



European  
Commission

# EU &



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# EU & ME



**EU &**

**ME**



If you are a citizen of an EU country then you are also a European citizen. But what does this mean in practice? What has the European Union done for you? Well, for a start, we all live in peaceful times, which in itself is a huge achievement, but it is not the only thing that Europe has done for us.

If you are between 14 and 18 and interested in finding out more about the European Union — then this publication is for you!

It will tell you how the European Union was built, what values we share, who does what in the EU and how all of this is relevant to your daily life. You will also learn about the many challenges that the EU deals with today, challenges that will also shape your future.

The European Union has been constructed over time. It is a continuous 'work in progress' and it will soon be your generation's turn to decide what to do next. So now is the time for you to shape your own opinions about the EU. This publication and the exercises it contains should provide food for thought not only for you, but also when talking about Europe with your friends and family.

<https://europa.eu/!tY87Hn>

An online quiz accompanies this booklet and is a fun way to revisit some of the issues covered.

If you have any remarks or suggestions about this publication, please send them to [comm-publi-feedback@ec.europa.eu](mailto:comm-publi-feedback@ec.europa.eu)



EU &  
ME

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SINCE ITS CREATION IN 1957, THE EU HAS GROWN FROM SIX TO 27 COUNTRIES. THEY JOINED FORCES TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE TOGETHER. WHICH COUNTRIES BELONG TO THE EU AND WHEN DID THEY JOIN? IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN HOW THE EU BECAME WHAT IT IS TODAY AND WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE.

# WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN UNION?

## EU Member States

The European Union is not a state, but a unique partnership between European countries, known as Member States. Together they cover much of the European continent. The EU is home to over 446 million people, which corresponds to around 6 % of the world's population. Citizens of the EU Member States are also citizens of the European Union.

The EU is currently made up of 27 countries. In June 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU, and left in 2020.

### EXERCISE 1

## WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE EU?

Look at the list of flags and country names on the right. They are all European but they do not all belong to the European Union. From the list, identify which do. Once you have identified them, locate them on the map. If you need help, take a look at this website: [europa.eu/!cW78Hk](http://europa.eu/!cW78Hk)



-  ALBANIA
-  ANDORRA
-  AUSTRIA
-  BELGIUM
-  BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
-  BULGARIA
-  CROATIA
-  CYPRUS
-  CZECHIA
-  DENMARK
-  ESTONIA
-  FINLAND
-  FRANCE
-  GERMANY
-  GREECE
-  HUNGARY
-  ICELAND
-  IRELAND
-  ITALY
-  LATVIA
-  LIECHTENSTEIN
-  LITHUANIA
-  LUXEMBOURG
-  MALTA
-  MOLDOVA
-  MONTENEGRO
-  NORTH MACEDONIA
-  NETHERLANDS
-  NORWAY
-  POLAND
-  PORTUGAL
-  ROMANIA
-  SERBIA
-  SLOVAKIA
-  SLOVENIA
-  SPAIN
-  SWEDEN
-  SWITZERLAND
-  TURKEY
-  UKRAINE
-  UNITED KINGDOM
-  VATICAN CITY

## EXERCISE 2

### WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE COUNTRIES OR WHAT CAN YOU FIND OUT?

Imagine you work for a tourist agency in Europe. Choose two EU countries that you know best and create a short summary aimed at tourists. For example, how many people live in them and what are their capital cities? What do they have to offer to visitors (food, culture, language and so on)?

### Official languages in the EU

The European Union has 24 official languages.

Why are there so many? The EU would not exist without its Member States and citizens. As a democratic organisation, it has to communicate with the governments of the Member States, its citizens, its companies and its public bodies in their own language. People have the right to know what is being done in their name. They must also be able to get actively involved in EU affairs without first having to learn a foreign language. Did you know that you can write to the EU institutions in any of the 24 official languages and receive a reply in the same language?

In this interactive audio booklet you can hear how all 24 languages sound when spoken: [europa.eu/!mF73gp](http://europa.eu/!mF73gp)

DOBRÓ ÚTRO / BUENOS DÍAS  
DOBRÉ RÁNO / GODMORGEN  
GUTEN MORGEN / TERE HOMMIKUST  
KALIMERA / GOOD MORNING  
BONJOUR / DIA DUIT  
DOBRO JUTRO / BUONGIORNO  
LABAS RYTAS / LABRĪT  
JÓ NAPOT / L-GĦODWA T-TAJBA  
GOEDEMORGEN / DZIEŃ DOBRY / BOM DIA  
BUNĂ DIMINEAȚA / DOBRÉ RÁNO  
DOBRO JUTRO / HYVÄÄ HUOMENTA  
GOD MORGON

# UNITED IN DIVERSITY

### European values

Have you ever heard the phrase 'United in diversity'? It is the EU's motto and it represents what the EU's values are all about. While each EU country has its own culture, language and traditions, they all share the same common values and must respect them if they want to be part of the European Union.

One fundamental value that unites all the Member States is democracy. This means that only democratic countries can be members of the EU.

The other values of the EU that are common to all Member States are human dignity, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of people belonging to minority groups.

These values are set out in an important legal text, called a treaty, which all Member States have approved and must therefore respect. The Lisbon Treaty is the most recent treaty. It was signed in the Portuguese capital in 2007.



## From six to 27 EU countries

As we have seen, the EU is made up of very different countries. The largest, Germany, has around 82 million inhabitants, while the smallest, Malta, has 400 000. Europeans speak different languages and use three different alphabets (Latin, Greek and Cyrillic). There are different traditions, cultures, foods and festivals.



### DID YOU KNOW?



The flag of Europe is made up of 12 golden stars on a blue background. It was adopted in 1984 by the European Union (which was called the European Economic Community at the time) and now flies above parliaments, municipal buildings, parks and monuments all over Europe. The design symbolises the peoples of Europe, with the circle representing their union. The number of stars never changes — it is always 12: representing perfection and entirety.



### EXERCISE 3

## WHAT THE EU'S VALUES AND PRINCIPLES MEAN IN PRACTICE

**Part 1.** Put a cross in the correct column for each of the nine questions below. In small groups, discuss what you think a country must do and should never do if it wants to be part of the EU.

A country ...	(A) Can join the EU	(B) Cannot join the EU
1 That does not have freedom of the press	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 That applies the death penalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 That allows its citizens to protest against the government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 In which the parliament is elected on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 In which a president governs until death and is succeeded by a son or a daughter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 In which the army determines policy and may even intervene in internal affairs with military power	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 In which people are considered innocent until their guilt has been established by a court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 In which there is only one party which is always in government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Which protects minorities, even when the majority is against them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part 2.** In small groups, choose two of the five EU values listed below and discuss with others in your group what they mean to you.

**DEMOCRACY**  
**HUMAN DIGNITY**  
**FREEDOM**  
**EQUALITY**  
**RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

## How did it all begin?

After the Second World War, which lasted from 1939 to 1945 and occurred just 20 years after the end of the First World War, people were determined that nothing like this should ever be allowed to happen again.

Between 1945 and 1950, a few European politicians, including Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide De Gasperi and Winston Churchill, began the process of creating the European Union we live in today. New structures were created in western Europe to unite European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace and prosperity.

On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman (the French foreign minister at the time) proposed that the production of coal and steel — the raw materials that were used to prepare for war — should be managed jointly in order to ensure that no one country could secretly arm itself against the others. At that time, coal played the role that oil and natural gas do today, in being the most important energy source available. The European Coal and Steel Community, from which today's EU emerged, came into being in 1952. It was founded by six neighbouring countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

**1957**  
**TREATY OF ROME:**  
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

## Extended cooperation

A few years later, the six founding countries decided to extend their cooperation to other economic sectors. The Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, establishing the European Economic Community. Mutual hostility was replaced by cooperation — and this cooperation was extremely successful. The European Economic Community made great strides economically. No wonder more and more countries have asked to join over the years.

## New members

In 1973, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom\* joined the EU. A few years later, three European countries, previously ruled by dictatorships, had become democratic and were also able to apply for membership. They were Greece, which joined in 1981, followed by Portugal and Spain in 1986. Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the European Union in 1995, bringing its membership to 15.

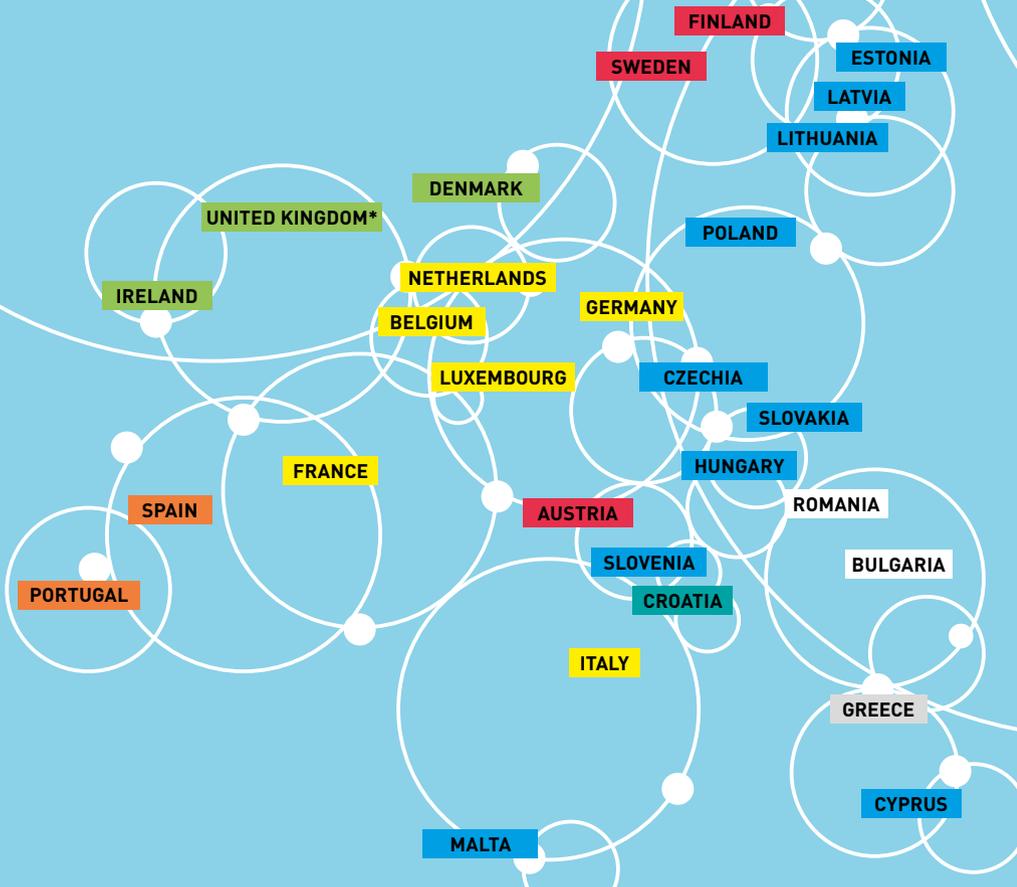
Soon after the Second World War, Europe was split into east and west by the Iron Curtain as the 40-year-long Cold War began. The Berlin Wall was a symbol of this division. After its fall in 1989, the path was clear for the central and eastern European countries that had previously been controlled by the former Soviet Union to reform their systems and apply to join the EU. In 2004, eight countries from central and eastern Europe joined the EU: Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. In the same year the Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Malta also became members. In 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined, and Croatia became the 28th member of the EU in 2013.

The addition of new members to the EU has helped to maintain peace and stability in Europe and to extend the area of democracy and the single market. Any new member must be prepared to sign up to the treaties and take on board the full body of EU law.

It must respect the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law.



\* The UK withdrew from the EU in 2020



# 70 YEARS OF LASTING PEACE



## Nobel Peace Prize

Although there may sometimes be disagreements between EU countries, the basic principles behind the EU have remained unchanged over the last 70 years. In 2012, thanks to its tireless work for peace, democracy and human rights in Europe and around the world, the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The EU is the first group of countries in the world to have been accorded this honour.

### EXERCISE 4

## WHAT DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION MEAN TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

As we have seen, the European Union has its origins in the early 1950s when its ground rules were laid down by the people who had experienced the atrocities of one, or even two, world wars. These had resulted in tens of millions of deaths across the continent. The idea was to avoid future conflict by creating close collaboration between countries and uniting their citizens: quite a brave project for countries and people that had recently been in conflict.

Not many young people nowadays still have living relatives to tell them about their experiences during these difficult times. You and your friends were born in or around the year 2004, by which time there had already been 50 years of peace and prosperity in Europe. **As a young person, what do you think about this long-lasting peace in Europe? Do you take it for granted or do you sometimes worry about the future?** Discuss this with your classmates.



YOU OFTEN HEAR IN THE NEWS THAT 'BRUSSELS'  
HAS DECIDED THIS AND THAT. BUT WHAT DOES THAT  
ACTUALLY MEAN? WHO OR WHAT EXACTLY IS 'BRUSSELS'?  
IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL GET A SHORT OVERVIEW OF  
THE STRUCTURE OF THE EU. WHAT ARE THE EU  
INSTITUTIONS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?  
WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DO THEY HAVE?

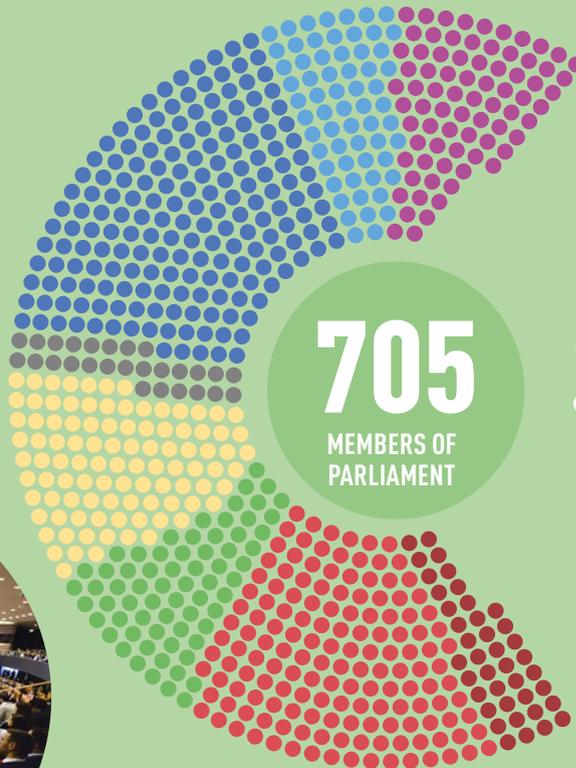
# HOW DOES THE EU WORK?

# Who decides what in the EU?

When you hear discussions about politics, it is often people who are mentioned: the prime minister of your country, for example, or an opposition leader. This is because human beings take decisions and shape policies. And the same is true for the EU.

The European institutions are simply places where politicians from all EU countries can meet in order to work and advance together towards concrete results. Let's take a look at the institutions where most of the decisions are made.

- Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
- Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
- Renew Europe group
- Identity and Democracy
- Group of the Greens/ European Free Alliance
- European Conservatives and Reformists Group
- Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
- Non-attached Members



[europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu)

## European Parliament

The **European Parliament** is the voice of the citizens. It represents the citizens of the EU countries and its members are directly elected by those citizens every 5 years. The last European elections were held in spring 2019. The next ones will be held in spring 2024. You have the right to vote at 18 in all EU countries except Austria and Malta, where you can vote at the age of 16, and Greece, where you can vote when you are 17.

The main meetings of the Parliament, also known as 'plenary sessions', take place in Strasbourg, France, 12 times a year, and in Brussels, Belgium, up to six times a year.



European citizens directly elect the Members of the European Parliament





AT LEAST

4

SUMMITS/  
YEAR

## European Council

The European Council brings together the presidents or prime ministers of the EU countries. They meet at least four times per year. Their meetings are often referred to as 'European summits'. The European Council sets the EU's main priorities and overall policy directions. It is chaired by a president who is elected every 2.5 years. The European Council does not adopt EU laws. This is the job of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union.

EU and national leaders attend a European Summit, chaired by the President of the Council

[consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu](https://consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu)

## Council of the European Union

The **Council of the European Union** represents the governments of the EU countries. In the Council, the ministers from all EU countries meet to discuss EU matters and take decisions on EU policies and laws. Which ministers meet depends on the topic under discussion. For example, if the meeting is about air pollution, then environment ministers will meet. If the focus is on unemployment, then ministers responsible for employment and social affairs will gather.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can watch the Council in action in all EU languages here: video.  
[consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts](https://consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts)

The Council is one of the two decision-making bodies. Without the Council and without the ministers from all EU countries, nothing can get done in the European Union. The Council takes its decisions by a majority vote and in some cases unanimously.

The rules of voting in the Council are decided by the EU countries. They have agreed to keep unanimous voting in some sensitive areas. For example, if the meeting is about taxation or security issues, all ministers must be in agreement for a decision to be taken. In many other areas, ministers take decisions by majority vote. For example, an EU law on how to treat urban waste can be adopted in the Council by a majority vote.

The work of the Council is led by each EU country in turn for a period of 6 months. In 2020 Croatia and Germany hold the presidency, followed by Portugal and Slovenia in 2021, then by France and Czechia in 2022.

## EXERCISE 6

### VOTING IN THE COUNCIL

In Council meetings, about 80 % of law proposals are decided by majority vote. Each minister casts one vote: s/he can vote for or against a proposal, or abstain. But the number of citizens represented varies according to the size of the country. This is why a 'double majority' (also called 'qualified majority') is required to adopt a decision: 55 % of the EU countries must vote in favour and must also represent at least 65 % of the EU population.

See [europa.eu/!fh76Jm](https://europa.eu/!fh76Jm) for more details.

Imagine that your class has collected money for a school trip and that you now need to agree on a destination. Are you all of the same opinion or do you need to take a vote like in the Council? Let's pretend that you are ministers at the Council of the European Union and want to put the proposed destination to a vote by double majority.

Try out the voting calculator on the Council's website to see how this system works: [europa.eu/!rM38Ru](https://europa.eu/!rM38Ru)

One of you represents the European Commission and takes 1 minute to argue in favour of a certain destination. One of you represents the Secretariat of the Council and is in charge of the voting calculator. The role of minister from each of the 27 EU countries is divided up amongst the other students.

Each country then declares whether it is for or against the proposed destination and the vote is recorded in the Council's voting calculator. What happened? Were you able to agree on the proposed destination? Discuss your thoughts about this with the group.



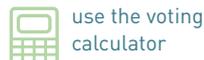
#### SIMPLE MAJORITY VS DOUBLE / QUALIFIED MAJORITY

**27 Member States**  
Minimum 'yes' required for adoption: 55 % = 15



**TOTAL SIMPLE MAJORITY =**

**% Population**  
Minimum 'yes' required for adoption: 65 %



use the voting calculator

MALTA HAS 0.11 % OF THE EU POPULATION

GERMANY HAS 18.56 % OF THE EU POPULATION



## European Commission

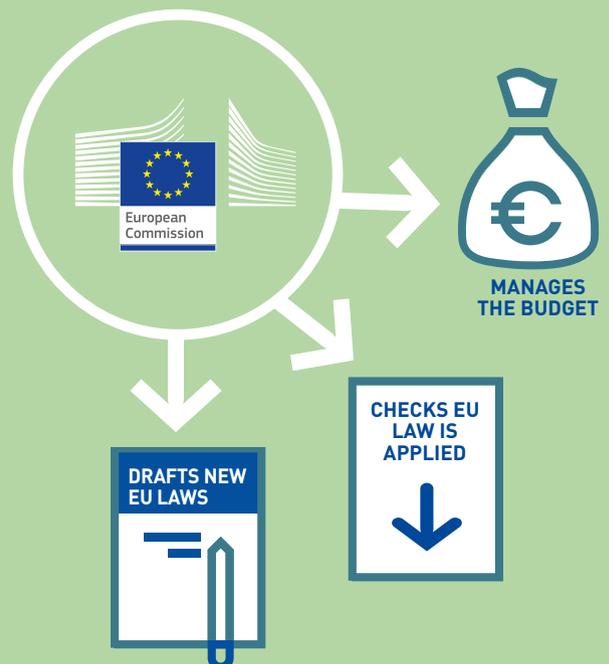
The European Commission is made up of 27 members — one president and 26 commissioners (including the vice-presidents). The president is nominated by the European Council and is formally elected for 5 years by the European Parliament. There is one commissioner from each EU country. They are also appointed for 5 years after having been proposed by their government and approved by the European Parliament. Commissioners do not represent the views of their country of origin but rather the common interest of the EU. Each Member of the Commission is responsible for a specific area, such as energy, economy or trade.

The European Commission **proposes new laws and programmes** in the general interest of the EU. Before making a proposal, the Commission seeks the opinions of national parliaments, governments, interest groups and experts, as well as the general public, who are invited to make their comments online.

The Commission's proposals are scrutinised in detail by the European Parliament and the Council. These two institutions take the final decision on all EU laws. They can of course modify proposals or reject them altogether.

The European Commission is the 'executive body' of the EU. It manages EU policies and the budget and ensures that Member States apply EU law correctly.

The European Commission is the 'executive body' of the EU





**DID YOU KNOW?  
YOU CAN VISIT  
THE EUROPEAN  
INSTITUTIONS!**

[www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en)

You can visit the EU institutions, including the

- **European Parliament**, the **Council**, the
- **European Council** and the **European Commission**.

[consilium.europa.eu/en/contact/visits](http://consilium.europa.eu/en/contact/visits)

[europa.eu/!bG46MY](http://europa.eu/!bG46MY)

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The day-to-day work of the Commission is carried out by its administrative staff, experts, translators, interpreters and assistants. Commission officials — like the staff of other EU institutions — are recruited via the European Personnel Selection Office: [epso.europa.eu](http://epso.europa.eu)

These officials are citizens of each of the EU countries, selected by means of recruitment competitions. There are approximately 33 000 people working for the Commission. That may sound like a lot, but it is in fact fewer than the number of staff employed by most large city councils in Europe. If this sounds like a career you might be interested in, then you could start as a trainee. Once you graduate from university, you can apply for an EU traineeship. Find out more here: [europa.eu/!tu37Kg](http://europa.eu/!tu37Kg)



**33 000**  
PEOPLE WORK  
IN THE EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION



## Court of Justice of the European Union

In the last 60 years, EU countries have drawn up many EU laws together. Understandably, there can be some dispute over the interpretation of these laws when it comes to putting them into practice in each EU country. If a national court is in doubt about the interpretation of an EU law, it can ask the Court of Justice for clarification. Likewise, individual EU countries do not always apply EU laws correctly. In this case, the Commission or another EU country can bring the matter before the Court. The Court is based in Luxembourg and consists of one judge per EU country. It ensures that EU legislation is interpreted and applied in the same way in each EU country. For more information, see: [curia.europa.eu](http://curia.europa.eu)

### EXERCISE 7

## WHO DOES WHAT IN THE EU?

That was a lot of institutional background to take in! However, it is important to understand what so-called Brussels actually is and who is responsible for what in the EU. Take the test below to see how much you remember. Put a cross in the box against the institution(s) that match(es) the description.

Who ...?	European Parliament	European Council	Council of the European Union	European Commission	European Court of Justice
1 Makes proposals for EU laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Approves EU laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Consists of (only) one representative/member per EU country	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Is elected by EU citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Executes the budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Represents the interests of citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Represents the interests of EU countries/their governments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Decides on the interpretation of EU laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Defines the general political direction of the EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Apart from the institutions discussed here, you may have heard of the following other EU institutions and bodies.

- European Central Bank: [www.ecb.europa.eu](http://www.ecb.europa.eu)
- European Court of Auditors: [eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu)
- European External Action Service: [eeas.europa.eu](http://eeas.europa.eu)
- European Economic and Social Committee: [eesc.europa.eu](http://eesc.europa.eu)
- European Committee of the Regions: [cor.europa.eu](http://cor.europa.eu)
- European Investment Bank: [eib.europa.eu](http://eib.europa.eu)
- European Ombudsman: [ombudsman.europa.eu](http://ombudsman.europa.eu)
- European Data Protection Supervisor: [edps.europa.eu](http://edps.europa.eu)

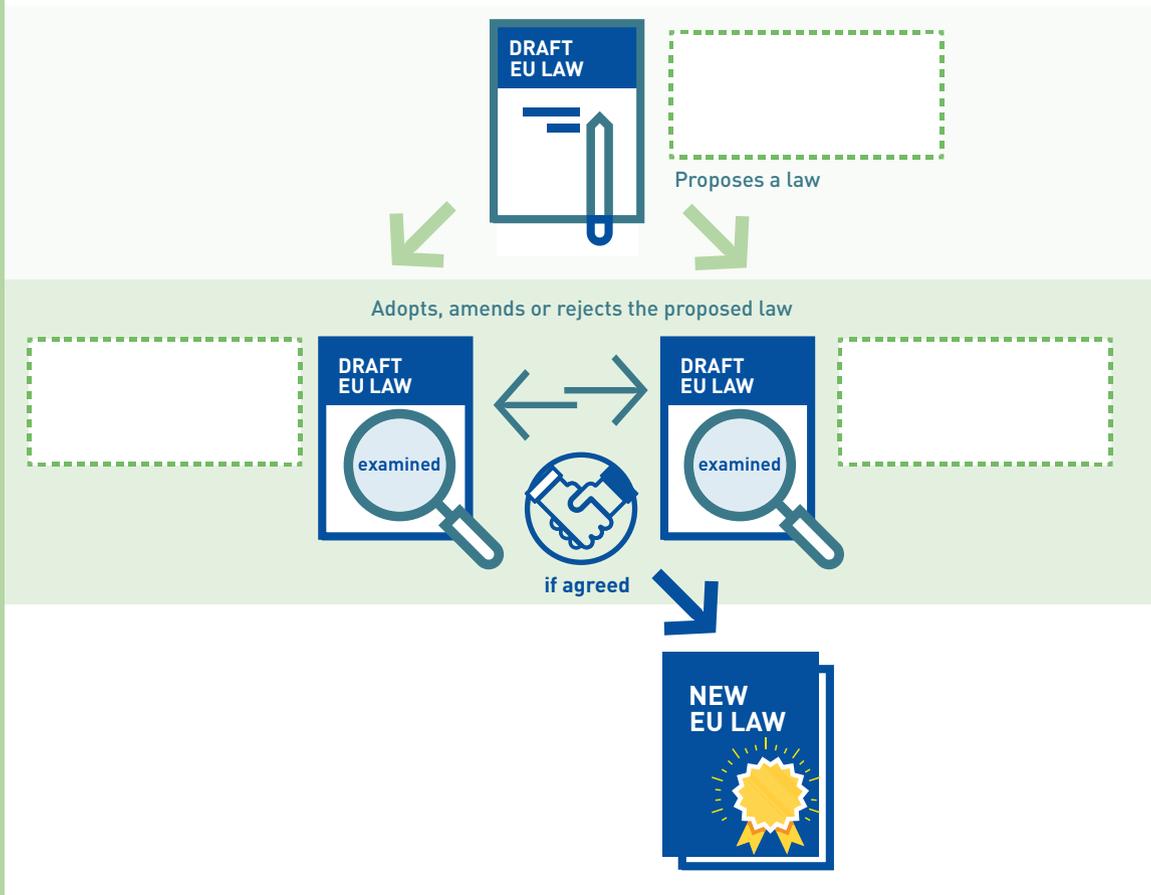


## EXERCISE 8

### LAWMAKING IN THE EU

The most common procedure for making laws in the EU is called the 'ordinary legislative procedure'. With this procedure, proposals for a new law are suggested, then considered and examined no more than three times (so-called readings). If no agreement can be reached, the proposal is withdrawn.

The three readings mainly involve three institutions: the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission. Please put each institution in the correct box below.



## EXERCISE 9

### WHO IS WHO?

You now know a lot about the European institutions, but do you know the names and faces of the people leading them? For example, who is the current President of the European Commission? And who are the other people in the photos? Test yourself below.



Put the correct number in the box next to the following names:



Charles Michel



Ursula von der Leyen



David Maria  
Sassoli



Josep Borrell

And now see if you can match them to their jobs by putting the correct number in each box below.



President of  
the European  
Parliament



High Representative  
of the Union for  
Foreign Affairs and  
Security Policy and  
Vice-President of the  
European Commission



President of  
the European  
Council from  
1 December  
2019 to 31 May  
2022



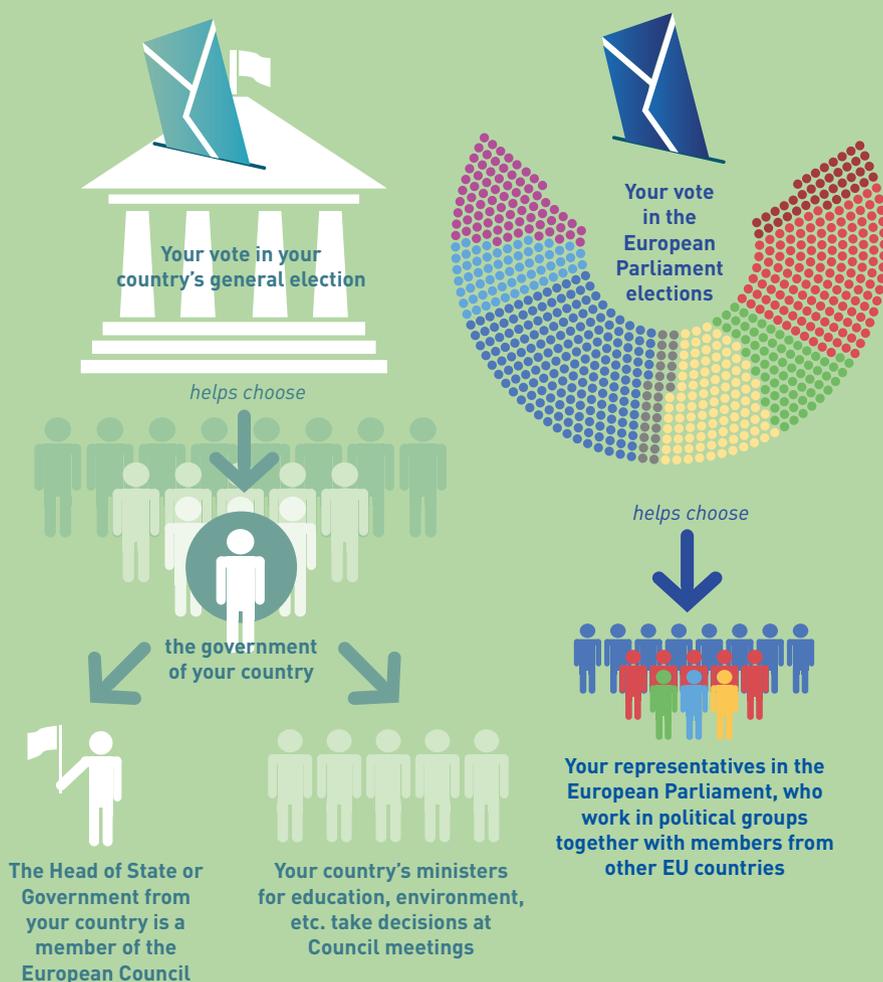
President of  
the European  
Commission

# Your influence as a European citizen

As a European citizen, you can influence EU policies in several ways.

Firstly, by **voting in your country's general election**: as a rule, the winning party then forms your government. Ministers from this government represent your country in the Council of the European Union, which plays an important role in EU lawmaking.

Secondly, by **voting in the European Parliament elections**: the European Parliament plays an equally important role in EU lawmaking and your vote will help determine the European Parliament's position on proposed laws. The largest political group in the European Parliament will normally decide who the President of the European Commission is, so your vote will help determine that as well.



You can read more about how you can influence EU policies at [europa.eu/!pP63DG](http://europa.eu/!pP63DG)

Thirdly, as a European citizen, you can make **your own voice heard by taking part in online public consultations**. Before making proposals for new EU laws and throughout the whole decision-making process, the European Commission seeks the opinions of citizens and stakeholders.

Fourthly, you can have your say about what is happening in the European Union during the many **citizens' dialogues** that take place across the EU. These give you the chance to discuss European issues with commissioners and other high-level representatives. Check whether a dialogue has recently taken place in your area or whether there is one coming up soon:

[europa.eu/!CM89Vn](http://europa.eu/!CM89Vn)

Finally, EU citizens can launch or support a **European citizens' initiative** [europa.eu/!JC69Xw](http://europa.eu/!JC69Xw). In practice this means that members of the public may invite the European Commission to propose legislation on a specific issue for which the EU is responsible, such as the environment, agriculture or transport. One million people, or just 0.2 % of the EU population, from at least seven EU countries are needed to launch a European citizens' initiative.

Logo of the European citizens' initiative



### DID YOU KNOW?

Representatives of the European Commission are there to listen and talk to you in your own EU country. You can make your voice heard or simply get the information you are looking for about the EU in your own language either at the **representations of the European Commission** in each EU country or from the **Europe Direct information centres**. You will find the contact details at the end of this booklet.

## EXERCISE 10

### PRIORITIES FOR YOUR REPRESENTATIVE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In little groups, make a list of the five main topics that you would like her/him to defend in the European Parliament. As an example, you can read about the Parliament's resolution to reduce plastic bag use in Europe here: [europa.eu/!Bt79yQ](http://europa.eu/!Bt79yQ)

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....



WE AS EUROPEAN CITIZENS BENEFIT FROM BASIC THINGS THAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED, INCLUDING A CONTINENT AT PEACE, BEING PART OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST ECONOMY, AND THE FREEDOM TO LIVE IN AND TRAVEL TO OTHER EU COUNTRIES. BUT WE ALSO BENEFIT FROM LESS OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES, EVERYDAY THINGS THAT MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE. THIS CHAPTER TAKES A LOOK AT SOME EXAMPLES TO SHOW HOW RELEVANT THE EU IS TO ITS CITIZENS.

# HOW IS THE EU RELEVANT TO YOUR DAILY LIFE?

The EU cannot deal with everything, nor has this ever been its aim. The EU's authority to act is clearly defined and limited by the EU treaties. The overall principle is that the EU should only act when a goal can be better achieved at EU level than at national, regional or local levels. If you have ever wondered what exactly the European Union does and has done for you, here are just a few of the achievements so far.

## Safe and easy travel in the EU

Travelling in Europe is much easier than it used to be. Most EU countries, and some non-EU countries, have taken away border controls between their countries. They have signed up to the Schengen Agreement, named after the village in Luxembourg where the first agreement to abolish border controls was signed in 1985.

As a European citizen, you can travel within the 26 'Schengen countries': 22 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Ireland has chosen not to be part of the Schengen area, while Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania cannot join yet. When travelling to or returning from non-Schengen countries, you will need to present a valid passport or ID card.



### EXERCISE 11

#### THE SCHENGEN AREA

Is your country part of the Schengen area? Have you or a member of your family recently travelled to another EU country? Did you have to go through a border control? In 2018, 1.7 million Europeans commuted between EU countries every day for work. What do you think Schengen means to them and to the economy in those areas? Divide yourselves up into small groups and discuss this with your classmates.



When travelling in Europe, all EU citizens in all EU countries are:

- protected by a full set of passenger rights when travelling by air, rail, ship, bus or coach. In certain circumstances, they can, for instance, get compensation if their flight is cancelled;
- protected when buying package holidays, meaning that the company that sold them the holiday must deal with their complaint (for example if they end up in a substandard hotel);
- protected if a tour operator or airline goes bankrupt;
- able to ask for help at any other EU country's consulate or embassy when travelling to a country outside of the EU if their own home country is not represented there — for instance, they can ask for help if they lose important documents or have a serious accident.

Train late?

Your passenger rights at hand

Find out more: Visit the website at europa.eu/yourrightsapp, download the passenger rights app or call Europe Direct on 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

Train delayed or cancelled? Difficulties with purchasing tickets? Left without information?

Railway undertakings and railway stations have a legal obligation to inform you about your rights and where to complain

Ever experienced one of these problems? EU legislation protects your rights wherever you travel across Europe



### DID YOU KNOW?

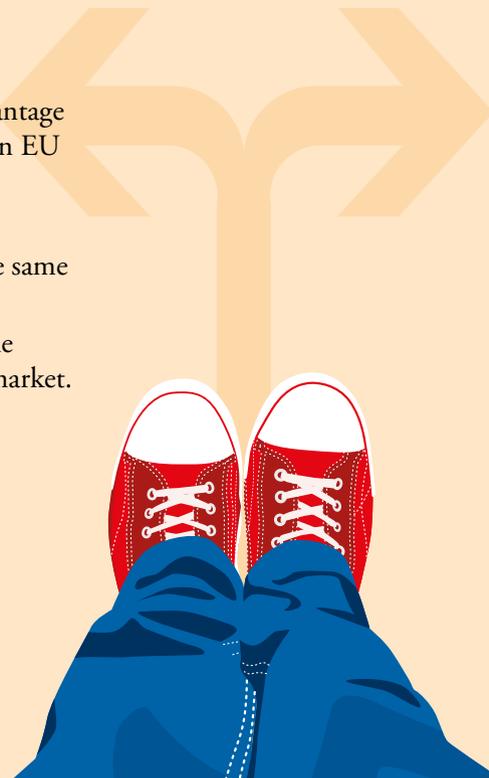
You can check your EU passenger rights anytime and anywhere. Simply download the **passenger rights app**: [europa.eu/!Fk66KJ](https://europa.eu/!Fk66KJ)

## Study, train and work anywhere in the EU

Thanks to the EU, many young people take advantage of the right to full freedom of movement between EU countries.

As an EU citizen, you have the right to:

- train and study anywhere in the EU under the same conditions as nationals;
- work anywhere in the EU and benefit from the opportunities offered by an EU-wide labour market.





### DID YOU KNOW?

To support young EU citizens entering the labour market, the Commission has created the 'Your first EURES job' website ([www.yourfirsteuresjob.eu](http://www.yourfirsteuresjob.eu)) to help 18-35 year olds from the EU, Iceland and Norway in their search for a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in another country. It also helps employers find candidates in another EU country to fill their vacancies.

## Erasmus+

You may have already heard or will soon hear about the 'Erasmus+' programme [ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus). This EU programme helps young people to spend a period of time abroad. Students can get financial and organisational support for a spell abroad at a European partner university. A European points system ensures that grades earned abroad are credited to participants' studies at home.

Schools can cooperate with other schools or organisations from other EU countries. Most of these partnerships require a minimum of three organisations from three countries. Ask your teacher or headteacher to check the opportunities that Erasmus+ provides for 'strategic partnerships'.

You might also opt for some on-the-job training abroad. Every year, many young EU citizens complete part of their apprenticeship in another EU country. The programme works in partnership with companies and institutions that advertise projects for which young people can apply.

## Tell us the+ of your Erasmus+

Roberto Breeveld – 30  
Netherlands  
eTwinning with  
5 countries, 2012

Roberto is a geography teacher who led two eTwinning projects, organising virtual student exchanges with five countries. By interacting with people from other cultures, his pupils gained new perspectives and improved their English. Now Roberto is an enthusiastic eTwinning ambassador.

Discover inspiring Erasmus+ stories or share yours on [ec.europa.eu/erasmus30](http://ec.europa.eu/erasmus30)

#ERASMUSPLUS

 Erasmus+  
ENRICHING LIVES, OPENING MINDS. FOR 30 YEARS



### DID YOU KNOW?

Since the launch of the first Erasmus programme in 1987, more than 5 million young people have benefited from the opportunities it offers. Find out more about Erasmus+ here: [ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus)

## The Youth Guarantee scheme

Many young people do not have the skills and qualifications that employers are looking for. Thanks to the Youth Guarantee scheme ([europa.eu/!vb63ug](http://europa.eu/!vb63ug)), the EU helps to ensure that young people are trained in the skills that employers need. This may be in the form of on-the-job training or individual career guidance.



## The European Solidarity Corps

The EU has launched a new initiative for young people who are willing to make a meaningful contribution to society and help show solidarity with their community. The European Solidarity Corps allows 18-30-year-old Europeans to participate in a wide range of solidarity activities, either by volunteering or by taking up an employment placement. This could prove to be a stepping stone into employment for many young people.

Interested in taking part? Read more about the initiative, find out what's on offer by way of training, linguistic and financial support and register via this website: [europa.eu/youth/solidarity\\_en](http://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en)

### EXERCISE 12

## VOLUNTEERING OR STUDYING ABROAD

Can you imagine working as a volunteer abroad or spending one or two terms of your studies at a university in another EU country? In pairs, make a list of four 'for' and four 'against' arguments. Which side comes out on top? Compare your results with your classmates and discuss them.



# Free movement of goods, services and capital in the EU

Thanks to the EU's single market, it is not only people who can move around freely in the EU, but also goods, services and capital. 'Capital' does not only mean 'money'. It also includes investments, loans and credit, and other operations with financial institutions such as legacies and endowments. This makes it easier for EU businesses to operate in more than one country, and to compete globally. Whatever their size, companies have access to the national markets of all EU countries and to around 446 million potential customers. Why does this benefit you as well? Because greater competition leads to lower prices as well as a wider choice of products and services.



## EXERCISE 13

### WHAT DOES FREE MOVEMENT MEAN FOR YOU IN PRACTICE?

Match the examples to the four aspects of the single market (free movement of people, goods, services and capital) and tick the appropriate box.

	Free movement of people	Free movement of goods	Free movement of services	Free movement of capital
1 I can buy a second-hand car abroad and take it back home without paying customs duties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 I can travel anywhere I like within the EU.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 I can study in another EU country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 My parents can have their bathroom renovated by a tiler from another EU country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 My parents can send money to me in the country where I am studying.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 I can work in another EU country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 I can buy goods online from another EU country without paying customs duties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Healthcare and safety throughout the EU

If you fall ill or have an accident during a visit to another EU country, as an EU citizen you have the right to receive the necessary public healthcare in any EU country under the same conditions as people in the host country.

Ask your insurer for your European Health Insurance Card ([europa.eu/!JH73NV](http://europa.eu/!JH73NV)) before you go abroad.

EU citizens also benefit from high-quality, appropriately labelled and safe food. The

EU has some of the highest food safety standards in the world. It has put in place compulsory checks throughout the agri-food chain to ensure that plants and animals are healthy, that food and animal feed is safe, and that products are correctly labelled.



### DID YOU KNOW?

The Rapid Alert System for non-food, dangerous products facilitates the rapid exchange of information between the national authorities of 30 countries and the European Commission on dangerous products found on the market. If a manufacturer or distributor finds out that one of their products on sale is dangerous, they have to inform the competent national authority. Find out more at: [europa.eu/!Ku94nH](http://europa.eu/!Ku94nH)

### EXERCISE 14

## EUROPEAN LABELS

EU laws have put strict rules in place with regard to the labelling of certain products such as food, drinks and cosmetic products to protect consumers' health and safety and to help them make the right choices. Without proper labelling, a product will not be allowed onto the market.

Do you recognise the labels below? Where can you find them? What do they mean?

1



2



3



4



5



## Consumer rights in the EU

When you go shopping in the EU, you are protected by all sorts of laws. For instance, as an EU consumer you have a minimum 2-year guarantee period for products, such as electronic goods, bought in the EU. This means, for example, that if your mobile phone breaks down after 1 year, it will be repaired or replaced free of charge, irrespective of where in the EU you originally bought it.

Furthermore, since 2015, EU consumers have been better protected when shopping online. There is now an EU law that:

- allows you 14 days to return goods bought at a distance, whether online or by phone;
- prohibits hidden charges and costs online; and
- bans pre-ticked boxes on websites which had previously tricked customers into, for instance, buying unwanted travel insurance or car rental.



### DID YOU KNOW?

What would you do if you bought a new flat-screen TV but never received it, or if you bought a faulty product from another EU country? Well you can now get your money back. Since July 2017, individual consumers and small businesses have been able to settle cross-border payment claims of up to €5 000 through the revised European small claims procedure: [europa.eu/!fp68bj](http://europa.eu/!fp68bj)

## Quality telecommunications in the EU

Many of us now use smartphones and tablets. As an EU citizen, you can:

- benefit from a guaranteed, reasonable-quality fixed telecoms service at an affordable price, regardless of where you live in the EU;
- shop around and compare prices easily, as operators have to provide transparent, up-to-date information on their prices and tariffs;
- change your telecoms operator without changing your phone number, within 1 day;
- use your phone anywhere in the EU in the same way as you do at home.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Since 2007, roaming prices have decreased by more than 90 %. 'Roam like at home', where customers pay domestic prices, irrespective of where they are travelling in the EU, is now a reality for all EU residents since June 2017.

## A common currency in 19 EU countries: the euro

Euro banknotes and coins were introduced in 12 EU countries in 2002, and 19 have now replaced their national currencies with the euro. More than 340 million EU citizens, i.e. 75 % of all EU citizens, use the euro on a daily basis.

There are a number of advantages in using a common currency in a single market where people from different countries trade together. Consumers can compare prices more easily at home, abroad and online. Companies can calculate and charge customers in one currency and are not at risk of exchange rate fluctuations, and getting rid of transaction costs keeps prices stable.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Euro coins have a common side that portrays a map of Europe, but on the other side each country has its own design. Do you recognise the symbol on this €2 coin? Can you guess where it comes from?



### EXERCISE 15

#### WHICH COUNTRIES ARE IN THE EURO AREA?

The table below lists all 27 EU countries. Tick the 19 that are in the 'euro area' and use the euro as their currency.

- |                                   |                                  |                                     |                                      |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Austria  | <input type="checkbox"/> Denmark | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungary    | <input type="checkbox"/> Malta       | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovenia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belgium  | <input type="checkbox"/> Estonia | <input type="checkbox"/> Ireland    | <input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Spain    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgaria | <input type="checkbox"/> Finland | <input type="checkbox"/> Italy      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poland      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Croatia  | <input type="checkbox"/> France  | <input type="checkbox"/> Latvia     | <input type="checkbox"/> Portugal    |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cyprus   | <input type="checkbox"/> Germany | <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuania  | <input type="checkbox"/> Romania     |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Czechia  | <input type="checkbox"/> Greece  | <input type="checkbox"/> Luxembourg | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovakia    |                                   |

## DID YOU KNOW?

The EU budget for 2020 amounts to €169 billion. This corresponds to about 1 % of the total value of all goods and services produced in the EU.

Most of the EU's money (about 94 %) is spent on projects and programmes that benefit students, researchers, farmers, businesses, organisations, cities and regions throughout the EU. It also goes towards development aid to countries outside of the EU. About 6 % is spent on administration.

## EU funding in your region

The countries and regions of the EU are not just of different sizes; they also have different levels of wealth. Thousands of projects have received EU funding over the years, benefitting all EU countries individually, and the EU as a whole, in terms of quality of life for its citizens, of economic growth and of jobs.

People are not always aware that the EU has financed or is financing projects close to where they live. However, projects supported by EU funding have created millions of new jobs, developed thousands of kilometres of strategic transport, energy and broadband links, invested in research and innovation, protected cultural heritage and areas of natural beauty, and much, much more.

Have a look at these websites and check out some examples of projects that have received EU funding in your country. You will see just how much closer the EU is to your home than you might have thought:

<https://europa.eu/!Kx43qx> and [europa.eu/!wC93kF](https://europa.eu/!wC93kF).



## EXERCISE 16

### THE EU IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

Here are 10 examples of how the EU is present in the daily life of its citizens. Pick the three that are most important to you, compare your answers with those of your classmates and explain the reasons for your choices.



You can travel, study, work and live in any EU country. Anyone can decide where they want to live or look for work. **Free movement of people** is possible thanks to the EU's single market.



The EU has removed barriers to **free trade** between its members. This means that you can produce, sell and buy goods wherever you want in the EU. It also means that consumers have a **larger choice** of products and lower prices.



Travelling in Europe is very easy nowadays. The Schengen Agreement has **removed border controls** between most EU countries. You can now cross most borders within the EU without showing your passport.



When travelling in another EU country you might fall ill or have an accident. As an EU citizen, you are entitled to any medical treatment that cannot wait until you get home. With the European Health Insurance Card you will receive state-provided **healthcare abroad** and pay the same fees as locals.



**Air travel** has become much cheaper. The EU has broken up national monopolies and has permitted competition in the aviation sector. More cities now have their own airports and there are more direct flights between them. **Passengers' rights** have also been strengthened.



Using mobile phones and smart devices abroad has become much cheaper in recent years. EU rules have significantly reduced the costs (more than 90 % since 2007) by capping prices. **Roaming** charges were abolished in June 2017, which means that when using your phone abroad, you now pay the same as you do at home.



The **minimum guarantee period for consumer products** such as electronic goods is now 2 years. This means, for example, that if your mobile phone breaks down after 1 year, it can be repaired or replaced free of charge. It also does not matter in which EU country you bought the product.



EU law protects you whenever you order or buy goods anywhere other than in a shop. For example, if you sign a subscription or contract in the street or buy online, you are allowed to change your mind. You have the **right to cancel your order or return your purchase** within 14 days.



As a consumer you might want to 'buy green', and the **EU's energy label** will help you make the right choice. Many products such as light bulbs, washing machines, refrigerators and televisions carry the EU energy label. This makes it easier to identify the most energy-efficient products, which are classified as A+++.



You can enjoy **clean bathing and drinking water** in the EU. Environmental pollution knows no boundaries, and having clean air and water is obviously very important. The EU has introduced compulsory, Europe-wide limits on air and water pollution, and EU countries must make sure that these levels are respected.

THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS ACHIEVED WHAT IT WAS ORIGINALLY CREATED FOR: IT HAS BROUGHT PEACE BETWEEN ITS MEMBERS — A PEACE THAT HAS NOW LASTED FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS. BUT WHERE ARE WE HEADING NOW? IN THIS CHAPTER, YOU WILL FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW THE EU IS TACKLING TODAY'S CHALLENGES.

# WHAT'S ON THE EU'S AGENDA?



## THE EU's SIX AMBITIONS

The EU is currently facing several different challenges, from economic to environmental and from technological to international, to name but a few. Many citizens have lost confidence in politicians. Some of the achievements of European integration, such as the free movement of people, are being brought into question.

In light of these challenges, Ursula von der Leyen, the first woman to be elected President of the European Commission, presented her political guidelines in July 2019. They contain six key ambitions for Europe:

- A European Green Deal
- An economy that works for people
- A Europe fit for the digital age
- Promoting our European way of life
- A stronger Europe in the world
- A new push for European democracy.

The new European Commission will build on the past while developing its own concrete policy proposals for the future of Europe. This chapter presents the main policy areas that the EU has engaged in over the last five years. The next edition of EU&ME will tell you more about the 2019-2024 Commission agenda for the EU.

***'For the generation of my parents, Europe was an aspiration of peace in a continent too long divided.***

***For my generation, Europe was an aspiration of peace, prosperity and unity that we brought to life through our single currency, free movement and enlargement.***

***For the generation of my children, Europe is a unique aspiration.'***



Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!XV36rj](https://europa.eu/!XV36rj)



**URSULA VON DER LEYEN,**  
President of the European Commission  
Political guidelines for the next European  
Commission 2019-2024



## Jobs, growth and investment

Europe is emerging from its worst economic and financial crisis since the 1930s. As a result of this crisis, many jobs have been lost and very few investments have been made in the EU. The EU's top priority is to get Europe growing again and to increase the number of jobs, particularly for young people, without creating new debt. In 2015, the EU created the **European Fund for Strategic Investments**. This fund, which was launched with an initial €21 billion backed by the EU, has been attracting public and private investors which will, in turn, invest strategically wherever the investment is most needed. Since its launch, the Investment Plan has helped finance the rollout of high-speed broadband internet to 15 million households, renovate or build half a million affordable homes and improved healthcare services for 30 million Europeans. It has supplied 7.4 million households with renewable energy and improved rail and urban infrastructure for the 95 million passengers who use it every year. All Member States are benefiting, especially those that were hardest hit by the crisis.



Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!Vb77ut](http://europa.eu/!Vb77ut)

### EXERCISE 17

## CREATING JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The EU is helping economic growth and job creation by attracting capital from potential EU investors. What more could the EU do to increase the number of jobs for young people?

Discuss in small groups.



## EXERCISE 18

### THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL

Are you a user of online/digital products and/or services? In small groups, discuss your personal experience and exchange ideas about how you see the future of the internet and of digital technologies.

## Digital single market

The internet and digital technologies are transforming the world. Whether you are watching films, shopping or studying, chances are that you are (or could be) using online tools to do so. The EU continues to remove hurdles that prevent citizens, governments and businesses from taking full advantage of the internet. The solutions range from ending 'geo-blocking', removing mobile phone roaming charges and addressing the lack of internet access or digital skills, to new portability rules so people can access their online subscriptions for TV, games and music when travelling in the EU in the same way as they do at home. Roaming charges ended in June 2017, so people can use their mobile devices when travelling in the EU, paying the same prices as at home. Since 1 April 2018, Europeans have been able to access the online content they subscribe to at home, wherever they are in the EU, and their personal data is protected by the new General Data Protection Regulation which came into effect in May. However, not all citizens and businesses have access to **fast internet and online opportunities**. The Commission aims to provide citizens with the best possible internet connection, while the WiFi4EU initiative supports installing free public Wi-Fi hotspots in local communities across the EU.



Find out more at: [europa.eu/!ck99dW](http://europa.eu/!ck99dW)



### DID YOU KNOW?

Geolocation is at the heart of the ongoing digital revolution. The EU has invested in its own Global Navigation Satellite System, called **Galileo**. It will increase geolocation precision tenfold and will enable new innovative services that may transform our daily lives, such as autonomous cars and improved urban transport networks. The Galileo constellation now has 18 satellites in orbit and has started offering its services to public authorities, businesses and citizens. The full constellation foresees a total of 24 satellites and is expected to be completed by 2020. No single European country could have done this alone.



## EXERCISE 19

### SAVING ENERGY

Small actions can also play an important role in saving energy. In small groups, discuss what you already do at your level, what more you could do and what you are not ready to do.



Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/ljN48TP](https://europa.eu/ljN48TP)

## Energy union and climate

Every EU citizen should have access to secure, sustainable, affordable and competitive energy and one of the greatest challenges for the European energy system is to provide this. However, at a time when the global climate is changing and the Earth's atmosphere is warming up, the EU is the largest energy importer in the world (importing more than half of its energy), most of its buildings are not energy efficient, and wholesale electricity prices in Europe are 25 % higher than in the United States.

To improve this situation, the EU has set ambitious climate and energy targets for 2030, namely:

- a 40 % reduction in greenhouse gases;
- an increase in the proportion of renewable energies (wind, solar power and biofuels) to 32 %; and
- a 32.5 % reduction in energy use.

However, climate change cannot be tackled by the EU alone. The EU is also working to promote strong global action through the United Nations and other international fora. In 2015, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, a global agreement on combating climate change was reached for the first time. The EU played a significant role in making this happen. Europe again led the way in December 2018 at the UN climate conference in Katowice, Poland, when a new rulebook to implement the Paris Agreement was agreed.

### DID YOU KNOW?

21 % of the EU budget is spent on climate-related projects. In addition, at least 40 % of the European Fund for Strategic Investments will support projects with components that contribute to climate action.





## Internal market

The single market is one of the EU's greatest achievements. It allows people, goods, services and capital to move more freely. It offers opportunities for professionals and businesses as well as greater choice and lower prices for consumers. It enables people to travel, live, work and study wherever they wish.

Despite the overall success of the single market, its benefits do not always materialise because rules are not known or applied, or other things simply get in the way.

The EU has decided to complete the internal market for products and services and make it the place where companies and industries can grow and then succeed in the global economy. To make this happen, the European Commission is:

- creating a 'capital markets union', making it easier for small businesses to raise money and making Europe a more attractive place in which to invest;
- encouraging workers to take up jobs in other EU countries in order to fill vacancies and meet the needs for special skills;
- strengthening social aspects;
- combating tax evasion and tax fraud.

Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!ww63Qq](https://europa.eu/!ww63Qq)

### EXERCISE 20

#### FREE MOVEMENT OR PROTECTIONISM?

'By allowing people, goods, services and capital to move more freely, the single market helps create growth and jobs.' Divide the class into two groups: one that supports this statement and the other that opposes it. After discussing amongst yourselves, each group should present its arguments to the class.



## Economic and monetary union

Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!jW98RX](https://europa.eu/!jW98RX)

The economic and monetary union represents a major step in bringing EU economies closer together. It makes it much easier to work and do business together because economic and tax policies across the EU are linked, everyone operates under one common monetary policy and a common currency — the euro — is used in most of the Member States.

When the global economic crisis hit, the EU and its then 28 countries took unprecedented measures to protect their economies. These measures proved difficult for citizens and did not always take into account the effect on people's lives. Today, the EU wants to draw on the lessons learned and complete the economic and monetary union to help support disadvantaged people and to create more jobs. In doing so, it aims to ensure the stability of the euro, to strengthen public finances and to relaunch social dialogue.

## EXERCISE 21

# THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

The EU also protects people through laws to limit working hours, tackle workplace discrimination, make working conditions safer and ensure that they receive compensation for work injuries. To deliver new and more effective rights for citizens, the European Pillar of Social rights enshrines principles and rights in the areas of equal opportunities on the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection.

**What kind of social dimension for Europe would you favour?** Individually, choose in the list below the three principles that you consider most important for a social Europe, then discuss your choice in small groups.

- Education, training and lifelong learning
- Gender equality
- Secure and adaptable employment
- Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals
- Social dialogue and involvement of workers
- Work-life balance
- Minimum income
- Healthcare
- Inclusion of people with disabilities
- Housing and assistance for the homeless



Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!Rc63QY](https://europa.eu/!Rc63QY)



## Free trade

Every day, the EU imports and exports goods and services worth hundreds of millions of euro. Together, the 27 EU countries represent the largest economy in the world, the biggest exporter and importer, the leading investor and recipient of foreign investment, and the biggest aid donor. Speaking with a single voice, the EU carries considerably more weight in international trade negotiations than any of its individual countries would. These open markets generate economic growth and better jobs for Europe and its partners. They also give EU consumers more choice and purchasing power and help firms to compete abroad.

However, the EU has made it clear with its partners that free trade will not be done at any price. Every trade agreement negotiated by the EU in the name of the EU countries must respect the EU's values, be transparent, reasonable and fair, and not be harmful to citizens or the environment. The economic and trade agreement signed between the **EU and Canada** in October 2016, commonly known as CETA, is a good example of this progressive approach, along with the free-trade agreements signed in July 2018 between the EU and **Japan**.



Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!dF94PQ](https://europa.eu/!dF94PQ)



### DID YOU KNOW?

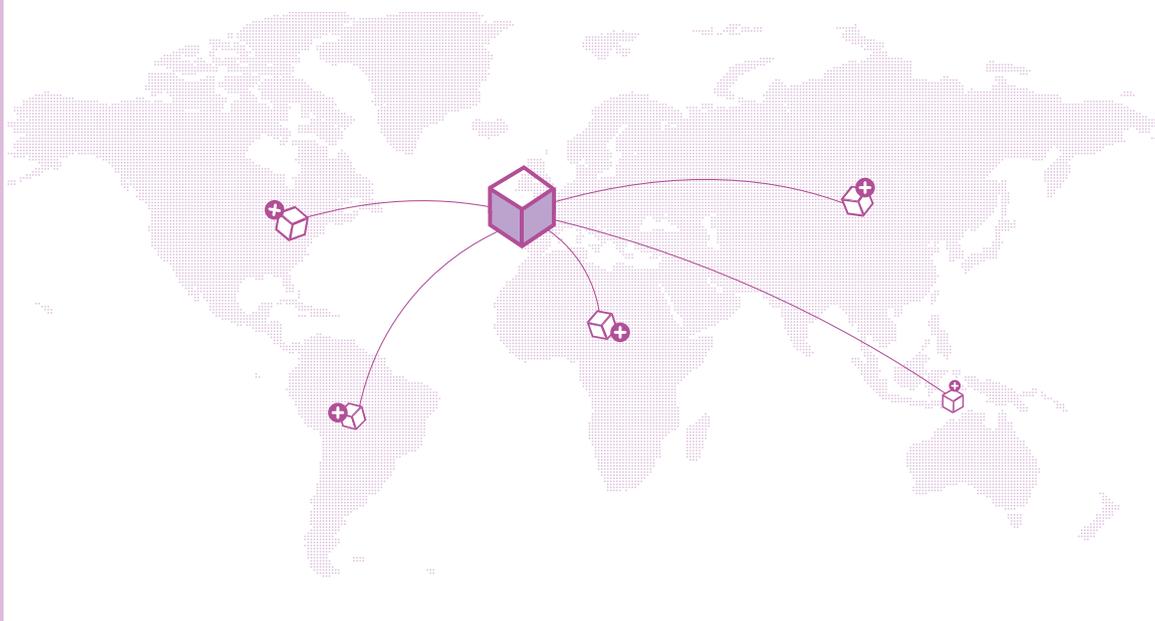
In 2018, over 36 million jobs in the EU were supported by EU exports to non-EU countries.



## EXERCISE 22

### FREE TRADE AND GLOBALISATION

Today, products are no longer made in one place from start to finish. Instead, they are assembled in a series of individual steps in places all over the world. **In small groups**, choose a product or a service that you are familiar with (it could be an item of clothing, a mobile phone or a computer, for example) and discuss together what it is made of, where its components come from and what the consequences might be of increasing or restricting free trade on how much it costs, what it is made of, and so on. **Present your thoughts** to the rest of your class.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

The economic relationship between the **EU and the United States** is the biggest in the world. Together the two blocs accounted, in 2018, for around 46 % of global economic output. Every day, the two trade goods and services worth around €2 billion. European companies exporting to the United States are based not just in cities, but also in towns and villages throughout Europe. Click on the map to see how many companies in your country/region currently export to the United States:

[europa.eu/!Nh93vR](https://europa.eu/!Nh93vR)



Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!dF94PQ](https://europa.eu/!dF94PQ)



## Justice and fundamental rights

The EU is not simply a common market for goods and services. It is also a union based on the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. For this reason, the European Commission has taken steps to improve the **protection of fundamental rights** in the area of data protection, the sharing of personal information and consumers' rights, and has stepped up efforts to boost gender equality, to fight discrimination and to stop human trafficking.

However, terrorist attacks on European soil have presented EU countries with new and unprecedented challenges. This is why the EU is striving to develop an **effective security union**. A series of measures have been taken at EU level to address all aspects of the terrorist threat. This includes the prevention of radicalisation, including online; making it a criminal offence to travel in order to commit terrorism or support it; stepping up detection of terrorism by increasing the exchange of information; tackling the financing of terrorism; cutting access to firearms and explosives; and supporting partner countries, particularly around the Mediterranean.

Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!qc74tw](https://europa.eu/!qc74tw)



### EXERCISE 23

## EUROPEAN VALUES

Get together in small groups and discuss the following points.

- ▶ Whether you all have the same understanding of the values listed in Article 2 of the EU Treaty (respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights). For instance, what does 'respect for human dignity' mean in practice?
- ▶ Which value is most important to each person in your group?
- ▶ Which political initiatives at EU or national level would you favour in order to safeguard the EU value that you most care about?

# Migration

In 2015 and 2016, the EU experienced an unparalleled influx of refugees and migrants. More than 1 million people arrived in the European Union, most of them fleeing war and terror in Syria and other countries and others crossing the EU's external borders to reunite with family and/or in search of a better life.

However, no EU country can or should have to face huge migratory pressures on its own. For these reasons, the EU is stepping up its efforts to save lives, fight human trafficking and cooperate with the countries where the migrants come from and pass through on their way to another country. Even more fundamentally, the EU wants to tackle the root causes that force people to escape and migrate: poverty, war, persecution, violations of human rights and natural disasters.

The EU has already done a great deal to **tackle the refugee crisis**, and continues to do so. As well as providing more money, it helps to relocate asylum seekers already in Europe and to resettle people in need from neighbouring countries. In addition, in order to offer safe ways for people to enter the EU legally, it is working to improve security at its borders and to tackle the problem of people smuggling.

Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!rg66cM](http://europa.eu/!rg66cM)



## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2017 the EU adopted new rules for the external Schengen borders to reinforce checks on all people, including European citizens, against relevant databases, to make sure that they do not represent a threat to public policy or internal security.

A **European Border and Coast Guard** was created to ensure strong and shared management of the external borders.



## DID YOU KNOW?

**Seeking asylum** is a fundamental right within the EU and is granted to **refugees**. EU countries have an international obligation to grant asylum under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

A **refugee** is a person who is fleeing his or her home country and who cannot return due to a well-founded fear of persecution.



An **asylum seeker** is someone who says he or she is a refugee and who has

made an application for international protection, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated.

A **migrant** is a broader term than refugee and refers to someone who leaves his or her home country to settle in another, usually in search of a better life.



## EXERCISE 24

### EU SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

The rise in the number of refugees and migrants arriving in the EU has put pressure on Europe. The EU has responded to this situation by taking various measures.

**Firstly**, give your view on the measures listed below. **Secondly**, in little groups, select three topics for which your respective views differ the most and discuss the reasons behind them.

	Completely support	Partly support	Somewhat against	Completely against
1 The EU has organised search and rescue vessels in the Mediterranean Sea, saving thousands of lives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 The EU has set up reception centres in Greece and Italy and sent experts to help identify and register arrivals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 EU countries should share the handling of asylum applications. People in need of international protection should be transferred from Greece or Italy to another EU country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Almost 90 % of refugees and migrants have paid organised criminals to get them across EU borders. This is why the EU has stepped up its fight against criminal networks and people smugglers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 The EU helps EU countries to return 'irregular' migrants to their home country if they have no right to stay in the EU.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 The EU helps improve the living conditions of the illegal immigrants in their countries of origin so that they do not flee these countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 The EU wants to create safe and legal ways for asylum seekers to enter the EU so that they do not have to risk their lives by turning to smugglers and traffickers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 The EU has improved the control of its external borders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Many people arriving in the EU need basics such as clean water, food and shelter. The EU finances projects aimed at providing the most urgent humanitarian needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 The EU provides humanitarian aid to refugees and migrants in countries outside of the EU, such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## EU in the world

The EU is a key player on many foreign policy issues, ranging from negotiating with Iran in order to reduce the amount of nuclear material it produces to tackling global warming. Its joint foreign and security policy, designed to **resolve conflicts and foster international understanding**, is based on diplomacy, while trade, aid, security and defence all play a complementary role.

The political crisis in Ukraine and the unrest in the Middle East have made it clear how important it is that the EU is united externally. For these reasons, the EU aims to strengthen its foreign policy. Indeed, acting together gives the EU countries far greater authority than they would have if each pursued its own policies.

For the EU, being a **stronger global actor** means that it is able to respond efficiently to global challenges, to promote the EU's values and to contribute to peace and prosperity in the world.

EU COUNTRIES  
MAKE UP  
**20 %**  
OF THE WORLD'S  
ECONOMY ...

### DID YOU KNOW?

The EU is home to around 6 % of the world's population. This share is decreasing, and in 2060 the EU will only represent about 4 %. Although Europe is a relatively small continent, it is economically significant. Together, the EU countries make up 20 % of the world economy, making the EU one of the largest economies in the world, similar in size to the United States' economy.

BUT ONLY  
**6 %**  
OF THE WORLD'S  
POPULATION

## EXERCISE 25

### THE EU IN THE WORLD

Here are some examples of what the EU does in the world. Pick the three that are the most important to you and explain your reasons for choosing them. Compare your answers with those of your classmates.

- The EU has led and supported peace talks around the world to stop conflicts.
- The EU stands for democracy and the rule of law throughout the world. It has made human rights a central aspect of its relations with other countries.
- Internationally, the EU works to fight terrorism, organised crime and illegal migration.
- The EU has taken a lead in the global fight against climate change.
- The EU and its Member States together constitute the world's largest donors of development aid. This contribution makes a huge difference to millions of people around the world.
- The EU also promotes development through trade by opening its markets to exports from developing countries and by encouraging them to increase trade among themselves.
- The EU and its Member States together constitute the world's largest donors of humanitarian aid. They provide life-saving aid to the victims of disasters, to refugees and to others in dire need.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2018 the EU consolidated its position as the world's biggest donor of humanitarian aid, giving over €1 billion. The EU's humanitarian aid worldwide provided life-saving support from natural disasters and man-made conflicts around the globe.



Find out more at:  
[europa.eu/!Qm99uF](https://europa.eu/!Qm99uF)





## Democratic change

Some people think that the EU is overly bureaucratic and distant from its citizens. At the same time, citizens expect the EU to face and manage significant economic and social challenges.

The EU is committed to real democracy and reform. The European Commission has made it a priority not only to propose new laws only when they are needed and when there is a clear European added value, but also to be fully transparent about what it is doing. For instance, all the key texts on the trade negotiations between the EU and Canada, and between the EU and the United States, are accessible to the public.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Members of the public have the chance to make comments at any time while a law is being made. The Commission is renewing its commitment to listen to external views by means of an online tool called **'Have your say'**: [europa.eu/!WJ46hc](http://europa.eu/!WJ46hc)



## EXERCISE 26

### CITIZENS' DIALOGUES

Citizens' dialogues between commissioners and the public take place across the EU on a daily basis ([europa.eu/!WJ38GB](http://europa.eu/!WJ38GB)). If you are not able to take part in one of these events, why not **organise a citizens' dialogue of your own in the classroom**? A group of three to four students, representing a commissioner, chooses one of the 10 topics presented in this chapter. At home, the group looks into the details of the chosen policy in order to be able to answer the citizens'/classmates' questions and prepares a 5-minute statement on this policy. In the classroom, once the 'commissioner' has delivered his or her short statement, a 15-minute question and answer session follows between the commissioner and the classmates, moderated by the teacher.

CHAPTER 1

EXERCISE 1

WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE EU?



### EXERCISE 3

## WHAT THE EU 'S VALUES AND PRINCIPLES MEAN IN PRACTICE

A country ...	(A) Can join the EU	(B) Cannot join the EU
1 That does not have freedom of the press		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2 That applies the death penalty		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3 That allows its citizens to protest against the government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4 In which the parliament is elected on a regular basis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5 In which a president governs until death and is succeeded by a son or a daughter		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6 In which the army determines policy and may even intervene in internal affairs with military power		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7 In which people are considered innocent until their guilt has been established by a court	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8 In which there is only one party which is always in government		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9 Which protects minorities, even when the majority is against them	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

## CHAPTER 2

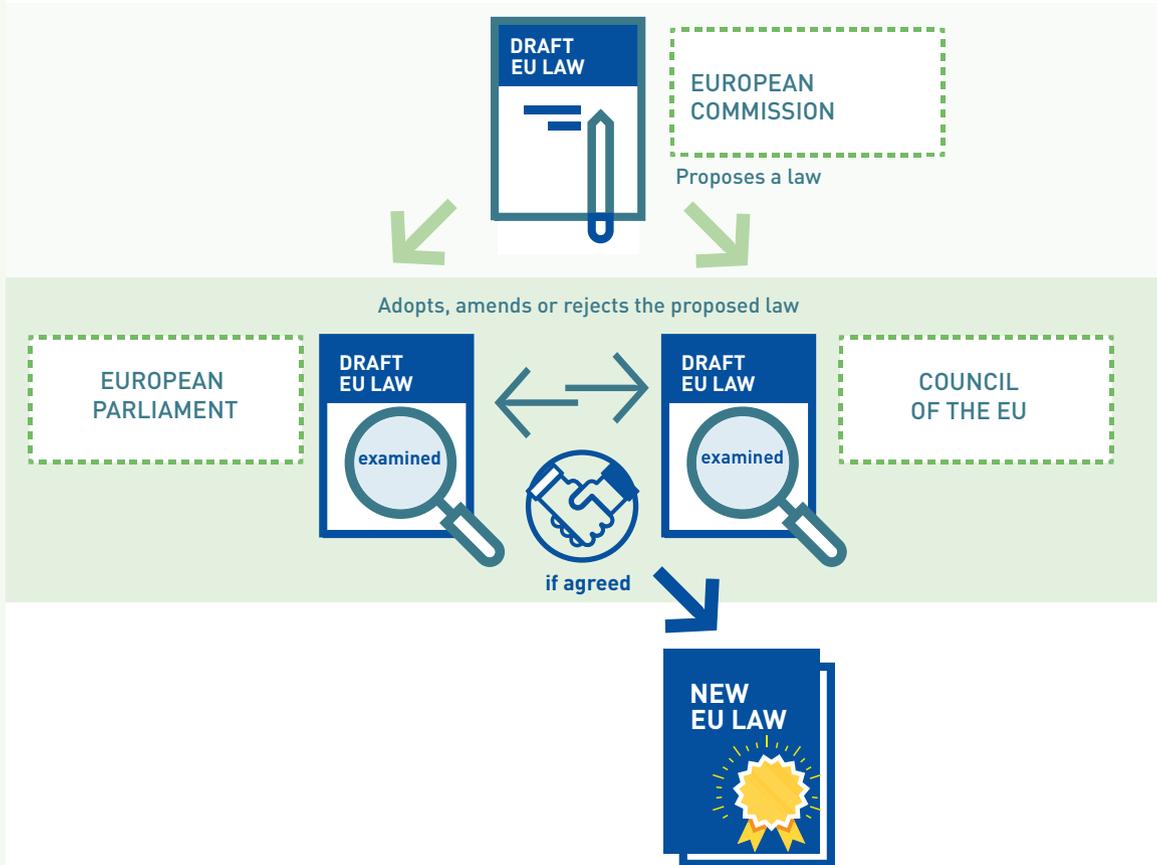
### EXERCISE 7

### WHO DOES WHAT IN THE EU?

Who ...?	European Parliament	European Council	Council of the European Union	European Commission	European Court of Justice
1 Makes proposals for EU laws				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2 Approves EU laws	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
3 Consists of (only) one representative/member per EU country		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4 Is elected by EU citizens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
5 Executes the budget				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6 Represents the interests of citizens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
7 Represents the interests of EU countries/their governments		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
8 Decides on the interpretation of EU laws					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9 Defines the general political direction of the EU		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

## EXERCISE 8

### LAWMAKING IN THE EU



## EXERCISE 9

### WHO IS WHO?



1

**Ursula von der Leyen**  
President of the European Commission



2

**Charles Michel**  
President of the European Council from 1 December 2019 to 31 May 2022



3

**Josep Borrell**  
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission



4

**David Maria Sassoli**  
President of the European Parliament

## CHAPTER 3

### EXERCISE 13

## WHAT DOES FREE MOVEMENT MEAN FOR YOU IN PRACTICE?

	Free movement of people	Free movement of goods	Free movement of services	Free movement of capital
1 I can buy a second-hand car abroad and take it back home without paying customs duties.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
2 I can travel anywhere I like within the EU.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
3 I can study in another EU country.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
4 My parents can have their bathroom renovated by a tiler from another EU country.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5 My parents can send money to me in the country where I am studying.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6 I can work in another EU country.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
7 I can buy goods online from another EU country without paying customs duties.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		



### DID YOU KNOW?

[PAGE 34]

This €2 coin is from Greece. It depicts a scene from a mosaic in Sparta (third century AD), showing Europa being abducted by Zeus, who has taken the form of a bull. Europa is a figure from Greek mythology after whom Europe was named.

## EXERCISE 14

### EUROPEAN LABELS

EU laws have put strict rules in place with regard to the labelling of certain products such as food, drinks and cosmetic products to protect consumers' health and safety and to help them make the right choices. Without proper labelling, a product will not be allowed onto the market.

1



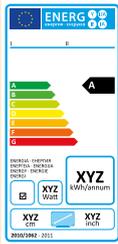
The **CE marking** is a product safety label. By using the label the manufacturer declares that products sold to consumers within the European Economic Area comply with European health, safety and environmental protection laws. The European Economic Area comprises the EU and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

2



The **EU Ecolabel** is awarded to products and services with reduced environmental impacts. It is a voluntary scheme that was introduced in 1980 by EU law.

3



The **EU energy label** shows how an appliance ranks on a scale from A to G based on its energy consumption. Class A (green) is the most energy efficient and Class G (red) is the least. Once most appliances of a given type reach Class A, up to three further classes can be added to the scale: A+, A++ and A+++.

4



The **EU organic logo** indicates that this product respects the EU rules for the organic farming sector. For processed products this means that at least 95 % of the agricultural ingredients are organic.

5



The **three EU quality logos** indicate characteristics of food products derived from the geographical location in which they are produced or from their traditional composition or production method.

## EXERCISE 15

### WHICH COUNTRIES ARE IN THE EURO AREA?

- |  |  |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Austria | <input type="radio"/> Denmark            | <input type="radio"/> Hungary               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Malta       | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Slovenia |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Belgium | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Estonia | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ireland    | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Netherlands | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Spain    |
| <input type="radio"/> Bulgaria           | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Finland | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Italy      | <input type="radio"/> Poland                 | <input type="radio"/> Sweden              |
| <input type="radio"/> Croatia            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> France  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Latvia     | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Portugal    |   |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Cyprus  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Germany | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Lithuania  | <input type="radio"/> Romania                |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Czechia            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Greece  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Luxembourg | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Slovakia    |   |

# FIND OUT MORE ABOUT EUROPE

## EU&ME ONLINE QUIZ

After reading this booklet, you probably know more about the European Union than most of your friends and family! Test your knowledge and challenge your friends with the online **EU&ME quiz**, available at: [europa.eu/!tY87Hn](https://europa.eu/!tY87Hn)  
See who gets the highest score!



## **Europa**

Information about the EU, in all 24 official EU languages:

▶ [europa.eu](http://europa.eu)

## **Learning Corner**

Teaching material, games and much more about the European Union and its activities, for teachers, children and teenagers:

▶ [europa.eu/learning-corner/home\\_en](http://europa.eu/learning-corner/home_en)

## **The history of the European Union**

Information and videos about the history of the EU:

▶ the EU timeline

[europa.eu/learning-corner/eu-timeline/overview\\_en](http://europa.eu/learning-corner/eu-timeline/overview_en)

▶ the EU pioneers

[europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history\\_en](http://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_en)

## **European Youth Portal**

European and national information about education, jobs, travel and much more for young people:

▶ [europa.eu/youth/EU\\_en](http://europa.eu/youth/EU_en)

## **The EU in your country**

EU information centres located throughout Europe.

You can ask your questions by freephone (00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11) or by email, or visit a centre near you:

▶ [europa.eu/european-union/contact\\_en](http://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en)

## **Your Europe**

Help and advice for EU nationals and their families:

▶ [europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index_en.htm)

## **Citizens' dialogues**

These events take place across the EU on a regular basis:

▶ [ec.europa.eu/info/events/citizens-dialogues](http://ec.europa.eu/info/events/citizens-dialogues)

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