

# GEOGRAPHY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



Grade(s) 9–12th

Subject: Geography

Topic: European Union

## Lesson Focus & Goals

Students will locate the European Union on a map. They will apply the themes of geography as it relates to the European Union.

## Materials

- colored pencils
- rulers
- map of the European Union
- Themes of Geography Note Taking Guide
- Computer
- Smartboard
- Personal student devices

## Appendix

Make copies for students

- A: European Union Political Map
- B: Instructions for items to be labeled
- C: Themes of Geography

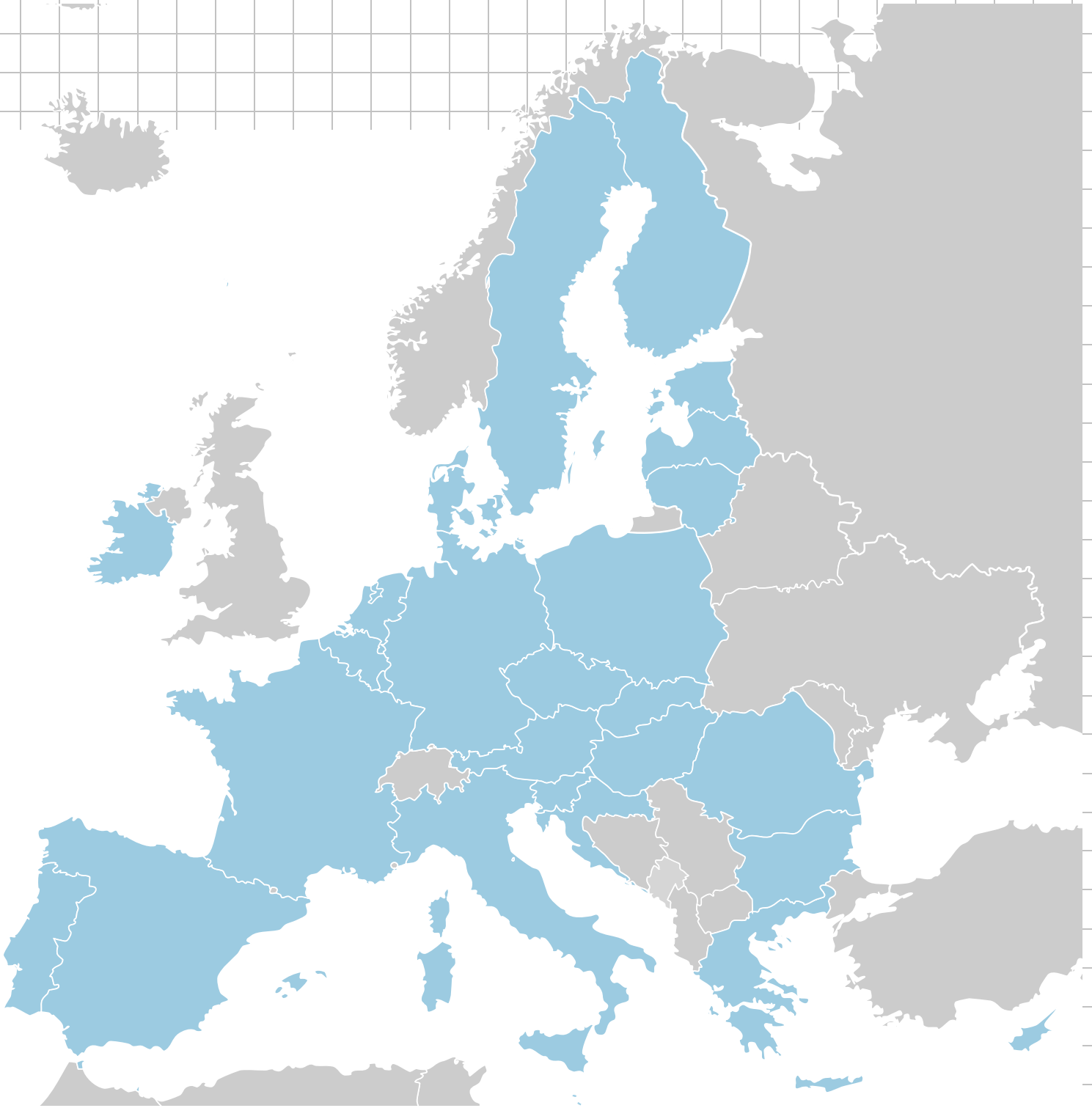
## Procedures

- **Assess Prior Knowledge:** What do you know about the European Union? What questions do you have about the European Union?
- **Introductory Activity:** Watch the video on the formation of the European Union, followed by a class discussion. What is the EU? Why did it form? What struggles did it overcome? <https://youtu.be/sAKpLw8n7Tg>
- **Individual Activity:** Have students individually label the countries and bodies of water around the European Union. (Appendix A–B)
- **Pair Activity:** Have students use the following resources to complete the Themes of Geography note taking guide about the European Union. (Appendix C)

## Resources:

- Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/european-union>
- CIA Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/european-union/>
- Country Profiles: [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en)
- Facts & Figures: [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/key-facts-and-figures/structure\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/key-facts-and-figures/structure_en)
- Timeline: [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_en)
- Indigenous People's Day: [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/08/08/international-day-of-the-world-s-indigenous-peoples-9-august-2022-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union/?mc\\_cid=f6079d1e01&mc\\_eid=b2d60b41b4](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/08/08/international-day-of-the-world-s-indigenous-peoples-9-august-2022-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union/?mc_cid=f6079d1e01&mc_eid=b2d60b41b4)

# Geography of the European Union

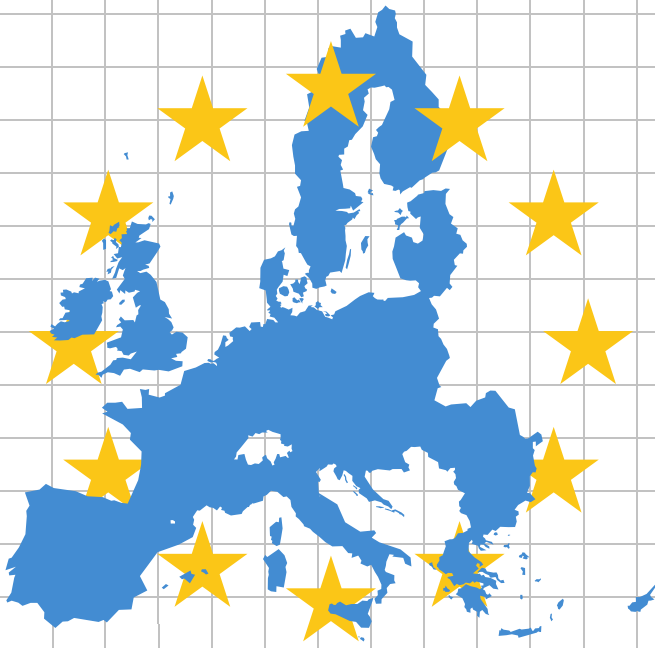


Appendix A



# Resource Map

# European Union Map Instructions



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Outline in **RED**, the original member nations of the European Economic Community, also known as the "Inner Six":

Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg & the Netherlands.

## Label the 27 member states:

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

## Label the following bodies of water:

- Mediterranean Sea
- Atlantic Ocean
- Arctic Ocean



# Themes of Geography: European Union

**LOCATION**

**PLACE**

**HUMAN  
ENVIRONMENT  
INTERACTION**

**MOVEMENT**

**REGION**

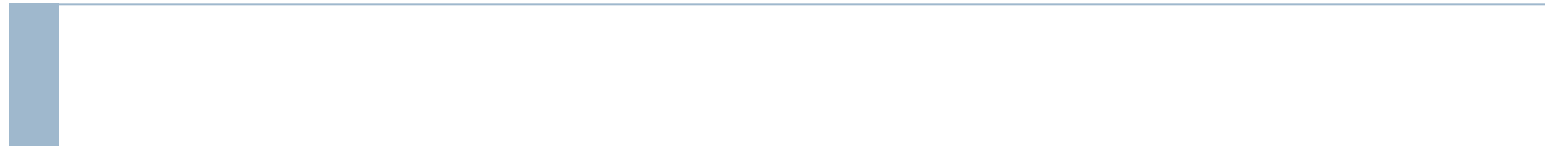
Appendix C



EUROPEAN UNION

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# The European Union – Introduction



# What is the European Union?

**27** Member States

Combined  
population of  
EU Member  
States

**500**  
million

**7.5** Percent of  
world's  
population

Percent of  
global GDP

**30**

**60** Percent of combined  
worldwide Official  
Development Assistance

- ❑ Shared values: liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law.
- ❑ The world's largest economic body.
- ❑ The world's most successful model for regional integration and for advancing peace and democracy.
- ❑ A unique institution as Member States voluntarily cede national sovereignty in many areas to carry out common policies and governance.
- ❑ It is not a super-state which replaces existing states. Nor is it simply an organization for international cooperation.



# Supranationalism

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- ❑ **Supranational Organizations:** organizations in which nations are not totally sovereign actors
- ❑ **Reflects trend of integration**
  - ❑ Process that encourages states to pool their sovereignty in order to gain political, economic, and social clout



# Why Form a European Union?

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- ❑ Began after WWII in an effort to repair nations' economies in a war-torn Europe
- ❑ Initial goals were almost completely economic in intent



# Evolution and Integration

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- ❑ 1957 the EEC (European Economic Community) established by Treaty of Rome
  - ❑ Informally named the “Common Market”
  - ❑ Eliminated all tariffs between European nations and creation of new ones



# Finally, the EU!

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- ❑ The 1991 Maastricht Treaty created the modern organization and gave it authority in new areas
- ❑ Important goal was to coordinate economic policies, particularly through the common currency, the Euro
- ❑ The treaty established three pillars:
  - ❑ Trade and economic cooperation
  - ❑ Law enforcement / human rights
  - ❑ Foreign policy and European security

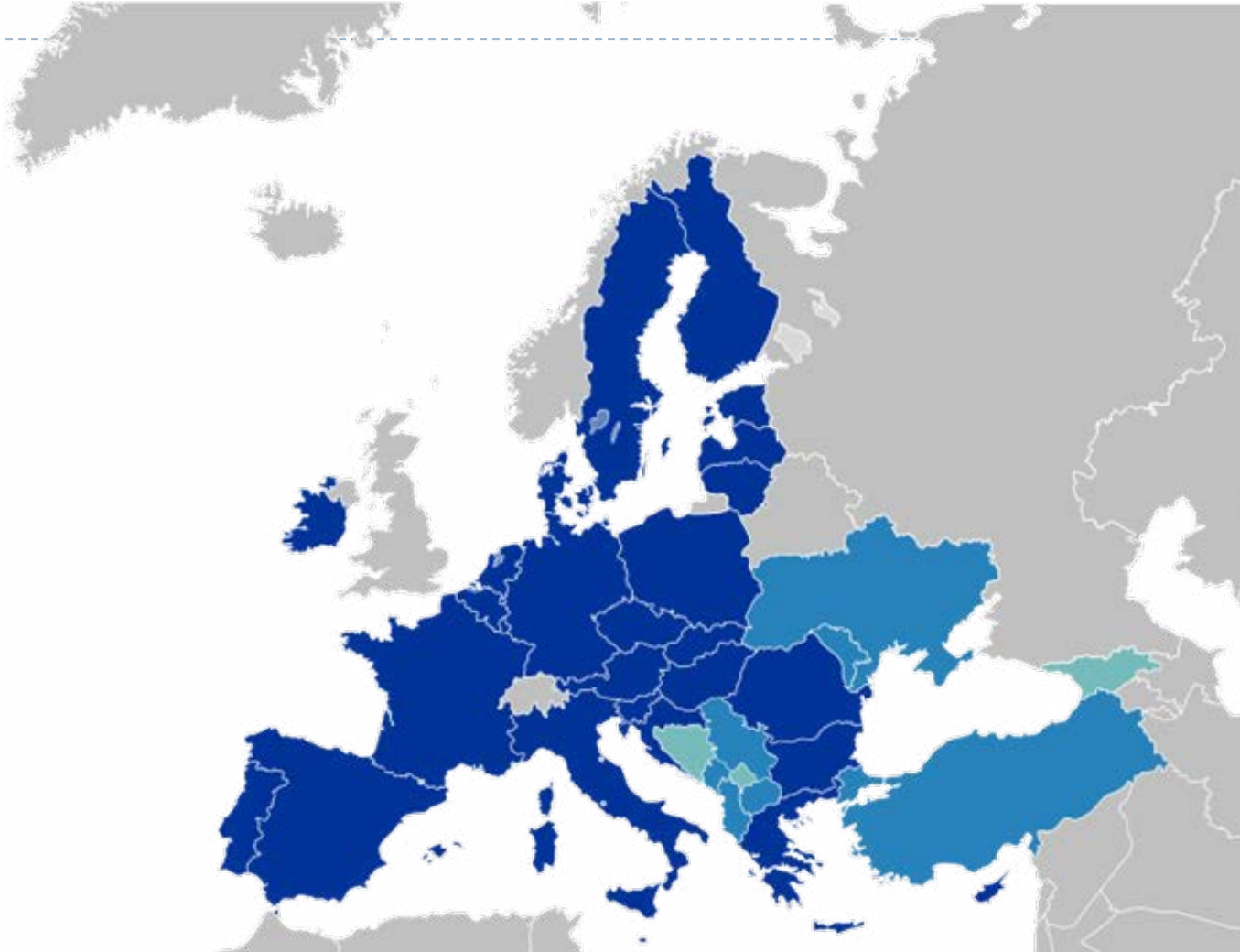


# Current Membership

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- ❑ Ongoing expansion is a major characteristic of the European Union – currently 27 members
  - ❑ Began with 6 members in 1957: France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg
  - ❑ Early 1970s: Denmark, UK, and Ireland
  - ❑ 1981: Greece
  - ❑ 1986: Portugal and Spain
  - ❑ 1995: Austria, Finland, and Sweden
  - ❑ 2004: Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia
  - ❑ 2007: Bulgaria and Romania
  - ❑ 2013: Croatia
  - ❑ 2020: UK leaves
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Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EU11date\\_countries\\_map.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EU11date_countries_map.svg)

# Under Consideration for Membership

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- ❑ North Macedonia, Turkey\*, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina (Iceland dropped its bid in 2015)
- ❑ Turkey is controversial (low GDP, history of authoritarian governments, location in mostly Asia, Muslim population)



# EU's 5 Main Institutions

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- **European Council**
  - Made up of leaders of EU members (most powerful)
- **European Commission**
  - Seeks to uphold interests of the Union as a whole
- **Council of the European Union**
  - Represents the individual member states
- **European Parliament**
  - Represents EU's citizens and is directly elected by them
- **European Court of Justice**
  - Upholds the rule of European law





# The European Council

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- ❑ The most powerful part of the European Union
- ❑ Made up of the 27 heads of state/government
- ❑ Sets the political direction of the EU
- ❑ Adopts conclusions identifying issues to be addressed
- ❑ Usually meet at least twice every six months



# The European Parliament

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- ❑ Historically has not had a lot of legislative power
- ❑ 751 members directly elected once every 5 years
- ❑ Passes laws together with the Council of the EU based on EU Commission proposals
- ❑ Provides oversight of all EU actions
- ❑ Gained more power with the Lisbon Treaty (2007)



# European Court of Justice

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- ❑ Supreme court of the EU
- ❑ Has power of judicial review
- ❑ Meets in Luxembourg
- ❑ Interprets European law and its decisions may limit national sovereignty
- ❑ 28 judges, each nominated by different member states
- ❑ Cases are decided by simple majority



# Key Policies – Single Market

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- ❑ Creating and maintaining a single internal market
- ❑ Removal of tariffs/barriers
- ❑ Most professional licenses (doctors, hairdressers, pilots) accepted in all member states



# Key Policies – Monetary Policies

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- ❑ Union of monetary policy
- ❑ Control of money supply
- ❑ Power to set basic interest rates/fiscal policy is being passed from national banks/governments to the European Monetary Union and its central bank
- ❑ Common currency – EURO (except Sweden/UK)



# Key Policies – Agriculture

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- ❑ Common Agriculture Policy
- ❑ Almost half of EU's budget goes to this policy
- ❑ Goal is to modernize inefficient farms so they can compete
  - ❑ Farm subsidies
  - ❑ Rural development projects



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## **Case Study:**

### **To what extent should the EU amend its policies to better address systemic racial discrimination?**

In this simulation, you will be divided into teams of 2-3 representatives of member states of the EU. Your goals will be to propose legislation to the European Commission that will address additional forms of systemic racism and/or other forms of discrimination.

## **Background**

The European Union contains several articles within several treaties that address the issue of racial and ethnic discrimination. For example, Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union states that:

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU states that:

Without prejudice to the other provisions of the Treaties and within the limits of the powers conferred by them upon the Union, the Council, acting unanimously in accordance with a special legislative procedure and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

To address discrimination, the EU created the Racial Equality Directive, which ordered member states to create a specific body within their country to address discrimination in areas such as employment and housing. This directive was adopted unanimously by all EU member states in 2000.

However, many have argued that it is time for legislation to be introduced into the EU to amend policies to address other forms of racial and ethnic discrimination, in particular forms of discrimination that may be systemic in nature. For example, many argue that the EU needs to take stronger steps to address racial and ethnic intimidation by police and racial bias within the criminal justice system of many EU countries. Other argue that the EU needs to specifically address the specific discrimination that women of color living in member states face.



(More information can be found [here](#))

## **Resources**

Use these sites to get a better understanding of the Racial Equality Directive:

[Text of the Racial Equality Directive](#)

[Handbook on the Racial Equality Directive](#)

This PDF gives you an overview of the areas of discrimination currently covered by the Racial Equality Directive and methods to address them.

[EU Anti-Discriminatory Frameworks: Module One](#)

This website gives you an overview of the history and scope of the Racial Equality Directive as well as attempts to amend it since 2000.

Use these sites to begin crafting resolutions

[European Commission Memo on Racial Equality Framework](#)

This memo outlines problems European Commission has determined with the current the Racial Equality Framework

[Addressing Possible Gaps in the Racial Equality Framework](#)

This report by Fair Trials, a non-governmental organization that serves as a watchdog around criminal justice issues, identifies several issues that are not sufficiently addressed under the current Racial Equality Framework.

[EU Anti-racism Action Plan:](#)

This report details steps that the European Commission has proposed to address systemic racism in the wake of the global racial reckoning that followed the George Floyd protests in 2020.



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