

Policy making

What did the Lisbon Treaty change?



European Commission
Trade

Factsheet

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The Lisbon treaty introduced **3 main changes** in trade policy:

Greater powers for the European Parliament

Parliament's powers have increased significantly – it is now **co-legislator with the Council on trade matters**:

- All **basic EU trade legislation** (on e.g. anti-dumping, trade preferences) must pass through the Parliament (the "ordinary legislative procedure") before being adopted or amended by the Council.
- All **trade agreements** must be approved by Parliament to be ratified.
- Status of **trade negotiations** – the Commission must transmit documents and report regularly on this to the European Parliament (*a degree of parliamentary scrutiny unparalleled in the field of international negotiations*).

Clarified/increased powers for the EU

- The Lisbon treaty creates a more solid basis for the EU to adopt **autonomous acts** on trade in services and commercial aspects of intellectual property (i.e. that go beyond international agreements).
- Trade in **cultural/audiovisual, educational and social/health services** are now an EU power, subject, in certain cases, to specific voting rules.
- **Foreign direct investment** is now an EU power under trade policy, i.e. the EU can both conclude international agreements and adopt autonomous measures on FDI.

Qualified majority voting for most trade issues

Qualified majority voting becomes the general rule in Council for **all aspects of trade policy**, Unanimity is required only in the following specific circumstances:

- where commitments on **cultural/audiovisual** services risk undermining the EU's cultural and linguistic diversity
- where commitments on **social, educational or health** services risk seriously disturbing the national organisation of these services and impeding member governments' ability to deliver them
- **where unanimity is required for the adoption of internal rules**