TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION:
A CURRICULUM UNIT FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES*

BY

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The main <u>objective</u> of this curriculum unit and our consortium is to increase the knowledge and understanding of students who are not likely to major or minor in political science, international relations or European Studies and to integrate global and European Union perspectives into to curriculum to foster perceptive visions of the world beyond narrow political boundaries so that young men and women acquire global and areas studies competency skills to adapt and succeed in a dynamic and highly interdependent global economy as they pursue a career of their choice.

MAP OF EUROPE

MAP OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The forerunner to the European Union was formed by six countries in 1952 and now has 27 (after Brexit) members with a combined population of more than 500 million people.

Why should American students learn about Europe and the European Union?

Europe is our closest partner and ally and will remain so through the 21st century. No two other regions in the world are as deeply integrated as U. S. and the Europe.

Link to the: Transatlantic Economy 2022

https://www.uschamber.com/assets/images/key-findings.pdf#asset:193209@1

https://www.uschamber.com/assets/images/TE2022_Executive_summary.pdf#asset:193263@1

The European Union, initiated at the end of the Second World War, is one of the most dynamic regional organizations in the world. The EU, consisting of 27 member states today, is a new and exciting concept. It has characteristics of a country and an international organization; yet it does not definitively fit into either of these categories. Scholars and experts today are still searching for a term to precisely describe the nature of the EU. On an international scale, the European Union offers hope for a stable future. The Union has evolved since its creation and is continuing to evolve along with the rest of the global community.

There are many reasons, from security to political and economic to strategic. But before hand, you should know that it is not one way love but both EU and the U.S. need one another. Since the end of WWII, the U.S. has protected, Europe, help to rebuild, and with NATO the work continues until today.

Europe being a large market for export, constitutes a vital component of U.S. power.

In terms of military and strategy, Europe and U.S. together constitute a strong military force and the peacekeepers in our contemporary world. They cover each other backs and also deter one another to remain peaceful and allies. Ideologically, they have a common enemy: China and Russia. They also have common goal: world leadership.

A Brief History of the European Union

The European Union was built with the aim of ending frequent wars among neighboring countries following the Second World War. In 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) started uniting nations to achieve peace.

The six founding countries of the EU are:

- Belgium
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands

The Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, creating the European Economic Community, or a "common market." It was followed by a period of economic growth – a result of lowering trade restrictions among member states.

The EU experienced continued expansion ever since, with the fall of communism and the Berlin Wall supporting a closer-knit Europe. In 1993, the "Single Market" agreement was completed, allowing four types of freedoms – the movement of goods, services, people, and money.

As more members joined the EU, it grew from a community of six member states to twenty-eight and after Brexit has twenty-seven members.

In brief, the mission of EU and its members states are engaged around the world to promote peace, security and prosperity and the interests of the European citizens. To this end, the EU works to prevent and resolve conflicts, to foster resilient democracies to promote human rights and sustainable development and to bolster cooperative and rules based global order.

Link to European Union Country Profiles:

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
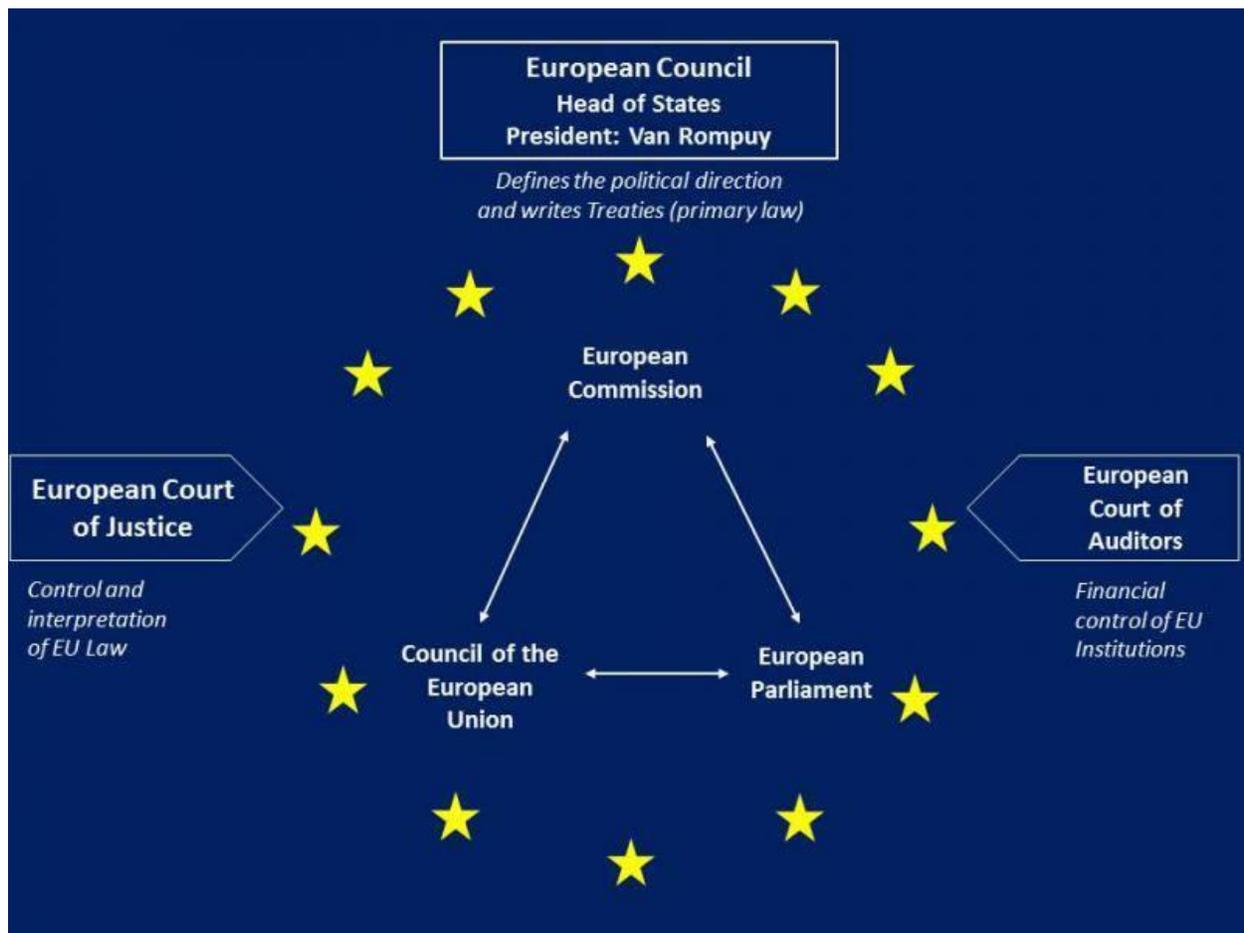
European Union Leadership:

The European Council: The members of the European Council are heads of state or government of the EU members states, the European Council President and the President of the European Commission. The European Council defines the EU's overall political direction and priorities traditionally by adopting conclusions. It does not negotiate or adopt EU laws.

https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/leadership/presidents_en

The EU can be characterized by both as an "intergovernmental government" and as a "Super national government". It is governed by four organizations that perform as executive, administrative, legislative, and judicial functions.

1. The Council of the European Union.
2. The European Commission.
3. The European Court of Justice.
4. The European Parliament.

The Council of European Union: The council of the European Union is composed of fifteen representatives, each selected directly and responsible to his or her home government. Representative country sends to a council meeting depends on the council's agenda. Each representative pursues the interests of his or her home government. The council is strong power reflecting. The reluctance of the member states surrender power to Brussels on issue they view as vital to the national interests.

The European Commission: The European commission is composed of twenty people selected for five-year term. The smaller EU countries each nominate one citizen to serve on the commission. The larger countries select two. Once these Individuals are in office, however their loyalty is to the EU itself not to their home countries. The commission's primary mandate is to be the "Guardian of the Treaties" The commission also acts as the EU's administrative branch and manages the EU's $ 100 billion annual budget. Its functions include the following:

a) It proposes legislation to he considered by the council.

b) It implements the provisions of the Treaty of Rome and other EU treaties.

c) It protects the EU's interest in political debates, particularly in council deliberations.
d) It has extensive powers in implementing the EU's customs union, the common agricultural policy, and the completion of the internal market.

The European Parliament: The parliament is composed of 624 members who are elected in every five years. And its membership is based on countries population. The three major responsibilities of the parliament are-

a) Legislative power.

b) Control over the budget.

c) Supervision of executive decision.

The commission prevents community legislation to the parliament. Parliament must approve the legislation before submitting it to the council for adoption. However, it has used its budgetary powers to enlarge its influence within the EU's governing institutions.

The European Court of Justice: The court of justice ensures consistent interpretation and application of EU treaties member states. EC institutions or individuals and companies may bring cases to the court. The court of justice is an appeal court for individuals. Firms and organizations fined by the commission for infringing of treaty laws. The court is required to hear every case referred to it even minor disputes over trade regulation and export issues.

The European External Action Service – EEAS - is a diplomatic service. It carries, out the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy to promote peace, development, security, and the interests of the European citizens around the world. It is led by the High Representative of for Foreign and Security Policy.

A LIST OF OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS

European Central Bank

European Court of Auditors (ECA)

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

European Committee of the Regions (CoR)

European Investment Bank (EIB)

European Ombudsman

European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)

European Data Protection Board

European Personnel Selection Office

Publications Office of the European Union

THE FLAG OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
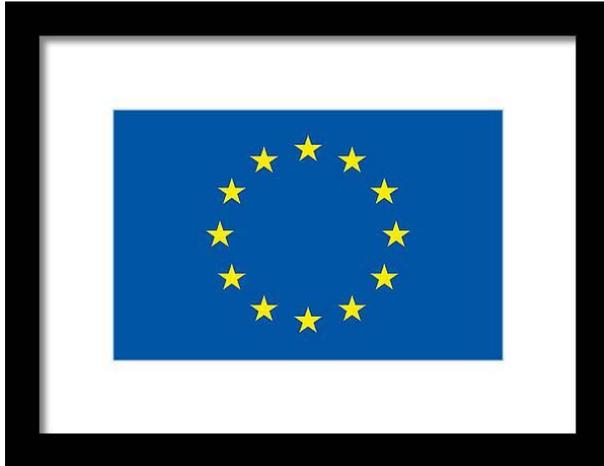
The 12 gold stars stand for the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe. The number of starts has nothing to do with the number of member countries.

THE EURO AND THE EUROZONE

The Euro (symbol: **€**; code: **EUR**) is the official currency of 19 out of the 27 member states of the European union. This group of states is known as Eurozone. The Euro is divided into 100 cents.

MAP OF THE EUROZONE
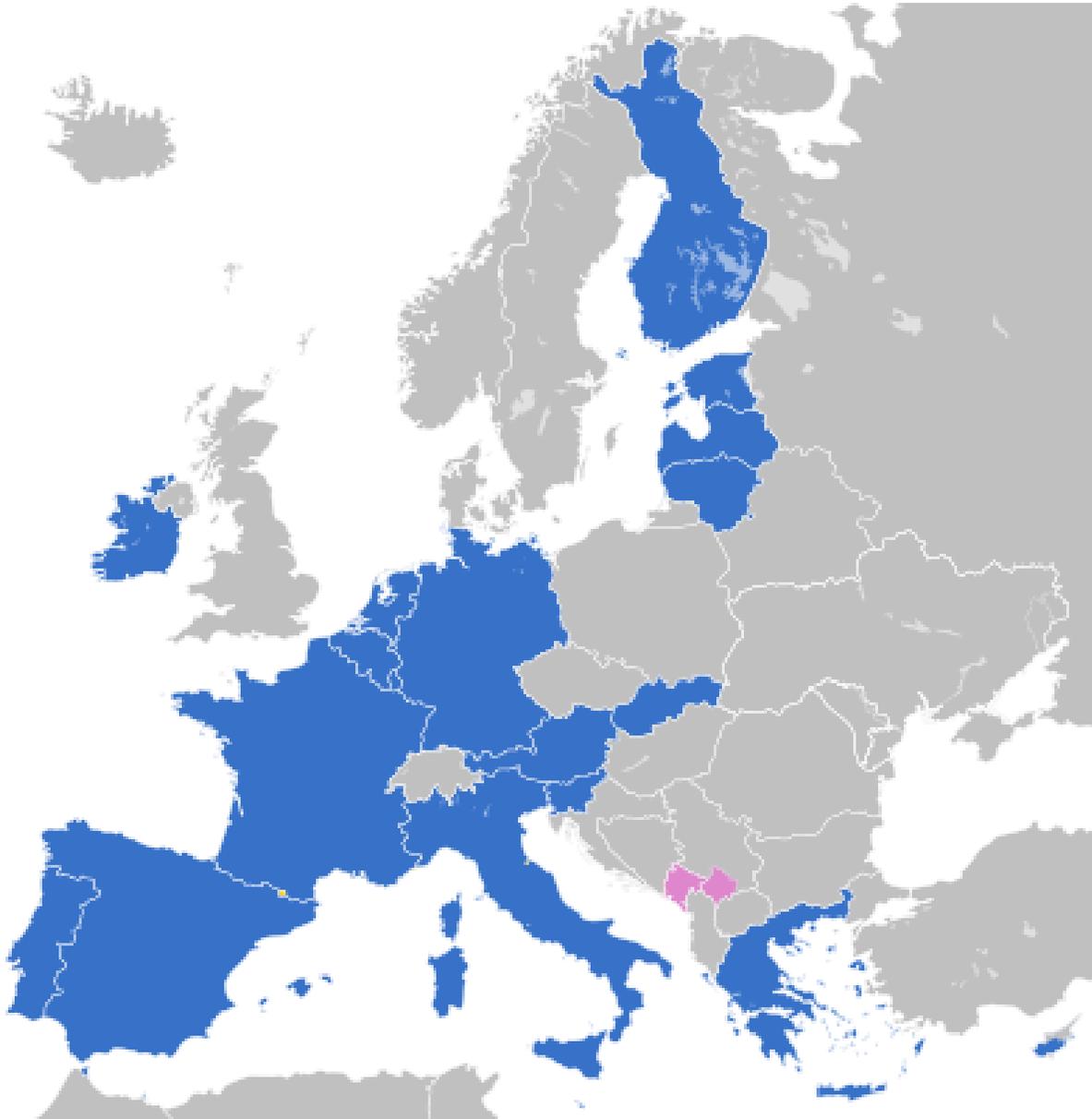
The monetary authority of the Eurozone is the Eurosystem.

EUROPEAN UNION A – Z* - https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary.html (from Glossary of Summaries – an official website of the European Union)

A for Accession Criteria

B for Banking Union

C for Council of the European Union

D for Democratic Deficit

E for Euro

F for Fundamental Rights

G for Green Economy

H for Human Rights

I for Intellectual Property

J for Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters

K for Kyoto Protocol

L for Legislative Acts

M for Member States

N for Non-Discrimination

O for Open Internet and Net Neutrality

P for President of the European Council/President of the European Commission

R for Rule of Law

S for Schengen (Agreement and Convention)

T for Transparency

U for Unanimity

V for Vocational Education

W for White Paper

X for

Y for Youth

Z for Zero Pollution

LINKS TO MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT

THE EUROPEAN UNION

An Introduction to the European Union

https://euro.indiana.edu/docs/outreach/lesson-plans/IntroEU_update.pdf

Basic Information About the European Union

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/basic-information-about-european-union_en

A Short Guide to EU

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/short-guide-eu_en

The EU and Me

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/eu-me_en

European Union – Key Terms

https://quizlet.com/171964775/european-union-key-terms-flash-cards/

Let's Explore Europe

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/lets-explore-europe-0_en

The Eu in a Nutshell

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/eu-nutshell_en

10 Global Climate Facts

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/10-global-climate-facts_en

25 Years of Single Market

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/25-years-single-market_en

A Day in the Life of People from Different European Countries

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/25-years-single-market_en

A Short Guide to Euro

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/25-years-single-market_en

For more info

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials_en

13 Advantages and Disadvantages of the European Union

https://vittana.org/13-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-the-european-union

Attitudes Towards EU are Largely Positive, Within and Outside the EU

https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/21/attitudes-toward-eu-are-largely-positive-both-within-europe-and-outside-it/

Five Challenges for the European Union

https://nationalinterest.org/feature/five-challenges-european-union-113006

What you need to Know About the U. k. Leaving the European Union

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887

The Euro

https://european-union.webnode.sk/euro/

The Way to the European Union

https://european-union.webnode.sk/enlargement/organisations-of-the-eu/

The people who helped to create the EU

https://european-union.webnode.sk/leaders/creators-european-union/

The Political Bodies of the European Union

https://european-union.webnode.sk/organs/

The European Union

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union

https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union

The European Union Explained

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O37yJBFRrfg

The European Union – Summary on a Map

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VCYHTGjr-U

A Brief History of the European Union

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgnXwrsMBUs

Views of the European Union – Pew Research

https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/the-european-union/

From World War II to Today's European Union

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRwZyDTdCAc

The euro was introduced in 1999 after decades of discussion and planning, with the intention of bringing unity, prosperity and stability to the continent. After two major wars in the first half of the 20th century, the argument for the euro and the broader European project was that common institutions would reduce the risk of war and crisis and provide diplomatic arenas for conflict resolution. The euro was a critical symbol of this unity.

MEET EU

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

EUROPEAN UNION