The European Union: 27 countries
Member states, candidates and potential candidates for accession

Why?

	Death toll	The Economic Set-Back: Pre-war year when GDP equalled that of 1945
Austria	525,000	1886
Belgium	82,750	1924
Denmark	4,250	1936
Finland	79,000	1938
France	505,750	1891
Germany	6,363,000	1908
Italy	355,500	1909
Netherlands	250,000	1912
Norway	10,250	1937
Sweden	0	GDP grew during WWII
Switzerland	0	GDP grew during WWII
UK	325,000	GDP grew during WWII

Baldwin&Wyplosz 2006. The Economics of European Integration 2nd Edition

Peace in Europe (post-WW II)

Jean Monnet (1943):

"**There will be no peace in Europe, if the states are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty with all that this implies by way of prestige politics and economic protectionism. If the countries of Europe once more protect themselves against each other, it will be once more be necessary to build up vast armies.**"

"**The European states must constitute themselves into a federation.**"

Economic interdependence as key

Economic reconstruction

Institutional foundations

- **Three Communities created in 1950s:**
  - European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), 1951
    - making war in Europe not only *'unthinkable, but materially impossible'*
  - European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), 1957
  - European Economic Community (EEC), 1957

- **Founders:**
  - Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg

- **Different patterns of development:**
  - Widening
  - Deepening
  - Differentiated and multi-speed integration
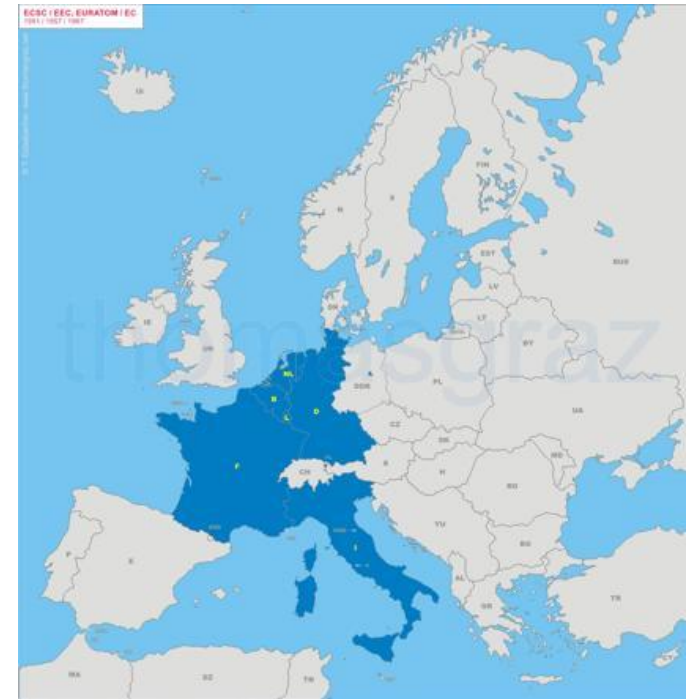
Widening: enlargement

Original members:
Germany, France, Italy, Belgium,
Netherlands, Luxemburg

1973:
UK, Ireland,
Denmark

1981:
Greece

1986:
Portugal,
Spain

1990:
East
Germany

1995:
Austria, Sweden,
Finland

2004:
CEE countries,
Cyprus, Malta

2007:
Bulgaria,
Romania

2013:
Croatia

Deepening – more policy matters decided at EU level

- Single European Act (1985): 4 freedoms of movement; strengthens European Parliament

- Maastricht Treaty (1991): creates European Union; Euro; pushes integration beyond economics (foreign policy, home affairs)

- Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2000) Treaties: preparation for enlargement; incorporate Schengen agreement into EU treaties

- Lisbon Treaty (2009): gives EU unified legal personality → in force since 2009
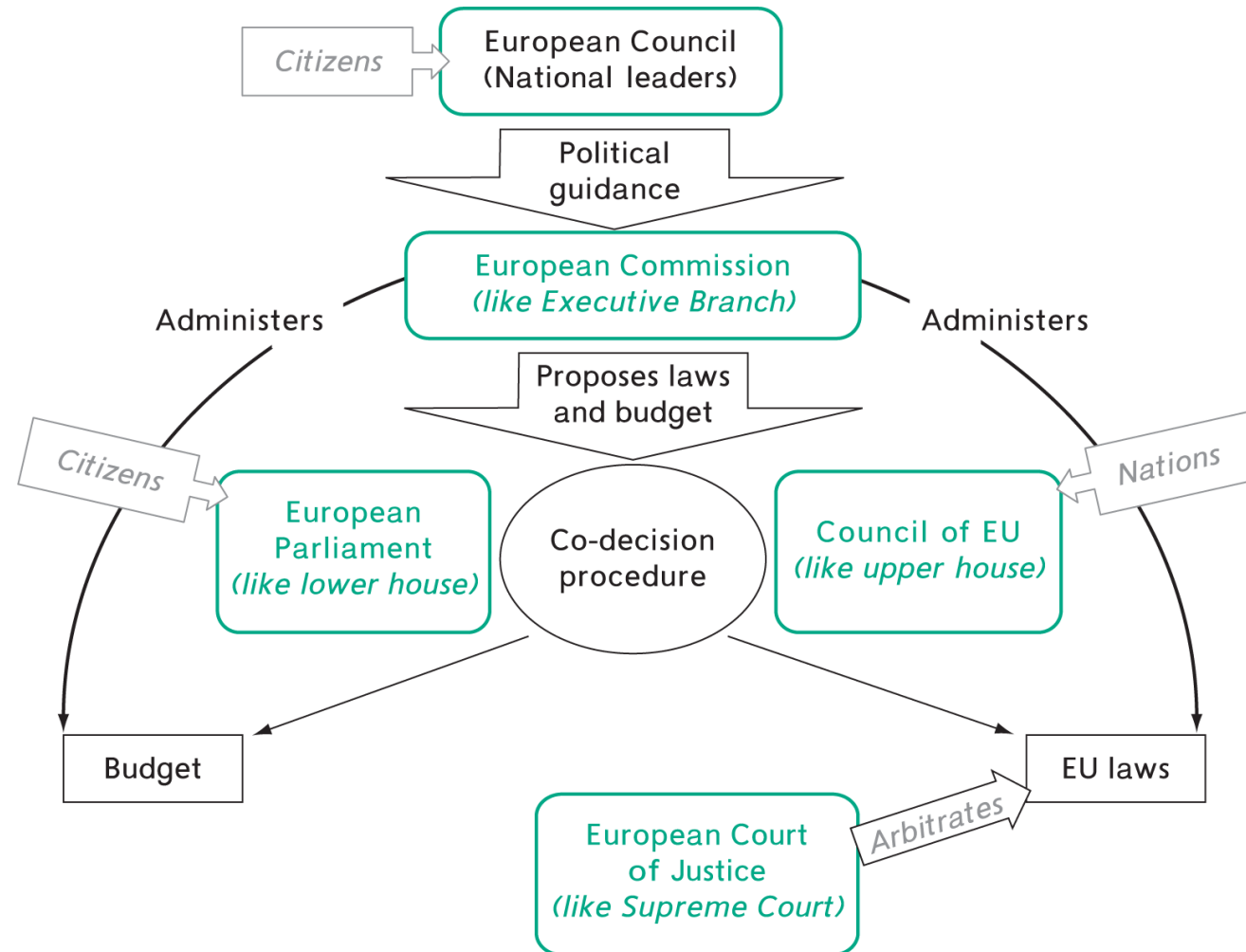
Differentiated integration
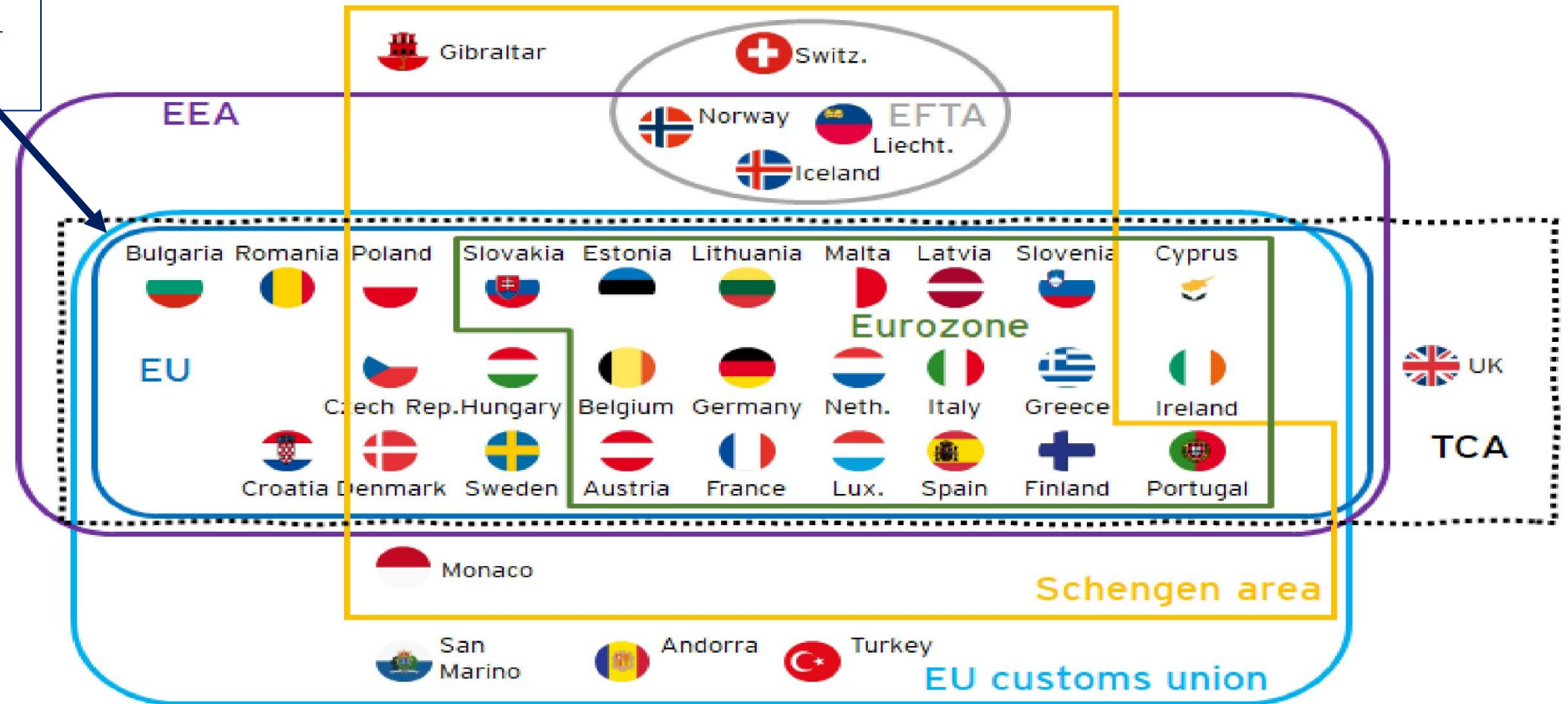
The 'Big-5' institutions

Figure 2.3 Basics of EU institutional architecture

Citizens → European Council (National leaders)

↓ Political guidance

European Commission *(like Executive Branch)*

Administers | Administers

↓ Proposes laws and budget

Citizens → European Parliament *(like lower house)*

Co-decision procedure

Nations → Council of EU *(like upper house)*

Budget

EU laws

European Court of Justice *(like Supreme Court)* — Arbitrates → EU laws

EU Institutions: a combination of a supranational principle (community matters) and an intergovernmental principle

Institution	Composition	Governance role
European Council (Brussels)	Member state leaders (intergovernmental)	Defines legislative, executive objectives
European Commission (Brussels)	EU bureaucrats (supranational)	Executive, some legislative functions
Council of the European Union (Brussels)	Member state ministers (intergovernmental)	Legislative, some executive functions
European Parliament (Strasbourg, Brussels)	Elected MEPs (supranational)	Legislative
Court of Justice (Luxembourg)	EU judges (supranational)	Judiciary

Hurrelmann, 2017

The European Council or Council of heads of state and of government (voice of the Member States) – president Charles Michel

Plays an important role:

- in providing overall political direction to the Union,

- defining goals and strategies

The European Council takes decisions on an intergovernmental basis, and implementation of the measures is left to the other EU institutions.

The Lisbon Treaty introduced a President of the European Council (Charles Michel since 2019) who holds office for 2.5 years, renewable for a following term (selected by qualified-majority voting in the European Council).

The European Commission (the voice of the EU) – president Ursula von der Leyen

- The European Commission is the executive branch of the EU.

- It enforces the Treaties and is driving forward European integration:
  - it proposes legislation to the Council and Parliament;
  - it administers and implements EU policies;
  - it provides surveillance and enforcement of EU law in coordination with the EU Court.

- It represents the EU at some international negotiations (e.g., WTO). However, the Commission's negotiating stances at such meetings are closely monitored by EU members.

- The Commission is made up of one Commissioner from each EU member (including the President).

- Commissioners are appointed all together and serve for five years.

- Commissioners are not supposed to act as national representatives.

- The Council is composed of representatives of each of the member states at the ministerial level plus a representative of the Commission; composition varies by policy field;
  - presidency rotates between member states every six months
- **Functions**:
  - To pass EU laws – jointly with the EP in many policy areas;

  - To co-ordinate the broad economic policies of the member states;

  - To conclude international agreements between the EU and other countries or international organizations;

  - To approve the budget of the EU, jointly with the EP;

  - To develop the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, based on guidelines set by the European Council and

  - To co-ordinate co-operation between the national courts and police forces in criminal matters.
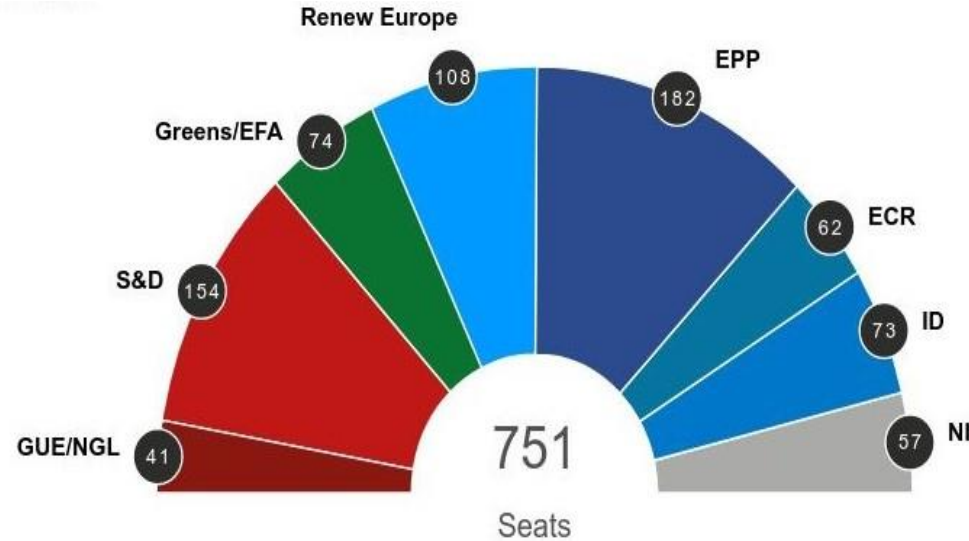
The European Parliament

- Organization:
  - 751 members (MEPs) directly elected; chaired by President (Roberta Metsola)
  - number per nation varies with population but is less than proportional;
  - MEPs physically sit left-to-right, not along national lines; organized in trans-national party groups.
- The European Parliament adopts laws by a simple majority: the usual 50 per cent majority threshold with one vote per member of Parliament.
- Main tasks:
  - sharing legislative powers with the Council of the EU and the Commission;
  - overseeing EU institutions, especially the Commission.

European Parliament (voice of the people)

- **Democratic Control:**
- Parliament is the primary democratic control over the EU's activities;
- MEPs are directly elected.

Renew Europe 108
Greens/EFA 74
EPP 182
ECR 62
S&D 154
ID 73
GUE/NGL 41
NI 57

751 Seats

Political groups in the European Parliament

- **EPP -** Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
- **S&D -** Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
- **ECR -** European Conservatives and Reformists Group
- **Renew Europe -** Renew Europe group
- **GUE/NGL -** Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
- **Greens/EFA -** Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
- **ID -** Identity and Democracy
- **NI -** Non-attached Members

Since 2009, according to Parliament's rules of procedure, a political group shall consist of at least 25 Members elected in at least seven Member States.

European Parliament 2019-2024

Court of Justice of the European Union

- Organization:
  - one judge from each member appointed for six years; chaired by president (Koen Lenaerts)
  - Court reaches its decisions by majority voting.
- EU laws and decisions are open to interpretation that may lead to disputes that cannot be settled by negotiation:
  - Court settles these disputes, especially disputes between Member States, between the EU and Member States, between EU institutions, and between individuals and the EU;
  - It has had a major impact on European integration via case-law.
- Judges are appointed by common accord of the Member States' governments.

Core EU institutions: Another look

Institution	Composition	Governance role
European Council (Brussels)	Member state leaders (intergovernmental)	Defines legislative, executive objectives
European Commission (Brussels)	EU bureaucrats (supranational)	Executive, some legislative functions
Council of the European Union (Brussels)	Member state ministers (intergovernmental)	Legislative, some executive functions
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Court of Justice (Luxembourg)	EU judges (supranational)	Judiciary

The ordinary legislative procedure

Figure 2.4 Ordinary legislative procedure
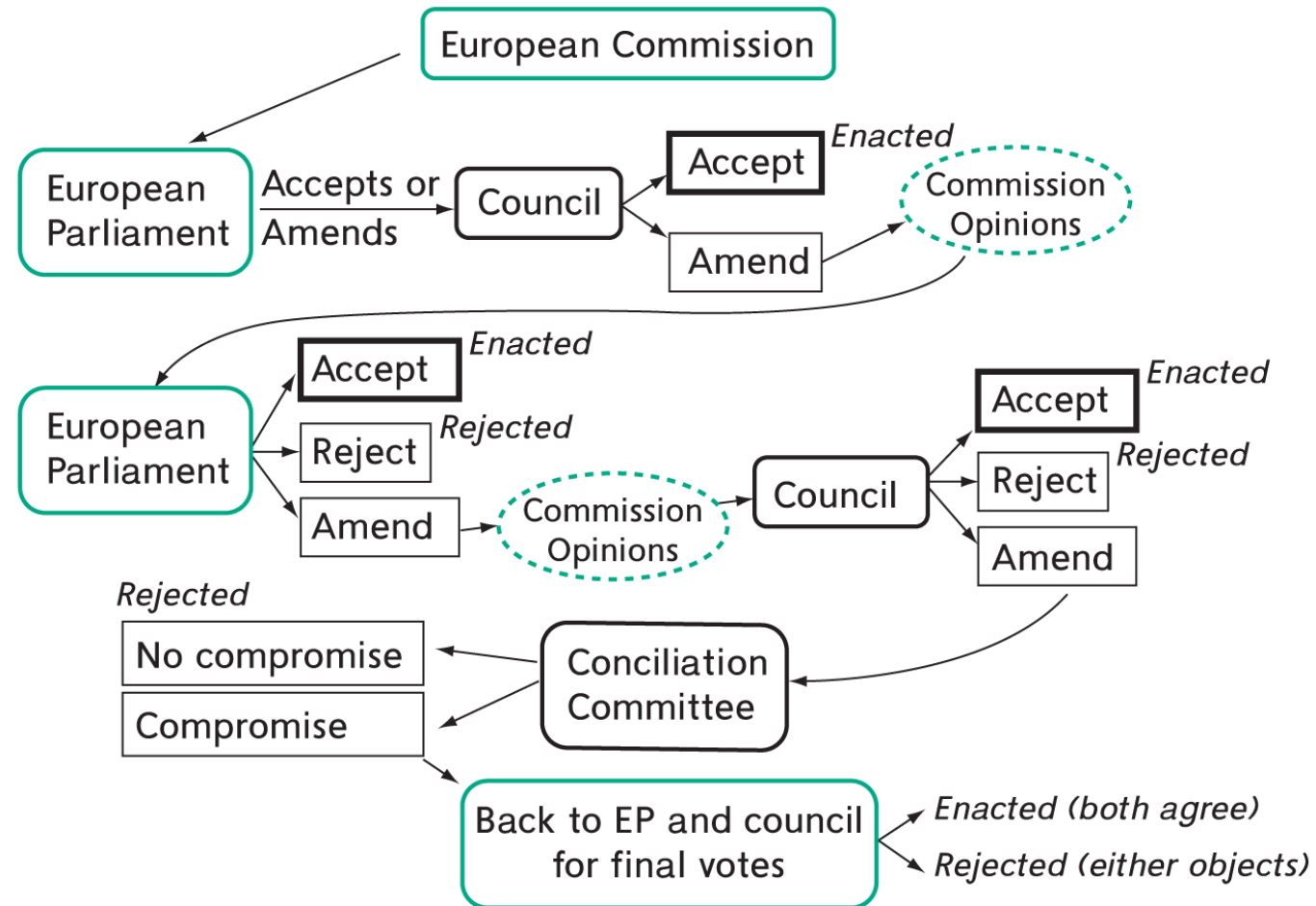
What is the EU?

More than an international organization, less than a state:

- EU is a combination of intergovernmentalism (member-state control) and supranationalism (pan-European mandate)

Areas of success

- Nobel peace prize in 2012
- Spread of European norms and values (freedom, democracy, human and minority rights, rule of law) through various policies
  - Enlargement, trade, development
- Largest single market of the world:
  - The EU is the third largest economy in the world.
  - The EU is the world's largest trading block.
  - The EU ranks first in both inbound and outbound international investments.
  - The EU is the top trading partner for 80 countries.
- Global leader in environmental matters
  - Green Deal
- The largest donor of the world

EU crises

- **Since 2010, succession of crises and rise of Euroscepticism:**
  - Eurozone crisis
  - Refugee crisis
  - Brexit
  - Covid-19 pandemic
  - Russia's war in Ukraine