

## **Meet the EU Lesson Plans**

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MeetEU 2022

These lesson plans are geared towards 9-12 grade students to explore what is the European Union and how the different components of it operate. I have tried to include as many links and supplemental materials as possible. I have provided ideas for assessments. Each lesson is based on a 55 minute class period.

### **Introduction to EU**

*Inquiry:* Ask the students what they know about the EU.

Can they name any countries?

Why did the countries combine into one union?

Can they identify the EU on a map?

Introduce the European Union with the attached [powerpoint](#).

Vocabulary: democracy, rule of law, parliament

For more information on the rule of law used by the European Parliament use this link to an infographic: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20180222STO98434/rule-of-law-concerns-how-the-eu-can-act-infographic>

Use the powerpoints to initiate classroom discussion and provide information. Use the handouts to focus on specific parts of the idea of working together for business, travel and law making.

Additional links:

Conditions for EU membership: [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership_en)

Brief history of the EU: [https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/history-the-treaties-of-rome\\_V001-0011\\_ev](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/history-the-treaties-of-rome_V001-0011_ev)  
<https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-in-12-lessons/en/#chap03-title>  
[https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/law-enforcement-cooperation\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/law-enforcement-cooperation_en)

**Activity suggestions:**

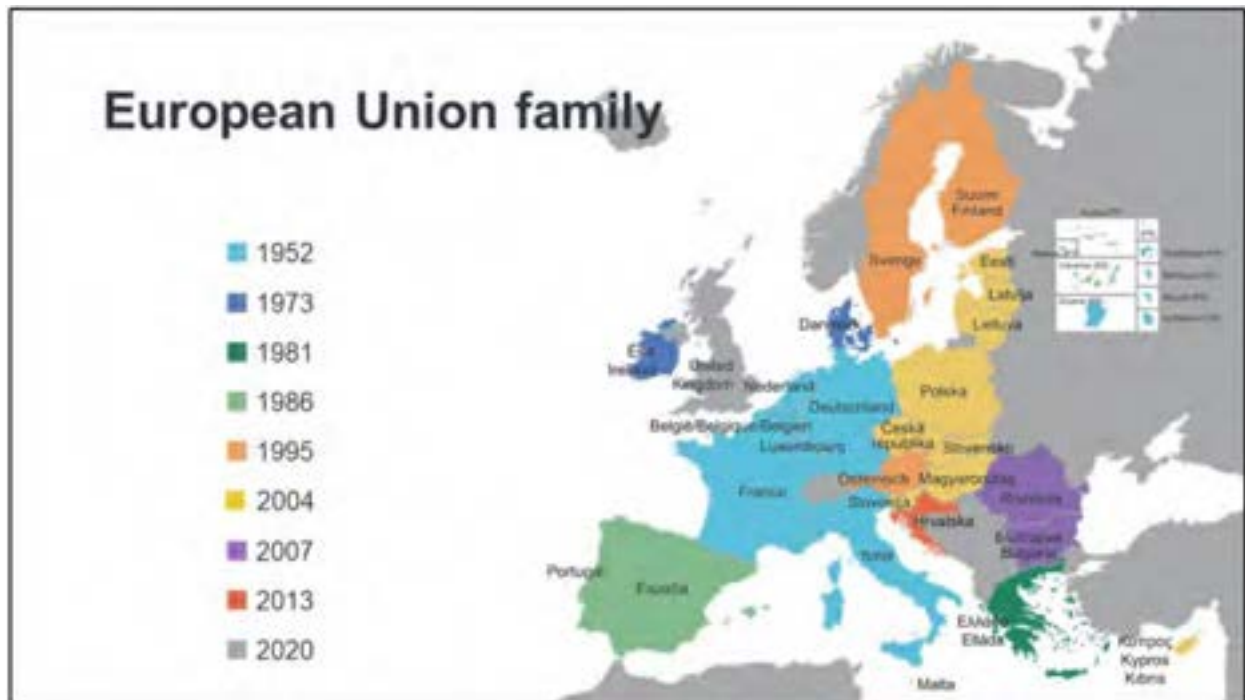
Create a map of the EU countries

Write a short essay showing an understanding of what the EU is and why it exists.

What is the Schengen Zone and why is it important.

On this website they provide complete instructions on simulation activities.

## Handout # 1 : Explaining the EU



- **The European project was created to reconcile old enemies and provide a structure to prevent future conflicts**

- There were 8 waves of enlargement, from 6 to 28 Member States.

- 5 current candidates: Albania, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey

- Potential future candidates: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo and Ukraine

- The Copenhagen criteria- *what it takes to become an EU Member state*:

- **political**: stability of institutions guaranteeing:
  - Democracy,
  - the rule of law,
  - human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- **economic**: a functioning market economy and the capacity to:
  - Cope with competition and market forces;
  - administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the acquis and ability to take on the all obligations
- 

- Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein participate directly in the single market via the *European Economic Area*.



\*Switzerland does so via 120 bilateral agreements.

- In June 2016, the UK voted in a referendum to leave the European Union; transitional period expired on 31 December 2020. *Brexit*

The ABC's of the E U Institutions. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20130905STO18726/key-facts-about-the-eu-institutions-infographic>

A visual guide to Europe's Member states: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/a-visual-guide-to-europes-member-states/>

**Handout # 2 What is the EU Economic Zone and the Euro?**

The European Economic Area, abbreviated as EEA, consists of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and three countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; excluding Switzerland).

The EEA originated on 1 January 1994. It seeks to strengthen trade and economic relations between the contracting parties and is mainly concerned with the four important factors of the market within this region.

- the free movement of goods
- Free movement of people
- Free movement of services
- Free movement of capital (financial funds).

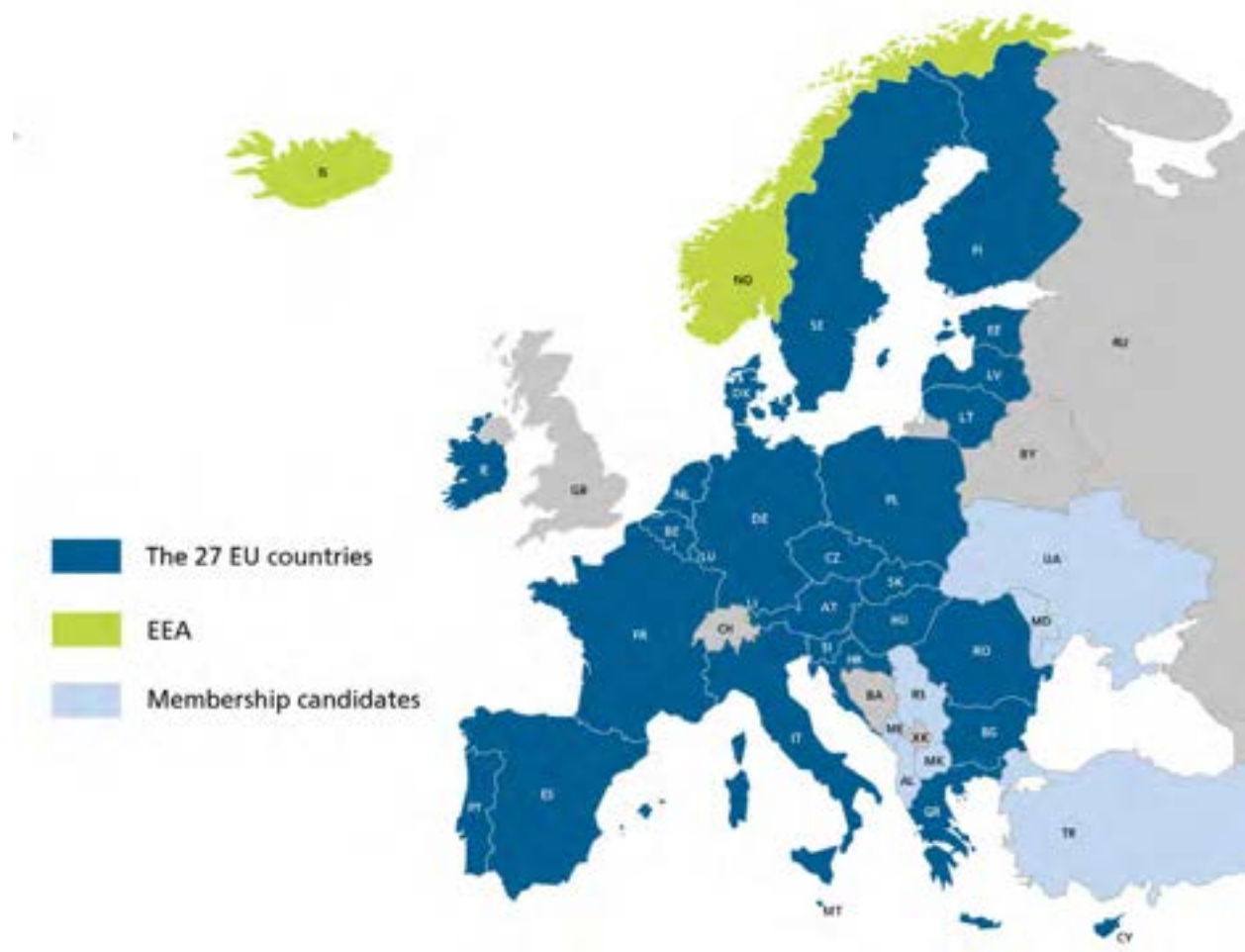
The availability of comparable statistical data is considered as relevant to the four freedoms and is therefore included in the agreement. This means that participants in the EEA share data with one another that is important to the success of the EEA and helpful to free trade.

What are some examples of each of the components?

Why is free trade important?

Why might some countries (Switzerland particularly) might not want to be a part of the EEA?

Why might countries want to be a part of the EEA but not part of the EU?



What is the Euro and how does it work?

The euro is the single currency shared by 19 of the 28 Member States of the European Union. It came into use for non-cash transactions in 1999 and for all payments in 2002, when euro notes and coins were issued.

New Member States are expected to adopt the euro once they meet the necessary criteria. In the long run, virtually all EU countries should join the euro area.

The euro gives consumers in Europe considerable advantages.

- Travelers are spared the cost and inconvenience of changing currencies.
- Shoppers can directly compare prices in different countries.
- The European Central Bank ensures price stability.
- The euro has become a major reserve currency, alongside the US dollar.



Why might some countries not want to use the Euro as their currency?

### Handout # 3 - Schengen Area



The border-free Schengen Area guarantees free movement to more than 400 million EU citizens, along with non-EU nationals living in the EU or visiting the EU as tourists, exchange students or for business purposes (anyone legally present in the EU). Free movement of persons enables every EU citizen to travel, work and live in an EU country without special

formalities. Schengen underpins this freedom by enabling citizens to move around the Schengen Area without being subject to border checks.

Today, the Schengen Area encompasses most EU countries, except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and Romania. However, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania are currently in the process of joining the Schengen Area and already applying the Schengen acquis to a large extent. Additionally, also the non-EU States Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein have joined the Schengen Area.

## Freedom and security for travelers

The Schengen provisions abolish checks at EU's internal borders, while providing a single set of rules for controls at the external borders applicable to those who enter the Schengen area for a short period of time (up to 90 days).

The Schengen area relies on common rules covering in particular the following areas:

- crossing the EU external borders, including the types of visa needed,
- harmonization of the conditions of entry and of the rules on short stay visas (up to 90 days),
- cross-border police cooperation (including rights of cross-border surveillance and hot pursuit),
- stronger judicial cooperation through a faster extradition system and the transfer of enforcement of criminal judgments,
  - the [Schengen Information System \(SIS\)](#)

How is the Schengen Area beneficial to the EU?

How might the Schengen area be helpful to you when planning a trip to Europe? What does it mean for Americans?

Should the United States create an area similar to the Schengen to allow freedom of movement between the United States, Mexico and Canada? Why or why not?



## **Handout # 4 EU Parliament**

Accompanying slides:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jMwD3loUPRL2PdIYXo1NyftH\\_yIHd7qxgmiC7LQ2HVo/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jMwD3loUPRL2PdIYXo1NyftH_yIHd7qxgmiC7LQ2HVo/edit?usp=sharing)

- European Commission prepares legislative proposals on its own initiative or at the request of other EU institutions or countries, or following a citizens' initiative, often after public consultations.
- The final proposal is sent simultaneously to the European Parliament, Council and national parliaments.
- President of the European Parliament refers the proposal to a parliamentary committee, which appoints a rapporteur who is responsible for drawing up a draft report with amendments to the proposed text.
- The committee votes on this report and any amendments to it tabled by other members.
- The European Parliament then discusses and votes on the legislative proposal in plenary based on the committee report and amendments.
- Parliament can accept the proposal without any changes or make amendments. In rare cases the President can request the Commission withdraw its proposal. Parliament's 1st reading position is forwarded to the Council.
- Council can: accept the EP position, in which case the legislative act is adopted; or adopt changes to Parliament's position, leading to a Council's first reading position, which is sent to the Parliament for a 2nd reading.

Legislative procedure:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/external/html/legislativeprocedure/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/external/html/legislativeprocedure/default_en.htm)

Vocabulary:

Parliament	multilingualism
Plenary	rapporteur
MEP	legislative
Supranational organization	
Democratic	

### **Video questions:**

Why are there 3 locations for parliamentary meetings?

How do members vote?

How are the parliamentary participants elected?

How often are elections held?

## **Multilingualism in the EU Parliament**

The European Union has always seen its *great diversity of cultures and languages as an asset*. Multilingualism is the reflection of this cultural and linguistic diversity. Multilingualism makes the European institutions more accessible and transparent for all citizens of the Union, which is essential for the success of the EU's democratic system.

The European Parliament differs from the other EU institutions in its obligation to ensure the highest possible degree of multilingualism. Every European citizen has the right to stand for election to the European Parliament. It would be unreasonable to require MEPs to have a perfect command of one of the more frequently used languages, such as French or English. The right of each Member to read and write parliamentary documents, follow debates and speak in his or her own language is expressly recognised in Parliament's Rules of Procedure. All EU citizens must be able to read legislation affecting them in the language of their own country. As a co-legislator, the European Parliament also has a duty to ensure that the linguistic quality of all laws it adopts is flawless in all official languages.

Europeans are entitled to follow the Parliament's work, ask questions and receive replies in their own language, under European legislation.

## **Translation**

The European Parliament's translation service enables multilingual written and electronic communication in all official languages of the European Union. It has a crucial role in ensuring the transparency of the legislative and budgetary process of the EU and in bringing the EU closer to its citizens.

The Directorate-General for Translation employs approximately 1140 staff, among them more than 600 translators, and is one of the biggest employers of its kind in the world.

## **Interpretation**

The main task of the European Parliament's interpreters is to render orally the speeches given by MEPs faithfully and in real time into all the official languages. Interpreting services are provided for all multilingual meetings organized by the official bodies of the institution.

The European Parliament's Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences employs approximately 270 staff interpreters and has at its disposal a reserve of some 1500 external accredited interpreters whom it calls on very regularly as required to cover its needs.

## **Multilingualism - Legislative Acts**

The legislation adopted by the European Parliament affects over 447 million people in 27 countries and 24 official languages: it must be identical and as clear as possible in all the languages. Verifying the linguistic and legislative quality of the texts is the job of Parliament's lawyer-linguists.

Parliament's lawyer-linguists ensure, throughout the legislative procedure, the highest possible quality of legislative texts in all EU languages. In order to guarantee that Parliament's political will is rendered in high quality legislative texts the lawyer-linguists are involved at all stages of the legislative procedure.

The work is carried out by a team of 75 lawyer-linguists. In particular they:

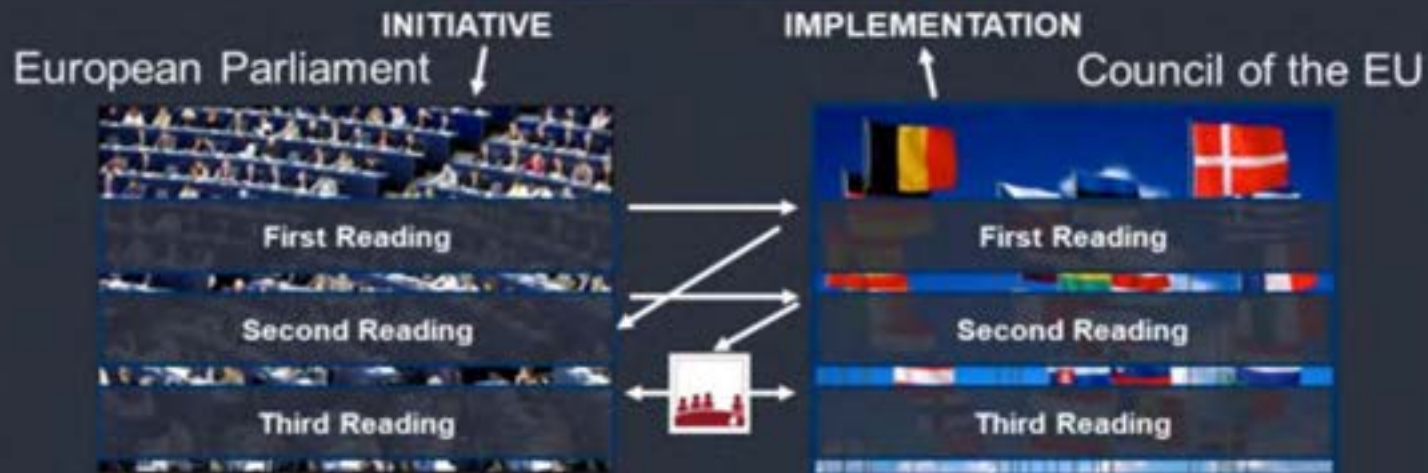
- provide Members and committee secretariats with drafting and procedural advice from the initial drafting of texts up to final adoption in plenary;
- prepare and publish legislative texts for adoption by Parliament in committee and in plenary, ensuring the highest quality of all the different language versions of the amendments in the reports and the smooth course of the procedure;
- are responsible for the technical preparation of amendments tabled for the plenary and for the publication of all the texts adopted on the day of the plenary vote;
- finalise legislative acts together with the lawyer-linguists of the Council.



# European Parliament

# How are EU Laws agreed?

European Commission

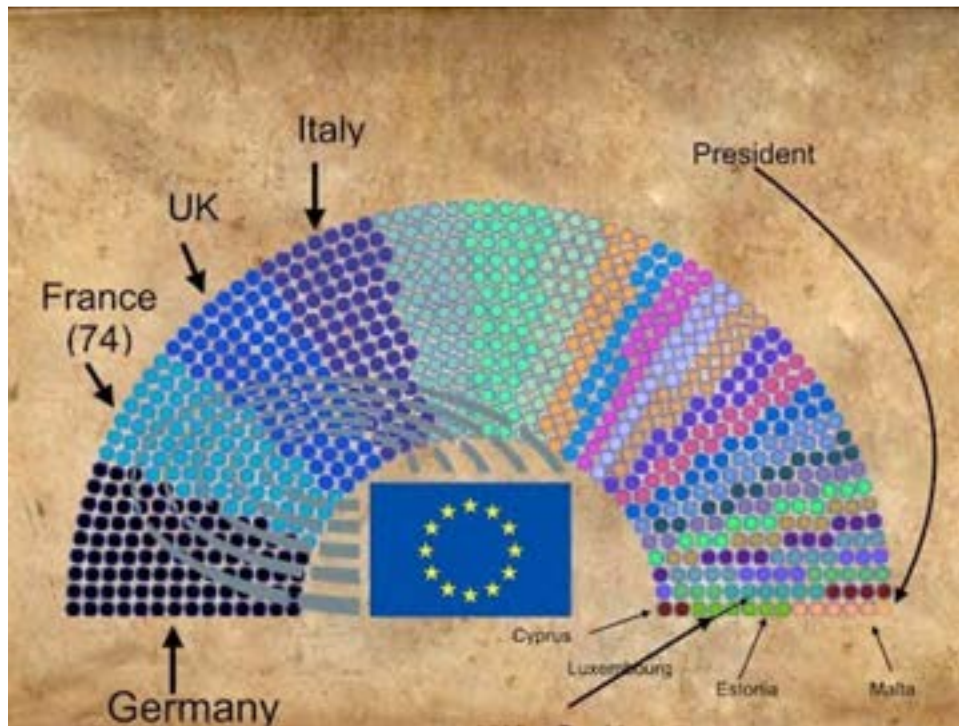




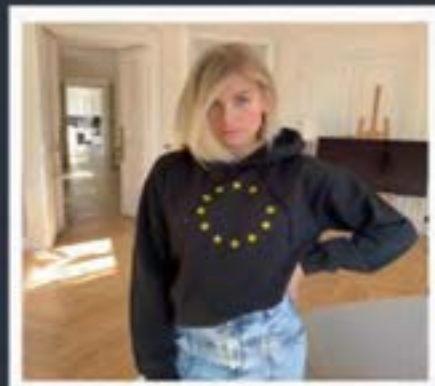
# The European Parliament



# Short video explaining how the EU Parliament works.



# European elections take place every 5 years



@dianazurloewen  
@xeniaadonts



Facebook: King Content creator: Daniela Wenzel, also on European Social Media



# 2019 European election turnout by country (%)



# 705 Seats

96		Germany
79		France
76		Italy
59		Spain
52		Poland
33		Romania
29		Netherlands
21		Belgium
21		Czech Republic

21		Greece
21		Hungary
21		Portugal
21		Sweden
19		Austria
17		Bulgaria
14		Denmark
14		Finland
14		Slovakia

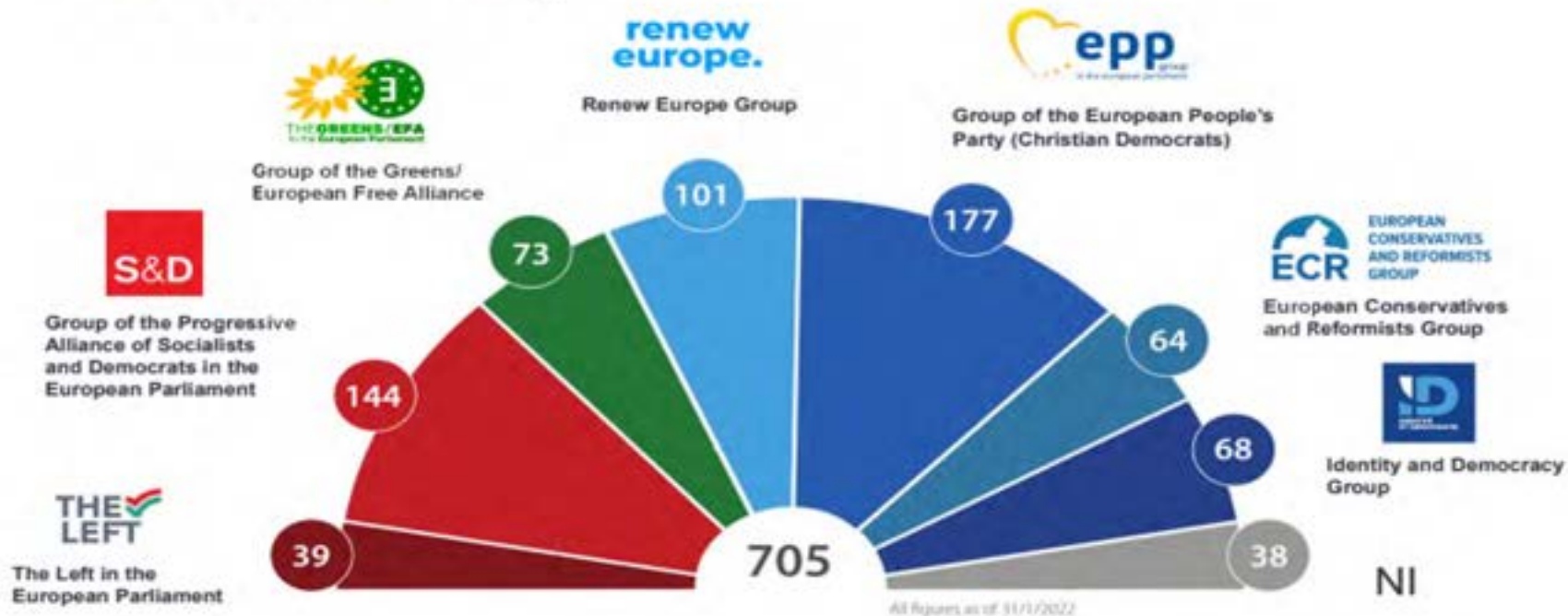
13		Ireland
12		Croatia
11		Lithuania
8		Latvia
8		Slovenia
7		Estonia
6		Cyprus
6		Luxemburg
6		Malta



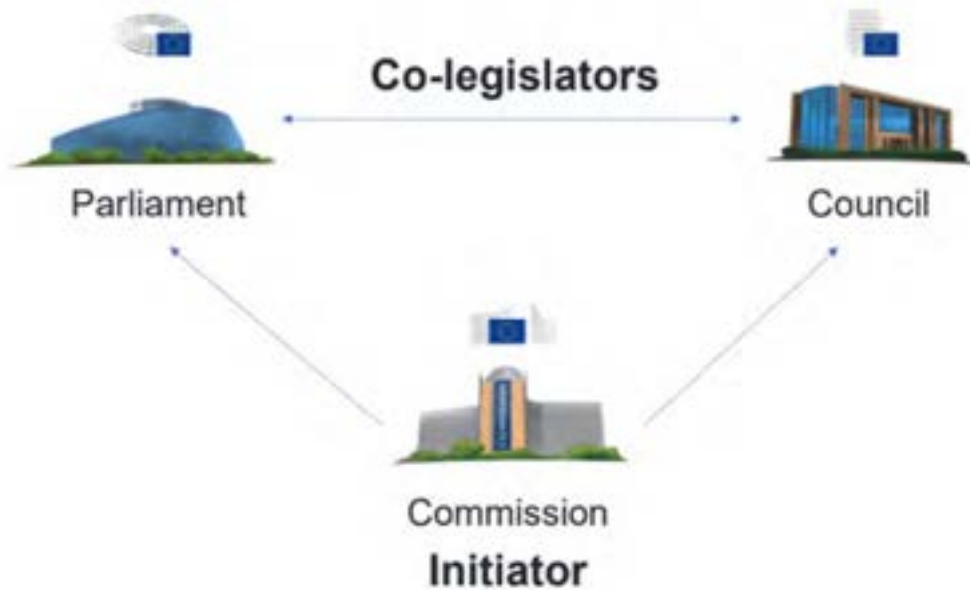


**POLITICAL  
GROUPS**

# Political Groups



# How are EU Laws agreed?



## The European Parliament declares climate emergency

Press Releases [Environment](#) [EU](#) 29-11-2019 - 11:09

## Parliament supports European Green Deal and pushes for even higher ambitions

Press Releases [Environment](#) [EU](#) 15-01-2020 - 13:41

## EU Climate Law: MEPs confirm deal on climate neutrality by 2050

Press Releases [Environment](#) [EU](#) 24-06-2021 - 13:04

### Fit for 55: MEPs want stricter rules for member states' greenhouse gas emissions

[EU](#) 16-05-2022

MEP's call for stricter regulation of greenhouse gas emissions in member states including fewer options to exceed quotas.

### Fit for 55: New EU carbon sinks goal will increase 2030 reduction target

[EU](#) 16-05-2022

MEP's agree to increase the EU carbon sinks target for land use, land use change and forestry sector (LULUCF) which would de facto increase EU 2030 greenhouse gas reduction target to 57 %.

### Fit for 55: MEPs back CO2 emission standards for cars and vans

[EU](#) 10-05-2022

Environment Committee MEPs are in favour of a pathway towards zero-emission road mobility in 2035 for new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles.

### Fit for 55 in 2030: MEPs put forward demands on Emissions Trading System reform

[EU](#) 16-05-2022

To incentivise industries to further reduce their emissions and invest in low-carbon technologies, the Emissions Trading



# Multilingualism in EU Parliament



# MULTILINGUALISM IN THE EU

Debating Europe

EUROPEAN CITIZENS AND LANGUAGES

24  
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

60+  
INDIGENOUS REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

40  
MILLION SPEAKERS

INCLUDING

- Catalan
- Basque
- Frisian
- Yiddish
- Saami
- Welsh

COUNTRIES WHERE CITIZENS DO NOT SPEAK ANY FOREIGN LANGUAGE

65% HUNGARY  
62% ITALY  
61% UK, PORTUGAL  
60% IRELAND

54% are able to read a second official EU language

1 ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

25% are able to speak at least

2 ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

10% are conversant in at least

3 ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

FOREIGN LANGUAGES SPEAKERS IN TOP 10

38% speak French  
11% speak German  
12% speak Spanish  
5% speak Italian  
7% speak English

How many languages do you speak?

Why is multilingualism so important in the EU?

How does this compare with the U.S. ?





Welcome to the  
European Union



# What is the European Union?

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The European Union is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. It was created to promote peace and shared values within Europe.



## EU Values

Human Dignity

Freedom

Democracy

Equality

The Rule of Law

Respect for Human Rights  
Including the rights of minorities



## Why the European Union?



**27**

member  
states



**446**

million  
citizens



**24**

official  
languages



**Peace**  
**Shared values**  
**Freedom,  
security and  
justice**  
**Economic and  
social solidarity**



Changing times, same values – values that need to be defended but within and beyond EU borders

- The EU is a community of values, not only an internal market of 440 million consumers.
- It 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 Minorities.
- Fundamental rights apply to all people in the EU, no matter their status or origin. Some of these freedoms are as old as Europe: life and liberty, thought and expression. But others have had to be redefined to keep pace with the times. Protecting personal data or prohibiting human cloning were far from the minds of the first elected MEPs, some four decades ago.
- The Parliament defends democracy and the rule of law at the European level.

Video : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeXgDZ9SSoA>

# Institutions of the European Union

**7**  
institutions



**2**  
advisory bodies

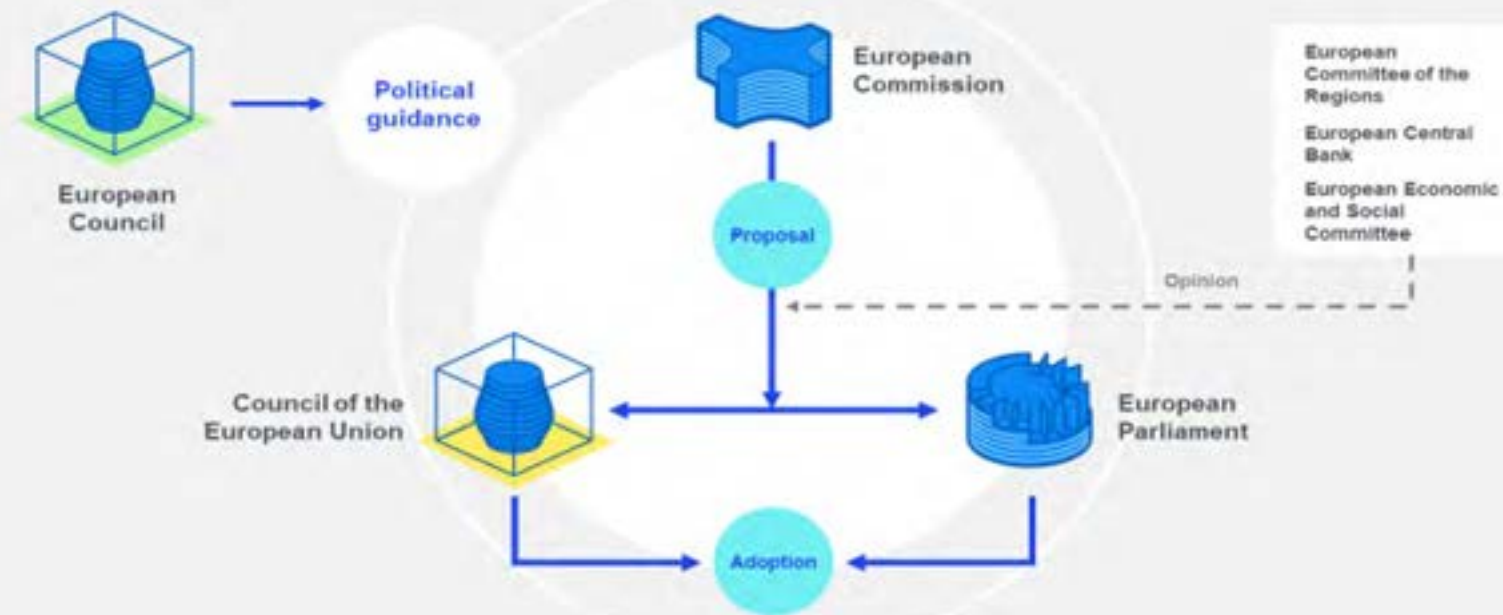


# How does the European Union work?

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# Institutions of the European Union



The views that are being presented are those of the speaker and not of the Council of the EU







The house of the  
member states

The views that are being expressed are those of the speaker and not of the Council of the EU



# The European Council and the Council

Two EU institutions under the same roof



## European Council

Sets the EU's political agenda



## Council of the EU

Negotiates and votes on legislation



## What is the difference between the **European Council** and the **Council of Europe**?



47 member states,  
including all 27 EU  
countries

All members signed  
up to the European  
Convention on Human  
Rights

Based in  
Strasbourg,  
France





## The Heads of State or Government meet as the **European Council**



The green, but also being explained are those of the speaker and not of the Council of the EU



## The European Council sets the EU's overall political direction



Defines overall **political direction** and **priorities**



**Mostly decides by consensus**, but by qualified majority for a limited number of decisions e.g. in:

- Electing its President
- Appointing the High Representative
- Establishing the list of Council configurations



Exercises **no legislative functions**





**The Council  
of the EU  
is made up  
of ministers**



The views that are being expressed are those of the speaker and not of the Council of the EU





## Role of the Council of the EU

**Negotiate and adopt EU laws,**  
*in most cases with the European Parliament*

**Adopt the EU budget,** *with the European Parliament*

**Coordinate member states' policies**

- economic and fiscal policies
- education, culture, youth and sport
- employment policy

**Develop the EU's common foreign and security policy**  
*Guidelines set by the European Council*

**Conclude international agreements**



## One Council – Ten configurations



The Council  
of the European  
Union



General Affairs



Foreign Affairs



Transport,  
Telecommunications  
and Energy



Economic and  
Financial Affairs



Competitiveness



Environment



Employment, Social  
Policy, Health and  
Consumer Affairs



Justice and Home Affairs



Education, Youth,  
Culture and Sport



Agriculture and Fisheries



## National experts meet in the Council working parties

150+ working parties, for example:



Atomic Questions



Law of the Sea



Transatlantic Relations



Financial Services



Terrorism



Agricultural Products



Company Law



Research



Aviation



Environment



# The rotating presidency of the Council

## Each member state in turn every 6 months

18-month rolling programme of **three** successive presidencies

currently: **FR, CZ, SE** until 30 June 2023 followed by **ES, BE, HU**



## ROLE OF THE ROTATING PRESIDENCY

### Three core functions:

- Organises, prioritises and plans
- Negotiates
- Communicates

### Chairs:

- Council configurations except Foreign Affairs
- Coreper I and II
- Committees and working groups, with some exceptions




*Framed by plans, rules and previous actions*





Different levels of economic participation within the EU.



# THE SCHENGEN AREA

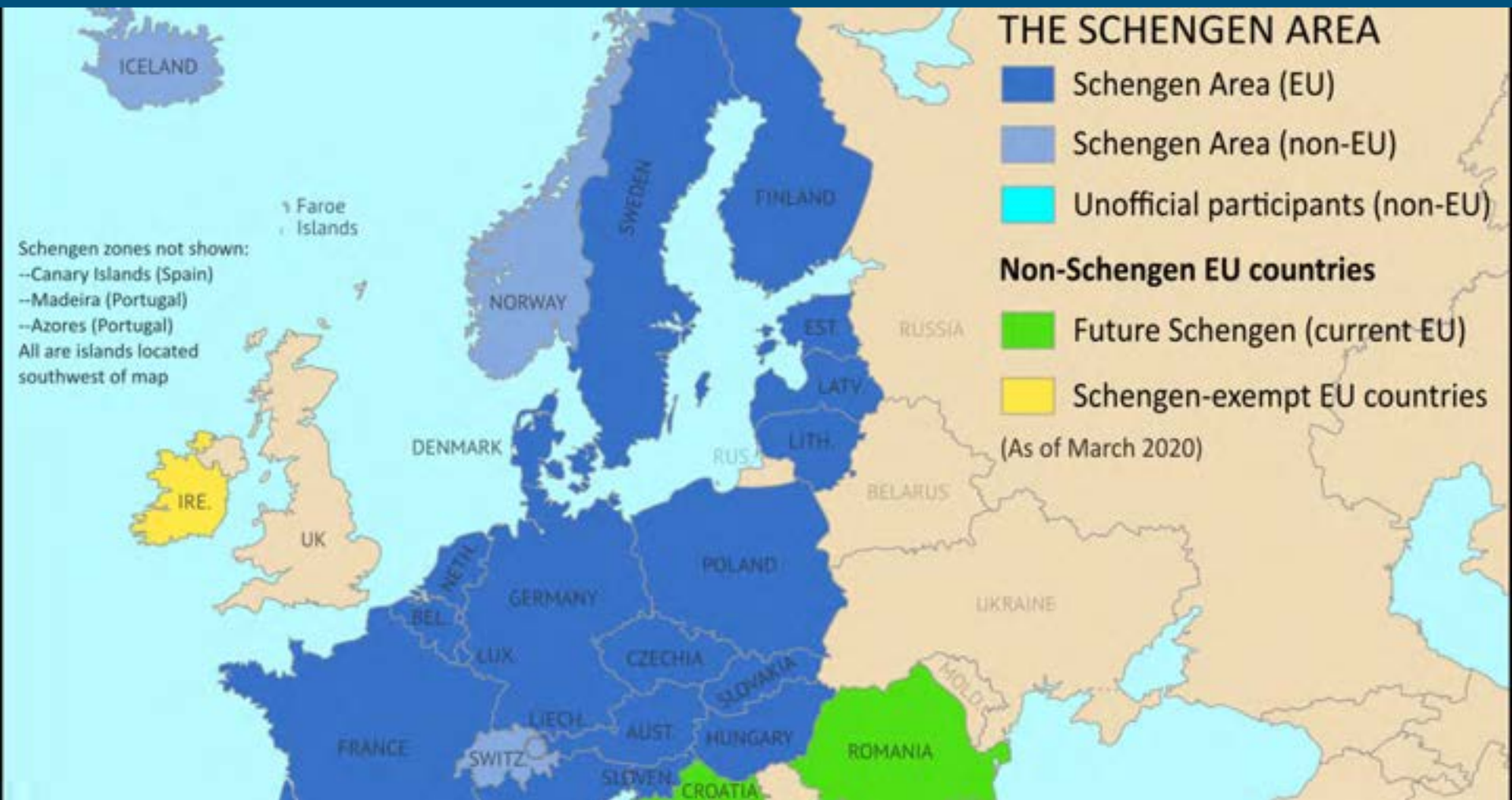
-  Schengen Area (EU)
-  Schengen Area (non-EU)
-  Unofficial participants (non-EU)

## Non-Schengen EU countries

-  Future Schengen (current-EU)
-  Schengen-exempt EU countries

(As of March 2020)

Schengen zones not shown:  
--Canary Islands (Spain)  
--Madeira (Portugal)  
--Azores (Portugal)  
All are islands located southwest of map



# Multilingualism in the EU.

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Speeches are interpreted  
in **real time** during plenary  
and meetings.



## Number of native speakers in millions

Estimates based on various publicly available sources

(\*L2\* figures show rough estimates of the number of non-native speakers)



# Summarization:

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The 27 EU countries together adopt common rules and legislation that affect all EU citizens. The 27 member states have shared values they act upon. Even though countries may have different opinions on how to solve problems, they want to solve them together. Most of the time they work on issues that cross borders and that we all have to deal with.

- The **Council of the European Union** is the institution where all EU countries are represented and work together to make decisions, together with the European Parliament.
- At the **European Council** the leaders of all EU countries define the EU's overall political direction and priorities together.

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**MEET EU**

*an initiative by*  
**UNC-Chapel Hill**  
**University of Pittsburgh**  
**Florida International University**



EUROPEAN UNION