



27
countries

24
languages

450
million citizens

GDP
USD **16** trillion

SCHENGEN
Space of
Freedom
& Security

€
EURO
for **350**
million people

9th
May
Europe
Day

Anthem is
"Ode to
Joy"
(Beethoven)

**Nobel
Peace
Prize**
(2012)

EUROPEAN UNION AT A GLANCE

"We are not forming coalitions of states, we are uniting people"
Jean Monnet

27 EU 1 Single Market
Member States for with the same rules



What is the European Union?(EU)

The 27 EU Member States:

1958	(6)	Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands
1973	(9)	Denmark, Ireland, UK
1981	(10)	Greece
1986	(12)	Portugal, Spain
1995	(15)	Austria, Finland, Sweden
2004	(25)	Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
2007	(27)	Bulgaria, Romania
2013	(28)	Croatia
2020	(27)	Brexit – UK

The EU is a unique economic and political union of 27 European countries (Member States).

Its origin can be traced back to the end of the World War II (1939-1945) when its 6 founding members decided in 1952 the best way to prevent further conflict was to jointly manage coal and steel production, two of the most important materials needed to wage a war.

To become an EU member, a country must enjoy a stable democracy and guarantees the rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities. It must have a functioning market economy and the capacity to enforce and manage EU laws.

EU Treaty of Lisbon (2009) proclaims that :

1. The EU objective is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.
2. The EU shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers with free movement of persons and the respect of external border controls, asylum, immigration, the prevention and combating of crime.
3. The Union shall establish an internal market and work the sustainable development of Europe, based on a balanced economic growth and price stability, a competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment, social progress, protection and improvement of the environment, and to promote scientific and technological advance.
The EU shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, promote social justice and protection, gender equality, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child.
The EU promotes economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States.
It respects EU rich cultural, linguistic diversity, and Europe's cultural heritage.
4. The Union establishes an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro.
5. With the wider world, the EU promote its values and interests. It contributes to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child. The EU strictly abides to and develops international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.

In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "who for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe".



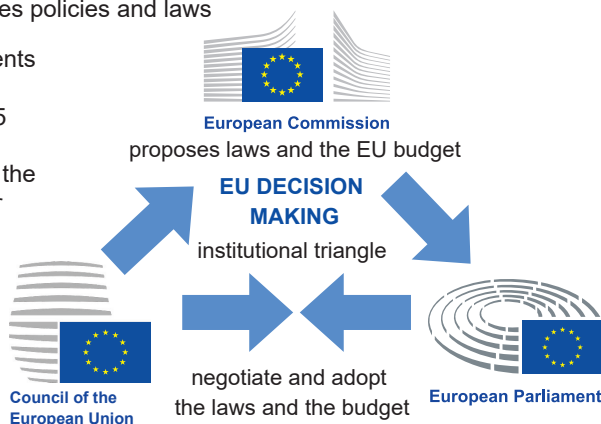
Who runs the European Union?

The EU is neither a federal state nor an international organisation in the traditional sense but rather an autonomous entity somewhere in between. In legal circles, the term 'supranational organisation' is now used.

The EU is unique as its 27 Member States remain independent sovereign nations, but they pool their sovereignty — and thus gain greater collective strength and influence. In practice, the EU Member States delegate some of their decision-making powers to shared EU institutions they have created, so that decisions on matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level.

An EU institutional triangle generates policies and laws

- **European Parliament**, represents the EU's 450 million citizens, directly elected by them every 5 years;
- **Council of the EU**, represents the 27 governments of the Member States;
- **European Commission**, represents the interests of the EU as a whole.



In addition, the **European Court of Auditors (ECA)**, oversees how the EU budget is spent, helps institutions and States being accountable. It produces public audit reports, works with the **European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)** and may transmit to the independent **European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO)**, investigating and prosecuting crimes affecting the EU's financial interests.

EU Court of Justice (EUCJ), independently ensures that EU laws are interpreted and enforced the same way. National courts can ask the EUCJ for clarification, who settles legal disputes among governments and EU institutions. It can decide infringement proceedings which may result in a fine for failing to comply with EU law. If an EU act is believed to violate EU treaties or fundamental rights, the EUCJ can annul it. If any person, company or organisation has their interests harmed by the action or inaction of the EU, it can take action against them through the EUCJ.

The European Central Bank (ECB) manages the euro, ensures low, stable and predictable inflation, keeps the financial infrastructure running smoothly, advise for reducing financial risks. **The European Investment Bank (EIB)**, owned by the 27 Member States, is the largest multilateral financial institution in the world. The EIB finances and invests in projects, focusing on climate, environment, SMEs, development, cohesion and infrastructure, through loans, equity and guarantees.



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European Parliament (Voice of EU citizens)

President: Roberta Metsola (Malta)

What is it? Directly elected by EU voters every 5 years, the “EP” has 720 members (MEPs) from all 27 EU Member States, who do not sit in national blocks, but in Europe-wide political groups.

What does it do? The EP passes European laws and approves the EU’s annual budget together with the Council of the EU, on the basis of proposals coming from the European Commission.

The EP has a **supervisory role**, ensuring the **democratic scrutiny** of institutions. The EP elects the European Commission (EC) President and approves the Commission as a body or votes a motion of censure, obliging the EC to resign. The EP questions the Commission and the Council. It approves the way EU budgets have been spent, and examines citizens’ **petitions** and sets up **inquiries**. It also discusses monetary policy with the European Central Bank. The European Parliament elects the European Ombudsman, who investigates citizens’ complaints about maladministration by the EU institutions.

Where is it? The General Secretariat is in Luxembourg, while the plenary sessions mostly take place in Strasbourg (France) and parliamentary committees in Brussels (Belgium).



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European Council (EU national leaders)

President: António Costa (Portugal)

What is it? The European Council is the highest political authority of the EU and is made up of the Heads of State or Government of the 27 EU Member States, the Presidents of the European Council and of the European Commission. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy also takes part in the European Council discussions.

What does it do? The European Council defines the general political direction and priorities of the EU. It meets at least twice every six months. With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, it became an institution.



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about European Council

Council of the European Union (27 Governments)

What is it? The Council of the EU consists of ministers from the 27 national governments. Meetings are attended by whichever ministers are responsible for the items to be discussed. The ministers have the authority to commit their governments to the actions agreed on in the meetings.

There are 10 Council configurations, covering the whole range of EU policies. Decisions are taken by vote. In most cases, a decision requires a **qualified majority** (55% of 27 Member States or 15 countries, representing at least 65% of the whole EU population). In some cases unanimity is required (ex. Taxation or Foreign affairs).

The Council is supported by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper), who are, in effect, national ambassadors to the EU, and 150 specialised working parties and committees ('Council preparatory bodies').

The Council of the EU should not be confused with the European Council (where EU leaders meet around four times a year) and the Council of Europe (not an EU institution), composed of 46 States.

What does it do? The Council of the EU shares with the European Parliament the responsibility for passing laws, taking policy decisions and adopting the annual EU budget. It also bears the responsibility in the field of the EU common foreign and security policy, on the basis of strategic guidelines set by the European Council. It concludes **agreements** between the EU and other countries or international organisations.

Where is it? The Council of the EU's headquarters is in Brussels, but in April, June and October its meetings are held in Luxembourg.

Presidency of the Council of the EU:

The EU's 27 Member States take turn to chair the Council of the EU for a period of six months each.

For six-months, the Presidency chairs meetings of the different Committees (except the Foreign Affairs Council) and is responsible for driving forward the Council's work on EU legislation, ensuring the continuity of the EU agenda.

Order of six-month presidencies:

Jan-Jun 2024	Belgium
Jul-Dec 2024	Hungary
Jan-Jun 2025	Poland
Jul-Dec 2025	Denmark
Jan-Jun 2026	Cyprus
Jul-Dec 2026	Ireland
Jan-Jun 2027	Lithuania
Jul-Dec 2027	Greece



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Council of the EU

European Commission

(Executive arm of the EU)

President since 2019 : Ursula von der Leyen (Germany)

What is it? The Commission is the EU executive arm. It represents and upholds EU interests as a whole. Political leadership is provided by a College (team) of 27 Commissioners (one from each Member State).

The College is made of 1 President, 8 Vice-Presidents (including the HR-VP: High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and 18 Commissioners.



European External Action Service (EEAS)

(EU's foreign service)

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

(Estonia)



What is it? Created in 2011, the European External Action Service (EEAS) is the EU's foreign service. The EEAS manages the EU's diplomatic relations and strategic partnerships with non-EU countries.

What does it do? The EEAS is led by the EU foreign affairs chief – or High Representative. The High Representative is also a Vice-President of the European Commission. He represents the EU's foreign and security policy around the world, coordinates the work of the European Commission on EU external relations and chairs the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) of the Council of the EU.

Where is it? The EEAS has its headquarters in Brussels and operates 144 EU Delegations and/or Offices around the world.



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Each Commissioner is responsible for specific EU policy areas. The Commission day-to-day running is managed by about 32,000 civil servants.

What does it do? It drafts proposals for new European laws, which it presents to the Parliament and the Council. It manages and monitors the implementation of EU policies and supervises how EU funds are spent. With the EU Court of Justice, the European Commission ensures that EU law is properly applied in all the Member States. The Commission also speaks on behalf of all EU Member States in international bodies, in particular in areas of trade policy and humanitarian assistance.

Where is it? The 'seat' of the European Commission is in Brussels, but it also has offices in Luxembourg, and representations in all EU Member States.



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