



**CivAct**



INSTITUTE  
OF RESEARCH & TRAINING  
ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

# THE EUROPEAN UNION



Co-funded by the  
Europe for Citizens Programme  
of the European Union

# EASY READING GUIDE OF EU PROCEDURES, VALUES AND RIGHTS

## Big numbers

4 million square miles

508 millions people

14,6 trillion EU GDP

43 thousands work in European Institutions

24 Official Languages

14 euros per month per person (its complicated)  
average contribution

Source [EU in Figures](#)



# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In 1951, a collaboration between 6 countries to coordinate production of Coal and Steel under a single authority and to create synergies within the US funded Marshall Plan

The idea was transformed from an economic union and as a way EU countries to trust each other to an expanding Political Union with the help of the 11 Founding Fathers of the EU



Konrad Adenauer (DE), Winston Churchill (GB), Alcide De Gasperi (IT), Paul-Henri Spaak (BE)

Politician who signed Treaty of Friendship and pushed EU states to come closer after the tragedy of the World Wars

Jean Monnet (FR) - Robert Schuman (DE) - Joseph Bech (LU), Walter Hallstein (DE), Johan Beyen (ND)

1950 Schuman Declaration created the EU Coal and Steel Community and the Common Market

Sicco Mansholt

Common Agricultural Policy (Self Sufficiency)

Paul- Henri Spaal

Treaty of Rome (1957) - Constitution of the EU

Altiero Spinelli

Maastricht Treaty (1992) - Constitution of the EU “Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union” was based on his Spinelli Plan

Source: [The founding Fathers of the EU](#)





# 28 European Union Member Countries



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

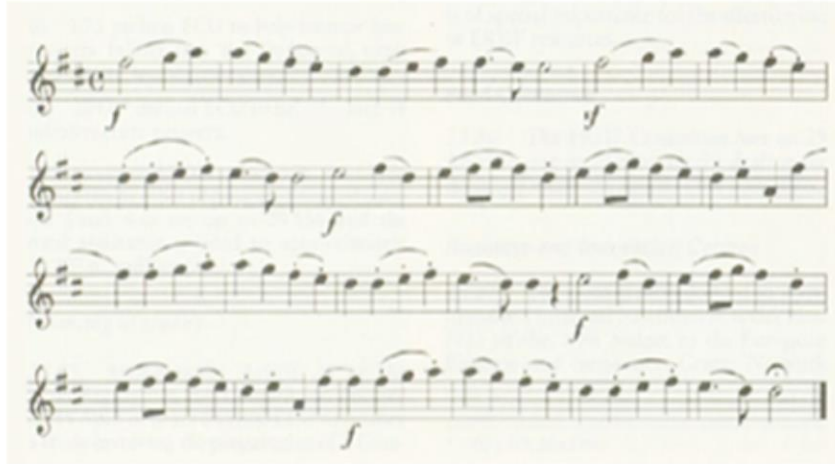


United Kingdom





The motto:  
United in diversity



The European anthem



The euro



The European flag



Europe Day,



# EUROPEAN COMMISSION



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# EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- ◉ **Role:** Promotes the general interest of the EU by proposing and enforcing legislation as well as by implementing policies and the EU budget
- ◉ **Members:** A team or 'College' of Commissioners, 1 from each EU country
- ◉ **President:** Jean-Claude Juncker
- ◉ **Year established:** 1958
- ◉ **Location:** Brussels
- ◉ The European Commission is the EU's **politically independent executive arm**. It is alone responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, and it implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU





# EUROPEAN COMMISSION

What does the Commission do?

- ◉ Proposes new laws
- ◉ Manages EU policies & allocates EU funding
- ◉ Enforces EU law
- ◉ Represents the EU internationally



# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



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# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**Role:** Directly-elected EU body with legislative, supervisory, and budgetary responsibilities

The MEPs are divided in the Parliament based on the Political Party they belong to, not their country of origin



# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament has 3 main roles:

- ✓ Legislative

Passing EU laws- together with the Council of the EU, based on European Commission proposals, deciding on international agreements, etc.

- ✓ Supervisory

Electing the Commission President and approving the Commission as a body, discussing monetary policy with the European Central Bank, questioning Commission and Council, Election observations, etc.

- ✓ Budgetary

Establishing the EU budget, together with the Council, approving the EU's long-term budget





# EUROPEAN COUNCIL



# EUROPEAN COUNCIL

- ◉ **Role:** Defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union
- ◉ **Members:** Heads of state or government of EU countries, European Commission President, High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy
- ◉ **President:** Donald Tusk
- ◉ **Location:** Brussels
- ◉ The European Council brings together EU leaders to set the EU's political agenda. It represents the highest level of political cooperation between EU countries.



# EUROPEAN COUNCIL

What does the European Council do?

- ◉ Decides on the EU's overall **direction** and political **priorities** – but *does not pass laws*.
- ◉ Deals with **complex or sensitive issues that cannot be resolved** at lower levels of intergovernmental cooperation
- ◉ Sets the EU's common foreign & security policy, taking into account EU strategic interests and defence implications
- ◉ Nominates and appoints candidates to certain high profile EU level roles, such as the ECB and the Commission



# THE REST OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS IN BRIEF

- ◉ Council of the European Union
- ◉ Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)
- ◉ European Central Bank (ECB)
- ◉ European Court of Auditors (ECA)
- ◉ European External Action Service (EEAS)
- ◉ European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- ◉ European Committee of the Regions (CoR)
- ◉ European Investment Bank (EIB)
- ◉ European Ombudsman
- ◉ European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)





# EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP



# NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Every state in the Union currently, has a definition of what makes a national citizen.

Most of them are based on history, religion, language, common characteristics, or rights of birth.

European Union as a collection of diverse populations and states is structure that exists upon and above the national social structure.

**It is therefore important that it does use qualifiers like religion, race, blood or language but more universal themes like human rights and the rule of law.**



# DEMOCRACY IN THE EU

The EU is governed in essence by a multiple representation of the member states

Elected national states heads appoint the EU commission's head and each get 1 commissioner, they have an formulating and tie-braker role as National Ministers in the EU council and a proportion of EU members of parliament



# DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN THE EU

Citizens can make their voices heard and influence decision making by

1. Requesting their own laws. The EU allows for proposal for a law to be presented for voting if 1 million signatories from 7 different countries in the EU
2. During the consultation process EU commission will seek the consultation of Civil Society Organizations across the EU





# HOW DOES THE EU MATTER IN MY PERSONAL LIFE

NATIONAL LAW IS SUBSERVANT TO THE EU LAW  
(which is why it is difficult to pass EU legislation)

Some examples

ABILITY TO STREAMLINE BASIC SERVICES FOR ALL OF  
EU (free roaming, no customs, health provision)

ABILITY TO MOVE AND LEARN EASILY

STRICT LAWS ON PRIVATE DATA

STRICT CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

ABILITY TO PROTECT ONESELF AGAINST

INFRINGMENT OF THE STATE AND BUSINESSES

ABILITY TO PROTECT ONE'S INTERESTS AGAINST

INFRINGEMENT OF THE STATE AND BUSINESSES



# HOW I CAN INFLUENCE EU PRACTICE

Mainly through Political Activism and Collaborative Actions i.e. **Civil Society Organizations**

These organizations can have

Create projects to address local issues (e.g. becoming Online Hate speech watchdogs)

Draft and Disseminate petitions on businesses, environmental, community rights violations

**The EU commission/parliament need this input in order to counteract the narrow interests of politicians in member states and business interests**



# MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

## MAIN LEGAL DIFFERENCE

### ASYLUM SEEKERS

MOVE DUE TO THREAD ON LIFE BECAUSE OF BELIEFS/RACE ETC.

### MIGRANTS

VOLUNTARY MOVE TO ESCAPE LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ETC.



# ASYLUM SEEKERS/REFUGEES/MIGRATION

National Issue

Dublin 3 regulation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEgezPFtm-k>





# RESOURCES

**How does the EU pass new laws?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8C0Kq7ioOpk>

**The Council (of the European Union) explained**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jZu0lUUAeM>

**The European Commission explained**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mE1rnOi8AFc>

**The European Parliament explained**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h2cwPKJRI8  
&t=112s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h2cwPKJRI8&t=112s)

**How much do you pay for the EU?**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2\\_BOd5lG2xQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_BOd5lG2xQ)

