

European Union Institutions : Functions, Powers and Organisation

3 credits

Teacher responsible: prof. Jacques Ziller, PhD

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20 hours

DESCRIPTION:

The course is designed to provide students who are not familiar with the European Union institutions with the necessary tools to be able to understand how policies are developed and implemented in the framework of the EU and its 28 member states and how politics are addressing European wide issues, with a particular focus on Italy.

The powers of EU institutions are conferred to it by the member states – which remain sovereign nation states – on the basis of the EU treaties. The course will examine the policy fields in which the EU has power to act and the limits to these powers as well as the obligations that derive for the member states.

The institutions of the EU are not dissimilar to those of a nation state, but have a number of very original features. The course will focus on the organisation and functioning of the European Parliament – which is elected by the EU citizens –; of the European Council and Council – where Heads of state and government as well as ministers from national government represent the member states; of the Commission – which is an independent political institution endowed with powers of proposal for policy making, as well as executive and oversight powers; and of the European Court of Justice which adjudicates on litigation regarding the actions of EU institutions and the compliance of member states with their obligations.

The citizens of EU member states enjoy EU citizenship, which entails political rights regarding the EU institutions as well as fundamental rights that have to be respected by both EU and member states institutions. The course will focus on the Charter of fundamental rights of the EU and its implementation.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION and FINAL EVALUATION:

Students will be invited to discuss the issues examined on the basis of easily accessible documents and explanations by the professor.