

HOW THE EU WORKS

How the EU makes laws

Role-play debate

European Commission/ Parliament/ Council of Ministers

Role-play - the Council of Ministers

Qualified Majority Voting

Decisions in the Council are taken by vote. Countries with a larger population have more votes. But to be fair to smaller countries the numbers are weighted in their favour.

Usually the Council takes decisions by *qualified majority voting* (QMV). The 27 EU countries have a total of 345 votes between them.

A *qualified majority* is reached

- if the measure is approved by a majority of the member states (on some issues a two-thirds majority is needed), *and* ...
- a minimum of 255 votes has been cast in favour;
- a member state may also ask for confirmation that the votes in favour represent at least 62% of the total population of the Union. If this is not so, the decision cannot be adopted.

Votes by country

Country	Population (millions)	Number of Votes
Austria	8.2	10
Belgium	10.5	12
Bulgaria	7.7	10
Cyprus	0.7	4
Czech Republic	10.2	12
Denmark	5.4	7
Estonia	1.3	4
Finland	5.2	7
France	62.8	29
Germany	82.4	29
Greece	11.1	12
Hungary	10.0	12
Ireland	4.2	7
Italy	58.7	29
Latvia	2.2	4
Lithuania	3.4	7
Luxembourg	0.4	4
Malta	0.4	3
Netherlands	16.3	13
Poland	38.1	27
Portugal	10.5	12
Romania	21.6	14
Slovakia	5.3	7
Slovenia	2.0	4
Spain	43.7	27
Sweden	9.0	10
United Kingdom	60.3	29