



# The *Parlamentarium*

## The open door to European democracy

**The European Parliament's brand new Visitors' Centre - the *Parlamentarium* - will open to the public on Friday 14 October at 10.00. The largest parliamentary visitors' centre in Europe and the first to be fully operational in 23 languages, it will use an impressive array of interactive multimedia tools to give citizens, tourists and local residents a unique insight into the European Parliament and the other European institutions.**

"The European Parliament Visitors' Centre offers an amazing journey into the heart of Europe, to the core of the only directly elected EU institution, where decisions influencing the lives of millions are taken. The *Parlamentarium* is the most modern exhibition centre of its kind. Thanks to high-technology and interactive exhibits, visitors can enjoy a thrilling tour in any of the 23 EU languages. But, more importantly, the exhibition shows that Europe has come a long way - surviving two World Wars, reuniting the divided continent and now sharing a joint political project which, I am convinced, will thrive and prevail over the challenges we face today."

***Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament***

"The *Parlamentarium* makes Europe come alive by inviting people to experience the European political life and atmosphere. It provides visitors with the unique opportunity to come close to the Members of the European Parliament, directly elected by the European Citizens, to be informed about their working environment and their diverse activities. Hence, the *Parlamentarium* makes a valuable contribution to showing European democracy in action."

***Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Vice-President of the European Parliament***



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# Introduction

## Experience the European Parliament as never before

The *Parlamentarium* will open to the public on Friday 14 October. Through innovative and entertaining multimedia tools, children and adults alike will be taken into the heart of the European Parliament to see how the political decisions that influence our daily lives are made.

The *Parlamentarium* will be the largest parliamentary visitors' centre in Europe and the first ever such exhibition in the world that is fully operational in 23 languages. Visitors will be able to get closer to politicians through interactive multimedia displays, take a virtual tour through Europe on a 3D map, see what the European Union has done for each country along the way, learn about the role of the European Parliament ... and much more.

### Europe is open seven days a week at the *Parlamentarium*

The *Parlamentarium* is the only part of the EU headquarters in Brussels open to all citizens seven days a week without an entrance pass.

With this new Visitors' Centre, Parliament is showcasing its wish to be open to the outside world while also helping to make the European district in Brussels a livelier place. The *Parlamentarium* is family-friendly and will warmly welcome adults and children from Belgium and all other countries. It will serve as a focal point for school visits, providing an environment where entire classes can explore a key aspect of today's political world.

The *Parlamentarium* is the first step towards developing a 'European campus' in Brussels. In the longer term, Parliament plans to create an urban tourism pathway offering educational visits that take in the new Visitor's Centre, the InfoPoint, the EP Information Office in Belgium and the future House of European History.

### The *Parlamentarium* in a nutshell

#### 360 degree projection of the Plenary Chamber

During their visit, visitors can sit in the middle of a huge 360-degree digital surround screen, projecting the Plenary Chamber (or "hemicycle"). Here, they will be able to see how decisions are taken in the Parliament and find out more about the people who make things happen: the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), the democratically elected representatives of the EU's citizens. They can listen to debates, see votes being taken and be guided through the legislative process in an educational but entertaining way. A touch-screen application will enable visitors to find out more about the MEPs.

#### Virtual trip through Europe

Visitors can also take a virtual tour through Europe, learning what contributions the European Union has made to each country and seeing that while all Member States are different they also share a joint political project. A walk through Europe on the "Ground of Stories" involves a 200m<sup>2</sup> map of Europe with over 90 interactive points. Moveable screens will act as media guides, allowing visitors to travel to a country or region of interest.

In the same room, suspended from the ceiling, visitors will see a stunning 3D light installation - one of the biggest such installations in the world - which is a shifting 3D map of Europe showing results of different opinion polls as it moves.



### **Role-play game for school students**

The *Parlamentarium* has a multimodal role-play game for groups of secondary school students. This game allows players to take on the role of an MEP and go through all the steps needed to approve a new European law. It caters for those between the ages of 14 and 16. Up to 32 people can play in each session.

### **Video messages from Members of the European Parliament...**

Who are our Members? What do they stand for? Why do they join forces in the seven political groups of the European Parliament? Visitors will be invited to find out through a number of interactive installations and a video wall with messages from each of Parliament's 736 elected Members.

### **... and from people from all around Europe**

Visitors will also hear personal stories from people living in different EU countries. For this 'Daily Life' section, 54 Europeans explain how the EU and its policies have had an impact on their lives, their businesses and their plans.

### **Interactive voting application: "It's your choice"**

Other installations also on offer include "It's your choice". Using an interactive voting application, visitors can gain an insight into the wide range of political issues being discussed in Parliament and can compare their votes with those of other visitors.

### **Journey through time**

The exhibition also offers a brief journey through time with 150 iconic images as well as numerous historical documents representing crucial events that have changed the face of Europe.

### **Practical information**

The Visitor's Centre will be open to the public as of Friday 14 October at 10.00. It is expected to receive up to 450,000 visitors a year and will be open every day, closed only on Monday mornings. Entrance is free, as is the multimedia guide which will be available in 23 languages. The facilities have been designed to make them fully accessible to those with special needs. The Centre also has a shop with branded EP products, a cafeteria, baby changing facilities and cloakroom.



# The role-play game

## Step into the shoes of a Member of the European Parliament

The *Parlamentarium* includes a role-play game for secondary school students wishing to take a crash course in the workings of Europe's democratically elected parliament. Students will step into the shoes of an MEP and will have to negotiate with fellow students to approve legislation that will affect the day-to-day lives of people living in Europe.

In the course of the game, players will discover how European legislation is drafted and which stakeholders are involved. They will encounter high-pressure environments similar to those faced by real MEPs: they will be asked to form alliances, defend their ideas in political debates, lead political negotiations with other institutions and communicate their decisions to the media. Students will learn the art of compromise, which is fundamental to success in European politics.

Throughout the game, players will come in contact with experts, interest groups and other stakeholders. They will have to make quick decisions on which piece of information emerging from these meetings is most relevant. The many languages spoken will add to the challenge.

More than 400 virtual characters have been created for the game and are played by actors from all over the 27 EU countries. The script of the game is over 250 pages long and has been translated into 23 languages (making over 5750 pages for all languages).

The game lasts two and a half hours, with a minimum of 16 participants and a maximum of 32. Participation is free of charge. The ideal age for the game is 14-16.

Similar role-play games have met with huge success in Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

Game sessions can be booked at: [Parlamentarium@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:Parlamentarium@europarl.europa.eu) and as of 15 September at [www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting).



# Facts and figures

## General information

- **Surface:** about 5,400 m<sup>2</sup>, of which 2890 m<sup>2</sup> is allocated to the exhibition area. The biggest parliamentary visitor's centre in Europe and the second in the world after the Capitol Hill in Washington.

- **Language:** The first permanent exhibition in the world using 23 languages. All the content is provided in these languages. Visitors will receive Personal Multimedia Guides (PMGs). At each installation the PMG will display in-depth information and short films in the visitor's desired language.

- **Expected visitor numbers:** 450,000 people expected each year.

- **Cost:** About €21 million including planning and production costs for 23 languages (in total).

Comparisons:

- Musée Tintin: €15 million for a surface of 3.500 m<sup>2</sup>

- Visitors Centre of the Austrian Parliament: €6 million for a surface of 700 m<sup>2</sup>

- US Capitol Hill Visitors Center €421 million for a surface of 53,800 m<sup>2</sup>

- **Time taken to devise and complete the project:** Six years.

Decision to create the Centre: July 2005

Tender on Interior and Exhibition Design: Spring 2007

Award of contract: January 2008

Inauguration: October 2011

- **Exhibitions:** Permanent and temporary exhibitions. First temporary exhibition: "The making of" the Visitors Centre.

- **General planning, concept, design of permanent exhibition:** ATELIER BRÜCKNER, German exhibition designers, winners of several prizes at national and international level. In the last 25 years ATELIER BRÜCKNER has designed the BMW Museum in Munich, the CERN visitors' centre in Geneva, the German Stock Exchange in Frankfurt and others.

- **Planning, concept design of role-play game:** *Media Farm*, Norway. The role-play is based on highly successful projects in the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian parliaments which attract tens of thousands of students annually.

- **Multimedia production:** *Markenfilm Crossing*, Germany. *Markenfilm Crossing* is an award-winning media production with a strong interactive design and multimedia solutions department. *Markenfilm Crossing* is a division of *Markenfilm Group*, Europe's leading commercial film production group, with over 50 years of experience.

- **First concept:** *LORD Cultural Resources Planning & Management Ltd.*, consultancy for museum planning and cultural heritage management, consultant to over 1500 museums and visitor centres (including Guggenheim Museum (Bilbao), Tate Modern, Louvre).

- **Graphic design (under the lead of ATELIER BRÜCKNER):** The graphic studio *integral ruedi baur* developed a special graphic script for the *Parlamentarium*. Each graphic sign used is composed of several EU languages superimposed on each other to bring out the 'united in diversity' concept. Some signs are based on all 23 languages.

- **Interactivity:** The exhibition offers around 100 videos and approx. 300 multimedia installations.



## Technical information

- **Actors for the role-play:** Over 400 actors from the 27 EU countries.
- **People interviewed for the Daily Life section:** 54 from all 27 Member States.
- **Number of Hot Spots in the 'United in Diversity' section:** 90, each with a film about a different town / area of the EU Member States.
- **Number of RFIDs in the 'United in Diversity' section:** More than 600 built-in RFID tags.
- **Number of screens:** Over 100 interactive terminals / screens and interactive projections.
- **Number of LEDs on entrance:** 595,968 LEDs: (97x 8 panels) x (256 pixels x 3)
- **Number of photos:** Over 1400.
- **Length of cables:** Around 40 km.
- **Interactive Floor Map:** Europe Floor Map of 210m<sup>2</sup> with 90 interactive spots.
- **360° cinemas:** 2 x 360° cinemas, each with approx. 150m<sup>2</sup> of projection surface.
- **Number of PMG provided:** 700
- **3 D light installations:** a) 3 D LED ceiling with ca. 13,000 LEDs on a surface of 42m<sup>2</sup> - largest in the world, b) 40 m long LED ring for European statistics with over 50,000 LEDs.

## Practical information

- **Opening days:** Open 7/7 (closed Monday morning). Closed on 1 January, 1 May, 1 November and 24, 25, 31 December.
- **Opening hours:** 59 per week  
Monday 13.00 – 18.00  
Tuesday, Wednesday 09.00 – 20.00  
Thursday, Friday 09.00 – 18.00  
Saturday, Sunday 10.00 – 17.00
- **Entrance fee:** Free of charge.
- **Capacity:** 630 people at any one time.
- **Floor staff:** Approximately 20 positions at all times.
- **Other facilities:** Free multimedia guide, cafeteria and shop with branded EP souvenirs.
- **For children:** Special one-hour tours have been devised for 8-14 year olds and each stage of the visit caters for children. Children will receive their own handheld media guides to use free of charge.
- **Accessibility:** Wheelchair access is provided. Staff will be on hand to provide assistance and a limited number of wheelchairs are available. If a wheelchair is needed, please send an email to [Parlamentarium@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:Parlamentarium@europarl.europa.eu) at least one day before arrival.
- **For visually impaired visitors:** The centre provides media guides with special audio files which describe the space, content and main features. Braille tactile maps are available in



Dutch, English, French and German and Braille keyboards are available in two parts of the centre. Guide dogs are also permitted.

- **For visitors with hearing difficulties:** Media guides are equipped with sign language videos in English, French, German and Dutch. There is a special one-hour tour for hearing impaired visitors. The centre is also fitted with induction loops.

- **Address/contact:**

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Willy Brandt building  
B-1047 Brussels  
Email: [Parlamentarium@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:Parlamentarium@europarl.europa.eu)



# Background information on the European Parliament

The European Parliament is the only EU institution directly elected by Europe's citizens. It represents approximately 500 million people in the EU's 27 Member States. Elections are held every five years. The June 2009 election marked the 30th anniversary of elections by universal suffrage. Following the election, 736 MEPs were elected to Parliament. They join together in political groups on the basis of political affiliation.

Since 1979, successive European treaties have increased the powers of the European Parliament over the EU budget and legislation as well as its power of scrutiny over the EU's other institutions and bodies.

In most EU policy areas, decisions on new European laws are made jointly by Parliament, directly representing the citizens, and the Council of Ministers, representing the Member States.

Parliament plays an active role in drafting legislation which has an impact on the daily lives of its citizens: for example, on environmental protection, consumer rights, equal opportunities, transport, agriculture, energy security, immigration, justice and home affairs, health, structural funds and the free movement of workers, capital, services and goods. Parliament also shares power with the Council over the EU annual budget.

Every year Parliament holds 12 plenary sessions in Strasbourg. Parliamentary committee meetings and additional plenary sessions are held in Brussels. Debates are conducted in all the EU's official languages, reflecting its commitment to a varied and multicultural Union which is 'united in diversity'.



# Information from the architects

## **ATELIER BRÜCKNER – Architecture, Exhibition Design, Scenography**

### **Designing the *Parlamentarium***

The *Parlamentarium* welcomes visitors to an innovative, choreographed exhibition. The concept and design of the Visitors` Centre was devised by ATELIER BRÜCKNER, the German exhibition design office contracted by the European Parliament in 2008 to do the general planning after being selected through a Europe-wide competition in 2007.

### **Setting the scene - the philosophy behind the project**

ATELIER BRÜCKNER is internationally known for customised spatial solutions, developed in accordance with its motto “form follows content”. The German studio provides conception, planning and implementation of scenography as a marriage between architecture and content. Through a pluridisciplinary design process, exhibits come alive, releasing the stories they hold and the context from which they emerged.

“We want to make the content speak, tell stories that move the visitor and create an experience that remains in the memory for a long time.” says Prof. Uwe R. Brückner.

The *Parlamentarium* offers a dynamic sequence of individual environments. Each part of the exhibition is styled in a different way, with each style chosen to best release the exhibits' stories and the specific content of every single exhibition unit. This not only allows an educational understanding of the complex history of Europe and European policy but also stimulates an emotional response. Visitors will plunge into an instructive, interactive world and acquire a better understanding of Parliament's role and activities.

### **Founded 1997 – broad repertoire of references**

ATELIER BRÜCKNER was established in 1997 following the exhibition “Expedition Titanic” realised in the harbour city of Hamburg (Germany). Since then, it has undertaken over 70 further projects, including the Main Trading Hall at the German Stock Exchange in Frankfurt/Main, the BMW Museum in Munich, the CERN Visitors' Centre in Geneva and the State Grid Pavilion at the EXPO Shanghai (China).

The Samsung History Museum in Yongin-si (Korea), the Maritime Museum in Amsterdam (Netherlands) as well as the permanent exhibition at the German Film Museum in Frankfurt/Main (Germany) are only a few among a dozen projects currently in progress – all of them designed by interdisciplinary teams, located in the German office in Stuttgart.

The studio is currently made up of 70 employees from nine different professions: architects, stage designers, interior designers, light designers, communication and graphic designers, product designers, dramatic advisers and art historians.

The executive board is composed of Shirin Frangoul-Brückner as general manager, Prof. Uwe R. Brückner, Prof. Eberhard Schlag and Britta Nagel. The project management of the *Parlamentarium* is dealt with by Michelle Bühler, Britta Nagel and René Walkenhorst, associate of ATELIER BRÜCKNER.



# Contact

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