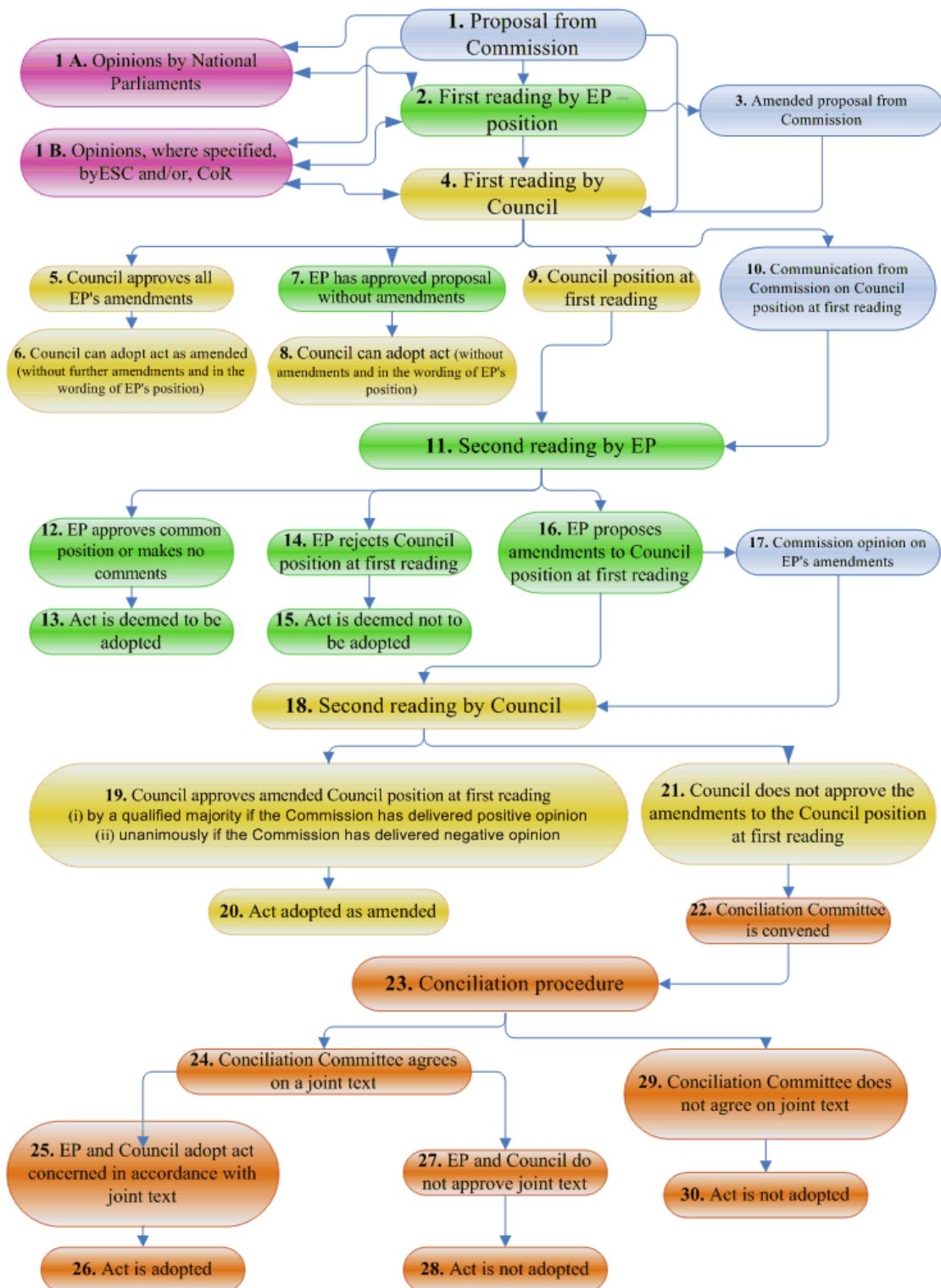


# Explanatory note on the ordinary legislative procedure / codecision



Flow chart of the ordinary legislative procedure (co-decision)  
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The European decision making process is extremely complicated and it takes many times several years when a legislative proposal became finally European law. **The EU decision making procedure** comes about as a result of decisions taken by **the institutional triangle**, made up of **the Council** (representing national governments), **the European Parliament** (representing the people) and **the European Commission** (a body independent of EU governments that upholds the collective European interest).

The EU's standard decision-making procedure is known as **ordinary legislative procedure** (or '**co-decision**').

### European Commission, the initiator of EU proposals

**The monopoly of making initiatives lies within the European Commission:** it launches the proposed EU legislation, followed by its adoption by the European Parliament together with the Council.

Before drafting a proposal, the European Commission may publish **White Papers or Green Papers**. **White Papers** aims to guide readers to better understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision. In order to collect further inputs, the Commission can publish **Green Papers** aiming to identify successful practices and policies. The public consultations offer a direct possibility not only for interested stakeholders but also for ordinary citizens to send input to the European Commission.

### Official EU advisory bodies – EESC and CoR

The Lisbon Treaty confirmed the roles of the official advisory bodies: **the Committee of the Regions** and **the European Economic and Social Committee**.

**The Committee of the Regions (CoR)** has to be consulted throughout the legislative process involving the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in areas such as health, civil protection or the environment.

**The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** is a consultative body that gives representatives of Europe's socio-occupational interest groups, and others, a formal platform to express their points of views on EU issues. Its opinions are forwarded to the larger institutions - the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament.

**The appropriate Directorate General (DG)** of the European Commission drafts a proposal. One of the most relevant DGs for public health is the **Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO)**. At the final political phase within the Commission, all proposals are transmitted to the **College of Commissioners** which usually holds its meeting on Wednesday and which agrees on the final proposal, before sending them to the co-legislators.

### The co-legislators: council of the European Union and the European Parliament

Based on the inputs received in previous procedures, the European Commission elaborates its legislative proposals to the co-legislators: to **the Council of the European Union** and to **the European Parliament**.

**The Council of the European Union** composed of the representatives of the Member States, and **the European Parliament** work together in the framework of **the ordinary**

**legislative procedure ('codecision')**. The Lisbon Treaty reinforced the competences of the European Parliament aiming at making its role equivalent to the Council.

### **Professional lobbyists**

All of the above mentioned decision making bodies are subject to lobbying from **NGOs**, the **industry, think tanks and academic groupings, trade associations, UN agencies, trade unions, local and regional authorities, the media and embassies**.

**Brussels is one of the cities with the highest concentration of professional lobbyists in the world, all trying to influence the policy making process at different stages of the game.** Hence there are many different actors, some very big and powerful, others representing grassroots interests, that have become an intrinsic part of the EU decision making process. They shape the policy process through various advocacy and awareness-raising activities, from **giving advice and taking part in public consultations to meeting with representatives of the various EU institutions and organising issue-specific events in collaboration with other EU stakeholders**.