

Nice Treaty

Came into force 1 February 2003

Reformed decision making

A number of institutional and decision making changes are introduced to make way for the 2004/2007 enlargement.



Once membership of the EU reaches 27 the number of Commissioners will be capped. The number of Commissioners will be fewer than the number of Member States and a system of rotation will be introduced based on the principle of equality.

The President of the Commission is given the power to dismiss individual Commissioners.

The national veto is removed from 39 areas in the European Council.

In the Council of Ministers Qualified Majority Voting is extended and the weighting of votes revised. The largest Member States, UK, France, Germany and Italy get 29 votes and Spain 27. If a Member State wishes to request it, a QMV decision will need the support of 62% of the population of the EU.

The number of MEPs is capped at 732.

More power for the Parliament

The European Parliament gains the power to approve the appointment of the President of the Commission and the body of Commissioners.

Enhanced co-operation

The idea of enhanced cooperation, first set out in the Treaty of Amsterdam is formalised. Its objective will be to develop the areas of freedom, security and justice and will involve a minimum of eight Member States.

EU Constitution

Under the Declaration on the Future of the European Union an Intergovernmental Conference will take place in 2004 to consider among other things:

- Delimitation of powers between the EU and Member States
- Status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Simplifying the Treaties to make them more comprehensible to citizens
- The place of national parliaments in the architecture of the EU.

For the full text of the Treaty see
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12001C/pdf/12001C_EN.pdf