European Commission

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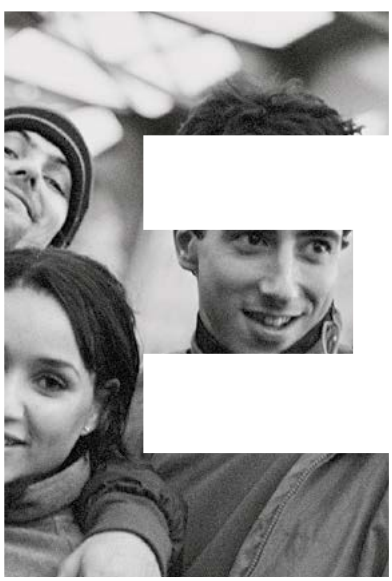

An interactive version of this publication, containing links to online content, is available in PDF and HTML format at:

http://publications.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-and-me/en/

europa.eu/teachers-corner/index_en.htm

EU&
ME

European Commission
Directorate-General for Communication
Citizens' Information
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

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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.

europa.eu/!vJ46Vv

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

EU &
ME

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SINCE ITS CREATION IN 1957, THE EU HAS GROWN FROM SIX TO 28 COUNTRIES. THEY JOINED FORCES TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE TOGETHER. WHICH COUNTRIES BELONG TO THE EUROPEAN UNION 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 510 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 28 countries. In June 2016 one of these, the United Kingdom, voted to leave the EU. However, until the withdrawal negotiations are complete, the United Kingdom remains a member of the EU with all the rights and obligations that derive from this.

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

- ☐ ALBANIA
- ☐ ANDORRA
- ☐ AUSTRIA
- ☐ BELGIUM
- ☐ BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- ☐ BULGARIA
- ☐ CROATIA
- ☐ CYPRUS
- ☐ CZECH REPUBLIC
- ☐ DENMARK
- ☐ ESTONIA
- ☐ FINLAND
- ☐ FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
- ☐ FRANCE
- ☐ GERMANY
- ☐ GREECE
- ☐ HUNGARY
- ☐ ICELAND
- ☐ IRELAND
- ☐ ITALY
- ☐ LATVIA
- ☐ LIECHTENSTEIN
- ☐ LITHUANIA
- ☐ LUXEMBOURG
- ☐ MALTA
- ☐ MOLDOVA
- ☐ MONTENEGRO
- ☐ 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

DOBRÓ ÚTRO / BUENOS DÍAS
DOBRÉ RÁNO / GOD MORGEN
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 28 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	☐	☐
2 That applies the death penalty	☐	☐
3 That allows its citizens to protest against the government	☐	☐
4 In which the parliament is elected on a regular basis	☐	☐
5 In which a president governs until death and is succeeded by a son or a daughter	☐	☐
6 In which the army determines policy and may even intervene in internal affairs with military power	☐	☐
7 In which people are considered innocent until their guilt has been established by a court	☐	☐
8 In which there is only one party which is always in government	☐	☐
9 Which protects minorities, even when the majority is against them	☐	☐

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.

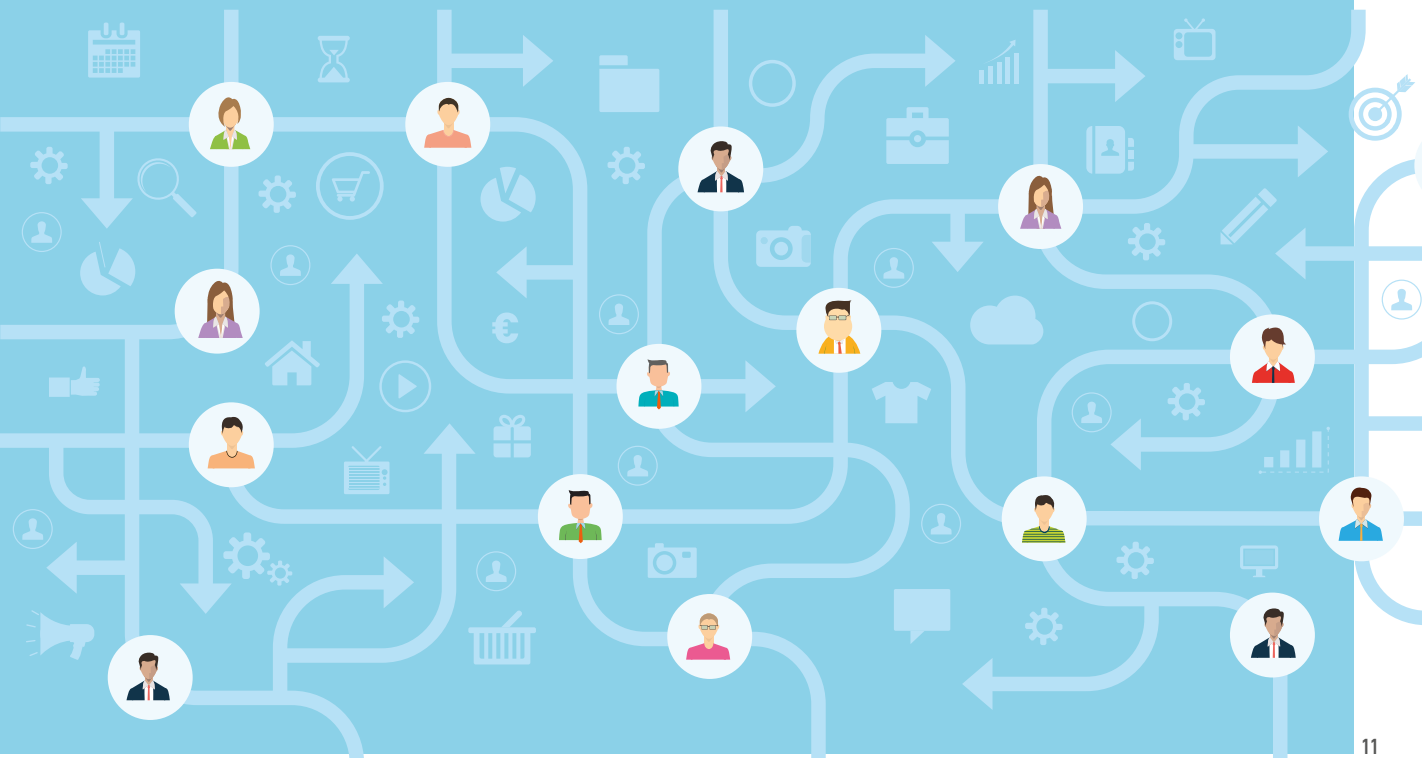
On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman (the French foreign minister at the time) proposed that the production of coal and steel — the raw materials that were used to prepare for war — should be managed jointly in order to ensure that no one country could secretly arm itself against the others. At that time, coal 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: Czech Republic, 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.

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 2000, 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.

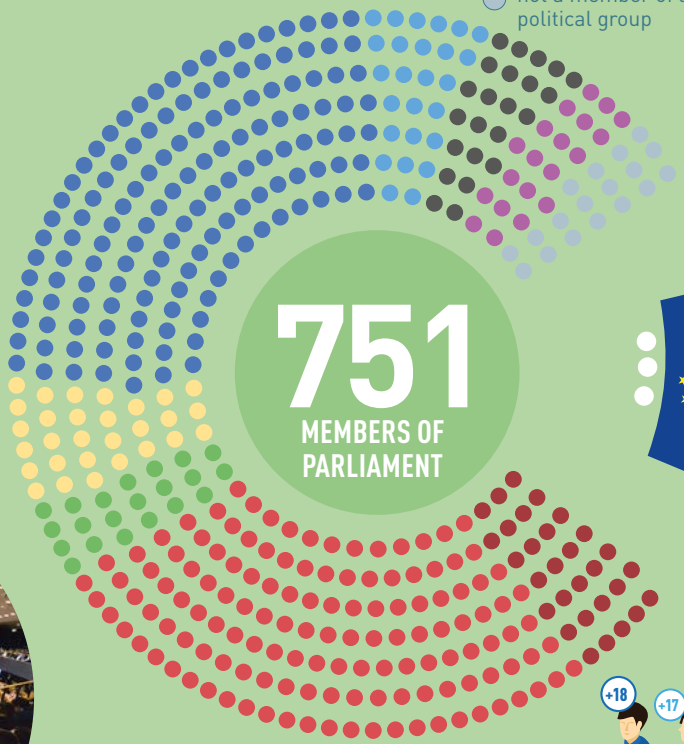
YOU OFTEN HEAR IN THE NEWS THAT 'BRUSSELS' HAS DECIDED THIS AND THAT. BUT WHAT DOES THAT ACTUALLY MEAN? WHO OR WHAT EXACTLY IS 'BRUSSELS'? IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL GET A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE EU. WHAT ARE THE EU INSTITUTIONS AND WHAT DO THEY DO? WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DO THEY HAVE?

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.



- European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
- Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
- European Conservatives and Reformists
- Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
- European United Left–Nordic Green Left
- Greens–European Free Alliance
- Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy
- Europe of Nations and Freedom
- not a member of a political group

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 next European elections will be held in spring 2019. You have the right to vote at 18 in all EU countries except Austria, 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, five times a year.

The Parliament has 751 members from all EU countries.

European citizens directly elect the Members of the European Parliament

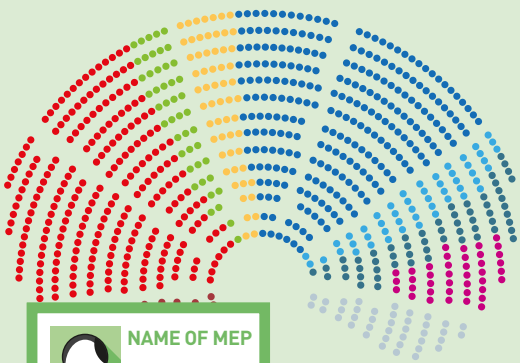
Based on their size, the large countries have more members than the small ones. For example: Germany, which has the largest population in the EU, has 96 members, while Cyprus, Estonia, Luxembourg and Malta have six members each. Members with similar political views work together in political groups. They do not form groups according to their nationality.

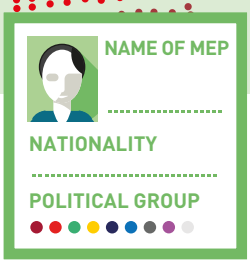
The Parliament takes decisions on European laws jointly with the Council. If the Parliament and the Council cannot agree on a piece of legislation, there will be no new law. The Parliament elects the President of the European Commission and approves the 28 members of the Commission as a body. It also approves the budget of the European Union.

EXERCISE 5

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The next elections to the European Parliament will be held in spring 2019, and you might be eligible to vote by then. Your representatives will work with Members of the European Parliament from other EU countries in political groups. At present there are eight political groups in the European Parliament. 25 members are needed to form a political group, and at least one quarter of the EU countries must be represented within the group. Members may not belong to more than one political group; some do not belong to any political group and are known as non-attached members.





In small groups, have a look at the following table to see which parties from your country were successful at the last European elections and which groups they belong to: europa.eu/!Qv36gj.

Take a closer look here: europa.eu/!yG46KN. Do you recognise some of the members from your own country?

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

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

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 2017 Malta and Estonia hold the presidency, followed by Bulgaria and Austria in 2018, then by Romania and Finland in 2019.

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 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

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 28 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

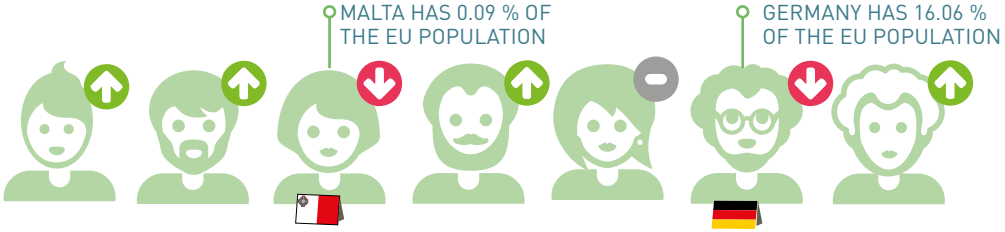
28 **Member States**
Minimum 'yes' required for adoption: 55 % = 16

YES NO ABSTAIN

TOTAL SIMPLE MAJORITY =

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

use the voting calculator

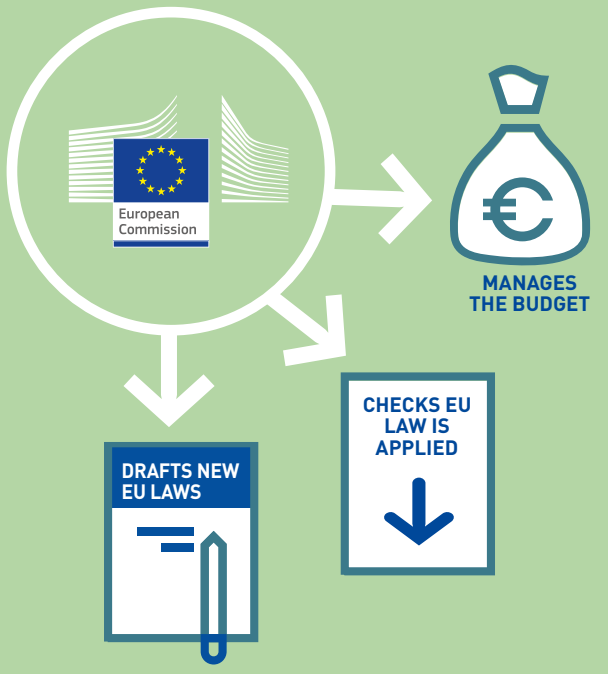


The European Commission proposes new laws and programmes in the general interest of the EU. Before making a proposal, the Commission seeks the opinions of national parliaments, governments, interest groups and experts, as well as the general public, who are invited to make their comments online.

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?

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

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/!Vt94my

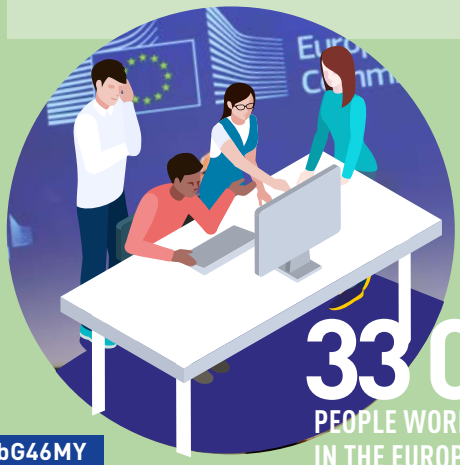
DID YOU KNOW? YOU CAN VISIT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS!

europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en

You can visit the EU institutions, including the **European Parliament**, the **Council**, the **European Council** and the **European Commission**.

europa.eu/!bG46MY

consilium.europa.eu/en/contact/visits



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

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	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Approves EU laws	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Consists of (only) one representative/member per EU country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 Is elected by EU citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Executes the budget	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 Represents the interests of citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 Represents the interests of EU countries/their governments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8 Decides on the interpretation of EU laws	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9 Defines the general political direction of the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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
- European Court of Auditors: eca.europa.eu
- European External Action Service: eeas.europa.eu
- European Economic and Social Committee: eesc.europa.eu
- European Committee of the Regions: cor.europa.eu
- European Investment Bank: eib.europa.eu
- European Ombudsman: ombudsman.europa.eu
- European Data Protection Supervisor: edps.europa.eu

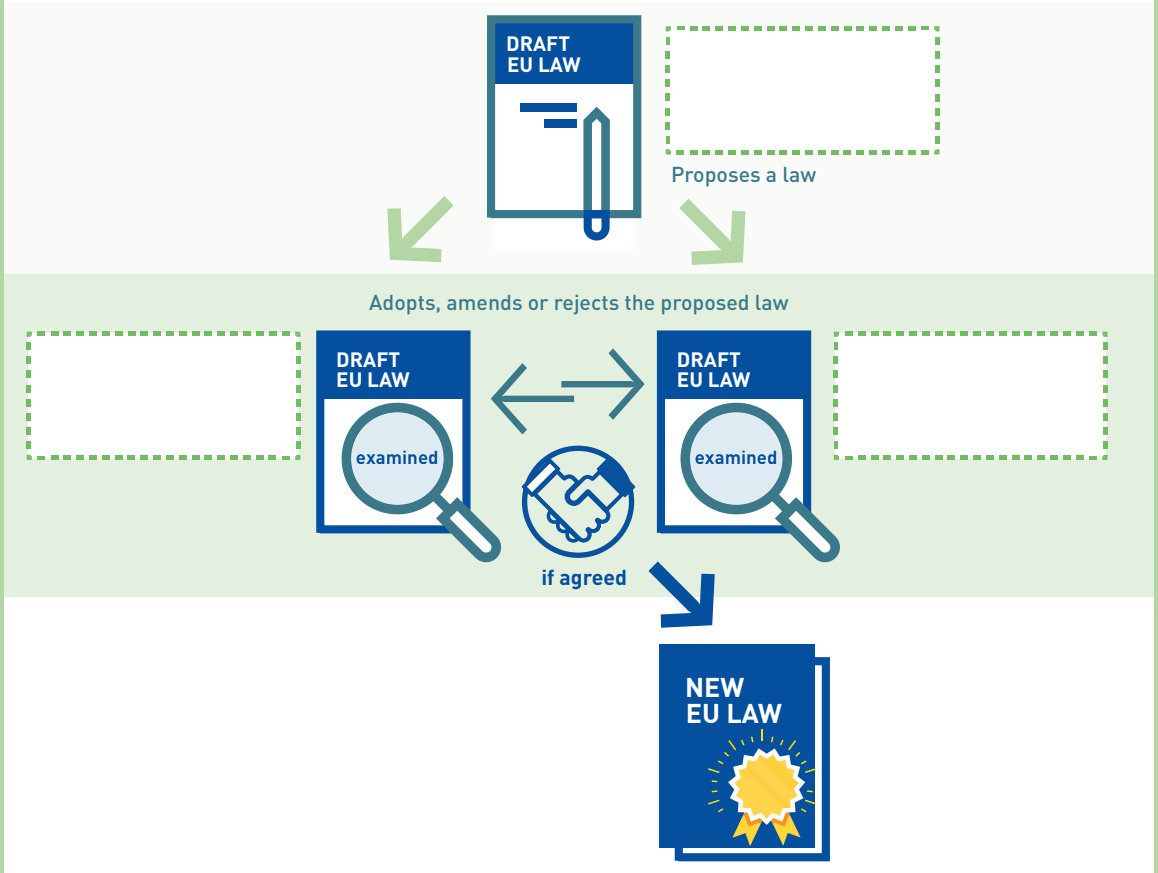
For more information see: europa.eu/!NX37Dd

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.



EU leaders attend a meeting with the United States
May 2017

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:

- ◯ Donald Tusk
- ◯ Jean-Claude Juncker
- ◯ Antonio Tajani
- ◯ Federica Mogherini

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

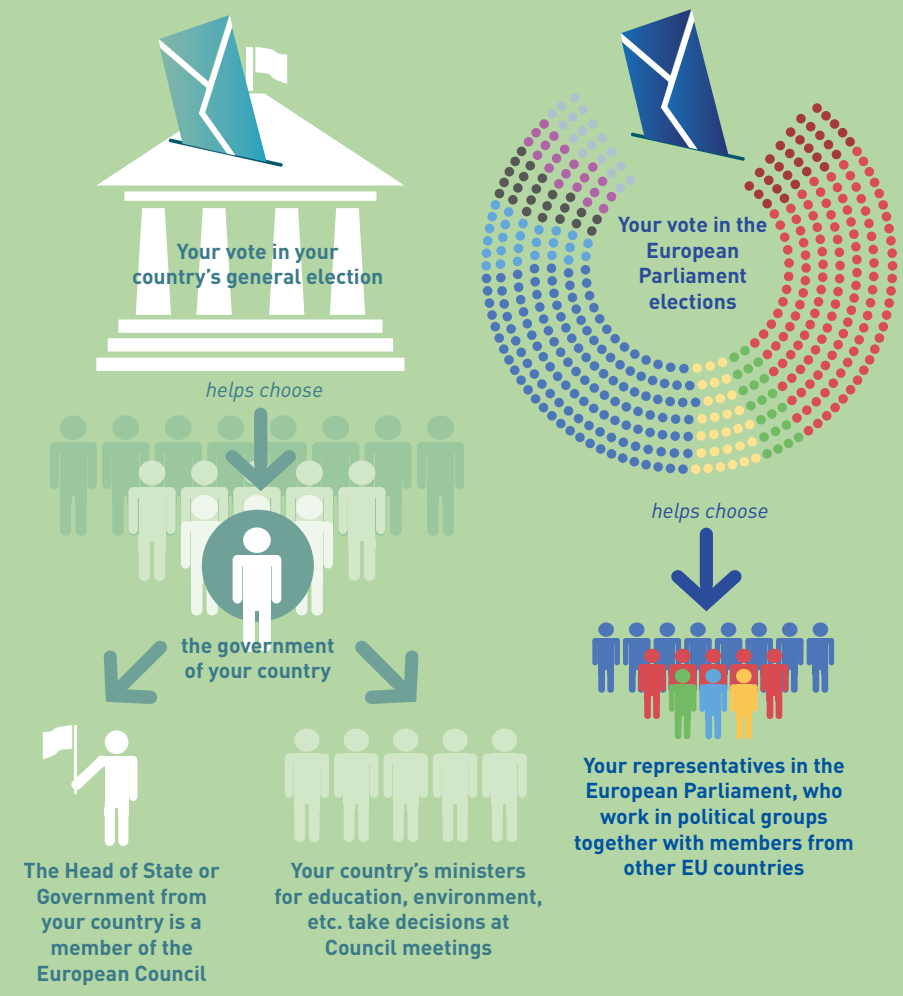
- ◯ President of the European Parliament
- ◯ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission
- ◯ President of the European Council
- ◯ President of the European Commission

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

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

Finally, EU citizens can launch or support a **European citizens' initiative** 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

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, Czech Republic, 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. The United Kingdom and Ireland have 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? 1.7 million Europeans commute 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.

DID YOU KNOW?
You can check your EU passenger rights anytime and anywhere. Simply download the passenger rights app: 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) 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. 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.

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

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), 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.

WATCH THE VIDEO
http://europa.eu/!cQ63fg

The European Solidarity Corps

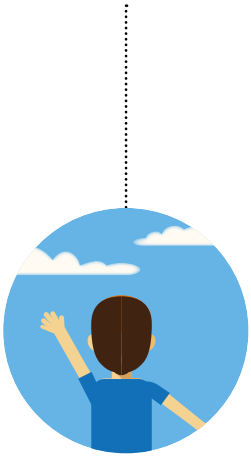
The EU has launched a new initiative for young people who are willing to make a meaningful contribution to society and help show solidarity with their community. The European Solidarity Corps allows 18-30-year-old Europeans to participate in a wide range of solidarity activities, either by volunteering 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

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 510 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?

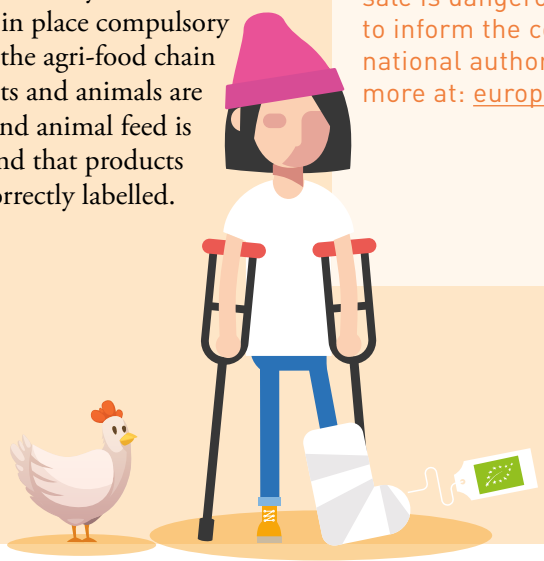
Match the examples to the four aspects of the single market (free movement of people, goods, services and capital) and tick the appropriate box.

	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.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I can travel anywhere I like within the EU.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I can study in another EU country.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 My parents can have their bathroom renovated by a tiler from another EU country.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 My parents can send money to me in the country where I am studying.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 I can work in another EU country.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 I can buy goods online from another EU country without paying customs duties.	☐	☐	☐	☐

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 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 31 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

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?

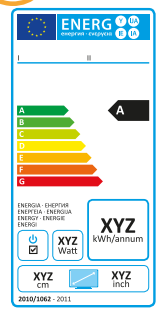
1

CE

2

EU Ecolabel
www.ecolabel.eu

3



4

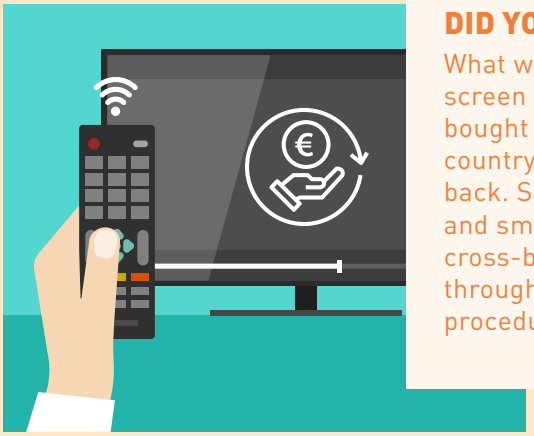
5

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

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 337 million EU citizens, i.e. two thirds 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 28 EU countries. Tick the 19 that are in the 'euro area' and use the euro as their currency.

◯ Austria	◯ Denmark	◯ Hungary	◯ Malta	◯ Slovenia
◯ Belgium	◯ Estonia	◯ Ireland	◯ Netherlands	◯ Spain
◯ Bulgaria	◯ Finland	◯ Italy	◯ Poland	◯ Sweden
◯ Croatia	◯ France	◯ Latvia	◯ Portugal	◯ United Kingdom
◯ Cyprus	◯ Germany	◯ Lithuania	◯ Romania	
◯ Czech Republic	◯ Greece	◯ Luxembourg	◯ Slovakia	

DID YOU KNOW?

The EU budget for 2017 amounts to €157 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 (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: europa.eu/!Tt44tv and 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 AS WELL AS WHAT ITS MAIN PRIORITIES ARE.

WHAT´S ON THE EU´S AGENDA?

THE EU'S 10 PRIORITIES

Today, the EU is facing unprecedented challenges in the form of unemployment, migration, climate change and terrorism, 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 now being put into question.

In light of these challenges, the newly elected President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, presented in 2014 a policy agenda to provide for a new start for Europe. Based on the competences given by the EU treaties, he identified 10 key priorities that the EU as a whole should focus on in the coming years to ensure that it seizes the opportunities that these trends present. This chapter outlines them for you.

In conjunction with these 10 priorities, the European Commission has invited all EU governments, civil society, stakeholders and citizens to reflect on the future of Europe.

'Our children deserve a Europe that preserves their way of life. They deserve a Europe that empowers and defends them. They deserve a Europe that protects. It is time we — the institutions, the governments and the citizens — all take responsibility for building that Europe. Together.'

Jean-Claude Juncker,
President of the European Commission,
2016 State of the Union address

You can learn more about this consultation at europa.eu/!wC97Bp

1. 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. These investments, expected to total in excess of €315 billion over 3 years, will focus in particular on infrastructure, innovation, smaller companies and start-ups. The investment plan is already showing results. In the first 18 months, it triggered €138.3 billion in new investment in 27 Member States and approved many projects, creating more than 100 000 new jobs. Given the concrete results of this fund, in September 2016 the European Commission proposed to extend it until the end of 2020 and to increase the total investment target to €500 billion.

Find out more at:
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.

2. 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. However, while such tools work perfectly well in your own country, you may have found that you were unable to access them from another EU country. These online barriers mean that citizens miss out on opportunities to buy goods and services: only 15 % of EU citizens shop online from another EU country.

Nevertheless, this figure is likely to increase as a result of the EU working on new rules to help people and companies easily buy and sell products and services online in all countries, like they would already do at home.

However, not all citizens and businesses have access to fast internet and online opportunities. The EU is therefore working on improving digital infrastructures. It wants to provide high-speed access to the internet for all, including for those who live in remote and rural areas. In 2015, President Juncker announced a €120 million plan to bring free Wi-Fi to parks, squares, libraries and public buildings in towns and villages across the EU by 2020. The EU has already made some progress towards this objective.

Find out more at: europa.eu/!ck99dW

DID YOU KNOW?

Geolocation is at the heart of the ongoing digital revolution. The EU has invested in its own global satellite navigation 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 30 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.

3. 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 53 % of its energy), 75 % of houses in the EU are energy inefficient, and wholesale electricity prices in Europe are 30 % 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 27 %; and
- a 27 % 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.

Find out more at: europa.eu/!jN48TP

DID YOU KNOW?

20 % 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.

4. 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

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.

Find out more at:
europa.eu/!jW98RX

5. A deeper and fairer economic and monetary union

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 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 European Commission is proposing to strengthen the social aspect of the European Union. With the 'European pillar of social rights' presented in April 2017, it proposes new and more effective rights for citizens structured around three chapters: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion.

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

6. Free trade

Every day, the EU imports and exports goods and services worth hundreds of millions of euros. Together, the 28 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.

Find out more at:
europa.eu/!dF94PQ

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 that the EU is negotiating with Japan.

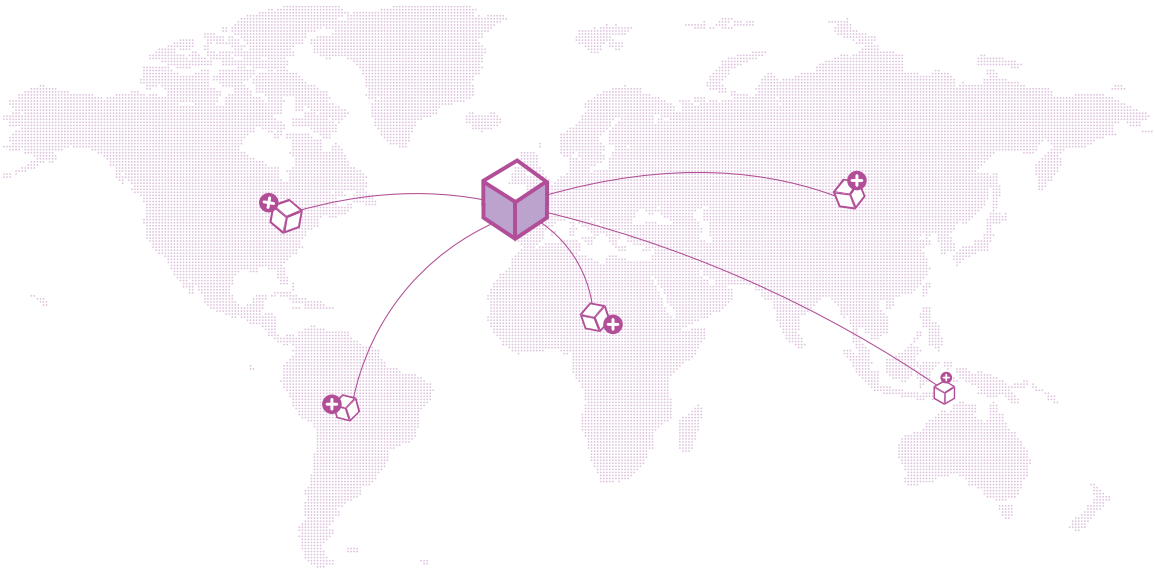
Another trade agreement that you may have heard about is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) that the EU is negotiating with the United States. The aim of this partnership is to open up as much trade and investment as possible between the two blocs without sacrificing European standards in areas such as food safety, health, social and data protection, and cultural diversity.

DID YOU KNOW?
In 2016, over 31 million jobs in the EU were supported by EU exports to non-EU countries.

EXERCISE 22

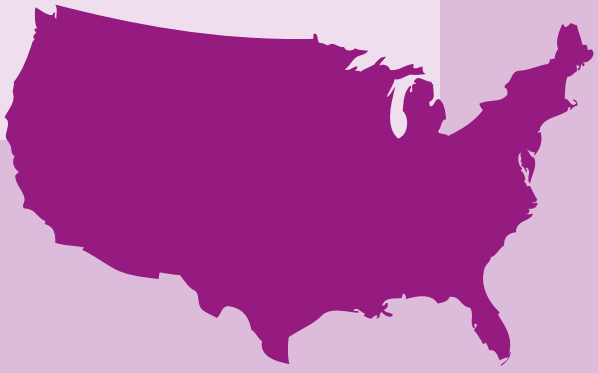
FREE TRADE AND GLOBALISATION

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 account for 40 % 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



7. 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

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?

8. 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

DID YOU KNOW?

On 15 December 2015, the European Commission adopted an important set of measures to manage the EU's external borders and protect the Schengen area without internal borders. For instance, 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.

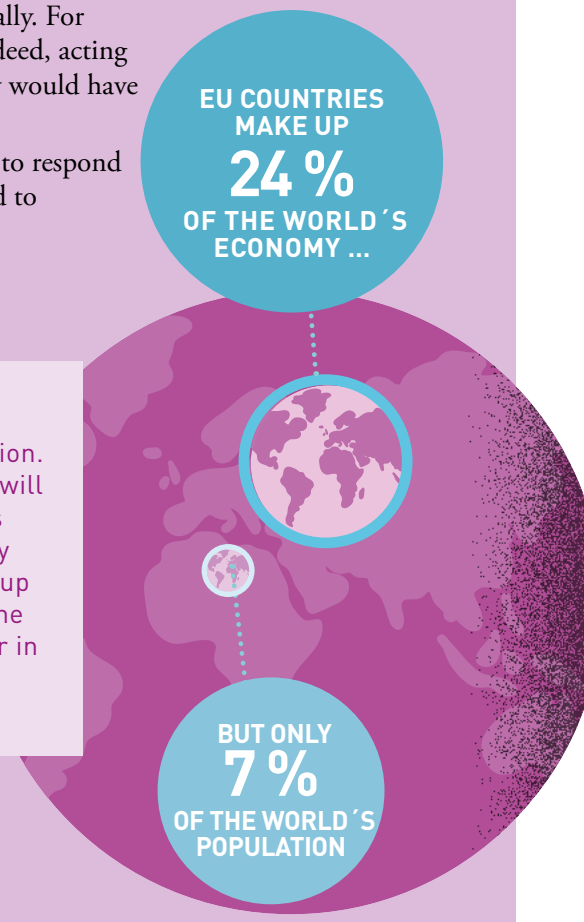
	Completely support	Partly support	Somewhat against	Completely against
1 The EU has organised search and rescue vessels in the Mediterranean Sea, saving thousands of lives.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 The EU has set up reception centres in Greece and Italy and sent experts to help identify and register arrivals.	☐	☐	☐	☐
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.	☐	☐	☐	☐
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.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 The EU helps EU countries to return 'irregular' migrants to their home country if they have no right to stay in the EU.	☐	☐	☐	☐
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.	☐	☐	☐	☐
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.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8 The EU has improved the control of its external borders.	☐	☐	☐	☐
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.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10 The EU provides humanitarian aid to refugees and migrants in countries outside of the EU, such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. A stronger global actor

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.



DID YOU KNOW?

The EU is home to 7 % 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 24 % of the world economy, making the EU one of the largest economies in the world, similar in size to the United States' economy.

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?

The EU plays an important role in helping countries suffering from humanitarian crises. In 2016, the EU allocated relief assistance of over €2.1 billion for food, shelter, protection and healthcare to 120 million people in over 80 countries.

Find out more at:
europa.eu/!Qm99uF

10. 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.

Find out more at:
europa.eu/!NR86bY

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

EXERCISE 26

CITIZENS´ DIALOGUES

Citizens' dialogues between commissioners and the public take place across the EU on a daily basis (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 priorities 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		☒
2 That applies the death penalty		☒
3 That allows its citizens to protest against the government	☒	
4 In which the parliament is elected on a regular basis	☒	
5 In which a president governs until death and is succeeded by a son or a daughter		☒
6 In which the army determines policy and may even intervene in internal affairs with military power		☒
7 In which people are considered innocent until their guilt has been established by a court	☒	
8 In which there is only one party which is always in government		☒
9 Which protects minorities, even when the majority is against them	☒	

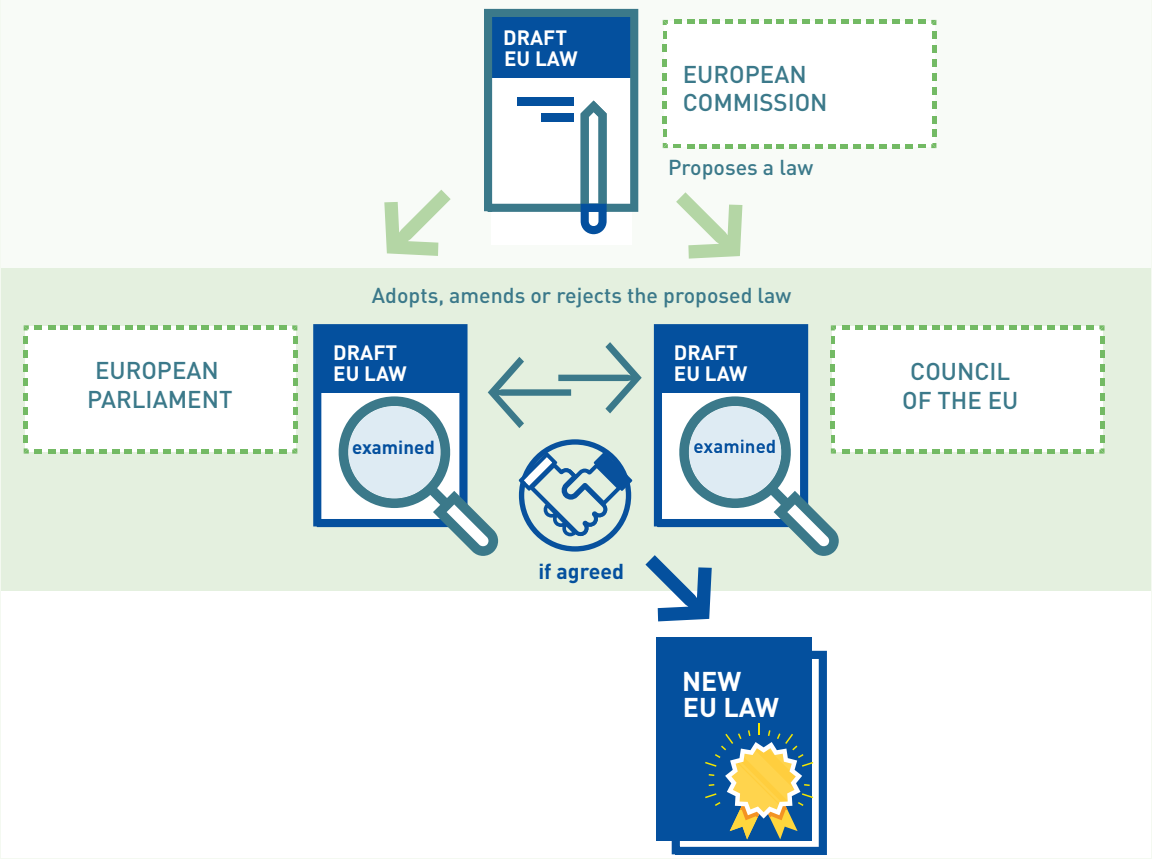
EXERCISE 7

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				☒	
2 Approves EU laws	☒		☒		
3 Consists of (only) one representative/member per EU country		☒	☒	☒	☒
4 Is elected by EU citizens	☒				
5 Executes the budget				☒	
6 Represents the interests of citizens	☒				
7 Represents the interests of EU countries/their governments		☒	☒		
8 Decides on the interpretation of EU laws					☒
9 Defines the general political direction of the EU		☒			

EXERCISE 8

LAWMAKING IN THE EU



EXERCISE 9

WHO IS WHO?

Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission

Donald Tusk
President of the European Council

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

Antonio Tajani
President of the European Parliament

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.		☒		
2 I can travel anywhere I like within the EU.	☒			
3 I can study in another EU country.	☒			
4 My parents can have their bathroom renovated by a tiler from another EU country.			☒	
5 My parents can send money to me in the country where I am studying.				☒
6 I can work in another EU country.	☒			
7 I can buy goods online from another EU country without paying customs duties.		☒		

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

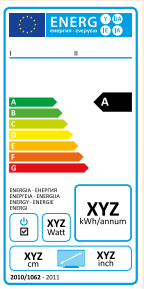
EU laws have put strict rules in place with regard to the labelling of certain products such as food, drinks and cosmetic products to protect consumers' health and safety and to help them make the right choices. Without proper labelling, a product will not be allowed onto the market.

1 CE

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?

€ Austria	○ Denmark	○ Hungary	€ Malta	€ Slovenia
€ Belgium	€ Estonia	€ Ireland	€ Netherlands	€ Spain
○ Bulgaria	€ Finland	€ Italy	○ Poland	○ Sweden
○ Croatia	€ France	€ Latvia	€ Portugal	○ United Kingdom
€ Cyprus	€ Germany	€ Lithuania	○ Romania	
○ Czech Republic	€ Greece	€ Luxembourg	€ Slovakia	

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT EUROPE

ONLINE QUIZ — DISCOVER THE EUROPEAN UNION

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 quiz, 'Discover the European Union', available at: europa.eu/teachers-corner/quiz_en
See who gets the highest score!

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Kids´ Corner
Games and quizzes about Europe for children and young people:
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European Youth Portal
European and national information about education, jobs, travel and much more for young people:
► 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

The history of the European Union
Information and videos about the history of the EU, including the founding fathers:
► europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_en

Your Europe
Help and advice for EU nationals and their families:
► 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

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