

Europe in a nutshell



What is the European Union?

It is European

= it is situated in Europe



It is a union

= it unites countries and people.



Let's have
a closer look:

What do Europeans
have in common?

How has the EU
developed?

What does the EU
do today?

Europe – our continent

Europe is one of the world's continents.

It stretches
from the
Arctic Ocean
in the north

and from the
Atlantic
Ocean in the
west

**500 million
of them in
the European
Union.**

to the Ural
Mountains in
the east.

More than 700 million
people live in Europe,

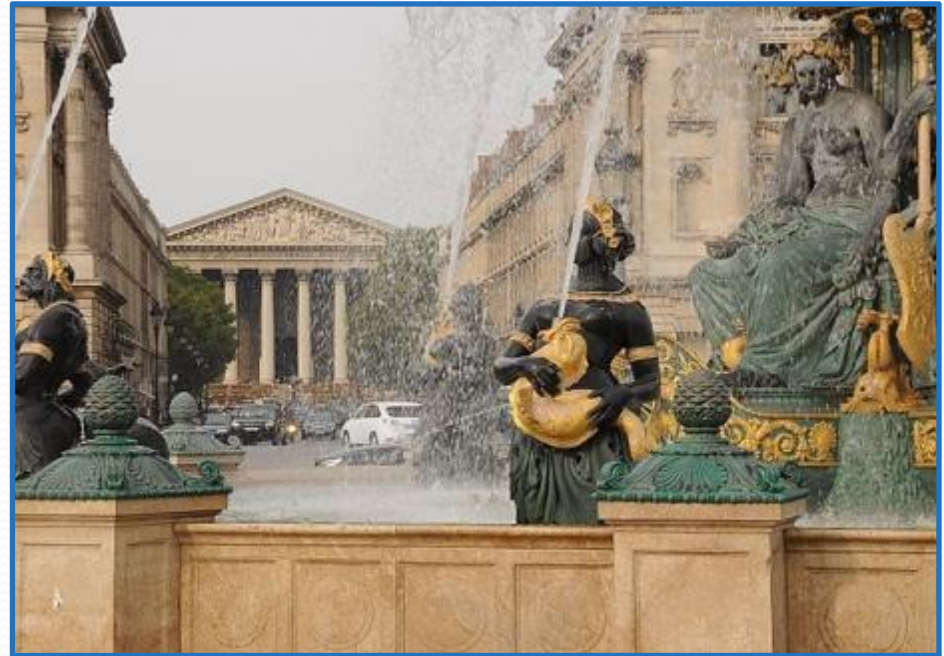
to the
Mediterranean
Sea in the
south

Europe – our history

We Europeans do not only share a continent, we share a common history.

New ways of living, thinking and believing have always spread throughout Europe. They have shaped the way we feel and behave to this day.

Ancient Greece and Rome, for example, have strongly influenced European culture.



The church of the Madeleine in Paris, inspired by a Roman temple, designed as a temple to the glory of Napoleon's army, seen here from the Place de la Concorde, where the guillotine was erected during the French Revolution.

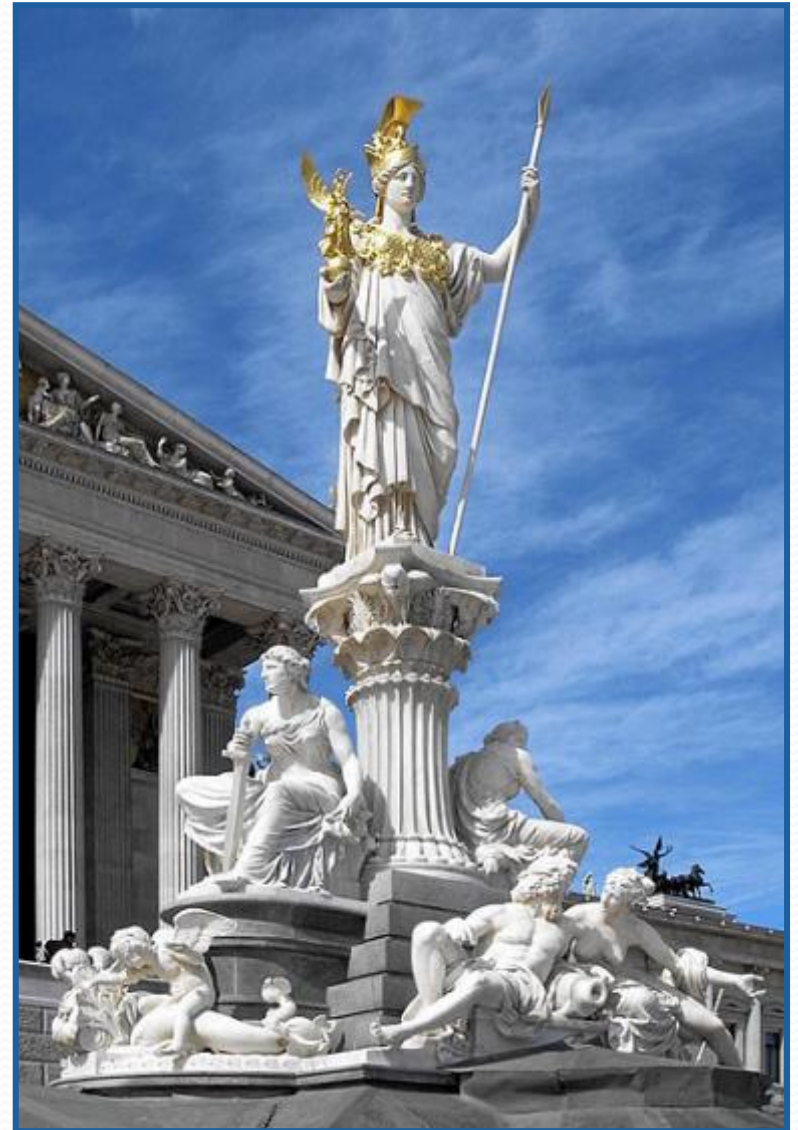
Languages

Our languages reflect that:
many words in European
languages have common roots
in ancient Greek and Latin.

For example:

- Europe and democracy
(Greek) or
- Union (Latin).

The Athena Fountain in front of the
Austrian Parliament Building in Vienna.



Arts and culture

Over the centuries, new styles of music, architecture and literature have inspired artists all over Europe.

For example:

- gothic churches in France, Spain, Poland or Slovakia, or
- classical music written by German, Italian, Austrian, or British composers.



European wars

Sadly, the story of Europe is not all about great achievements of which we can be proud.

Throughout history, European nations have fought terrible wars against each other.

In the 20th century, two wars that started on this continent spread and involved countries all over the world.



This cemetery contains the remains of more than 140,000 soldiers who died during the Battle of Verdun (France) in the First World War.

European wars

At the end of the Second World War, people in Europe asked themselves:

"Can anything be done to stop these terrible things from happening again?"

"Will Europeans ever learn to work together instead of fighting each other?"

Let's see what happened next.

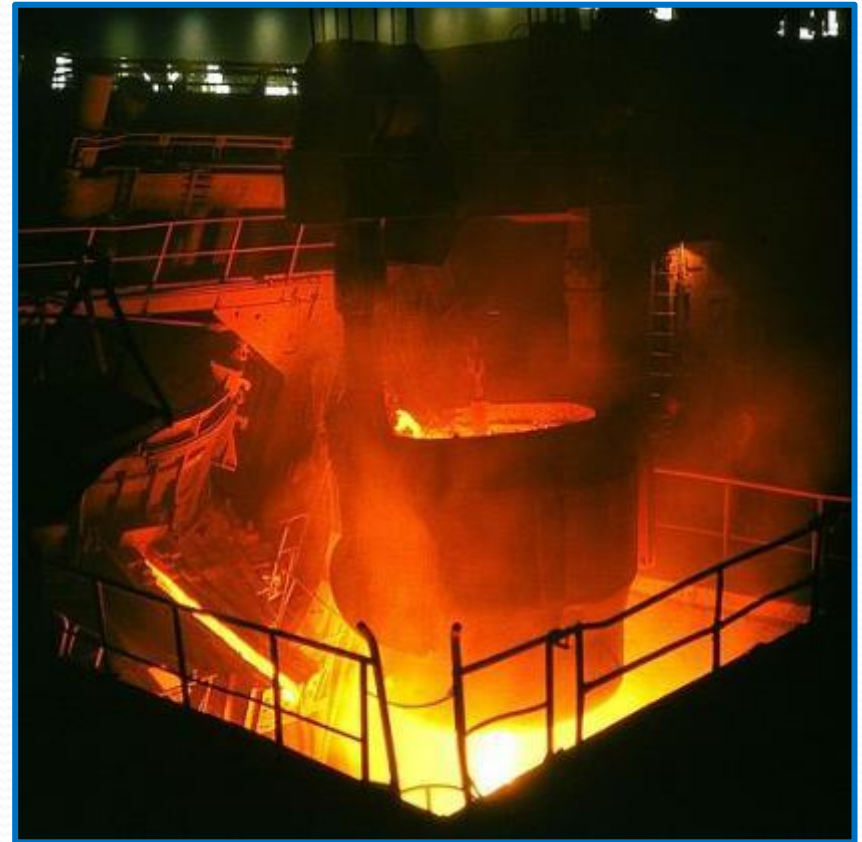


Founding of the European Union

If you want to prevent war,
you have to **work together**.

A first step is to control jointly
the things needed for war:

- **steel** for weapons and
- **energy** for factories and transport...



European Coal and Steel Community

... That's why six European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) agreed to unite their coal and steel industries.

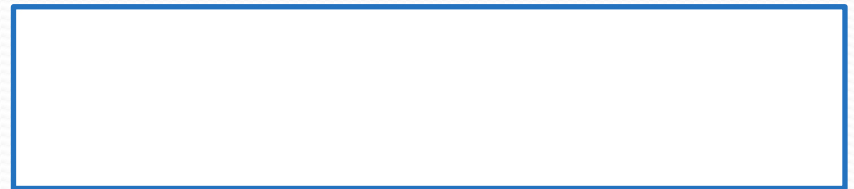
They set up the European Coal and Steel Community.



European Economic Community

The six countries got on so well that they decided to go a step further and to set up the **European Economic Community (EEC)**.

The main idea was to create a '**common market**'. That means getting rid of all national obstacles to free trade, such as border checks and customs duties, as if Europe were one country.



Not just economics...

Over the years, more and more countries joined the EEC.

They started working together in many more areas, for example,

- to protect the environment and
- to build better roads and railways across Europe.



The Øresund Bridge, completed in 1999, links Sweden and Denmark.

Fall of the Iron Curtain

In 1989, countries from central and eastern Europe broke free from Communist rule. The unnatural separation between the eastern and western parts of Europe, the '[Iron Curtain](#)', ceased to exist.

The countries that had regained their freedom reformed their laws and economies and joined the EU. The EU now has 28 member countries.



What the European Union does today

The EU tries to make life better for all of us. Let's have a look at some examples.

Money

In the past, each country in Europe had its own currency. Now, many EU countries use one single currency, the euro.



Freedom for young people

The EU supports young people who want to spend some time studying or training in another European country. ([Erasmus+](#))

What the European Union does today

Freedom for employees

EU citizens may live and work in any EU country of their choice.



Do you want to become a chef?
Why not work in another EU country to
uncover the secrets of its cuisine.



Climate action

In international negotiations on climate change, the European Union speaks with one voice.

What the European Union does today

Helping poorer regions

Some areas in Europe need money to build new roads and railways; in other places many people are looking for a job. The EU provides funding for specific projects that address these needs.



**Wastewater treatment plant in Croatia,
financed with the help of EU funds**



Helping neighbouring countries

The EU helps other countries improve schools, hospitals and social protection. Lida and Alina from Moldova have benefited from this.

What the European Union does today

There are many more things the EU is doing today:

Protecting
the
environment



Making
phone calls
cheaper



Helping to
save energy

Ensuring
the food we
eat is safe



and

lots,

lots

more!

The EU is even working in space

A satellite with two large solar panel arrays is shown in orbit above the Earth's horizon. A bright blue beam of light originates from the satellite and points down towards the Earth's surface. The background is the blackness of space with stars.

with satellites
that help cars
navigate more
intelligently and
make air travel
safer.

How the EU makes decisions

As you can imagine, it takes a lot of effort by many people to organise the EU and make everything work. So who does what?



The **European Commission** is made up of 28 Commissioners, one from each member state. Their job is to think about what would be best for the EU as a whole. They propose laws and make sure that the EU treaties are respected.

The 28 Commissioners

European
Commission



**JEAN-CLAUDE
JUNCKER**

PRESIDENT



**FRANS
TIMMERMANS**

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
*Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations,
Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights*



**FEDERICA
MOGHERINI**

VICE-PRESIDENT
HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy



**KRISTALINA
GEORGIEVA**

VICE-PRESIDENT
*Budget
and Human Resources*



**GÜNTHER
OETTINGER**

Digital Economy and Society



**KARMENU
VELLA**

*Environment, Maritime
Affairs and Fisheries*



**CHRISTOS
STYLIANIDES**

*Humanitarian Aid
and Crisis Management*



**VĚRA
JOUROVÁ**

*Justice, Consumers
and Gender Equality*



**ANDRUS
ANSIP**

VICE-PRESIDENT
Digital Single Market



**JOHANNES
HAHN**

*European Neighbourhood
Policy and Enlargement
Negotiations*



**VYTENIS
ANDRIUKAITIS**

Health and Food Safety



**PHIL
HOGAN**

*Agriculture
and Rural Development*



**TIBOR
NAVRACSICS**

*Education, Culture, Youth
and Sport*



**MAROŠ
ŠEFČOVIČ**

VICE-PRESIDENT
Energy Union



**CECILIA
MALMSTRÖM**

Trade



**DIMITRIS
AVRAMOPOULOS**

*Migration, Home Affairs
and Citizenship*



**JONATHAN
HILL**

*Financial Stability,
Financial Services
and Capital Markets Union*



**CORINA
CREȚU**

Regional Policy



**VALDIS
DOMBROVSKIS**

VICE-PRESIDENT
Euro and Social Dialogue



**NEVEN
MIMICA**

*International Cooperation
and Development*



**MARIANNE
THYSSEN**

*Employment, Social Affairs,
Skills and Labour Mobility*



**VIOLETA
BULC**

Transport



**MARGRETHE
VESTAGER**

Competition



**JYRKI
KATAINEN**

VICE-PRESIDENT
*Jobs, Growth, Investment
and Competitiveness*



**MIGUEL ARIAS
CAÑETE**

Climate Action and Energy



**PIERRE
MOSCOVICI**

*Economic and Financial Affairs,
Taxation and Customs*



**ELŻBIETA
BIENKOWSKA**

*Internal Market, Industry,
Entrepreneurship and SMEs*



**CARLOS
MOEDAS**

*Research, Science
and Innovation*

The European Parliament

The **European Parliament** represents all people in the EU. Its members are chosen in an election every five years. All adult citizens in the EU have the right to vote.



The Council and the European Council

In the **Council**, ministers of EU Member States meet to discuss EU matters, take decisions and pass laws.

In the **European Council** all the leaders of the EU countries (Presidents, Prime Ministers or Chancellors) get together to set Europe's general strategy.



European Council meeting, February 2016

The Court of Justice

The **Court of Justice** makes sure that all EU countries stick to the laws that they have agreed upon.

The Court also checks that these laws respect 'fundamental rights', such as freedom of speech and the freedom of the press.



Court of Justice, Luxembourg

Taking care of our money



The **European Central Bank** is responsible for maintaining price stability in the euro area.

The **European Court of Auditors** checks if the budget of the European Union has been spent correctly.



Member States of the European Union

These are the 28
Member States of the
European Union.

Can you remember
the names of the six
founding countries?

Member States of the
European Union



Candidate countries and
potential candidates



Enlargement: from six to 28 countries

1952 Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands

1973 Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom

1981 Greece

1986 Portugal, Spain

1995 Austria, Finland, Sweden

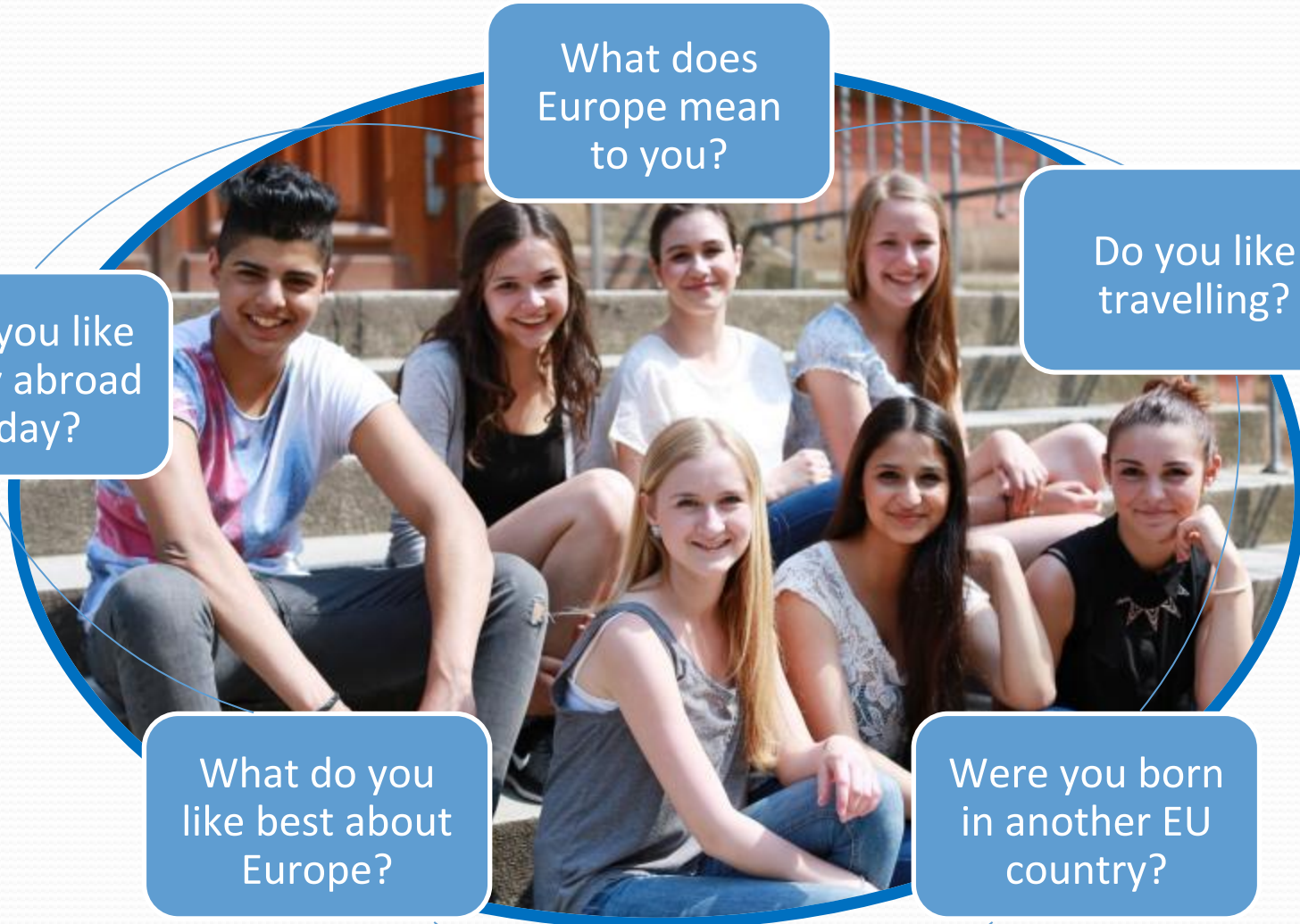
2004 Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia

2007 Bulgaria, Romania

2013 Croatia



What about you?



What does
Europe mean
to you?

Do you like
travelling?

Would you like
to study abroad
one day?

What do you
like best about
Europe?

Were you born
in another EU
country?

Ready for more?

This presentation was originally designed by the European Commission. The current version can be downloaded [here](#).

Many more teaching materials about the European Union and its policies are available on our [Teachers' Corner](#).

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