



The European Parliament's implementation of Article 17 TFEU

1. Legal Basis:

Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) introduced a legal obligation on the EU to conduct an open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches, religious associations, and philosophical and non-confessional organisations. It states:

1. *The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.*
2. *The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organisations.*
3. *Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations.*

The European Parliament has given effect to the Treaty provisions through the designation by its President of a Vice-President responsible for conducting the dialogue, as well as a number of specific decisions establishing the framework.

2. Elements of the Parliament's implementation of Article 17 TFEU include:

- Designation of a Vice-President responsible for conducting the dialogue.
- Presentation to Parliament's Bureau of an Annual Report by the Vice-President.
- Dedicated Article 17 secretariat to administer the dialogue.
- Further administrative support for the dialogue from all relevant Parliament services.
- Dedicated pages of Parliament's website to increase transparency and awareness.
- Reflection papers prepared by the European Parliamentary Research Service.
- Organisation of regular seminars and other dialogue activities with external partners.
- Linking the dialogue to parliamentary work and policy debate, involving office holders.

3. Types of Article 17 TFEU activities at the European Parliament:

- Article 17 dialogue seminars hosted by the Parliament.
- Other dialogue activities hosted by the Parliament.
- Seminars hosted by other parliamentary actors on Article 17 related issues.
- Activities organised in cooperation with one or more Article 17 dialogue partner.
- Receiving delegations in Parliament from Article 17 partner organisations.
- Representing Parliament at events organised by Article 17 TFEU partner organisations.
- Cooperation with other EU institutions on the implementation of Article 17 TFEU.

Parliament typically organises two to three full Article 17 dialogue seminars per year. These are held in public and web streamed. All registered dialogue partners, both religious and non-confessional, are invited to attend all Article 17 seminars and other activities. The topics for the dialogue can be drawn from all areas of EU action. Parliament's Article 17 dialogue partners are consulted as to the choice of topics as well as on the format of seminars.

In between dialogue seminars, the Parliament maintains a regular dialogue with Article 17 partners at various levels, including the administrative level through its dedicated secretariat.