

*Voice of the People*

**Manuscript**  
**The Commission**  
**TVSYD, Brussels**

Participants:

No names of the questioners

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Music: Song of Joy from Council of Europe's CD "The European Anthem" 15sec

Duration: 3:03

## **Translation**

### **The Commission**

### **TVSYD, Denmark**

0:11

The European Commission is the European institution with the real power, at least if you ask many European citizens. But at the end of the day, is this really so?

Sync:

0:22

What is the difference between the Parliament and the Commission?

Speak:

0:24

In reality, the Commission has no decision-making powers. These lie with the Parliament and the Council. However, the Commission is the only institution in the EU which can initiate legislative proposals that must be approved by the Parliament and the Council. Furthermore, the Commission has other fields of responsibility. The Commission must ensure that the EU rules and budget are adopted. And that the programmes adopted by the Parliament and the Council are implemented. And the Commission supervises that the member states are respecting EU-law.

Sync:

0:56

It is not easy, as there are no comparable institutions in the national states. By and large, it could be compared to a government, i.e. its task is to execute adopted law, especially, when it comes to competition policies in the common market.

Speak:

1:15

Every fifth year a new Commission takes office. However, before it can begin its work, the composition of commissioners must be approved by the Parliament. Normally, this takes place without frictions, however, in 2004, the president of the new Commission, after a lot of discussions back and forth and in face of the danger of being outvoted by the majority of members of Parliament, had to change his composition of commissioners. Simply because the Parliament refused to approve the new Italian commissioner as he had made degrading remarks about women and homosexuals.

1:51

After the accession of the 10 new member states, the Commission now consists of 25 commissioners: The president and 24 commissioners, each with his or her particular area of responsibility. Each commissioner is assisted by a cabinet.

The cabinet usually consists of academic employees who assist the commissioner in working out the policies in his field of responsibility.

2:14

However, 20,000 people work for the Commission all over Europe.

Sync

2:24

The field of responsibility of a Commissioner is decided by the president of the Commission, who allots a portfolio to him or her, so there is a commissioner for competition policy, for culture, for environment, for development policies, for foreign relations etc. as in a national government where you have ministers for various fields, and so you have commissioners for various fields.

However, the Commission is more a collegial body, even more so than in national government. They always decide jointly.