



## The EU symbols

### The European flag (see below)

The 12 stars in a circle symbolise the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe.



### The European anthem

The melody comes from the Ninth Symphony by Beethoven. When this tune is used as the European anthem, it has no words.

### Europe Day, 9 May

The ideas behind what is now the European Union were first put forward on 9 May 1950 in a speech by the then French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman. Each year, 9 May is celebrated as the EU's birthday.

### United in diversity

This is the motto of the EU.

As a result of on-going tensions in these and many other European Union nations regarding the proper treatment of immigrant populations as well as the border restrictions imposed on new immigrants, the European Union has no effectively cohesive immigration policy in its current set of regulations.

There are certain aspects of immigration and international travel that EU policy does cover, however.

For example:

- EU members can travel freely to any other member nation without checking in with the customs office
- Migration between member states is largely unrestricted

## Foreign Policy

The creation of a common foreign policy has been similarly difficult for the European Union. While common positions, such as a stated opposition to the Iraq War, have been adopted on a EU-wide basis, national policies again take priority. Some EU member nations, such as Poland and Britain, currently have troops serving in Afghanistan or Iraq, whereas France and Germany have never supported either military endeavour. The European Union does itself hold a military of roughly 60,000 soldiers, but these have been used primarily for peace-keeping and goodwill operations around the world, in a similar fashion to United Nations armed forces.

it is owned by EU governments, the bank can raise capital and provide loans and credit at favourable rates.

## EU Common Policy

One of the most challenging aspects of European Union policy-making is the establishment of common European Policies regarding the major political issues that Europe faces as a continent. The most significant steps toward a comprehensive European Policy have been made regarding environmental concerns, and, of course, the creation of a singular “European Economic Market”, that is regulated and measured on a Europe-wide basis.

National interests have proven a difficult hurdle to overcome, particularly regarding foreign and security policies.

## Immigration

Immigration is inarguably one of the most controversial issues currently facing the European Union and its member nations, and the creation of a common immigration policy has proven problematic given the drastic variation between current national regulations. Germany, France and Britain have seen increased turmoil in recent years as immigrant populations (many from Turkey and North Africa) fail to effectively integrate with national societies and concentrate in urban slums in cities such as Berlin, Paris and London.

The European Union is the framework for economic and political co-operation between 27 European countries.

It began as a post-war initiative between six countries pooling control over coal and steel to guarantee a more peaceful future for Europe.

But it now manages co-operation on issues as wide-ranging as the environment, transport and employment which wield increasing influence in defense and foreign policy.

It has five declared objectives:

To promote economic and social progress

To assert the identity of the European Union on the international scene

To introduce European citizenship

To develop an area of freedom, security and justice

To maintain and build on established EU law

The European Union consistently generates mixed perceptions among national European publics. Europeans are variously indifferent, hostile, ignorant and confused about the EU’s purpose, and some scholars have pointed to the EU’s lack of direct electoral accountability for this mixed review. Suffering from what some have called a “democracy deficit”, the EU has earned a reputation as a powerful but largely unrestrained organization with increasing control over national enterprises such as economic growth and fiscal policy.

## EU members and when they joined:

- 1952 Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands
- 1973 Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom
- 1981 Greece
- 1986 Portugal, Spain
- 1995 Austria, Finland, Sweden
- 2004 Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
- 2007 Bulgaria, Romania

Notable Exceptions: Norway, Switzerland

### Future EU Members:

Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey are candidates for future membership.

Before they can become members, candidates must fulfill a number of conditions - known as the Copenhagen criteria. Established June 1993 by the European Council in Copenhagen, Denmark.

These are:

Stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, i.e. the rule of law, hu-

- The Committee is an advisory body which must be consulted on proposed EU decisions about employment, social spending, vocational training, etc.

### **The Committee of the Regions:**

- The Committee of the Regions is consulted on upcoming EU decisions with a direct impact at the local or regional level in fields such as transport, health, employment or education. Its 344 members are often leaders of regional governments or mayors of cities.

### **The European Central Bank:**

- Based in Frankfurt, the European Central Bank is responsible for managing the euro, principally by setting interest rates. Its prime concern is ensuring price stability so that the European economy is not harmed by inflation. The bank takes its decisions independently of governments and other bodies.

### **The European Investment Bank:**

- The bank lends money for projects of European interest, particularly in the less well-off regions. It finances infrastructure projects such as rail and road links, airports or environmental schemes. It provides credit for investments by small businesses (SMEs). The Luxembourg-based bank also lends to candidate states and developing countries. Because

of five years, coinciding with the period for which the European Parliament is elected

From January 2009, the European Union will have its own president to chair EU summits and unite the views of 27 member states.

That responsibility currently falls to a 6-month EU presidency held by individual nations on a rotating basis.

## Other Branches of EU Governance

### The Court of Justice:

- The job of the Court of Justice is to make sure that EU law is interpreted and applied in the same way in all EU countries.
- It ensures, for example, that national courts do not give different rulings on the same issue.
- The Court is located in Luxembourg and has one judge from each member country.

### The European Economic and Social Committee:

- 344 members represent a wide range of interests: from employers to trade unionists, from consumers to ecologists.



Current Map of European Union Countries

man rights and respect for and protection of minorities.

A functioning market economy, which can deal with the market forces of the EU.

The ability to meet the obligations of membership, including keeping to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

The adoption and implementation of the body of EU law.

## A Brief History of the European Union

The European Union's (EU) roots lie in aftermath of the Second World War, when Europeans made conscious attempts to prevent that scale of killing and destruction from happening again. With Europe split between the West and the Soviet East for approximately 40 years, 6 Western European nations (Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) created the Council of Europe in 1949.

May 9, 1950: French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman presented a plan for deeper cooperation between European nations; known as the "Schuman Declaration", this proposal was considered to be the beginning of the creation of the EU.

April 18, 1951: Schuman's plan for economic cooperation resulted in the treaty between six Council of Europe nations (Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) to run heavy industries (coal and steel)

member states meet as the European Council. These 'summit' meetings set overall EU policy.

### III. The European Commission:

- Represents and upholds the interests of Europe as a whole. It is independent of national governments.
- Drafts proposals for new European laws, which it presents to the European Parliament and the Council
- Manages the day-to-day business of implementing EU policies and spending EU funds
- Also makes sure that everyone abides by the European treaties and laws
- Can act against rule-breakers, taking them to the European Court of Justice if necessary
- The Commission consists of 27 men and women — one from each EU country, assisted by about 23 000 civil servants, most of whom work in Brussels.
- The President of the Commission is chosen by EU governments and endorsed by the European Parliament
- The other commissioners are nominated by their national governments in consultation with the incoming president, and must be approved by the Parliament.
- They do not represent the governments of their home countries. Instead, each of them has responsibility for a particular EU policy area.

The President and members of the Commission are appointed for a period

the centre-right European People's Party (Christian Democrats), followed by the Socialists, the Liberals and the Greens

- The main meetings of the Parliament are held in Strasbourg
- Like all other EU institutions, the Parliament works in all the 23 official EU languages
- The Parliament elects the European Ombudsman, who investigates citizens' complaints about maladministration by the EU institutions

## II. The Council of the European Union:

- The EU's principal decision-taking body
- Shares with Parliament the responsibility for passing EU laws
- Also in charge of the EU's foreign, security and defence policies, and is responsible for key decisions on justice and freedom issues.
- The Council consists of ministers from the national governments of all the EU countries. Meetings are attended by whichever ministers are responsible for the items to be discussed: foreign ministers, ministers of the economy and finance, ministers for agriculture and so on, as appropriate.
- Each country has a number of votes in the Council proportionate to the size of its population. Most decisions are taken by majority vote, although sensitive issues in areas like taxation, asylum and immigration, or foreign policy, require unanimity.
- Up to four times a year the presidents and/or prime ministers of the

under common management. This agreement was known as the Coal and Steel Treaty. By tying together two main industries of wartime production across national borders, the Council of Europe hoped to preserve an atmosphere of good faith and economic cooperation between previously antagonistic states.

March 25, 1957: Those six countries expand economic integration with the Treaty of Rome, which created the European Economic Community (EEC), and establishes a "common market" between those nations so that people, goods and services can move freely across borders.

July 30, 1962: The European Community adopted a common agricultural policy, under which all of the countries share control of food production. This resulted in higher earnings for farmers, but also food surpluses due to over-production.

July 20, 1963: The European Community signed its first international agreement, a treaty to help 18 countries in Africa.

July 1, 1968: The original six nations removed customs duties on goods imported from each other, and adopted common duties on imports from outside countries. This sparked trade within the EC and between the EC and the rest of the world.

April 24, 1972: The European Community nations agreed to limit the amount of fluctuation between the values of their currencies. This was the first step toward the later establishment of the common currency, the euro.

January 1, 1973: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom formally entered the European Community, for a total of 9 member states.

December 1974: EC leaders established the European Regional Development Fund to distribute funds from rich areas to finance infrastructural improvements in poor areas. This type of development funding now accounts for 1/3 of the total budget.

June 1979: European Community citizens elected the members of the European Parliament for the first time, instead of having them appointed by national parliaments. Elected members of the European Parliament were divided by political group (Socialist, Conservative, Liberal, etc.) rather than national affiliation.

January 1, 1981: Greece became a member of the European Community, for a total of 10 states.

January 1, 1986: Spain and Portugal became members of the European Community, for a total of 12 states.

February 17, 1986: As a means of eliminating obstacles to free-flowing trade between member nations, the EC launched the Single European Act of 1986 to sort out differences in national economic policy that act as barriers to free-trade.



## Major Branches of EU Governance

### I. European Parliament

- Elected every five years by the people of Europe to represent their interests
- The present Parliament has 785 members from all 27 EU countries
- Nearly one third of them are women.
- The Parliament's main job is to pass European laws on the basis of proposals presented by the European Commission.
- Parliament shares this responsibility with the Council of the European Union.
- Parliament and Council also share joint authority for approving the EU's €115 billion annual budget.
- Parliament has the power to dismiss the European Commission.
- Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) do not sit in national blocks, but in eight Europe-wide political groups. The largest of these are

### **Treaty of Rome**

The Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), signed in Rome on 25 March 1957, and entered into force on 1 January 1958. The Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) was signed at the same time and the two are therefore jointly known as the Treaties of Rome.

### **Treaty establishing the European**

#### Coal and Steel Community

The Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, which was signed on 18 April 1951 in Paris, entered into force on 23 July 1952 and expired on 23 July 2002.

February 7, 1992: The Treaty on European Union is signed in Maastricht. The treaty set rules for a single currency, as well as cooperative efforts in foreign policy, security, and domestic affairs. The treaty also officially named the “European Union”, replacing “European Community”.

January 1, 1993: A single European market was formally created, with four freedoms: the movement of goods, services, people and money.

January 1, 1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the EU, bringing the total to 15 states, which covered most of Western Europe.

March 26, 1995: Seven EU member states (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal) agreed to allow travel between them without passports. Other countries have since joined in this agreement.

June 17, 1997: The Treaty of Amsterdam built on the agreements of the Treaty of Maastricht.

December 13, 1997: The EU began membership negotiations with 10 central and eastern European countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

January 1, 1999: The euro was introduced in 11 countries (all except Greece, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom), but only for commercial and financial transactions.

January 1, 2002: Euro coins and bills were introduced.

March 2003: The EU engaged in peace-keeping operations in the Balkans, specifically Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

May 1, 2004: 10 new states were admitted to the EU: the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. This made a total of 25 member states. Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey were recognized as the candidates for future membership.

October 2004: 25 EU countries signed a treaty to establish a European Constitution that would make democratic decision-making more efficient. One measure toward this end was the creation of the post of European Foreign Minister. To become effective, the constitution must be ratified by all 25 states. Citizens in France and the Netherlands voted against the constitution in referendums. 15 states have approved the document, only 2 by popular vote. The EU is now in a “period of reflection” regarding the constitution.

January 1, 2007: Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU, making 27 members states. Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey are candidates for future membership.

December 2007: all 27 EU member states signed the Treaty of Lisbon, which attempted to make the EU more transparent and efficient in order to com-

### **Treaty of Amsterdam**

The Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on 2 October 1997, entered into force on 1 May 1999. It amended and renumbered the EU and EC Treaties. Consolidated versions of the EU and EC Treaties are attached to it. The Treaty of Amsterdam changed the articles of the Treaty on European Union, identified by letters A to S, into numerical form.

### **Treaty on European Union**

The Treaty on the European Union, which was signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992, entered into force on 1 November 1993. 'The Maastricht Treaty changed the name of the European Economic Community to simply "the European Community". It also introduced new forms of co-operation between the Member State governments - for example on defense, and in the area of "justice and home affairs". By adding this inter-governmental co-operation to the existing "Community" system, the Maastricht Treaty created a new structure with three "pillars" which is political as well economic. This is the European Union (EU).

### **Single European Act (SEA)**

The Single European Act, signed in Luxembourg and the Hague, and entered into force on 1 July 1987, provided for the adaptations required for the achievement of the Internal Market.

### **Merger Treaty**

The Merger Treaty signed in Brussels on 8 April 1965 and in force since 1 July 1967, which provided for a Single Commission and a Single Council of the then three European Communities.

## Summary of EU Treaties

### Treaty of Lisbon

The Treaty of Lisbon was signed on 13 December 2007. It will have to be ratified by all 27 Member States before it can enter into force, which is hoped to be before the next European Parliament elections in June 2009.

Its main objectives are to make the EU more democratic, meeting the European citizens' expectations for high standards of accountability, openness, transparency and participation; and to make the EU more efficient and able to tackle today's global challenges such as climate change, security and sustainable development.

The agreement on the Treaty of Lisbon followed the discussion about a constitution. A "Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe" was adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Brussels European Council on 17 and 18 June 2004 and signed in Rome on 29 October 2004, but it was never ratified.

### Treaty of Nice

The Treaty of Nice, signed on 26 February 2001, entered into force on 1 February 2003. It dealt mostly with reforming the institutions so that the Union could function efficiently after its enlargement to 25 Member States. The Treaty of Nice, the former Treaty of the EU and the Treaty of the EC have been merged into one consolidated version.

bat global climate change, and provide better security and development. Before the Treaty can become effective, it must be ratified in each member state.

The Treaty of Lisbon is considered an alternative to a full constitution, and aims to accomplish many of the same goals. Specifically, the Treaty makes the following changes to current EU policies:

The Treaty of Lisbon amends the current EU treaties, without replacing them. It aims to create the following:

- A more democratic and transparent Europe
- A strengthened role for the European Parliament: the European Parliament, directly elected by EU citizens, will have new powers over the EU legislation, the EU budget and international agreements.
- A stronger voice for citizens: thanks to the Citizens' Initiative, one million citizens from a number of Member States will have the possibility to call on the Commission to bring forward new policy proposals.
- Who does what: the relationship between the Member States and the European Union will become clearer with the categorization of competences.
- Withdrawal from the Union: the Treaty of Lisbon explicitly recognizes for the first time the possibility for a Member State to withdraw from the Union.
- The Treaty of Lisbon creates the function of President of the European Council elected for two and a half years, and introduces a direct link be-

tween the election of the Commission President and the results of the European elections.

- The Treaty of Lisbon enhances the EU's ability to act in several policy areas, in particular with issues of security and justice, such as combating terrorism.
- The Treaty of Lisbon guarantees the freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and gives its provisions a binding legal force. It concerns civil, political, economic and social rights.
- Solidarity between Member States: the Treaty of Lisbon provides that the Union and its Member States act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the subject of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. Solidarity in the area of energy is also emphasized.
- Increased security: extended capacity to act on security and justice. New provisions on civil protection, humanitarian aid and public health also aim at boosting the Union's ability to respond to threats to the security of European citizens.
- Europe as an actor on the global stage  
A new High Representative in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, also Vice-President of the Commission, will increase the coherence and visibility of the EU's external action.
- A new European External Action Service will provide back up and support to the High Representative.

- A single legal personality will strengthen the Union's negotiating power, making it more effective on the world stage and a more visible partner for third countries and international organizations.

