolkestein workers' directive 2005/6)
- **European Citizens' Initiative**
  - 1 million signatures collected (by trans-national networks)
- **Citizens Assemblies**
  - e.g., Conference on the Future of Europe to discuss how to improve EU
    - (with expert testimony, citizen involvement, etc.)
- **EU public consultations**
  - On Commission initiatives: 3090 listed today,
    - e.g., vehicle safety, emission reduction, aid to the most deprived
    - https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say_en
- **Media events** traditional media, social media, national/EU