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What is the European Project About?

A Toolkit for Place-based Learning

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Based on the Place-based Learning Toolkit: Who Were the Victims of the National Socialists?

What is the European Project About?

A Toolkit for Place-Based Learning

This Toolkit, *What is the European Project About?* invites you, students, to reflect what the European Union means to you, how it impacts your day-to-day, your community and our societies. It also encourages you to explore how and why the European Union has taken on its shape as we know it today, and, by looking at its history, think about what it could, or perhaps, *should* look like in the future.

To many of us, it may seem that the European Union has been there forever. We are used to travelling without border controls, to study in another EU country, to its currency, etc. but in fact, the European Union is quite a young and exceptional collaboration between countries. Its development is an ongoing process, also depending on the political will of its member states. *What is the European Union all about?* Some would say it is about peace and prosperity, and others would say it is about economic benefits. It may seem a simple question: *What is the European Project About?* But as soon as we dive a little deeper into it, one will notice that it is more complicated and a matter of perspective as well. There might even be multiple answers.

Considering the European project and its current avatar, the European Union, as a historical construct and belonging to the waves of change and continuity within European and global history, one realises that it is a dynamic organisation that adapts and must adapt to changing circumstances. It is part of our history as well as our future.

In this journey, you will dive into this question by creating your own **local history project** with your peers. In the process, you will discover what ignites your curiosity and what findings, ideas and reflections you would like to share within your community and a wider audience.

The Toolkit encourages you, **teachers**, to fully empower your students to be agents of their own learning journey and thus to become researchers of your local history. They will engage in active decision-making, teamwork, research, and co-creation. This process can be challenging. To support you and your students, this Toolkit offers a step-by-step guide on how to set up a local history project about the European Union. It also includes historical context, facts sheets, timeline and a list of resources about the history of the European project that can serve as a starting point for you and your students.

This learning experience is rooted in place-based learning pedagogy that encourages students to research the topic by exploring different places (e.g. museums, memorial sites, archives, and other sites of relevance) in their own locale. Depending on where you are located, there might be plenty of relevant places where your students can go to learn about the European Union. However, this might not be the case for everyone. Therefore, the Toolkit also includes a list of places across Europe that can be visited and also an overview of *what kind of* places you could visit. Organising a place-based learning project with your students may also come with logistical challenges, depending on the school infrastructure and framework you are working with. To help you on the

way, the Toolkit offers some tips and tricks on setting up a cooperation with different sites in your locale.

How to use the Toolkit?

This Toolkit offers different ideas, examples and historical background information for students and teachers to undertake a place-based learning local history project. If you are a teacher, you can scroll down to the sections Learning Objectives, A Place-Based Learning Local History Project, The Learning Journey and Building Blocks of a Local History Project. These sections introduce you to the methodology of place-based learning.

The Learning Journey provides a general guiding framework for a local history project. Please keep in mind that it is merely a way of guiding you and your students throughout the process. It is not necessary to strictly follow the order, and you are of course invited to use other frameworks of place-based learning that you already know.

Both you and your students can navigate to What is the European Project About?, Timeline of the European Project, Facts Sheets, and Places to Explore for historical background information and ideas on what places to visit. Keep in mind that the historical information sheet, the fact sheets and the timeline are only a **starting point**. They do not cover all the information about the European project. Rather, they provide an overview of and insight into the main events and driving factors behind the European project. Throughout the text, you will find several questions following each section that help your students to reflect and identify their research question(s).

If you are a student, you can also scroll down to Your Learning Journey. There, you will find the different steps of the learning journey that help you with implementing your local history project.

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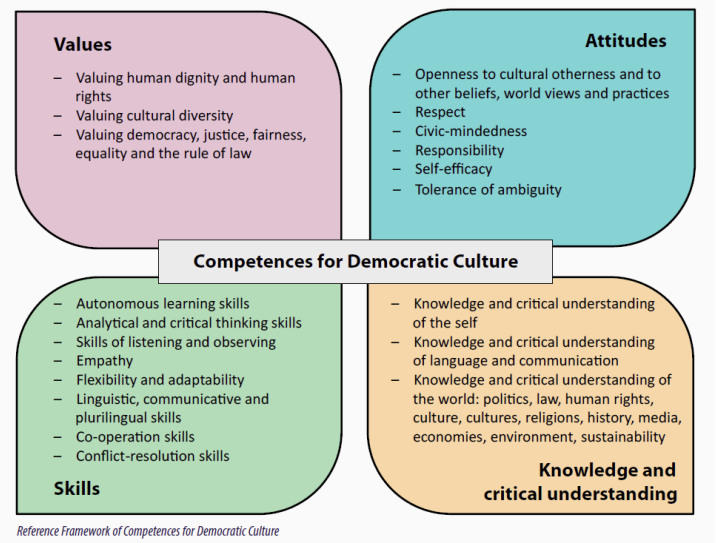
Learning Objectives

Creating a place-based local history project will allow your students to discover their strengths and empower them to improve a variety of skill sets related to autonomous learning, teamwork, and understanding the self in relation to one's surroundings. This learning journey is one example of how history education and student agency can help students develop core competencies, including critical thinking, communication, empathy and collaboration, that are necessary for them to thrive in a 21st-century world.[1]

It also aims to deepen students' understanding of the European project and its ongoing development and to encourage students to critically reflect on the founding ideas of the European Union. It invites students to think about what the European project is about or *should* be about. The project helps students to understand EU developments in the past and offers guidelines to reflect on current and future developments as well.

The activities and content of this Toolkit aim to foster mutual understanding by accepting, respecting, and cherishing a diversity of perspectives, e.g. cross-cultural and transnational awareness, and also promotes the development of skills related to fact-checking and research (media literacy).

Depending on the curriculum you are working with, you can, together with your students, identify additional and specific learning objectives. For this, you might want to use the Council of Europe's *Reference Framework of Competences for a Democratic Framework* as a basis.



[1] OECD Future of Education and Learning Skills 2030, OECD Learning Compass 2030.

A Place-Based Learning Local History Project

You are about to start a place-based learning local history project on *What is the European Project About?* with your students. Most of the learning and exploring will be done outside of the classroom, and your students are invited to take full ownership of their work.

Place-based learning is an approach to learning that is not limited to the arts and humanities, but can be implemented within various disciplines in school curricula and be adapted to different local contexts. It allows young people to fully immerse themselves in their (geographical) surroundings and use places (e.g. sites of local heritage, museums, archives) as a foundation for their learning journey. It promotes a learning experience that is grounded in students' local communities, challenging them to form a deeper understanding of their surroundings and their own place in the world. Place-based learning puts students at the very centre of their learning, making it a personal experience through which they determine what, how, when and where they want to learn. It also provides an opportunity for students to learn outside of the classroom and their regular school framework.

This approach aims to unlock the potential of student-centred learning and excites students to become researchers of history, to follow their own interests, and share their findings and final product with a wider audience in a meaningful way.

A Theoretical Context

Place-based learning is a teaching methodology, a tool, for achieving a particular kind of educational experience. For example, at High Tech Charter Schools in California, project-based learning - which place-based learning is a subset of - is used to create learning experiences that are in alignment with their four school design principles. These principles are *Equity*, *Personalisation*, *Authentic Work* and *Collaborative Design*. Let's take a look at how place-based learning is a methodology that is compatible with these principles.

Equity: Learning ensures access and challenge for all students

- Accessibility of content: Leveraging local resources ensures all students can access relevant learning experiences without necessary costly travel.
- Cultural relevance: Local community history, traditions, and perspectives ground learning in students' own lived experiences and identities.
- Community involvement: Engaging with local experts and stakeholders validates diverse viewpoints and fosters equal participation.

Personalisation: Students have a voice and choice in their learning, with work that reflects their individual interests and needs

- Contextual relevance to students' lives: Using the local environment connects content to personal experiences, increasing engagement.

- Choice and agency: Open-ended, community-based inquiries allow students to pursue issues that genuinely matter to them.
- Differentiated learning experiences: Multiple entry points and skill sets fit naturally into the variety of local contexts.

Authentic Work: Learning connects to real-world contexts

- Real-World problems and projects: Students address genuine local challenges, making their work meaningful and impactful.
- Meaningful stakeholder engagement: Collaboration with community members ties learning directly to tangible outcomes.
- Applied skills and interdisciplinary learning: Complex, real-world problems require integrating various academic disciplines and practical skills.

Collaborative Design: Teachers and students and community members collaborate in the design learning experiences

- Partnership with the community: Schools, families, community organisations, and civic leaders work jointly to shape learning experiences.
- Shared decision-making: Students contribute to selecting local issues and strategies, creating ownership in the learning process.
- Peer-to-Peer learning: Students rely on each other's strengths to solve problems, fostering teamwork and shared success.

Your educational design principles may be similar to, or differ from, High Tech High's principles. Part of your journey is to determine if and how place-based learning aligns with your own educational design principles. To help assess this, it can be useful to examine the broader pedagogical concepts that project-based and place-based learning draw upon. Below you will find an overview of some of these concepts and the end of this section contains several helpful resources for further reading.

Constructivism

Place-based learning is grounded in the idea that learning is actively constructed by learners. This process is most effective when the tasks students undertake are meaningful and relevant to their lives. Meaningful tasks are often authentic—they connect to the students' interests and mirror real-world activities. These connections help students engage deeply and retain their learning.

Experiential Learning (John Dewey)

A meaningful experience is one that resonates with you and invites deeper reflection. In place-based learning, creating or participating in these meaningful experiences is the starting point for deeper learning. Reflecting on those experiences allows learners to develop new insights, draw conclusions, and generate further questions. The ultimate goal in place-based learning is to articulate those insights through a product—something that communicates understanding, transforms the experience, or applies the learning in a new way that others can connect with.

Sociocultural Theory (Lev Vygotsky)

Social interaction is a key component of place-based learning. Collaboration is both a goal of place-based learning and an essential part of the learning process, as working with others helps deepen understanding. Additionally, service—work done for the benefit of others—is seen as inherently motivating. In place-based learning, the level of engagement often increases based on the significance of the audience to the learner. The more meaningful the audience, the more invested students become in their work.

Your Role as A Teacher

In place-based learning, you might see yourself adapting ideas that may be as relevant to a facilitator or coach as they are to a teacher. Guiding students as they explore their local environment may feel uncertain or even less structured than what you and your students are used to. All of the skills you have now are still necessary but you can experiment with some different approaches as well. To support, you might want to take a look at the following pointers.

- Help students embrace the uncertainty that arises when it isn't yet clear how the learning journey will look and what the final product will look like.
- Focus on helping students refine their own ideas: Oftentimes students will ask for the 'right' answer from you. Sometimes, you might respond with a question of your own to push their own thinking. You might help them refine their questions or break them into smaller pieces to make them easier to solve.
- Support students to create their own timelines: Some of the work students do in this project may be outside of the normal school time or maybe it is inside but students will need to structure their time for themselves. Support students to schedule their time effectively while allowing the space to let their explorations unfold at their own pace.
- Encourage *interdisciplinary thinking*: Guide students in blending subjects, even if this is a history class you can encourage students to draw on what they have learned in other disciplines or in life to support and strengthen their ideas.
- Support *student-generated questions*: Encourage students to come up with their own questions, and help them figure out how to find answers, rather than handing them ready-made problems to solve. In this Toolkit, *What is the European Project About?* provides a starting point from which students can distil their own driving questions for their research project.
- Foster *collaborative problem-solving*: Facilitate team discussions, model listening skills, and help students navigate disagreements, so they learn how to solve real-world issues together.
- Promote *reflection and iteration*: Help students view mistakes as opportunities for growth, guiding them through rethinking and refining their work.
- Connect to the community: Encourage partnerships with local experts or organisations, helping students understand that learning extends beyond the classroom walls.
- Celebrate *iterative progress over perceived ideas about perfection*: Remind students—and yourself—that place-based learning is a journey, and each step, even if uncertain, deepens

understanding and builds confidence. Use models that you can compare your work to. Reflect on improvements in each iteration of the research and the product.

As always, it is you who has to decide what is right for you and your students at any given time. These ideas are meant to give you some additional ways to support your student in this new learning experience.

It is about encouraging your students to explore and providing guidance where needed. Rather than presenting your students with information about the topic in the classroom and telling them what they are going to do, you are setting a guiding framework and inviting them to explore what it is that they want to learn, how they want to learn and what they are going to create with their peers. A guiding framework can be offered by giving your students different options to choose from on what they can research, how they can do it, and what they can create to share with their peers and their community. You know your students best!

A Brief Note on Assessment

In a place-based learning environment, assessment goes beyond traditional tests. Because students produce meaningful work through their projects, these artifacts can be used to assess what they have learned. Moreover, since this approach encourages student reflection, it is helpful to provide structures that support ongoing self-assessment.

Looking at Students' Work

Teachers can assess what students have learned by examining the actual work they produce. By looking at how students gather data, solve problems, and express their ideas, teachers get a clear picture of both their understanding and their ability to apply what they've learned in a real-world setting.

Presentations of Learning

Having students present their work to classmates, teachers, community members, or local experts is also a powerful form of assessment. These presentations push students to clearly explain their thinking, refine their ideas, and respond to feedback. In turn, teachers see how well students can communicate their learning and connect it to real-world contexts.

A Continuous Process

Assessment in place-based learning happens throughout the project, not just at the end. Feedback from peers, teachers, and community members—along with time for reflection—helps students keep improving their work. This ongoing process ensures that assessment is woven into learning, guiding students as they deepen their understanding and skills.

Helpful Resources

On High Tech High Design Principles

- **Link:** High Tech High Design Principles (HTH Unboxed video)
- **What It Offers:** A concise video overview explaining High Tech High's four key design principles—**Equity**, **Personalisation**, **Authentic Work**, and **Collaborative Design**—directly from educators and students at High Tech High. You'll see how these principles guide everything from curriculum planning to assessment, as well as insights into how the school fosters a culture of real-world problem-solving, student agency, and community involvement. This resource is especially helpful for anyone looking to understand the foundational ethos behind High Tech High's innovative, project-based, and often place-based learning approaches.

On Constructivism

- **Resource:** *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (National Research Council)
- **Link (free PDF):** https://www.nap.edu/catalog/9853/how-people-learn-brain-mind-experience-and-school-expanded-edition
- **Why It's Useful:** Provides an in-depth look at how learners actively construct knowledge. Highlights the significance of meaningful tasks and prior knowledge—core ideas behind place-based and project-based methodologies.

On John Dewey and Experiential Learning

- **Recommended Reading:** *Experience and Education* (John Dewey, 1938)

Although it's a short book rather than a journal article, this classic work succinctly lays out Dewey's principles of experiential learning—how real-world experience and reflection serve as the core drivers of authentic education. Dewey contrasts traditional schooling with progressive methods, emphasizing active engagement, problem-solving, and reflective thinking as the basis for meaningful learning experiences.

On Assessment

- **Link:** https://rethinkingassessment.com/
- **What It Offers:** A growing network of educators, policymakers, and researchers dedicated to transforming the way we evaluate student learning. They explore alternative, authentic assessments—like portfolios, exhibitions, and real-world projects—that align closely with place-based and project-based learning principles. You'll find thought-provoking blog posts, case studies, and practical resources aimed at helping schools move beyond traditional exams and foster deeper, more meaningful assessment practices.

The Learning Journey

You can use the *Learning Journey* as a reference point in guiding your students through different phases of their local history project.[2] It is an organic and iterative process to help and inspire you in shaping your lessons for this project. Phases can overlap. Reflection takes place after each step in the process, and thus, it is recommended to plan some time for reflection after completing each phase. **Keep in mind that you do not have to strictly follow the journey for a successful local history project**

[2] Visual of the Learning Journey as designed for the place-based learning Toolkit *Who Were the Victims of the National Socialists?* https://euroclio.eu/resource/who-were-the-victims-of-the-national-socialists-a-toolkit-for-place-based-learning/

Building Blocks of a Local History Project

1.Launch

Preparation and Planning

A (local) history project has a very open character and the majority of the activities will depend on your local context and the interests of your students. However, it is very much advisable to start identifying the places you can visit and the possible resources your students could choose well in advance before presenting the project to students. Some steps to consider:

1) **Teamwork with colleagues**
   Place-based learning invites students to get creative! You might want to opt for an interdisciplinary approach and team up with your colleagues from other sections, such as the language, literature, civics and even arts departments. Reach out to your colleagues and explore the possibilities.

2) **Mapping project timeline**
   Your project timeline will depend on your school framework. Some schools will have the option to integrate the project into regular history lessons and can spread the work over several weeks. This is not possible for everyone, but it is recommended to at least dedicate one week to the project.

3) **Re(sources)**
   Students will be choosing the focus of their own research. However, the locality of your area will naturally provide a framework. If there is a clear historical framework, it will be easier for you (and your students) to identify sources. To help your students, you can already prepare some sources as examples. Get in touch with colleagues, local universities, research centres, museums or archives. Usually, they will have materials that you can use.

4) **Identifying places to visit**
   In this project, your students will be spending most of their time outside of the classroom. Start exploring the different sites that they can visit: archives, museums, community centres, and European heritage sites. Get in touch with them as soon as you have a timeplan to arrange a visit well in advance and discuss what kinds of activities they might offer (guided tour, workshops etc.). For inspiration, you can take a look at Places to Explore. To help you with organising visits and creating partnerships with different sites, you are invited to read through the guide below that gives you some more pointers on how to get started.

Involving Collaboration Partners in Meaningful Ways

Collaborating with people and organisations outside the classroom in a place-based learning project adds value by connecting your students to real-world expertise, resources, and perspectives, enriching the learning experience. Partners can include local businesses, community organizations, or individuals with relevant knowledge, and their involvement does not have to be elaborate or formal. Sometimes, a simple conversation, a shared story, or a quick site visit can provide the spark that makes a project meaningful and authentic. Here are some examples that might spark inspiration:

- **Stories, presentations and Q&A sessions:** Archivists and museum curators and community members can visit (in-person or virtually) your students to share their experience and stories. Often the personal connections that presenters have to their work and stories are compelling and the event is meaningful to both presenter and student.
- **Hands-on workshops:** Some museums or archives offer workshops where students learn relevant professional skills. These activities not only support learners with their project work but also deepen their understanding of the subject matter, foster curiosity, and provide hands-on experiences that make their learning more engaging and memorable.
- **Curator-led exhibit creation:** If time and resources permit, partner experts could help your students mount a small exhibit at your school, guiding them in selecting items (photographs, scanned archival documents, local artifacts on loan), writing interpretive text, and designing a display.
- **Project mentorship:** Have an archivist or other collaborative partner serve as a mentor, checking in periodically as students develop research projects. They might help students refine research questions, suggest primary source materials, or teach students how to analyze and interpret documents.

Identify Your Project Focus and Potential Partners

Before reaching out to museums, archives, or other cultural sites, take the time to clarify the focus of your project. This will help you determine who you want to connect with and enable you to clearly explain what you are doing. Next, look for organisations that align with your project's themes. Sometimes smaller, lesser-known organisations such as local historical societies, specialised archives, or cultural centers, often have unique offerings and are eager to collaborate.

Making Initial Contact

When reaching out, start by introducing yourself, your school, and your planned project. Clearly outline your timeframe, the size of your student group, and the types of experiences you are seeking, such as a guided tour, access to archive materials, or a workshop led by a curator. You might highlight the mutual benefits of the collaboration, showing how hosting students can support the site's mission—young learners might become future patrons, volunteers, or ambassadors for the organisation's work. Additionally, offer to recognise the partner's involvement through your school newsletter or social media, providing positive exposure. Finally, ask if they recommend other organisations or individuals who might be valuable contacts for your project.

Develop a Structured Plan with the Partner

Work collaboratively with your partner to co-create a schedule and set clear expectations. This plan could involve a detailed itinerary for all students or allow smaller student groups to contact the site or person and arrange their own visits. Where relevant, plan specific visits, determine how long students will stay. If students will be visiting the site independently agree on how the students should set these visits up. To support your students, incorporate pre-visit activities such as preliminary research or reflective activities to put the visit in context. After the visit, include post-visit components like reflection activities to help students process and build on what they have learned.

Incorporating collaborative partners into your place-based learning project can transform the experience for both students and educators by fostering connections between the classroom and the community. Whether through storytelling sessions, hands-on workshops, or mentoring relationships, these partnerships help bring learning to life in authentic, memorable ways. The key is to approach collaboration with flexibility and creativity, valuing meaningful engagement over perfection. By taking the time to identify relevant partners, communicate clearly, and co-create plans, you can ensure a rewarding experience that benefits everyone involved—building stronger ties between your students, your school, and the broader community.

Launching the Project

You can integrate this project into your regular history lessons. Pitching the project as an elective on its own or as a part of a project week and inviting students to participate are options too. At this stage, it is very important to hook your students' interest. Depending on your country and locale, there are different ways of inviting your students to create a personal connection to the topic and motivate them to explore more. Ask your students what they want to find out about the topic. **What are they curious about? What are the skills they want to learn or develop?** Reflect on the following questions with your students:

- What do you want to learn more about?
- How do you want to learn?
- What does your ideal learning experience look like?
- How do you want to work together with your peers (in teams or in pairs)?
- How can you find out more about the things you want to learn?

In this phase, you can already offer options and examples of what your students can create to present their research findings (e.g. podcast, exhibition, guided tour). Provide them with a few options they can choose from. Let them explore the possibilities!

Throughout each step, students are provided with a set of reflection questions. You can find these in Your Learning Journey. Students can use these questions to reflect individually (e.g. using a learning log) in pairs or teams. You might also want to give the option of plenary reflection moments after each step.

Tools and Activities

- Places to Explore
- Rough timeline of the project
- Planning visits to ensure that most learning takes place outside the classroom
- Reaching out to archives, researchers, museums, community centres for sources
- Know, Want to Know, Learned (KWL) Worksheet
- Mindmap
- Motivation letter to apply for the project
- Group reflection on learning goals with students
- Learning journal for students

2. Investigate

Now it is time for your students to do research. To prepare your students for research, you can offer them more background information. You can provide basic information by using the information sheet that provides historical context about the European Project and the EU as well as the supporting fact sheets and historical timeline of events. Building on this, you could ask your students to make a timeline of events based on their own local historical context that are relevant to the history of the EU. The information sheet also contains reflection questions following the different sections. There are also questions that can help your students to shape their own research focus.

Based on the research questions that your students have identified, you may want to connect them with an expert to share their knowledge and experience. For example, the expert can be an academic researcher, a politician, an activist or a journalist. Invite your students to do an interview with them. The expert can also help you and your students find additional information and primary sources. Once your students have found out how they would like to organise their work, what their time planning is and what kind of research questions they would like to pursue, they are ready to go out in the field and explore further!

Finding sources can be very hard. Do not hesitate to contact local experts to help you find resources. Your colleagues can help you identify local experts or institutes to provide your students with the necessary resources they need to start their investigation. In addition, the partnership you set up with the site your students are visiting can also serve as a very resourceful connection.

Tools and Activities

- Information Sheet on *What is the European Project About?*
- Fact Sheet 1 From the European Coal and Steel Community to Lisbon
- Fact Sheet 2 Institutions of the European Union
- Fact Sheet 3 The League of Nations
- Fact Sheet 4 The Council of Europe
- Timeline of the European Project
- Secondary sources: Recommendations for further reading

- Primary sources: Treaties, Speeches, Debates
- Identifying research focus and questions
- Reflection
- Places to Explore

3. Create

When done with research, your students will enter the next phase of their *Learning Journey*, in which they are finding a way of presenting their findings to the outside world. In **Launch**, you have already reflected upon some options with your students. Now, it is up to them to choose what they want to create. Whether it is a podcast, an exhibition, or a website, the most important element in this phase – as in all phases – is to empower your students by allowing them to take full ownership of their product. The end result may not be flawless, and that is perfectly fine. As a coach, provide support where needed. They might need some help with printing materials, recording a video, or any other kind of support and feedback. This process can be messy, and that is also perfectly fine.

What students can create

- Exhibition
- Podcast
- Website
- Interactive Map
- Documentary
- Play
- Graphic novel
- Artwork

4. Revise

Remember, the *Learning Journey* is an iterative process! This means that throughout each step, students are invited to reflect on their learning. Here, students can zoom out, take a step back, and reflect on their research findings and how they translate them into a project output. They can go back to their learning goals and research questions to refine them further. A guided exercise may be done in plenary, groups or even individually. Ask your students to reflect on their journey using questions like:

- Did I discover what I wanted to discover?
- Have I answered my research questions?
- Do I have enough information to continue with creating and sharing?
- Is there any information that I am missing?
- How happy am I with the work that I am creating with my peers?
- How happy am I with the teamwork?
- Is there something I want to improve?

Depending on their answers, students can go back to the previous phases, doing more research if needed or adjusting their focus and research question. They might also want to reconsider their roles within their project and the project team or change their research output. Your students may

choose to write a periodic log of their learning journey or a journal to keep track of their own progress. Again, it is an open process and journey of exploration that can be and is allowed to be messy sometimes. Keep in mind that revision does need time and is a continuous process.

Tools and Activities

- Guided reflection session
- Peer-reflection sessions
- Learning journal
- KWL Worksheet

5. Share

Once the project output is ready, it is time to share it with the outside world! The main objective of sharing your students' projects with the greater public is to maximise the societal impact of their work. You empower your students to be active citizens in their communities, contributing to their local history and awareness about this history. Making an impact can mean creating and giving a guided tour along all the sites in your place that are connected to European heritage or the history behind the formation of the EU. It can also mean presenting the output to (younger or older) students or displaying an exhibition at a community centre or local library. It is up to your students to explore the possibilities. Invite as many people as possible: students, teachers, parents, siblings, friends and community members. Your students worked very hard, and their efforts deserve to be recognised!

Tools and Activities

- Opening event for an exhibition at school
- Transporting exhibition to various locations, community centres, museums, and libraries
- Peer-learning activities: Presenting findings to fellow students, hosting workshops
- Launch event for website
- Publishing podcasts

6. Reflect

Finishing the project means reflection! You can use similar reflection questions to those used previously to guide the students throughout the project . This time, you ask your students to reflect on the entire learning experience and see how it compares to the original learning objectives that you and your students identified in the **Launch** phase. Give your students (and yourself) the time to think about it and consider the following points:

- What knowledge have I gained from the project?
- What are the skills that I have developed?
- To what extent do I feel my research was meaningful?
- Have I learned something new about the topic or my community?
- Is there something I would have done/would have wanted to do differently?

Throughout the project, your students will collect, experience, and make sense of information from a variety of sources to build a deeper understanding of the topic or driving question. Reflection is the process of connecting those experiences to larger insights. It allows your students to consider multiple perspectives, connect their experiences to broader ideas, and trace the evolution of their thinking over time. Keeping a journal throughout the project can help your students capture their thoughts and document their learning journey. This journal is personal, so its structure should work for the individual student. However, you might decide with your group to journal at specific moments, like after key events or milestones. Using prompts can also guide your reflections—team members could take turns selecting prompts. For instance, after reading something new or visiting an interesting place, they might respond: What surprised you today, and why?

In addition to journaling, reflection protocols or routines can help deepen students' understanding of their own thinking and allow them to learn from others. Protocols provide structure and focus for reflection, encouraging richer conversations and insights. Start with the Project Tuning Protocol, which has useful norms that can guide how you approach all other protocols. The list of protocols shared here is not exhaustive—there are reflection tools for nearly every type of learning—but the ones included are tried and tested by students working on similar projects.

Using a journal alongside these reflection activities is highly beneficial. Some protocols explicitly ask students to write, while others don't, but you can always choose to jot down your thoughts. Writing during or after a reflection can help students process experiences and strengthen the connections they are making. Ultimately, reflection helps turn experiences into meaningful learning that sticks with them long after the project ends.

Protocols

I Used to Think, and Now I Think
Purpose: This activity helps students to reflect on how and why their thinking may have shifted on a topic.
When to use: I can be used after a specific experience or at checkpoints along the way in the project.
Link:https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/I%20Used%20to%20Think%20-%20Now%20I%20Think_2.pdf

Final Word Protocol
Purpose: The purpose of this protocol is to give each person in a group an opportunity to have their ideas, understandings, and perspective enhanced by hearing from others. With this protocol, the group can explore an article, clarify their thinking, and have their assumptions and beliefs questioned to gain a deeper understanding of the issue.
When to use: You can use this to share and synthesize your groups thinking about a topic, article or other experience.
Link: https://www.clee.org/resources/final-word/

Project Tuning Protocol

Purpose: The project tuning protocol will help students get constructive feedback on their placed back project ideas.
When to use: Use this protocol during the launch phase of students' place-based project.
Link:https://www.edutopia.org/blog/tuning-protocol-framework-personalized-professional-development-jess-hughes

What, So What, Now What
Purpose: Encourage reflection on learning experiences and their significance.
When to Use: At the end of a project or specific activity.
Link:https://www.experientiallearning.org/blog/what-so-what-now-what-reflection-model-and-reflection-questions/?v=796834e7a283

Considering Evidence Protocol
Purpose: Analyse and reflect on the significance of evidence of evidence, supports your group to think critically and analytically about the evidence and where it fits into their work.
When to Use: During the research or decision-making phases of a project.
Link: https://www.clee.org/resources/considering-evidence-protocol/

Example: Final Word Protocol

Objective: The Final Word Protocol is designed to foster reflective and respectful dialogue by allowing all students to share and discuss insights in an equitable manner. This structured discussion method ensures that each participant's voice is heard and encourages active listening and thoughtful engagement.

Materials Needed:

- A reading passage, article, or text relevant to the discussion
- Notebooks or digital note-taking tools
- A timer or stopwatch

Procedure:

1. **Individual Reflection:** Each student reads the assigned text independently and selects a passage or idea that resonates with them. They take notes on why they found it significant.
2. **First Speaker's Turn:** A volunteer shares the passage or idea they selected and explains why it stood out to them. They should keep their explanation concise (1-2 minutes).
3. **Group Responses:** Each group member, in turn, offers a brief response to the first speaker's selection. Responses may include agreements, extensions, alternative interpretations, or personal connections. Each response should be limited to 1 minute.
4. **Final Word:** After all group members have responded, the original speaker has the final word. They reflect on the responses and share any new insights or reconsiderations they have based on the discussion. This reflection should take no longer than 2 minutes.
5. **Next Speaker:** The process repeats with another participant until all group members have had a turn to be the first speaker.

Guidelines for Effective Discussion:

- **Active Listening:** Focus fully on the speaker without interrupting.
- **Respectful Engagement:** Offer responses that build on the discussion rather than dismissing or contradicting others in an unproductive manner.
- **Time Awareness:** Adhere to the time limits to ensure that all voices are heard.
- **Open-Mindedness:** Be willing to reconsider or expand your understanding based on others' perspectives.

Benefits of the Final Word Protocol:

- Encourages deep engagement with the text
- Fosters a culture of listening and reflection
- Ensures equitable participation
- Promotes critical thinking and meaningful discussion

Your Learning Journey

You are about to start your own history project on *What is the European Project About?* You might have already covered the topic in your regular history or civics lessons. It might also be the first time that you are learning about the topic. In either case, this Toolkit provides you with a guiding framework on how to set up a history project that delves into the history of the European project, and the European Union around your own locale. It may seem as an overwhelming task at first, and to help you with setting up your project, you can follow the step-by-step breakdown of different iterative phases:

1. **Launch**: You and your peers will reflect on what you would like to find out about the topic and explore what skills you would like to improve.
2. **Investigate:** Time to do research! You will identify a group of victims that you would like to find out more about, map research questions, identify and study sources, and explore different places that are relevant to your local history project.
3. **Create:** Done with research? It's time to create! You will be translating your research findings into a final product. This can be a guided tour, a podcast, and exhibition or a website (or something completely different).
4. **Revise**: You will take a moment to jointly reflect on your journey so far. At this stage, you want to do more research or edit your final product. Keep in mind that reflection is an important part of each step. You will find some reflection questions after each step that you can choose to do individually or in a group.
5. **Share**: You are going to present your work and final product to the outside world to maximise the impact of your work within your community.
6. **Reflect**: You are going to look back at your overall learning journey and go back to the learning objectives that you explored in **Launch**.

Launch: How to start my project?

Whether this project is part of your regular history or civics lesson, an elective or a dedicated project week, you will start with reflecting on the overarching question: *What is the European Project About?* Together with your peers, start brainstorming about what you already know about this topic, and what you would like to explore. Think about what makes you excited and what makes you curious. What do you know about the history of the European Union? Did something happen in your own town that is very much connected to this history? What ways does the EU influence your town or even your daily life? There might also be certain skills that you want to develop, and maybe there are specific places you want to go to, or people in your community you would like to talk to. What is it that you want to learn? You will be in charge of your own learning journey: you get to choose what you want to learn, how you want to learn and what you would like to create. Your teacher will be there to guide you where needed and will help you with the preparation of your project. The journey can be a bit messy, and you will be spending most of the time outside of the classroom. At this stage, it is possible that you do not exactly know what you are going to do, and that is completely okay!

Tools

- Know, Want to Know, Learned (KWL) Worksheet *(ask your teacher)*
- Group discussion on your learning goals
- Creating a learning journal *(ask your teacher for guidance)*

Reflection Questions

- What do I already know about the European Union?
- What do I want to explore about the European project?
- What are the skills that I would like to develop?
- How do I want to work together with my peers (in teams or in pairs)?
- What can I create?

TIP: *To track your learning journey, you can create a learning journal. This can be in the format of a mind map, a diary or even a bullet journal. You teachers can help you with other examples.*

Investigate: What to explore?

Your teacher has given you a general introduction to the project, the timeline and the overall goals. Now, it is time to explore and dive into the research phase of your local history project: Investigate! To prepare your research, consult the Information Sheet *What is the European Project About?* As well as the supporting Timeline, fact sheets and recommended sources. You can also create your own timeline of events. As a historian, you want to have an idea of the knowledge that is already there to see what there is left to further explore. You can work with different sources to expand your knowledge: read books, watch a movie, listen to a podcast, or interview an expert. A lot of information will be available at the different sites you will be visiting: museums, heritage sites, archives or community centres. Talk to the guides, explore the objects you see and discover your surroundings. To help you structure your research, you can make use of the following pointers.

Organising Your Research

Design your essential question

The central question to this Toolkit can serve as a starting point to identify your own driving question. In the Information Sheet, you will also find several reflective questions that can help you sharpen your research question. Craft a single, focused question that captures the core of what you want to explore, ensuring it is open-ended yet specific enough to guide meaningful investigation. This “essential question” becomes the backbone of your research, shaping the direction you take and the type of information you seek.

Design sub questions

Once you have your essential question, break it down into smaller, more targeted sub questions. These help you explore different angles of your main inquiry and ensure you examine the topic in depth. Sub questions should address who, what, when, where, why, or how, giving you multiple pathways to gather information.

Create a KWL Chart

A KWL chart is a simple but powerful tool to structure your thinking. In the "K" column, list what you already *Know* about the topic. In the "W" column, note what you *Want* to learn—often directly linked to your essential and sub questions. After you conduct your research, complete the "L" column with what you have *Learned*. This visual framework keeps track of your evolving understanding and helps you identify knowledge gaps.

Decide on roles

If you're working in a group, assign roles that play to each member's strengths while ensuring everyone participates fully. Common roles include a researcher (responsible for finding credible sources), a note-taker (organises information), a project manager (oversees timelines and tasks), and a communicator (coordinates interviews or presentations). Defining clear responsibilities reduces confusion and keeps everyone accountable.

Identify resources (people, places, things)

Consider a wide range of resources that can help you answer your essential question and sub questions—books, articles, community members, local organisations, relevant experts, and even field sites. People can provide interviews or firsthand accounts; places offer on-site observations and real-world context; and things like tools, data sets, or artifacts can supply tangible evidence. Listing these resources at the outset ensures you have multiple avenues to explore.

Plan research

Use a visual project management system, such as a scrum board, to break your research cycle into manageable steps. A typical research cycle might include:

1. **Question formulation** – Revisit and refine your questions based on new insights.
2. **Resource gathering** – Locate sources, set up interviews, or plan field visits.
3. **Data collection** – Take notes, record observations, or compile evidence from various materials.
4. **Analysis and reflection** – Review your findings, look for patterns, and consider whether you need to revise any sub questions or explore new ones.

   Track each task on the scrum board in columns like "To Do," "In Progress," and "Done." This method keeps everyone aware of what needs to be completed, who is working on it, and when each step is finished. By revisiting and refining your essential question throughout the process, you maintain a dynamic and responsive research approach that continuously adapts to new discoveries.

Tools

- Information Sheet on *What is the European Project About?*
- Fact Sheet 1 From the European Coal and Steel Community to Lisbon
- Fact Sheet 2 Institutions of the European Union
- Fact Sheet 3 The League of Nations
- Fact Sheet 4 The Council of Europe
- Timeline of the European Project

- Secondary sources: Recommendations for further reading
- Primary sources: Treaties, Speeches, Debates
- Identifying research focus and questions
- Reflection
- Places to Explore

Reflection Questions

- How am I going to organise my research?
- What are my research questions?
- Where do I find sources?
- How do I work with sources?
- What do I take from the places I am visiting?

What happens next? Now, it is time to go back to your research questions. Do you feel you are able to answer the questions with the information you have collected? Take the time to reflect on this and to process the stories that you have discovered. In preparation for the next phase, you can already start thinking about how you are going to organise and present the information to a wider audience.

Create: What to create?

Once you have finalised your research, it is time to create. Perhaps you already have a clear idea of how you want to present your findings. Your teacher can also give some examples to choose from. Make sure to plan the work in advance and check what kind of materials and tools you need and have access to. There are many different products that you co-create to present the findings of your research. Think about how you want to present the information and where you want to present it, and who your audience will be. These considerations will help you with sharing your final output.

Reflection Questions

- How do I want to present my findings?
- What do I need in order to create my product?
- How am I going to organise the work?

Examples

- Exhibition
- Podcast
- Website
- Documentary
- Play
- Guided tour
- Artwork

Revise: Where do I stand now?

Reflection happens throughout each phase of your local history project. Revising at this stage is all about checking if you are satisfied with the research you have done and the output you have created. It could happen that you feel you need more information while you are working on your project output. That is totally okay. You can take a step back in the process and do a little bit more research until you feel comfortable enough to continue. It might also be the case that you have found some new information that ignited your curiosity about another topic. That is also okay! If you have the capacity and if it fits your time plan, you can continue to explore further.

Reflection Questions

- Have I answered my research questions?
- Do I have enough information to start creating my product?
- Is there anything else that I want to explore further?

Share: How to present my project?

You and your peers have worked incredibly hard on your local history project. You are almost there! You have co-created a product that you are now going to present to the outside world. This is your opportunity to connect with your local community, share with them, and jointly reflect on what the European project is about, how the EU impacts you and how a European project could look like.

Practically, look into what needs to be arranged in preparation, depending on your project. If you are creating a podcast series, think about how you would like to launch it. If you are curating an exhibition, look into various places that can host your exhibition. Make sure to plan this in advance and reach out to your teacher for guidance.

Sharing your work is often the culminating event of your place-based learning project. It's your chance to showcase your learning, raise awareness, engage your community, and make a lasting impact. Using the 5E framework below can help you design an effective plan for sharing your learning. The goal is to share your product (podcasts, exhibitions, etc) and your process to achieve your goals, whether it is raising awareness, getting people to act or whatever you hope to achieve.

The five steps below give you a way to think about the phases of sharing your work, each step has some questions for you to consider and some examples of what you might do.

1. Creating Excitement Before the Event

Purpose: Build curiosity and anticipation for your event.

Questions to consider: How can you spark excitement for your work? What elements (mystery, cliffhangers, or visual teasers) will make people eager to attend?

What to do: Use creative strategies to generate excitement. For example, you could design eye-catching posters, create teaser videos for your podcast or documentary, or share a behind-the-scenes sneak peek of your interactive map or artwork on social media.

Examples: Post a short video teaser for your exhibition, or send out personal invitations that hint at what the audience will experience, like a "map fragment" for an interactive map project.

2. Entry

Purpose: Set the tone and welcome your audience.

What to do: Create an inviting first impression that makes your guests feel included and curious. Hand out question cards that guide their exploration of your website or exhibition, or provide name badges inspired by your play or podcast theme.

Questions to consider: How will you greet your audience and make them feel welcome? What small details can set the framework for the rest of the event?

Examples: If your product is a documentary, play a short highlight reel as guests arrive. For an interactive map, guide attendees to a starting point with prompts to get them exploring. Post your driving question on a board where users can write their own reflections.

3. Presentation

Purpose: Showcase your work in the most engaging and impactful way.

What to do: Highlight your project in a format that best suits your product. Whether it's an exhibition of artwork, a live play, a podcast listening station, or a presentation of your website, make the experience interactive and memorable.

Questions to consider: What's the highlight of your project? How can you keep your audience engaged throughout the presentation? How can you showcase your learning in the clearest and most compelling way?

Examples: Set up a listening booth for your podcast with headphones. Guide attendees through your interactive map or website with a walkthrough.

4. Exit

Purpose: End on a high note and help your audience reflect.

What to do: Create a closing moment that ties back to the start of your event or project and leaves the audience thinking. Use a reflective activity or a final thank-you message to wrap things up. **Questions to consider:** How can you refer back to the opening or the project's core themes? What reflective moments can you create for your audience? How can you leave a strong final impression?

Examples: Hand out feedback cards with prompts like "What inspired you the most today?" Close with a group Q&A or a call to action related to your project's theme.

5. Extension

Purpose: Give your audience something to take away that keeps the experience alive.

What to do: Create a physical or digital takeaway that represents your project and its message. This could be a thank-you card, a link to your website or podcast, or even a piece of artwork made during the project.

Questions to consider: How can you make the takeaway meaningful and connected to your work? Could your audience help create the takeaway during the event?

Examples: Provide a QR code that links to your podcast, website, or interactive map. Give out flyers of your exhibition. Create a collaborative mural or artifact with your guests during the exhibition.

Reflection Questions

- Who is my audience?
- In what ways can I reach my audience?
- What is the main message that I want to communicate?
- How can I connect with my community?

Reflect: How to finish my project?

Though you have had reflection moments in each phase, it is now time to finish the project with a bigger reflection exercise. The reflection exercise can be done in different ways: individually, in groups, or even with your whole class. Your teacher may propose some options. In this step, you are invited to reflect on your learning journey by going back to your learning objectives that you identified in **Launch**. Some guiding questions can help you to structure your thoughts. There are different things that you can reflect on: your learning goals, the knowledge you gained, the way you worked together with your peers, and the final product you co-created. What stood out to you? What would you have done differently?

Reflection Questions

- In what ways have I achieved my learning goals?
- What kind of skills have I developed?
- What has been the most meaningful part of the project?
- What has been very challenging?
- What would I do differently next time?

What is the European Project About?

A Historical Context for the European Union

This information sheet aims to provide a historical context for the European project and the foundation of the European Union in particular. It is, as all history is, an interpretation among many possible ones, which focuses on placing the European project within European and global history, and on serving as a guide for teachers and students alike on how to apply historical skills to interpret its significance, its position in the world, and its future.

Europe's borders

Contrary to what may be common belief, Europe's borders have never remained fixed or stayed the same for long periods. Borders are fluctuating organisms, sensitive to sociological as well as geographical change. This Dailymotion video gives a rough, if not completely accurate, impression about moving borders: https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1i1e6h.

The borders of Europe have never been a matter of fact; one needs only think of the Roman Empire. The borders that mattered were not those we imagine for modern Europe today, nor will they probably be those of our descendants. The knowledge of a language often determined the boundaries between "countries".

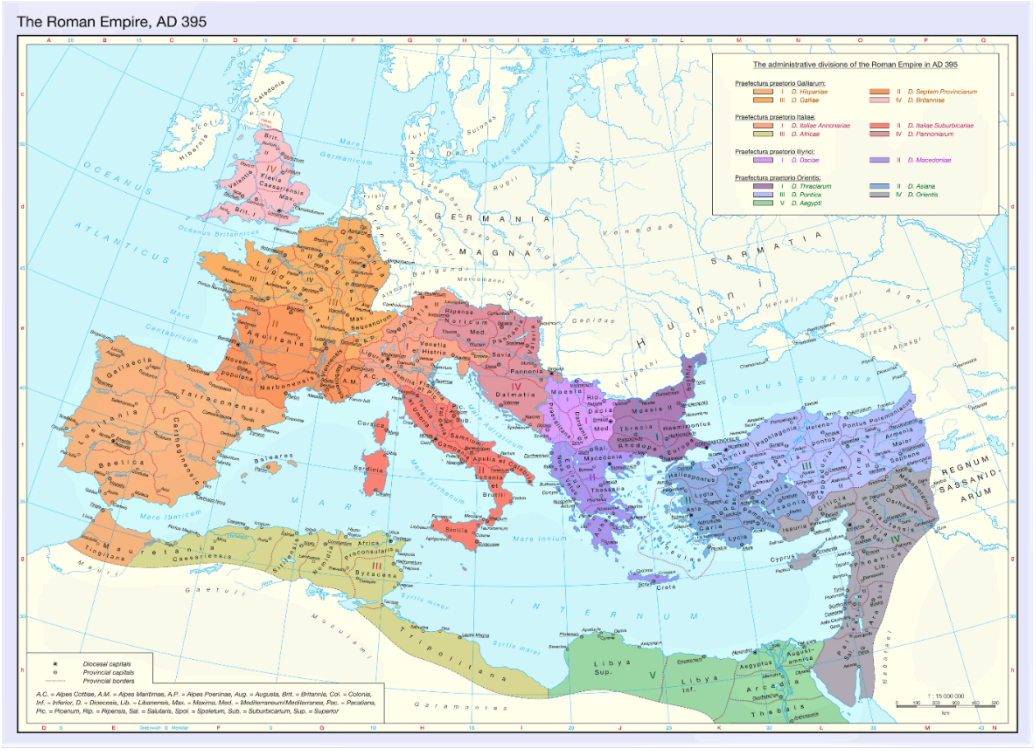


Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Roman_Empire,_AD_395.png, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Another side note has to be added. If you look at the maps of the European Union, they usually show the European continent. However, many, though not all, of the overseas territories of some

EU Member States are also included in the European Union. In 1957, that meant that a correct version of a map of the European Economic Community, predecessor of the EU, meant to also show parts of the colonial empires of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, as well as the "trust territory" of Somaliland for Italy. Even though most of these territories became independent shortly after 1957, the maps were meant to show that the concept of Europe, of what Europe means, where it stops, and therefore what the aim of a unified Europe should be, were all open, politically charged questions.

The European project came to life in the aftermath of the Second World War. It was, however, just the last iteration of many, very different ideas of what a united continent would look like, and why it should be united in the first place.

Part of the continent had been united before. Two thousand years ago, ancient Rome created a cultural and political unity that led to one of history's most successful and longest-lasting empires: the Roman Empire. Held together by the military power of one city, the Roman Empire stretched from northern Africa, and western Asia to all Mediterranean countries, Spain, Gaul, and southern Britain. The empire was responsible for a long period of peaceful development.

However, the concept of a united Europe as we imagine it today was born in the Middle Ages, which stretched from the collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th century until the 15th/16th century (depending on which part of Europe is considered). A unified Europe was, then, necessarily a Christian and monarchical project. Christianity was the dominant religion in Europe in the Middle Ages. While the Catholic Church of Rome was most powerful in Western Europe, the Eastern Orthodox Church of Constantinople was most popular in Eastern Europe.

As time went by and European monarchies became more firmly entrenched in the Continent, the concept shifted from a centralised Europe, led by a universal monarch, to a kind of early federal idea of a permanent structure regulating conflicts and governance between different monarchies. The first proposal in this sense was called "Treaty on the Establishment of Peace throughout Christendom", where Christendom self-evidently meant Europe. It was written by the King of Bohemia (1420 – 1471) and unsuccessful, but it was by no means the last of the projects. Various attempts to stabilise, "pacify", and unite the continent - not just by peaceful means as described above, but also militarily, followed.

The common thread of all these projects was their objective: peace and stability. It is quite telling that, while civil wars had been ravaging Europe (the Hundred Years War, the Italian Wars, the War of the Roses, the Wars of Religion, the Thirty Years War, etcetera) seemingly without respite, the main political aspiration was to achieve peace, or more exactly, stability. Peace would be achieved mainly by having common institutions, however different in each project, common decision-making, and especially common laws.

Reflection:

- Why do you think people thought that these projects could bring peace and / or stability?
- Why do you think common institutions were expected to bring peace and / or stability?
- According to you, did any of these projects succeed (even partly) in doing so?

Origins of the European Union

Von Coudenhove-Kalergi

The European project has been influenced by various proposals and ideas from Richard Nikolaus Eijiro von Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894 - 1972), an Austrian-Japanese nobleman who also held Czechoslovak and French citizenship. He dedicated his efforts to establishing a political union in Europe. This union, envisioned by multinational elites like himself, aimed to ensure peace through political collaboration. It is important to note that Kalergi sought support for his project from a wide range of European leaders, including some who were associated with fascist or Nazi ideologies.

Briand and Stresemann

The 1920s saw the first significant rapprochement between France and Germany. Prime Minister Aristide Briand and Chancellor Stresemann were the engines that kindled hopes for peace and European entente over that decade. Yet again, Briand's and Stresemann's efforts were those of a committed elite, and they arguably missed the chance to build a shared anti-nationalist and pro-peace narrative with the rest of the population. Their untimely deaths, the Great Depression, the cultural hegemony held by nationalist movements, and then the Second World War scrambled all political projects.

The Ventotene Manifesto

In 1940, a group of anti-fascist activists was exiled to the southern Italian island of Ventotene. What the activists, Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, Eugenio Colorni, and Ursula Hirschmann, wrote there became known as the Ventotene Manifesto. The text is the ideological drive of European federalist viewpoint to this day and was instrumental in informing the post-1945 debate on a European political community. A good source to learn more about European federalism would be the documents of the Hague Congress (1948) and the early European Movement. The Ventotene Manifesto, however, was particularly explicit in its idea that a united Europe would have to be socialist, in its original sense of being concerned with social concerns as well as guaranteeing peace. As it ensured stability, it would have the strength to protect and emancipate "the working classes". However, nowadays' federalists' come not only from the left but belong to many other political families (see: https://federalists.eu/).

Churchill and his United States of Europe

In parallel, in 1946, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered a well-known speech in Zurich about a "kind of United States of Europe". In it, he underlined that such a Union (in which the United Kingdom would not participate) would be structured to prevent any country from having the "material strength" to wage war. Understandably, Churchill's main concern was to avoid another continental war. And of course, his "kind of" European Union was to be solidly anti-communist, as the Cold War loomed soon.

The convergence of three different points of view (Kalergi's cosmopolitan elitism, Spinelli's leftist federalism, and Churchill's soundly grounded political realism), are very important to the founding

of the modern European project. This rare convergence of ideas from different political perspectives made it politically viable.

The Schuman Declaration and the European Communities

Were it not for this convergence of intents, Schuman's 1950 declaration may not have happened, nor would have had any effect on the political landscape. But it did: it inaugurated a decade of ups and downs which culminated in 1951 with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and then in 1957 with the Treaties of Rome, establishing the European Communities (EEC) - and in 1960 with the birth of the European Communities' earliest alternative project: the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Nevertheless, divergent opinions about the purpose and future of Europe continued; the British government, afraid of the potential development of the project into a political union, had decided not to participate, and was the leading founder of the EFTA. But even within the EEC's members' political élites views diverged between supranationalist, federalists, and supporters of a simple economic union. In addition, very vocal leftist and pro-Soviet political forces (a very strong minority in Western Europe) saw the European project as the attempt of the capitalist forces to unite and subdue the Continent's workers, and to form a solid block opposing the Soviet Union.

These points of view, though, all stemmed from the political elites. There was little involvement of the population at large in this discourse: the booming economy and the sense of a common purpose across the EEC Member States, a block of liberal democracies opposing the USSR to the East and the authoritarian regimes in the South (i.e. Spain and Portugal), enabled a tacit consensus on the European project, which was hardly ever put into question.

There still was, however, a sizable portion of the European population that actively followed and supported further European integration; it was an eclectic group of people, holding different political views, who had lived through one or two world wars and were determined to ensure that, from then on, conflict in Europe would be solved politically and not militarily.

Increasing economic integration across Europe was widely thought by European governments to be essential to secure peace and contain conflict in Europe. While economic integration and a single market were not necessarily the priority for many of the federalists or the leftists who supported the project, it certainly was for the policy- and law-makers that willed the project into being. The Schuman declaration did mention European solidarity, however. And economic integration brought about other kinds of integration (e.g., political institutions, freedom of movement for citizens and their rights as European citizens).

Reflection:

- How do you think the different political strands behind European integration have shaped the EU as it is today?
- How do you think that the global context and events influenced the development of European integration?
- How would you explain, or rebuke, the link between peace and solidarity?
- With which political strand behind European integration do you identify most? And why?

Europe under De Gaulle – The Fouchet Plan

Charles de Gaulle served as President of France from 1959 to 1969. He profoundly influenced the European Communities as well. He was committed to Europe but he rejected a supranational Europe and wanted a Europe of sovereign states instead. His 1961 Fouchet Plan was a failed attempt to avoid a further political union in Europe. De Gaulle's vision for the continent was that of a third Superpower, able to broker between the USSR and the USA, but led by France and firmly intergovernmental: it would have ensured stability while providing Europe with an alternative to the EEC, which in de Gaulle's opinion was limiting its member States' sovereignty. In implementing his European ideal, De Gaulle counted mainly on the support of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). He maintained a very close relationship with the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer. His approach was however rejected by the other European member States. De Gaulle delayed Britain's entry into the EEC until 1973. He also had a very difficult relationship with the European Commission, which was at the time more of a secretariat than an executive body but which many thought should have more competencies. The tensions peaked during the "empty chair" crisis of 1965, when France withdrew from Council meetings for six months. France ultimately gained veto power over Council decisions affecting national interests, a privilege that lasted until the late 1980s. The Commission, on the other hand, increased in importance and became the only executive body of the European Community in 1967.

Simultaneously, De Gaulle and German Chancellor Adenauer signed the Elysée Treaty in 1963, establishing a consultation routine between their governments that persists today. This treaty reflected the importance of Franco-German cooperation in the European project while reinforcing De Gaulle's vision of governmental control in European politics.

Although West German governments had shown at times a commitment to a different view of Europe, theirs was a pragmatic attitude: the Elysée Treaty was signed one year after the European Common Agricultural Policy came into force. Thanks to this policy, the German government was sure to have access to the French market, while accepting to be a net contributor to the European subsidies that greatly benefitted French farmers: trade, be free or regulated, was still at the heart of the European project. As long as the two countries benefited from mutual trade, they would not go to war. After all, not even twenty years had passed since the end of the Second World War.

De Gaulle's viewpoint illustrates that the European project is an organic outcome of history rather than an external imposition. During the Cold War, the EEC's member states held diverse perspectives, with some, like De Gaulle, advocating for national autonomy, while others believed in a united Europe as essential for a significant global role.

The 1950s and 1960s were years of great change in the colonial empires of some of the EEC's members. Arguably all former European colonial powers maintained variously extreme forms of hegemony over their former colonies, as the latter declared their independence (very often after very violent struggles) during these years. How colonial empires and the independence of most

(but not all) colonies impacted the development of the European project is the matter of a very lively historical debate.

Reflection:

- What do you think Europe would look like today if De Gaulle's plan had succeeded?
- Which vision of Europe do you think won in the long term after their empty chair crisis, De Gaulle's stress on national sovereignty or the Commission's emphasis on collective decision-making? Why?
- Do you think that the loss of their colonial empires influenced European countries' willingness to support European integration? Why did it or why did it not?

Europe, a community of democracies?

1979 was the year of the first direct elections for the European Parliament (EP). Nowadays, after years of political fighting, the EP can co-legislate on a majority of subjects (including, importantly, the budget of the Union) on equal footing with the Council of the EU (where member States sit). Direct suffrage had been stipulated by the Treaty of Rome, in 1957, but the member States had not complied until they had been forced to do so by Parliament's threat to go to Court over the issue.

However, are direct elections for the Parliament a sufficient guarantee for democracy? While a basic condition for a fully functioning democracy, a directly (or sometimes indirectly) elected Parliament does not in itself guarantee an accountable governance that is the expression of the popular will (it also depends on one's definition of 'popular will'!). In order to guarantee it, a Parliament must have at least a solid role in policymaking and a significant influence on the government, and a fair safeguard for minority parties. It is up to debate whether the current European Parliament is fully respecting such conditions - but it is widely agreed that it has been accumulating competencies and increasing influence on policy-making and as co-legislator over the years.

The 1980s are the years of another enlargement, this time southwards: Greece, Portugal, and Spain all entered the Community after years of military dictatorship. Each of these Mediterranean countries faced its own peculiar challenges; all of them, though, had to struggle through economic and political reconstruction.

Reflection:

- Why do you think that member States had been reluctant to allow direct elections to the EP?
- What do you think are the necessary ingredients to a functioning democracy, and why?
- Do you think that only democracies should be members of the EU? And why?

The European Union's long birth

The wave of optimism left by the 1979 Parliamentary direct elections gave Spinelli, now a Member of the European Parliament, hope that the federalisation of the European Community was within

reach. He thus authored a parliamentary report (1984), proposing a new Treaty establishing a European Union. It was approved by the EP but shot down by member States. His attempt did, however, contribute to the negotiations for the agreements that, in 1993, led to the birth of the European Union. Spinelli's report foreshadowed the EU as we know it today: the different competencies between States and EU institutions were rationalised, the European Parliament was put on the same level as the Council as co-legislator, and the Commission consolidated its executive powers. But this was to be the last real hurrah for the federalists for a long time.

What happened in the late 1980s was (i) the Schengen agreement, which lifted border controls between some European countries and was not part of the EC framework (though it became part of EU law in 1999), and (ii) a long negotiation period that led to the Single European Act and the Treaty of Maastricht (1992). This is the birth of the European Union as we know it: **The Treaty of Maastricht officially unified the European Communities into one entity, the EU, laid down rules for the adoption of a common currency, and structured the EU in three pillars: the Community pillar, supranational, and two intergovernmental pillars (for defence, foreign policy, justice and home affairs).**

At this point, the EU was considered the natural home for almost all European countries. There was a consensus, a sort of shared perception among most political parties, that the EU was naturally destined to ultimately engage the entire continent. But it was still a top-down discourse, and populations were still not engaged, besides routine consultations: the French population had for instance approved the Treaty of Maastricht by a slim 51%, testifying the beginning of a potential disaffection.

The big enlargement of the EU

The EU had become a wealthy and promising block, and its big internal market was an important incentive for those countries that had not accessed it yet. The end of the Cold War had eased the tensions between East and West, lowered public pressure for a national defence policy, and neutral countries such as Finland and Austria could now aspire to access the Union. Indeed, the 1990s saw the EU grow bigger: new countries joined in, such as Austria, Finland, and Sweden; the Euro entered into legal force (1999) and then became the physical currency of the countries that had not opted out in Maastricht (as the UK and Denmark had instead).

In the 2000s, the momentum continued with the biggest enlargement to date taking place: especially notable was the entry of countries that used to be on the Soviet side of the Iron Curtain. This enlargement changed the face of the EU completely: it added more complexity to the institutional structure (more Members of the Parliament, more Commissioners, different voting rules in the Council, etc). It also altered the EU's economic stance: in just a few years, the EU became the stage of a dramatic economic difference between its Member States. The shockwave, conjunct with the sudden arrival of the financial crisis (2008), finally put the enlargement momentum to a stop. The shock also had the effect of reverting, for the first time, the once-positive trend of public support for the EU.

European support for the EU was waning, while support for a federalist EU had almost disappeared altogether. And while the demographic make up of EU countries evolved, due to globalisation and to long-term consequences of decolonisation and migration trends, its institutions struggled to

reflect it in their ranks: another dangerous layer of separation from Europeans. Furthermore, the new EU had to grapple to answer the most important question of any political construction: what was it for? Was it peace? Peace through democracy, peace through free trade, or through common institutions? A blend of the three, and in with what priorities? And how would it be able to ensure that its aims, whatever they may be, would be reached and then protected?

Reflection:

- What do you think the EU is for? And why?
- Do you think that the accession of former Soviet countries changed the EU, and if so, how? And if not, why not?
- What do you think were the reasons for new countries to join the EU, and why have other countries decided not to join the EU?

What next?

In 2003 a big European Convention convened to draft an ambitious Constitutional Treaty, meant to provide the EU with an actual Constitution, which may have led the way to a Federal Union. The Convention was a special body consisting of representatives from the EU institutions, Member States' Parliaments and Governments, and observers from regional authorities and trade unions. It approved a text, but French and Dutch citizens rejected the project by way of referendums. Some other countries, such as Spain and Luxembourg, did hold referendums too, and the Constitution was approved there with significant margins. The European Constitution had become a dead letter.

A different text, similar in construction but less ambitious, was then approved more simply by Member States, which met in Lisbon and agreed on a new Treaty: the current Treaty of Lisbon, the text of reference for the EU.

The difference in principle between the two texts is significant: the Lisbon Treaty is not a Constitution and was drafted by governments only. While it did include some of the proposals of the rejected text, such as increased powers for the Parliament and a closer cooperation on foreign affairs (establishment of a European External Action Service), it remained a firmly intergovernmental construction. The post-Lisbon EU certainly has important supranational elements, but as its constitutive text was produced by an intergovernmental conference, it ultimately rests on the Member States government's willingness to keep it in function.

There is, however, no shortage of countries still aspiring to access the European Union. Each of them is at different stages in their path to accession, and in different geographical zones, and their populations show varying degrees of support to the EU; their candidacies, in any case, testify to the enduring attraction of the European project.

At the time of writing, no treaty or reform is being discussed. This is now one of the longest time frames during which the institutional framework of the current EU has not been updated. There are talks (by no means new) of a multi-speed (or double speed) Europe or differentiated integration, whereby some member States would decide to integrate more or faster than others while maintaining a common central structure. In certain respects, this is already happening on specific

projects (e.g., common provisions for procuring vaccines and medicines). Whether this is a good or a bad development is a much too political and alive issue for historians to judge - yet

According to the Standard Eurobarometer 102 - Autumn 2024, 51% of Europeans tend to trust the EU, however. That is the highest result since 2007.
(https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3215).

Reflection:

- How would have you voted in the Constitutional referendum, and why?
- Would you be in favour of further enlargements of the EU? Why yes, or why not?
- Do you think the EU should have a geographical limit? If yes, where and why? If not, why not?

Waves of Change

Although this document focuses on the historical context of the European Union we can't deny that more recent events like the UK leaving the EU, the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, impacted the EU and its policy. The recent political shifts in some Member States, and geopolitical and climate challenges also affect the European Union and its functioning. We won't go into this but it shows again the waves of change the European Union has to deal with. Bearing that in mind, what would your ideal European Union look like?

Overall reflection:

- What do you think the EEC/EU meant to your grandparents' or parents' generations?
- What do you think the EEC/EU has meant to people living in non-European countries?
- What would your ideal EU look like?
- **If you could change the historical context of the European Union, what would you have done differently?**
- What does the EU mean to you?

Fact Sheet 1 From the European Coal and Steel Community to Lisbon

If you want to understand the European Union, it is important that you also know a little about the history of its institutions. This factsheet offers a brief (and therefore not complete) outline. It is about the following.

THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY

THE EURATOM TREATY

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

TREATY AMENDMENTS

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)

After WWII, there was a growing awareness that cooperation would be the only way to maintain peace in Europe as well. The three most recent wars between France and Germany (both World Wars and the Franco-Prussian War) included the coal mining areas and the steel industry of the Ruhr, Alsace-Lorraine and the Saarland. A partnership that separated these economic interests from the national state interest could therefore eliminate an important risk of international conflicts.

In addition, the desire to counterbalance the US on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other also played a role. This would only be possible with a strong Europe.

On 9 May 1950, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, issued an important Declaration in which he invited not only Germany but all European countries to far-reaching cooperation (Schuman Plan). Jean Monnet, also a Frenchman, was the author of this declaration. After WWI, Jean Monnet gained experience as Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations. He was convinced that peace in Europe could only be achieved through close economic cooperation between the military powers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Because of his experience with the League of Nations, he also strived for a supranational organization. Not everyone agreed with him. Some countries were reluctant towards Germany.

The British were not in favor of transferring powers and eventually decided not to participate in the cooperation. By the way, supranational means that countries have transferred (part of their) their authority to common institutions/organizations created by themselves (supra = above). In that area, the countries are no longer in charge. The opposite of supranational is intergovernmental; countries may work together but do not transfer powers to an international institution/organisation.

Back to the Schuman Declaration: Robert Schuman first shared his declaration on the 9th of May. This day is now celebrated as **Europe Day,** the day on which the foundations for the European Union were laid.

Negotiations followed. On 18 April 1951, the Treaty of Paris was signed, which brought into force the European Coal and Steel Community (**ECSC)** Treaty about a year later. France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Treaty. From then on, production and prices of coal and steel were no longer regulated by these countries themselves, but by a supranational body (standing above the countries).

INSTITUTIONS

The ECSC Treaty is the basis for the institutions as we know them today. The ECSC Treaty established a **High Authority**, similar to the European Commission, a **Common Assembly**, similar to the European Parliament, a **Council of Ministers**, similar to the current Council, and a **Court of Justice**. The ECSC had a legal personality. Legal Personality refers to the ability of an entity, such as a person or an organization, to participate in legal activities, such as entering into contracts, owning property, and suing or being sued.

The High Authority (similar to the European Commission today) was the **independent executive body** responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the Treaty (control of distribution and unimpeded supply of coal and steel + reconstruction of heavy industry) were to be achieved and to act in the general interest of the Community. The High Authority was a genuine supranational body with autonomous decision-making powers. The High Authority was responsible for modernising production and improving its quality, providing products on equal terms, developing common exports and improving working conditions in the coal and steel industries. The High Authority's management was composed of nine representatives appointed by the Member States. The larger member states Italy, Germany and France delivered two representatives and the Benelux countries one. The representatives elected a president from amongst them. The first president was Jean Monnet. Although the members were appointed by the national parliaments, they had to stay aloof from the national interest and pursue only the common European interest. The High Authority could make decisions, recommendations, and give advice.

The Common Assembly (similar to the European Parliament today) consisted of representatives **delegated by the national parliaments**. The Common Assembly was empowered to supervise.

The Council (similar to the current Council of EU/Ministers) was composed of representatives **delegated by national governments**. The Presidency of the Council was held in turn by each Member State for three months. The Council was responsible for harmonizing the activities of the High Authority and the general economic policies of the governments. Important decisions by the High Authority required a unanimous opinion of the Council.

The Court of Justice was composed of judges appointed by mutual consent for six years by the Member States. The Court had to ensure that the ECSC Treaty was interpreted and applied to the law by its Member States.

The ECSC's task was to create an **internal market** for coal and steel. The ECSC was the first of the European Communities (EC) and paved the way for further European integration. In 1967, when a Merger Treaty came into force, the European Economic Community (EEC), Euratom and the ECSC were given a single Commission, a single Council and a single budget. As a result, the function of the High Authority of the ECSC disappeared.

In 2002, the ECSC Treaty expired. It could have been extended, but in the meantime, the economic value of both coal and steel had been greatly reduced. A protocol annexed to the Treaty of Nice stipulated that all the provisions of the Treaty would be transferred to the European Community.

The Euratom Treaty

In March 1957, the "Treaties of Rome" were signed. The first Treaty provided for the establishment of a European Economic Community (EEC), the second a **European Atomic Energy Community** (EAEC) or Euratom for short. Both Treaties entered into force on 1 January 1958.

Due to the shortage of traditional energy sources in the 50s, nuclear energy was developed. Because the investment costs for nuclear energy were very high, Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands decided to unite and set up Euratom.

The general objective of the Treaty is to contribute to the creation and development of the European nuclear energy industry, to ensure that all Member States can benefit from the development of this energy and to ensure security of supply. At the same time, the Treaty guarantees a high level of safety for the public and aims to prevent nuclear material intended for civilian purposes from being used for military purposes.

The Euratom Treaty did not confer exclusive powers (i.e. no supranational character) to the Community (now the Union). Nevertheless, this Treaty was/is important: based on this Treaty, the Commission has adopted recommendations and decisions which, although not binding, have established standards at the European level.

Chernobyl, CC BY-SA 4.0, Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=chernobyl&title=Special:MediaSearch&type=image

Euratom is (still) made up of all the members of the European Union. It is a separate organisation, but membership and organisation are fully integrated into the European Union. Since the entry into force of the Merger Treaty, Euratom has had a single Commission, a single Council and a single budget together with the EEC and the ECSC.

The enlargement of the EU to the east has placed great emphasis on the nuclear sector, and in particular on the problems related to **nuclear safety**. Nuclear energy is still an important source of energy for many Eastern European countries (candidate countries or new EU countries), but the level of safety of their nuclear power plants and the protection of their populations and workers is often inadequate (the Commission can help these countries through the PHARE programme).

Of course, other issues relating to nuclear energy have also become important, such as the operational safety of nuclear power plants, the storage of radioactive waste and nuclear non-proliferation (the nuclear security guarantees/limitation of the possession of nuclear weapons).

In March 2007, the Commission took stock and assessed the prospects of the Euratom Treaty. This assessment is largely positive, particularly in the areas of research, public health protection, monitoring of the peaceful uses of nuclear materials and relations with third countries.

In the past decades, many countries decided to reduce the use of nuclear energy and/or close nuclear power plants completely. More recently some of these countries are reconsidering their decisions however, because nuclear energy produces less carbon dioxide emissions than fossil fuels and would therefore be useful in combating climate change through the enhanced greenhouse effect.

THE EEC (the European Economic Community)

The EEC Treaty was signed at the same time as the Euratom Treaty. The aim was to unite France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries in a Community that would be aimed at further integration, especially in the economic field. Attempts had already been made to cooperate more in the political field (defence), but without success. Regarding economy, member states appeared to have less resistance to (supranational) cooperation.

The EEC aimed to create a common market. Through this common market and the gradual approximation of the economic policies of the Member States, the EEC sought to:

1. Promote the development of economic activities throughout the Community;
2. Achieve a steady and balanced expansion;
3. Ensure greater stability;
4. Strive for an accelerated improvement in living standards;
5. Establish closer relations between the 'United States' in the Community.

The common market

A common market, also known as the internal market, is when supply and demand from all Member States can meet each other freely. An area without internal economic borders and with a common external border (customs union) within which factors of production (goods, persons, services and capital) can move without barriers.

Such a common market was therefore based on "four freedoms": **the free movement of persons, services, goods and capital.**

The Treaty provided for a single economic area with free competition between companies and laid the foundations for harmonising the conditions for the marketing of products and services. The market was based on the principle of free competition and prohibited agreements between undertakings and State aid which could affect trade between Member States and which had as their object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition.

"Câmpu Negru" by Luc Coekaerts from Tessenderlo is marked with CC0 1.0.
Source: https://openverse.org/image/5a0d017b-3f39-4cda-a55f-470befe96e84?q=douane+border&p=42

The establishment of a customs union

The EEC Treaty abolished the customs tariffs (import and export duties) applicable to trade between Member States. After all, they formed an obstacle to trade between member states. The old tariffs of the Member States were replaced by a common customs tariff, which constituted a kind of external border for products from third countries. The customs union went hand in hand with a common commercial policy. This policy was no longer pursued at national level but at Community level.

The removal of customs barriers and the prevention of all kinds of other measures which in practice also constituted a restriction on trade between Member States (quantitative restrictions, restrictions on quantity) led to a considerable increase in trade both within the EEC and between the EEC and third countries.

The development of common policies

A number of common policies were explicitly mentioned in the Treaty: the common agricultural policy, the common commercial policy and the common transport policy. In these areas, the Member States no longer had the power to take their own measures.
Other common policies could be developed as needed.

'If action by the Community should prove necessary to attain, in the course of the operation of the common market, one of the objectives of the Community and this Treaty has not provided the necessary powers, the Council may, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, take the appropriate measures' (see also the current principle of subsidiarity).

INSTITUTIONS

The EEC had a Commission, a Council of Ministers and a Parliament.

The Members of the **Commission** were appointed by the governments of the Member States after joint consultation. The Commission represented the common interest as an independent institution. It was the only institution with the right to propose new Community legislation to the Council of Ministers (right of initiative). As 'guardian of the Treaties', she also oversaw the application of the Treaties and the legislation derived from them. The Commission had various means of exercising control over the Member States and the business community and was empowered to implement common policies.

The **Council of Ministers** was composed of representatives of the governments of the Member States and had the most important decision-making powers.

In the beginning, Parliament only had an advisory role. Members of Parliament, who come from the national parliaments, were not yet directly elected by the people of the Member States.

The Treaty also provided for the establishment of a **Court of Justice**. The Parliament and the Court of Justice were common institutions for both the EEC and Euratom Treaties.

IMPORTANT TREATIES, ACTS AND AMENDMENTS

The EEC Treaty has been amended on a number of occasions in important respects:

The 'Merger Treaty' (1965)

The Treaty replaced the three Councils of Ministers (EEC, ECSC and Euratom) with a single Council and replaced the two Commissions (EEC, Euratom) and the High Authority (ECSC) with a single Commission. In addition, a single operating budget was introduced.

The "Electoral Act" (1976)

On 20 September 1976 the 'Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage ('Electoral Act')' was signed in Brussels. Before that, Members of the European Parliament were delegated by the national parliaments. In addition to their duties in the European Parliament, they also retained their obligations in the national parliaments and were therefore only able to fulfil their European role to a limited extent. After 1976, Members of the European Parliament could therefore be directly elected (every five years) by the citizens.

The Hague [photo: NA/Fotocollectie Anefo]

Single European Act (1986)
The Single European Act was the first major reform of the Treaties. Qualified majority voting* in the Council was extended (thus reducing the right of veto that blocked many decisions), the role of the European Parliament was strengthened and the Community's powers were extended.

* A qualified majority is a majority that is decisive in a voting procedure only if it fulfills additional conditions: since 1 November 2014, the calculation of qualified majorities is a combination of: the total number of Member States voting in favour, and the share of the population represented by the Member States voting in favour, in relation to the total number of inhabitants of the European Union. By default, a qualified majority is 55% of the Member States and 65% of the population

Treaty on European Union, the so-called Maastricht Treaty (1992)
The Maastricht Treaty established the **EUROPEAN UNION** , based on three pillars: the European Communities (ECSC, EEC and Euratom), the common foreign and security policy and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. In addition, an economic and monetary union and new common policies (education, culture) were introduced. The European Parliament was also given broader powers.

Treaty of Lisbon (2007)
In the meantime, the EU had been greatly expanded with new member states. This was one of the reasons why the functioning of the European institutions and the decision-making process had to be changed. The Treaty of Lisbon made sure of that. The Treaty aims to make the European Union more governable and democratic. The Treaty also put an end to the European Community, abolished the old structure of the EU (the aforementioned pillars) and redistributed the competencies of the EU and the Member States.

After the Treaty of Lisbon, we now have the **Treaty on the EU** and the **Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.**

Fact Sheet 2 Institutions of the European Union

What is the European Union?
Many people would probably say, Brussels or mention one or all of the EU institutions. But the EU is about people, about you and me as citizens of its 27 member states.
We, citizens of the EU Member States, represented by our governments, have transferred part of our national sovereignty to joint institutions created by ourselves, such as the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

Everything the European Union does is based on treaties. All the countries of the European Union have voluntarily and democratically agreed to this. They have negotiated the treaties extensively in advance, approved and ratified the treaties (ratification means "official approval of an international agreement or treaty by the state). The EU is therefore a **treaty based organisation**.

After the Treaty of Lisbon, we now have the Treaty on the EU and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

The Treaties set out:

- EU's objectives
- Rules for EU's institutions
- The decision-making process (how decisions are made)
- The relationship between the EU and its member states

Every action taken by the EU is founded on treaties. The EU can certainly not act if there is no competency to do so. The treaties set out the policy areas in which the EU can act. There are areas in which:

- The EU has exclusive competence
  In these areas the Member States have transferred their competence, for example in the area of free competition, the Union alone can legislate, and Member States only implement;

- There is shared competence between the EU and the Member States (e.g. agriculture and the environment);
- The Member States have competence (if the policy area in question is not expressly mentioned in the Treaty). In this area the EU can only support or complement Member States' policies.

The Treaties are the basis of EU and EU legislation. The Treaties are also known as primary law. A large amount of legislation is derived from the Treaties (secondary law) and sometimes directly affects EU citizens. There are Regulations, Directives, decisions and non-binding recommendations and advice/opinions. EU's competences can also be handed back to the Member States in the course of a Treaty revision.
EU legislation and policies are the result of decisions from the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission in which:

- The Council represents the EU countries;
- The European Parliament represents the citizens;
- The Commission is politically independent and represents the EU's collective interest.

The European Council
The European Council is the highest political institution of the EU and consists of the heads of state of all EU countries and the President of the European Commission. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is also a member of the European Council. The current High Representative is Kaja Kallas (from Estonia). The President of the European Council, also known as the President of Europe, is António Costa (from Portugal).

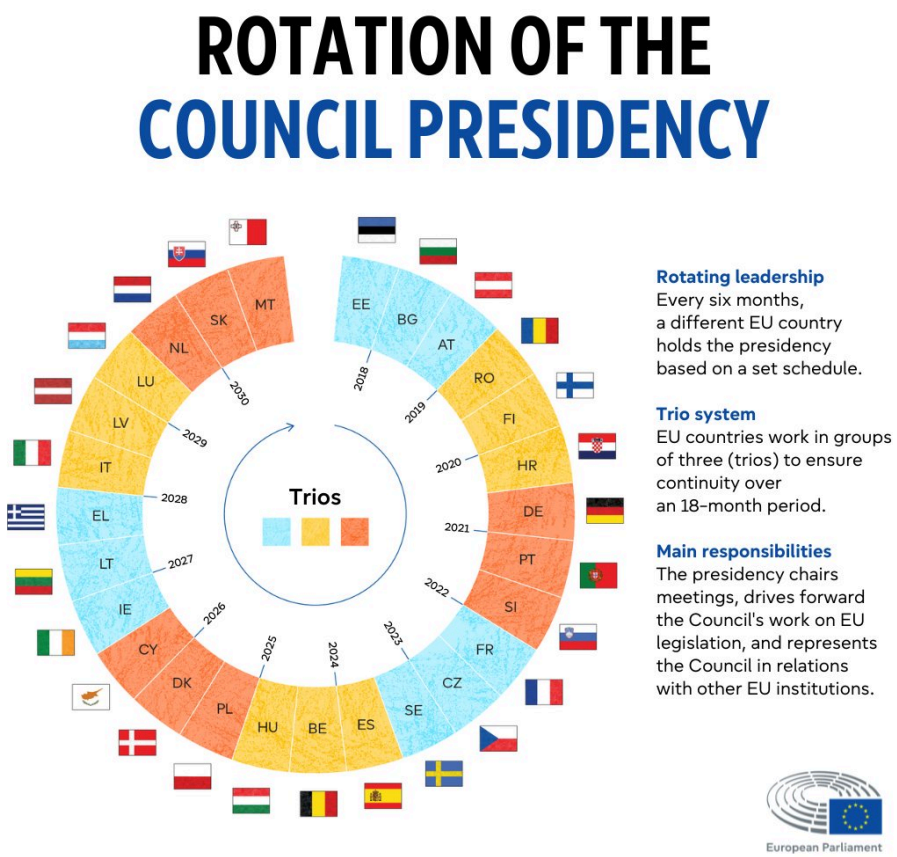
The President leads the work of the European Council. Together with the President of the European Commission, the President ensures the continuity of the work of the European Council. The President represents the European Council in the field of foreign and security policy in contacts with Heads of State or Government. Of course, he must not interfere with the High Representative who represents the European Union in the field of foreign and security policy in contacts with foreign ministers. After each meeting of the European Council, the President reports to the European Parliament.

The European Council **sets the EU's objectives and how to achieve them** (within its competencies). The Common Foreign and Security Policy also allows the European Council to address international issues.

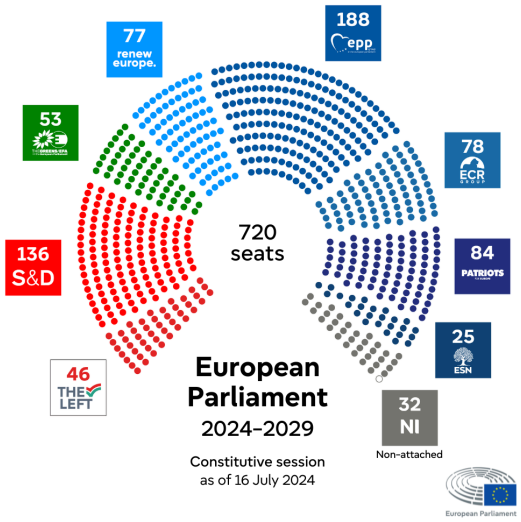
European Council meetings are important and are often referred to as 'European summits': the heads of government then set the priorities that are often the starting point for the European Commission when formulating new initiatives.

The Council
The Council is not the same as the European Council (above) or the Council of Europe (international organisation). The Council is also called the Council of Ministers or, very confusingly, the Council of the European Union.

The designation Council of Ministers best covers the load; the Council is made up of one minister from each EU country. Which ministers depend on the subject on the agenda. For example, if it is about justice, then all ministers of justice from the EU countries are invited/present, if it is about agriculture, then all ministers of Agriculture are invited/present.
The president of the Council is not a single person but an EU country. The chair changes every 6 months. There is always a close cooperation with the country that held the previous presidency and the country that will hold the next one (see: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/).



The Council's main task is to adopt EU laws and to determine the EU's budget. The Council shares these powers with the European Parliament. The Council may also conclude international agreements negotiated in advance by the Commission.



The European Parliament

The European Parliament is a directly elected body that represents EU citizens. The official seat of the EP is in Strasbourg. Elections are held every five years in all EU countries. The last elections were in 2024. The seats in the EP are distributed among the member states on the basis of their share in the total EU population (with a minimum and maximum

number of seats). There are a total of 720 MEPs from all 27 member states. The members of the European Parliament (MEP) are affiliated with national political parties in their own country but have formed political groupings on an EU scale.

Visual: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/images/20241015PHT24546/20241015PHT24546_original.png

Roberta Metsola is the current President of the European Parliament (EP). She directs all of Parliament's activities, chairs the plenary sessions, the Presidents' Conferences mentioned below, and represents Parliament externally, particularly in international relations.

There is a plenary session of the EP, which means that all MEPs are invited to be present at this meeting every month. The meeting usually takes place in Strasbourg, but the preparatory work is done in Brussels. The agenda for the plenary session is drawn up during a Presidents' Conference in which all the chairs of the political groups participate together with the President of the EP. The parliamentary committees are working on the amendments* that will be discussed during the session. The administrative work of the EP is carried out by the General Secretariat. Each political group has its own secretariat.

Tasks

The EP adopts legislation together with the Council, the co-decision procedure. In addition, there is the entry or consent procedure. The EP also decides on the budget proposals from the European Commission together with the Council. If the EP rejects the budget, the Commission will have to restart the entire budgetary procedure. Through the budget, the EP has a considerable influence on EU policy-making as well.

The EP also exercises democratic control over the EU, in particular the Commission: the European Council nominates a new President for the European Commission every five years. The candidacy can be approved or rejected by the EP. Of course, the EP will take the outcome of the EP elections into account. In addition, all new members of the European Commission are questioned by the EP before they take office. The EP may or may not approve a new Commissioner. The entire European Commission can also be dismissed by Parliament during its lifetime. Furthermore, the EP can always put oral and written questions to both the Commission and the Council.

The European Commission

The European Commission is the only EU institution who can initiate (new) EU legislation, policies and action programmes. The Commission is also responsible for implementing regulations and directives adopted by the EP and the Council in the EU countries.
The Commission is also known as the guardian of the Treaties. The Commission can start a legal procedure at the Court of Justice to ensure compliance with EU law. The Commission also implements decisions taken by the Council. The Commission therefore has four main tasks:

1. Submission of legislative proposals to the EP and the Council (right of initiative);
2. Implementing European policies and the EU budget (the Commission also prepares the budget);

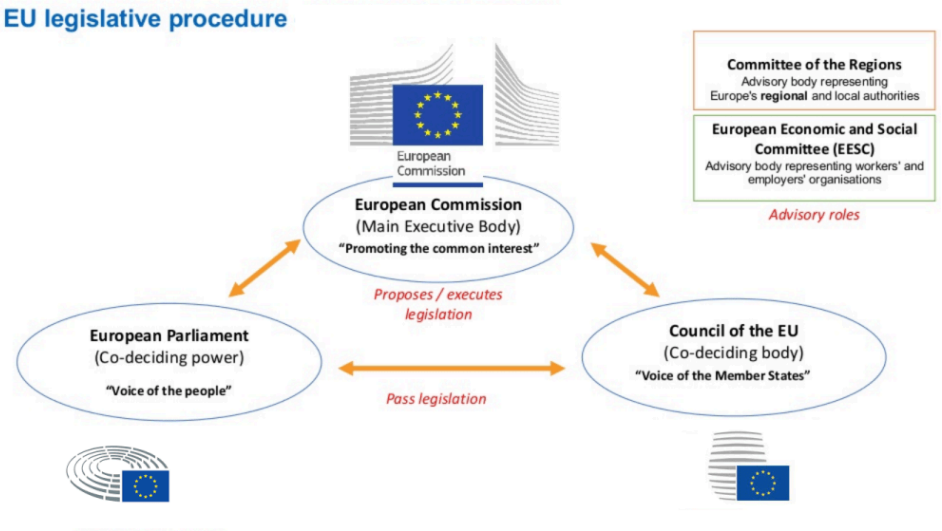
3. Enforcing European law through, for example, the infringement procedure (together with the Court of Justice, the judgments of the Court are binding on the Member States and the institutions);
4. Representing the EU in the rest of the world (the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini).

The Commission is politically independent and therefore cannot accept any instructions from an EU government. The Commission represents the interests of the EU as a whole. The Commission is politically accountable to the EP. The EP can even dismiss the entire Commission.

The members of the Commission are called Commissioners. They are `appointed` every five years and no later than six months after the election of the EP. How does that work? All the governments of the EU Member States propose a new President of the Commission. Of course, there is a lot of lobbying about the presidency in advance. The new candidate must be approved by the EP. The President-designate will then elect the other members of the Commission in consultation with the governments of the Member States. All proposed candidates are then put through their paces by the EP. The EP also votes for the new composition of the Commission as a whole. If the European Parliament is confident with the new Commission, they can start working. The Commissioners have all held political positions and have often been ministers, but as Members of the Commission they must act in the interests of the EU as a whole.

The Commissioners are supported in their work by a large civil service. Staff are divided into departments: Directorates-General (DGs) and services (such as the Legal Service). Each DG is responsible for a particular policy area, such as trade, competition, and is headed by a Director-General. The Director-General is accountable to the commissioner to whom he/she belongs.

The Commission also consults two advisory bodies: the Economic and Social Committee (representatives of employers and trade unions) and the Committee of the Regions (representatives of local and regional authorities). The Commission also consults national parliaments and governments and, of course, the people in the Member States to find out about new situations and problems that arise within the EU. The Commission should always consider whether EU legislation is the best way to deal with these new situations and/or problems or whether Member States should do so themselves (subsidiarity principle).



Visual: https://www.eyp.nl/category/regional-conferences-2023-2024/

Of course, these are not the only bodies of the EU. You probably also know:

- the ECB, the European Central Bank, responsible for the management of the euro and the monetary policy of the European Union;
- the Court of Justice, ensures compliance with EU law and the accurate interpretation and application of the Treaties;
- the European Court of Auditors, checks the legality and accuracy of all EU revenue and expenditure and the management of the EU budget;
- the European Investment Bank, which can, for example, grant loans for projects to support less developed regions of the EU and to promote business competitiveness.

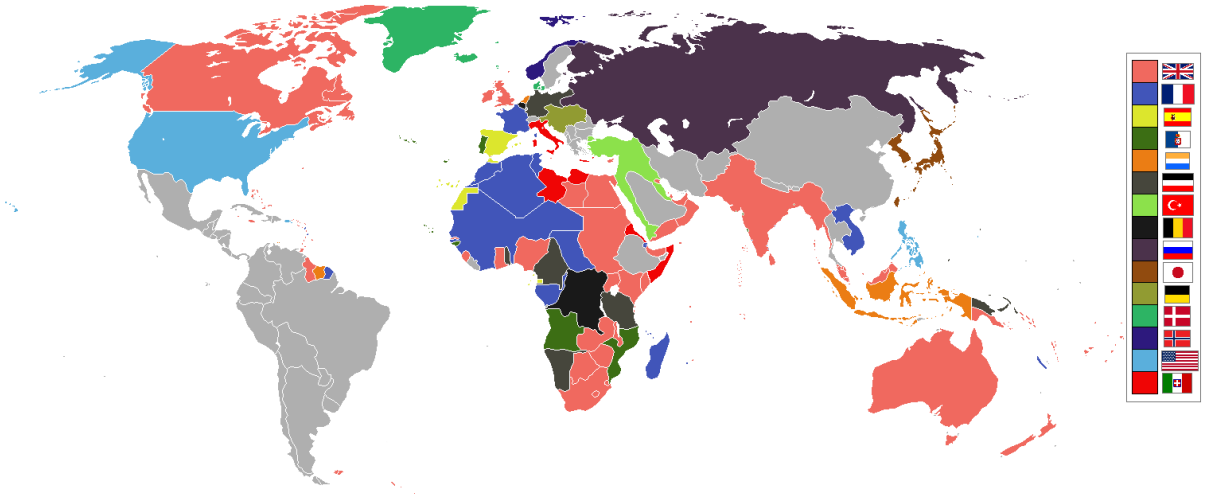
Although this factsheet is about EU institutions, let's never forget that institutions consist of people!

Fact Sheet 3 The League of Nations

The League of Nations

Long before the European Union was established, many European countries experienced periods of unification. The map illustrates the peak of the Roman Empire, which showcased this early collaboration. Even after the fall of the Roman Empire, there were times when people recognized that collective efforts in Europe fostered peace and increased prosperity.

Charles V, who reigned from 1519 to 1556, was one such leader. He aimed to make Europe the most powerful empire in the world and succeeded in unifying large parts of it. However, resistance to his plans led to the Eighty Years' War. When the empire of Charles V eventually disintegrated, conflicts among individual countries reignited. Each nation, royal family, or emperor sought to be Europe's richest and most influential power. During this time, many European countries also expanded their reach by establishing colonies around the world, leading to a prolonged era of imperialist foreign policies and resulting in global tensions. The subsequent outbreak of conflict was unsurprising to many.



Visual: World 1914 empires colonies territory. By Andrew0921 - Own work, CC BY 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11022316.

In the lead-up to World War I, two major power blocs formed on the European continent: France, Russia, and England on one side, and Germany and Austria-Hungary on the other. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria triggered heightened tensions, setting off a chain reaction that ultimately led to a worldwide conflict. Thus, World War I began.

Between July 28, 1914, and November 11, 1918, World War I devastated vast parts of Europe and beyond. While wars had occurred throughout history, this particular conflict resulted in unprecedented levels of death, injury, destruction, and suffering. Numerous countries participated in the war, and advancements in technology (such as tanks, airplanes, and chemical weapons) combined with traditional warfare strategies (like trench warfare) led to an immense loss of life.

The war officially concluded with the Treaty of Versailles, which included a war guilt clause that designated Germany as the aggressor. This clause held Germany accountable for reparations to the Allied nations in compensation for the losses and damage incurred during the war. Additionally, Germany was stripped of significant territories and faced disarmament, creating conditions that would later contribute to World War II.

At the Versailles Conference, American President Thomas Woodrow Wilson also introduced his plan for establishing lasting peace globally. Among his "Fourteen Points" was the proposal to create a supranational organization: the League of Nations. Consequently, the League of Nations was founded in 1919.

The League of Nations had three main bodies: the General Assembly, the Council and the Permanent Secretariat.

The General Assembly consisted of representatives of all member states. Each Member State was allowed up to three representatives and one vote. Recommendations could be made and/or resolutions adopted. However, these recommendations and resolutions could not bind the Member States.

The Council was the most important body of the League of Nations. The Council consisted of permanent and non-permanent members. The permanent members were France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Japan. In 1926, Germany was added as the fifth permanent member, and in 1934 the USSR was the sixth. The non-permanent members were elected by the General Assembly. The Council was able to advise on situations that posed a concrete threat to peace. In both the General Assembly and the Council, each member had a right to veto. This meant that any member could still block a decision that had been taken by majority vote (veto is Latin for 'I forbid').

The Permanent Secretariat was responsible for the administration, the preparation of meetings and the implementation of the resolutions.

In addition to the League of Nations, the **Permanent Court of International Justice** was established (Peace Palace The Hague). This Court was later "succeeded" by the International Court of Justice as we still know it today. All member states of the League of Nations undertook to submit international conflicts to the Court. The Court also had an advisory function for the Council and the General Assembly of the League of Nations.

At its peak, 58 countries were members of the League of Nations (in 1934). The map on the next page shows which countries were involved.

The League's primary goals were stated in a Covenant. They included preventing wars through collective security and disarmament and settling international disputes through negotiation and arbitration. The Covenant was signed at Versailles.

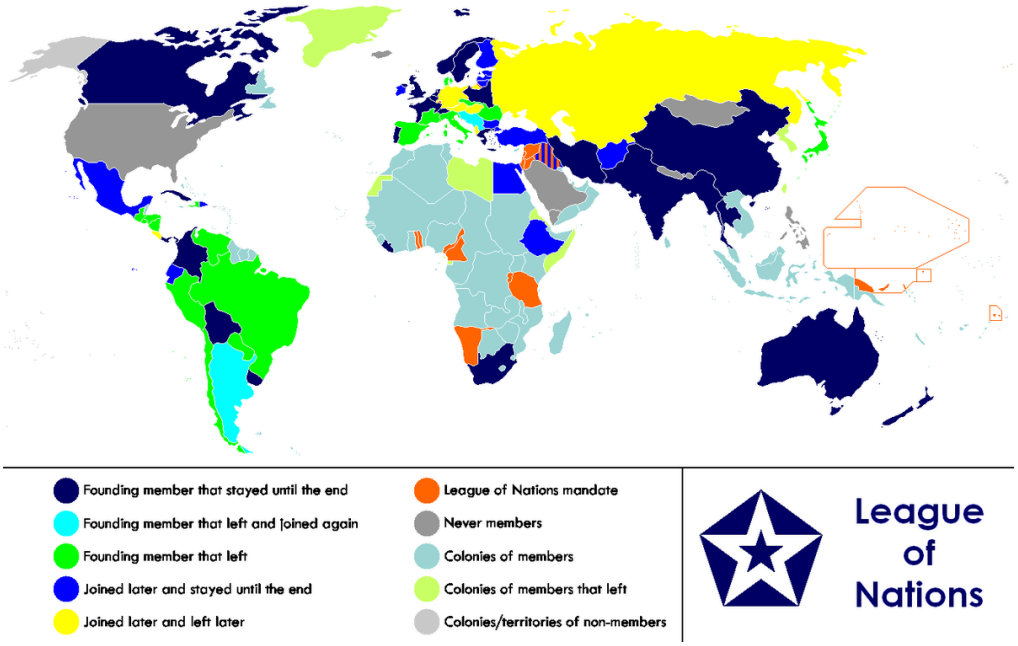
Yet the League of Nations was less successful than hoped and expected.

The League of Nations was an American idea, yet the country itself did not become a member of the League of Nations, much to the regret of President Wilson. Congress did not ratify (official ratification of an international treaty or agreement) the Treaty of Versailles. In the meantime, a different political wind was blowing in the US (mainly aimed at the US itself: isolationist politics).

At the beginning of the 1930s, Germany, Italy and Japan left the League of Nations because they did not want to comply with certain rules of the League. The United Kingdom and France were the only permanent members that remained from then on. Many other countries feared that from that moment on the League of Nations would be used as a disguised instrument of power by both countries. At that time, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini (Italy) also emerged. The League of Nations proved incapable of responding unanimously and forcefully to their ideas.

Soon the world was at war again. After WWII, the United Nations succeeded the League of Nations.

WWII also meant the end of the Permanent Court of International Justice. The International Court of Justice (UN body) took over. The International Court of Justice is also located in the Peace Palace in The Hague.



Fact Sheet 4 The Council of Europe

Both World Wars rooted further international collaboration worldwide and on the European Continent.

On the European Continent, countries started to collaborate to secure peace through economic collaboration (the forerunners of what we now call the European Union).

The World Wars also started a thorough reflection on Human rights, resulting in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and on the European Continent, the establishment of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1949.

The Council of Europe's main task is to promote human rights, democracy and the Rule of Law in Europe.

The Council of Europe started with 10 European countries and now includes 46 member states, covering almost the entire European continent.

Soon after its establishment, it created the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. This treaty aims to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. It was the first legally binding instrument on human rights whereas the Universal Declaration wasn't. More conventions followed.

It also established a European Court of Human Rights. The European Court of Human Rights ensures that the rights outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights are respected.

The Council of Europe is not an EU institution. All EU Member States also take part in the Council of Europe, however. You might also notice that the EU Flag originates from the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe works on various projects such as combating discrimination, protecting cultural heritage, promoting education, and ensuring freedom of expression.

If you would like to dive a little deeper into what the Council of Europe is and what it does, take a look at these videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA36LCnNlgQ&t=3s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yC1ndo8yX0w

Timeline of the European Project

The timeline offers an overview of the main events, most important documents and treaties that all contributed to the founding of the European Union as we know it today.

In the orange blocks, you will find important documents, the green blocks include treaties and the blue blocks represent events.

Document 1464	**George of Poděbrady's Treaty on the Establishment of Peace throughout Christendom** George of Poděbrady (1420–1471) was King of Bohemia. His proposal, made in the context of the fight against the Ottomans (who in 1453 had conquered Constantinople), abandoned, probably for the first time, the idea of a Universal Monarchy, which had been a common aspiration in Christian Europe during the Middle Ages. George, instead, proposed a multilateral treaty among European States aiming at a permanent and equal union.
Document 1693	**William Penn's "An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe"** William Penn (1644 – 1718) was a Quaker and founder of what is today the US State of Pennsylvania. When he wrote this essay he had returned to England. The essay lays plans for a pan-European organisation, with membership rules and various institutions, including a Parliament (or "Dyet"). The PDF is available here.
Document 1713	**Charles-Irénée Castel de Saint-Pierre's "Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe"** Castel de Saint-Pierre (1658 – 1743) argued that balance among powers would only work if permanently armed and as such it could not bring peace to Europe. He therefore proposed a European federation, with common institutions. File available from the French National Library here (Volume I).
Document 1814	**Saint-Simon and Thierry's De la réorganisation de la société européenne, ou De la nécessité et des moyens de rassembler les peuples de l'Europe en un seul corps politique, en conservant à chacun son indépendance nationale**

	The Count of Saint-Simon (1760 -1825) and Augustin Thierry (1795-1856) published this book at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, as Europeans tried to find ways to stabilise the Continent. While European leaders settled for a "Restoration" of the traditional monarchical systems and the establishment of a "Concert of Europe" (a forum where European leaders could try to solve conflicts without resorting to war), Saint-Simon and Thierry advocated for a "general Parliament" of Europe, as well as equally democratic "national parliaments" "for all nations of Europe". Document available from the French National Library here.
Event 1815 - 1866	**German Confederation established by the Congress of Vienna** The German Confederation was established at the Congress of Vienna (1814) to replace the defunct Holy Roman Empire. Its member States would meet in a Council, where decisions (mostly about security issues) could only be made in unanimity - but were then binding. The Confederation was established "for eternity" and there was no legal way of leaving it. Some German nationalists subsequently attempted to transform the Confederation into a German unitary State. Conflict over this continued until Prussia defeated Austria in 1866: the Confederation was then dissolved and Prussia took the helm of a North-German Confederation, without Austria, before becoming the German Empire in 1871.
Event 1834 – 1919	**German Customs Union (Zollverein)** The Zollverein was a Custom Union area that covered much of the German speaking area. It was not a German Confederation's institution. It was mostly a Prussian project and, very broadly, ended up including most of the Confederation except Austria. It became obsolete with the German Empire, but survived until 1919 (that is, the end of WWI), as the German Empire formally consisted of various sovereign States.
Event 1834	**Giuseppe Mazzini founds the secret society "Young Europe"** Giuseppe Mazzini (1805 – 1872) had already founded "Young Italy" in 1840 while in exile in London, with the aim of uniting the peninsula under a republican government. "Young Europe" followed, with republicanism and national liberation as immediate aims but with plans for a future loosely federated Europe. Its members were Young Italy, Young Poland, and Young Germany, and, subsequently, Young France. Its aims for a united Europe were to be achieved after national "liberations", so the organisations never achieved anything practical; however, it did prove an inspiration to later generations of republicans and democratic activists. It also influenced the independently active Young Ireland and, much later, the Young Turks.
Event 1849	**Victor Hugo invokes the "United States of Europe"** In 1849, Victor Hugo chaired the Peace Congress in Paris, the third meeting between peace societies from around the world. There, he introduced the idea of a "United States of Europe", governed by a sovereign "Senate". His formulation became a common refrain repeated by many writers and political activists over the years. While in exile from Napoleon III's France, he planted, together with his grandchildren, an oak tree in his garden in Guernsey. This is now known as the United States of Europe oak, because he said that, when the oak would mature, the United States of Europe would have been established.
Document 1885	**Théodore de Korwin Szymanowski's "L'avenir économique, social et politique en Europe"** Szymanowski (1846 - 1901), a writer and a poet, was an active proponent of the abolition of slavery and of its trade, as well as of a united Europe. His project revolved mostly around an economic Common Market and a common currency (his preference was for the French Franc).

	File available in the Polish National Library here.
Treaty 25/07/1921	**Signature of the Belgium–Luxembourg Economic Union convention** The convention, a precursor to the Benelux agreement, opened the markets of Luxembourg and Belgium to each other and aligned their currencies on a fixed change rate.
Event 1923 - 1926	**Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi launches the Pan-Europa movement and holds its first congress** Kalergi's movement and ideas went on to influence the modern EU (the EU anthem, Beethoven's Hymn to Joy, was his suggestion, for instance). Pan-Europa seemed to have gathered momentum among progressive leaders and thinkers such as Briand or Mann, but the events of the 1930s soon made it marginal.
Document 1930	**Aristide Briand presents a "Memorandum on the organisation of a system of European Federal Union" at the request of the League of Nations** Briand (1862 - 1932) was President of the Council and Foreign Minister of France. Beside his stellar political career, he is now remembered for his many attempts to pacify an increasingly conflictual Europe. He won the Nobel Peace Prize (1926) with German Chancellor Gustav Stresemann (1878 - 1929) for those efforts. Briand also signed the famous Briand-Kellogg pact (1928), which aspired to "outlaw war". In his Memorandum, Briand suggests "a European Union", perhaps organised within the League of Nations (its member States had to be members of the League as well), with a Common Market and a Customs Union. States would be equal and independent within the Union. Document available here.
Document 1933	**Future British Conservative minister Arthur Salter's "The United States of Europe"** Salter (1881 - 1975), an economist and politician, had worked with Jean Monnet in an international agency for maritime transport, and had then had a stint in the Secretariat of the League of Nations, which he left at the end of 1930. He had responded to Briand's memorandum on behalf of the British government with objections concerning the political parts and potential issues due to the world-wide extent of the British empire. He was, however, in favour of an economic and customs union. In his 1933 book, Salter proposed a Europe-wide Zollverein. His proposals were in fact very similar to the so-called Monnet plan, which was a French plan for post-war recovery that provided the basis for the Schuman declaration in 1950, which Monnet himself helped to draft. Document available here.
Document 1934	**Former and future French Prime Minister Edouard Herriot's "The United States of Europe"** Herriot (1872 - 1957) was an academic and politician, three-times President of the Council in France. His book was an analysis of Briand's memorandum and of the developments that had happened since. His take was strikingly similar to Salter's: an economic, rather than political union was what was possible at that moment, and a political union could only happen, if ever, once an economic structure was in place. Document available here.

Document 1940	**Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, Eugenio Colorni, and Ursula Hirschmann's Ventotene Manifesto is written** Spinelli, Rossi, Colorni, and Hirschmann had been exiled by the Fascist regime to the Southern Italian island of Ventotene. There they wrote a Manifesto that launched the modern Federalist movement. A decidedly progressive text, the Manifesto argued for a united Europe, organised federally, with a focus on democracy and social issues. Document available here.
Event 1943	**Nazi Minister Von Ribbentrop proposes a European confederation under Nazi rule (to some support across collaborating governments)** Von Ribbentrop (1893 - 1946) was the Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany, notably during the whole of WWII. It is unclear whether his proposal was serious or a mere propaganda tool. The choice, for Fascist and Nazi regimes in Europe, was between total hegemony and a federation of Fascist regimes across Europe, which was supported in some quarters. Hitler himself disagreed with his minister: his vision was one of total German domination over the Continent. Others, like Vichy France Prime Minister Laval, supported the proposal.
Event 27 – 28/08/1943	**Foundation of the European Federalist Movement** Based on the principles of the Ventotene Manifesto, the EFM was founded in a secret meeting in Milan in an extremely volatile context: Mussolini had been dismissed and arrested in July 1943, but Italy was still allied to Nazi Germany and it would be until Sept 8th 1943, when the provisional government announced the signature of an Armistice with the Allies.
Treaty 1944 - 1948	**First Customs Union agreement and then Economic Union Agreement founding the BENELUX** The BENELUX is an intergovernmental organisation consisting of Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg. The agreements established a customs and economic union as well as deeper cooperation in other areas. BENELUX still exists and it is headquartered in Brussels.
Document 19/09/1946	**Churchill's speech at the University of Zurich calls for a United States of Europe** Churchill (1874 - 1965), former wartime Prime Minister of Britain, delivered a speech about post-war Europe and argued that lasting peace on the Continent may be achieved by a "sort of United States of Europe" based on Franco-German reconciliation. This organisation would not include the UK, which Churchill, leader of the Conservative party, saw as still an Imperial power. Document available here.
Treaty 17/03/1948	**Treaty of Brussels** The Treaty of Brussels led to the founding of the Western Union, a military alliance between France, UK, NL, Belgium, and Luxembourg, strongly supported by the USA within the framework of the Cold War. Document available here.
	North Atlantic Treaty

Treaty 04/04/1949	The Treaty established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a US-led military alliance based on mutual military assistance.
Treaty 05/05/1949	**Treaty of London: Founding of the Council of Europe** The Council of Europe (CoE) is the first intergovernmental organisation still functioning in Europe. Its focus is on human rights, rule of law, and democracy. The CoE has 46 member States in 2025 (Russia was expelled in 2022). One of the most important institutions of the CoE is the European Court of Human Rights. The EU has adopted the original flag and anthem of the CoE. Document available here.
Document 09/05/1950	**Schuman Declaration** Schuman (1886 - 1963) was a Luxembourg-born, French former Prime Minister who in 1950 was serving as minister for Foreign Affairs in France. As the Monnet plan of industrial post-WWII recovery for France required importing coal from Germany, and as Germany conversely had traditionally feared French capabilities for using the coal for its steel factories, the French government saw the opportunity for an agreement that would pool their resources. By linking steel and coal production together and creating a first single market for these resources, it was widely believed that war would become an impractical option and that peace would therefore be ensured. Monnet and others worked on the speech, which was delivered by Schuman, who had been championing policies that would unite Europe. His speech was well received, including, crucially, in West Germany, spurring negotiations that would eventually lead to the founding of the European Communities. May 9th, the anniversary of the speech, is now celebrated as Europe Day. Document Available here.
Treaty 18/04/1951	**Treaty of Paris: European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)** The Treaty formalised Schuman's proposal and established a supranational European organisation, the ECSC, with an independent High Authority, an Assembly consisting of representatives from its Member States, as well as a Council where their Ministers sat. It counted six members (Belgium, France - including Algeria -, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, and West Germany). Document available here.
Event 1954 - 1962	**Algerian war between Algerian independentists and France** This was a bloody decolonisation war fought between Algerian separatists and the French State as well as paramilitary groups as Algeria itself descended into civil war. Unlike other colonies of the French empire, Algeria had been made into an integral part of continental France - a "departement". Generations of French had been born in Algeria and considered themselves part of that territory; however, great inequalities between them and the rest of the Algerians persisted and caused great tensions. The protracted war, which featured guerrilla tactics, urban warfare as well as human rights violations. The French colonial forces in particular have been accused of torture, summary killings as well as use of gazes and napalm. The war caused a deep moral and political crisis which led to the fall of the Parliamentary system in France and eventually, pushed by an attempted military coup, led to the return of General De Gaulle to power and to the establishment of a Presidential system. The war itself ended with the independence of Algeria, which consequently left the EEC (the successor of the ECSC).

Event 13/03-07/05/1954	**Battle of Điện Biên Phủ** While the war in Algeria was getting started, France lost one of its most important imperial possessions: Indochina. The battle of Điện Biên Phủ, in modern Vietnam, was fought between France and the Communist forces of the Viet Minh. After its decisive defeat, France left Indochina for good, after a century of colonial domination. The peace treaty included the division into a North and South Vietnam, which in time would lead to the Vietnam War and eventually to the conquest of the whole of Vietnam by the Communist forces of the North.
Treaty 23/10/1954	**Western Union becomes Western European Union (WEU)** As West Germany and Italy accessed the military organisation, this became an essential bloc of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). As the Cold War ended, the WEU started to be redundant. It was closed in 2011 as its functions had been taken over by the EU.
Event 23 October – 4 November 1956	**Hungarian Revolution** The unrest in Hungary was anti-USSR in nature. It was quelled with extraordinary violence by the Soviet army. The repression was a wake up call for many leftists in Western Europe, who started to look for alternative ways to argue for progressive and leftist ideas while rejecting the Soviet Union's political leadership.
Treaty 25/03/1957	**Treaties of Rome** The Treaties were the culmination of the negotiations for further European integration within the ESCS. The ESCS did not expire but became part of the European Communities (EC), together with the newly established European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom. This treaty is a foundational text for the current European Union, whose text of reference, the 2013 Lisbon Treaty, derives from. The EEC featured a common market (goods, capital, labour), a common agricultural and transport policy, as well as a European social fund (which is in fact a cohesion fund for equal regional development). Document available here.
Event 1961	**The Berlin Wall is erected** The reasons that pushed the Soviet bloc and the German Democratic Republic to erect a wall that split Berlin into an East and a West zone are many and varied. Berlin had been a contentious subject since the end of WWII. While the intra-German border in the 1950s was difficult if not impossible to cross for Eastern Germans, Berlin had been different because of the international Power's presence. The Wall became a physical representation of the Iron Curtain and prevented Eastern Germans from emigrating.
Event 05/07/1962	**Algeria becomes an independent State and leaves its association with the EEC**
Event 1963	**UK's first attempt to join the EEC** The UK tried three times to belatedly join the EEC and was twice rejected by a declaration by French President De Gaulle. De Gaulle was convinced that Britain's interest would be at odds with the EEC's as well as France's. A

	recent UK - US military agreement on missiles also concerned the French government and reinforced their assessment. Document available here.
Event June 1965 – January 1966	**EEC's crisis of the "empty chair" and Luxembourg compromise** A six-month long confrontation between the French government and the European Commission led to a compromise which ensured a right to veto European decisions but also led to enhanced powers and competences for the Commission itself.
Event 1967	**UK's second attempt to join the EEC (President de Gaulle's second veto)** Article available here.
Event 1967 - 1974	**Military dictatorship in Greece**
Treaty 01/07/1967	**Merger of the EEC, the ECSC, and Euratom into the European Communities (EC)** The merger was signed right after the end of the empty chair crisis. The Communities were still legally separate, but their institutions were merged.
Event February - August 1968	**Prague Spring** The Prague Spring was a period in the history of Communist Czechoslovakia during which the newly elected leader of the party, Alexander Dubček, set off to build an alternative, non-Soviet though still Socialist, way to govern the country. The Soviet Union and the other members of the Warsaw Pact (the Communist version of NATO) invaded Prague and ejected Dubček and his allies from government. After that, Czechoslovakia was "normalised", that is, returned to orthodox Soviet governance.
Event 25/09/1972	**Norwegian voters reject membership of the EC in a referendum**
Event 01/01/1973	**Accession of Denmark, Ireland, and the UK to the EC**
Event 25/04/1974	**Carnation Revolution in Portugal and start of democratic transition** In 1974, a revolution facilitated by progressive wings of the Portuguese military prompted the fall of the Estado Novo, already enfeebled by the passing of former dictator Salazar.
Event 15 - 20/07/1974	**Coup d'etat in Cyprus and Turkish invasion** After years of inter-communal violence between the Greek and Turkish speaking population, the military junta in Greece launched a coup d'etat in Cyprus, which was independent but ruled by the Greek majority (which the Turkish minority accused of discrimination). The coup was launched on the 15th July and aimed to ultimately

	unite Cyprus with Greece; on the 20th July, Turkey launched an invasion of Cyprus. The result of the ensuing confrontation was a division of the island into a Northern half, occupied by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is currently unrecognised at UN level, and by the Republic of Cyprus, which officially is still considered to govern the whole island but only occupies its Southern and Central parts. The division continues in a stalemate as of 2025, regardless of multiple attempts to solve the impasse.
Event 07-10/06/1979	**First elections for the European Parliament** The European Parliament had been fighting for Member States to agree on organising direct elections to the Parliament since the Treaties of Rome (which stipulated not just direct elections, but also a common voting system, which member States to this date have not implemented). Under pressure, the States agreed. Until 1979, national MPs would be selected to sit in the EP. Simone Veil (1927 - 2017), holocaust survivor and French politician (former Minister for Health), was the first President of a directly elected EP, as well as the first female President. Document available here.
Event 1975 - 1982	**Death of Franco and democratic transition of Spain** Franco's nomination of Juan Carlos Bourbon as his heir led the way, after the former's death to a democratic transition agreed between the newly anointed King and politicians from the moderate wing of Spanish conservatives and the Socialist, leftists, and regional parties which had been allowed to return from exile and clandestinity. A coup attempt in 1981 failed thanks in part to the King's intervention, which reinforced the democratic transition as well as his personal standing.
Event 01/01/1981	**Accession of Greece to the EC**
Event 23/02/1982	**Greenland exits the EC** Greenland, having recently become autonomous from (while still being part of) Denmark, rejected EC membership by referendum. The withdrawal treaty was particularly hard to negotiate (currently, Greenland remains one of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the EU – a list of territories, often colonies / former colonies described as having "special" relationships to one of the member States; it used to include French West Africa and the Belgian Congo among others).
Treaty 14/06/1985	**Schengen Agreement (Treaty)** The treaty established the Schengen zone of free movement. This meant a virtually border-free zone (countries still have the right to check occasionally and following certain protocols) and a harmonisation of visa rules (which led to the current common "Schengen visa" in use currently). The treaty was not part of the EC and in fact only Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed it (three of them were already part of the Benelux free border zone). The other members of the EC/EU started to join at different moments in the 1990s. Schengen became part of the EU framework in 1997. Document available here.
Event 01/01/1986	**Accession of Portugal and Spain to the EC**

Treaty February 1986	**Single European Act (SEA)** The SEA was the first major treaty signed since the Rome (1957) and Merger (1967) treaties and signalled a renewed push for further integration. It followed general dissatisfaction among member States that the European market still was not fully harmonised and thus prevented frictionless trade. The Treaty established a single European market (to be completed by 1992) and was based on a white paper strongly supported by the UK government led by Margaret Thatcher. The treaty was hotly debated as certain member States deemed it gave either too much power to European institutions (e.g., Denmark), or too little (e.g., Italy). Document available here.
Event 1989 - 1992	**Velvet Revolution and Velvet Divorce** In 1989, a non-violent movement led to the fall of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. After a couple of years of democratic transition, the country split in two, again peacefully, into nowadays Czechia and Slovakia.
Event 23/08/1989	**Baltic Way** It was a peaceful anti-Soviet demonstration where some 2 million people joined hands across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. These countries still regard this date as a foundational moment that led to their independence from the Soviet Union. Lithuania was the first to declare it, in 1990, followed by Latvia and Estonia in 1991.
Event 09/11/1989	**Fall of the Berlin Wall** In the midst of the deep political and economic crisis hitting the Eastern Bloc, the government of the Democratic Republic of Germany sought to open its frontiers with the West in order to ease the pressure of East German people migrating to Hungary or Czechoslovakia to emigrate to the Western Bloc (Hungary and Czechoslovakia were very recently pressured into letting people cross their own borders with Austria). However, a slip of the tongue by a government official during a press conference led Berliners to understand that they could now cross the border into West Berlin “immidetialy”. As the crowd assembled at the Wall’s gates, nobody in the government would take responsibility for ordering to use force to stop the people; the guards therefore decided to let people pass through. Soon afterwards, people from West and East Berlin started to climb on top of the wall, and some proceeded to dismantle it.
Event 03/10/1990	**Reunification of Germany** The fall of the wall and the progressive disintegration of the Eastern Bloc led to talks of reunifications, which led quite swiftly to the German reunification. As Eastern Germany ceased to exist and became part of the Federal Republic of Germany, its territories automatically became part of the EC.
Event 26/12/1991	**Official end of the Soviet Union** The Soviet Union, seized by a very complex combination of deep crises, officially dissolved in December 1991, thus releasing the remaining Republics in the Eurasian area.
Treaty	**Treaty of Maastricht**

07/02/1992	The Treaty of Maastricht marks a transformational moment in the history of European integration, as it marks the birth of the European Union (EU) as a truly supranational organisation with some hints of a federal order: a truly historically unique organisation. The Treaty deepened the harmonisation of European policies, continuing the merging process of the "European Communities" into one legal entity and adding two additional "pillars" of cooperation on home and foreign/security affairs. In those two pillars, member States retained their competences, but they would engage in mutual consultation. Maastricht increased the powers of the Parliament, which now became a co-legislator (that is, it could debate and approve law on a mostly equal standing with member States). Maastricht also set the process in motion for the establishment of a common currency and established the concept of a European citizenship. A truly fundamental text for the functioning of the EU, the Maastricht Treaty was refined and modified over the years but only finally revised by the most recent Treaty of Lisbon, in 2007. Document available here.
Event 22/03/1992	**Fall of the communist government in Albania** The communist party, until 1990 firmly in power in Albania, had had to gradually cede its position under the pressure of popular demonstrations and strikes. It finally was ejected from government in the 1992 parliamentary elections.
Event 27/04/1992	**Breakup of Yugoslavia** The breakup was caused by the fall of the communist regime as well as the national instances of its constituent parts. In April 1992, Yugoslavia ceased to exist: its successor State was the Union of Serbia and Montenegro (or "Former Yugoslavia"). This event was followed by a series of particularly violent wars - the Balkan wars, which featured among other things the 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia. Kosovo finally seceded (violently) from Serbia in 1999, while Montenegro voted for its secession in 2006. Among the former Yugoslavian countries, Slovenia and Croatia are the only current members of the EU.
Event 02/06/1992	**Danish voters reject the Treaty of Maastricht in a referendum** The Treaty of Maastrich's entry into force was therefore delayed. French voters had approved it in a parallel referendum by small margins.
Event 18/05/1993	**Danish voters approve the Treaty of Maastricht in a second referendum** Denmark had secured some opt-outs for its provisions on security and foreign policy notably (as well as the common currency, which Denmark has not adopted to this day).
Event 27 – 28/11/1994	**Norwegian voters reject membership of the EU in a referendum for a second time**
Event 01/01/1995	**Accession of Austria, Finland, and Sweden to the EU** With the fall of the iron curtain and the end of the Cold War, previously "neutral" countries were now free to access the EU.

Treaty 02/10/1997	**Treaty of Amsterdam** The Treaty increased some EU competences (security and foreign policy) as well Parliament's legislative role, building on the provisions of the Treaty of Maastricht. Document available here.
Event 10/04/1998	**Good Friday Agreement** The Good Friday Agreement marked the end of the Troubles in Ireland, a period of violent unrest between separatists and unionists in Northern Ireland. It consisted of an agreement between Northern Irish parties on how to share power, and between the UK and the Republic of Ireland on how to jointly manage contrasting views of whether Northern Ireland should stay in the UK or join the Republic. While the agreement did not say much about the land border, its stipulations about cross-border cooperation were widely understood to imply a border open to at least a certain degree. This situation came under strain once Britain voted to leave the EU, thus making the Irish border the only EU-UK land border.
Treaty 26/02/2001	**Treaty of Nice** The Treaty of Nice tweaked some rules (including the numbers of members of Parliament per country) in anticipation of the planned enlargement of 2004. Negotiations during the Nice Council (held in 2000) had been acrimonious: leaders disagreed on almost all parts of the proposed text. The number of MEPs was an issue, as was the composition of the European Commission: the bigger member States argued that they should lose their second Commissioner and discussion revolved, in fact, on whether there should be fewer Commissioners (thus not one per country) at all. Smaller member States firmly requested to keep one Commissioner each - even though Commissioners ("ministers" of the European Commission) do not represent member States. This status quo has survived to this day, so that the Commission currently counts 27 Commissioners. Document available here.
Event 07/01/2001	**Irish voters reject the Treaty of Nice in a referendum** The Treaty's entry into force is delayed.
Event 01/01/2002	**Introduction of the Euro** The Euro, the common currency of the EU since 1995, was introduced as a physical currency. Until then, it had just nominally existed and national currencies were still in place. For a short while EU member States in the so-called Eurozone maintained two physical currencies, while the old ones were retired little by little.
Treaty 28/02/2002 – 18/07/2003	**Convention on the Future of the European Union** The Convention was called for by European leaders in 2001, in the aftermath of the Treaty of Nice which had highlighted the increasing difficulties for EU leaders to agree on further EU integration. The Convention was meant to prepare a Constitution (which, even though it would have to be ratified as a Treaty, would have all the trappings of a Constitution - carrying the symbolic meaning that it was more than a multilateral text but a founding document discussed by a wider range of representatives of a European people). It was the first time that a fundamental text of the EU was prepared by a constitutional assembly consisting of representatives of different legislative bodies from the EU and its member States, including the European and the national

	parliaments. The resulting Constitution / Treaty would have been called “Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe” - its ambiguous status clearly noticeable from its name. Document available here.
Event 19/10/2002	**Irish voters approve the Treaty of Nice** This was their second referendum. Irish military neutrality had now been guaranteed. This had been the main concern for Irish voters.
Event 01/05/2004	**Accession of Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia to the EU** The largest enlargement to date.
Treaty 29/10/2004	**The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe is signed in Rome** It still needed ratification from all member States to enter into force.
Event 20/02/2005	**Spanish voters approve the Constitutional Treaty in a referendum (76 to 24%)**
Event 29/05/2005	**French voters reject the Constitutional Treaty in a referendum (55 to 45%)**
Event 01/06/2005	**Dutch voters reject the Constitutional Treaty in a referendum (61 to 39%)**
Event 10/07/2005	**Luxembourgish voters approve the Constitutional Treaty in a referendum (57 to 43%)** However, given the rejections in France and The Netherlands, the Constitution is not ratified. The draft Treaty is abandoned.
Event 01/01/2007	**Accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU**
Treaty 13/12/2007	**Treaty of Lisbon** The Treaty of Lisbon is the most recent fundamental text of the EU. It amends both the Treaties of Rome and Maastricht (which are now called the TFEU and the TEU, respectively). Together, the TFEU and TEU contain all the rules and provisions that govern the EU. While the Lisbon provisions took much that had been negotiated for the Constitutional treaty, this was a purely intergovernmental treaty and any reference to a constitution had been lost. Its symbols, as well as the affirmation of the supremacy of EU law over national law, were moved from the body of the text to annex declarations. The Lisbon Treaty, however, did build on the innovations proposed by its failed predecessor, including clarifications concerning the role of Parliament as co-legislator and a systematisation of the competences of the EU and member States. It also provided a procedure for withdrawing from the EU.

	Document available here.
Event 01/07/2013	**Accession of Croatia to the EU** The last enlargement to date: the EU had then 28 member States.
Event February - March 2014	**Russia invades and annexes Crimea (Ukraine)** The annexation of Crimea was followed by a civil war in Eastern Ukraine, with separatist forces supported and funded from Russia. The war was at its climax in 2014-2015. An armed truce ensued, which was repeatedly broken from both sides. The conflict became part of the larger Ukraine-Russia war from 2022.
Event 2015	**Migration crisis** In 2015, a combination of world crises led to a greatly increased flux of refugees that put European cooperation at strain. Some EU leaders signalled their willingness to support the refugees by letting them cross their borders, while others refused. The crisis led to a fiery debate in all countries and contributed to the crisis of many mainstream parties and to the rise of new ones, often from the far right.
Event 23/06/2016	**Brexit referendum** After years of internal fighting over whether Britain would be better or worse off if it left the EU, Prime Minister David Cameron called a referendum. British voters decided, by razor margins and amid accusations of foreign interference, to leave the EU (52 to 48%). Very difficult negotiations ensue, as the British Conservative party veered rightwards and argued for a clean break for Britain, with no membership of the EU, nor membership of its common market. A summary of an EP debate available here.
Event 12/06/2018	**Prespa Agreement** In 2018, Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia reached an agreement on the name of the latter. Macedonia, whose name is linked to the history of Macedonian king Alexander the Great, was a great contention point between the two countries - so much so that Greece had objected to Macedonia's accession to NATO and the EU. Thanks to the agreement, Macedonia became North Macedonia and Greece accepted the new name and accession talks with the EU could start.
Event November - December 2019	**Start of the COVID-19 pandemic** The pandemic, which is technically still ongoing in 2025, was at its most acute in the years 2020 - 2021 and has killed millions of people across the world. The pandemic forced the EU to rethink its cooperation mechanism and led some of its member States to push for new competences for the EU and better and faster mechanism to pool resources.
Event 31/01/2020	**The UK leaves the EU**

	After a very challenging negotiation period, which was especially taxing for the UK political system, the UK officially left the EU. The EU returned to a 27-member configuration. A withdrawal agreement governed the new UK - EU relation.
Event 24/02/2022	**Russian invasion of Ukraine** The Russian invasion of Ukraine signalled the start of a ferocious war that is still ongoing as of 2025. The war is putting a big strain on European cooperation, as Russian President Putin is seizing the chance by influencing European politics at party and government level.

Places to Explore

Depending on where you are, there are different places that you can visit to explore the history and day-to-day of the European Union, specifically in your locale. You can visit monuments, local archives, local political parties, or the municipalities, local organisations that work closely with the EU, museums, cultural centres and different heritage sites (see for example: https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/initiatives-and-success-stories/european-heritage-label and https://geo.osnabrueck.de/ehl/EN/map). Here, we are offering some ideas, places and initiatives that you can explore or use as sources for inspiration. Many national history museums across Europe often have collections that are also relevant to the history of the European Union. Perhaps, you can also visit the Schengen border if you happen to live closeby, and explore former border offices.

Europe Experience

Europa Experiences are multimedia spaces around Europes where people explore how Europeans work together to tackle its most important challenge, find out how the European Union works, how it affects people's daily life and how EU citizens can make a difference. All visits to Europe Experiences are free of charge and available in all 24 official European Union languages. Besides the ones in Brussels and Strasbourg there are 13 other Europe Experiences: Berlin, Copenhagen, Dublin, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Luxembourg, Paris, Prague, Luxembourg, Rome, Stockholm, Tallinn, Vienna and Warsaw (see: https://visiting.europarl.europa.eu/en/visitor-offer/other-locations/europa-experience).

EU agencies

An EU agency is not an EU institution. European Union (EU) agencies are bodies that are set up to carry out specific technical, scientific or administrative tasks like Europol, Eurofound. There are agencies in every EU member state and they often accept visitors as well (see: https://agencies-network.europa.eu/index_en).

Europe Direct Centres

Europe Direct Centres (EDC) help bring the European Union closer to people. You can turn to them with questions about EU policies, programmes and priorities but many of the EDCs also proactively engage with citizens, pupils and students included. There are EDCs in every EU Member State and

in many neighboring countries. Check the map: https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en

What does Europe do for me?
This website offers amongst other an overview of EU projects or EU funded projects and initiatives in your country/region. You can visit many of these places (see: https://what-europe-does-for-me.europarl.europa.eu/en/home).

In addition, these are some specific sites you can visit if you are based in the are:

Jean Monnet House (France): https://jean-monnet.europa.eu/home_nl

Solidarity Centre Gdansk (Poland): https://ecs.gda.pl/

Parlamentarium (Brussels/Belgium): https://visiting.europarl.europa.eu/en/visitor-offer/brussels/parlamentarium

House of History (Bonn, Germany): https://www.hdg.de/en/

House of European History (Brussels/Belgium): https://historia.europa.eu/en

Berlin Wall Memorial (Germany): https://www.stiftung-berliner-mauer.de/en/berlin-wall-memorial

The European Museum in Schengen (Luxembourg): https://www.visitluxembourg.com/place/schengen

Robert Schuman's house: https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/robert-schuman-european-centre

Memorial for migrant rescuers (Lampedusa/Italy): https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/60383/lampedusa-garden-honors-migrant-rescuers

Further Readings

In this section, we would like to offer some suggestions for some further reading. Ideally, schools will have some of these publications in their library, or could find some of them in their local library. Some of these texts can be read together in the classroom (in their entirety in the case of articles, or by sections or chapters), some others can be suggested by the teacher to particularly interested students. Due to the fact that this is a list for users in the whole of Europe, we had to select books that are either written in English, or are available in an English translation. We hope that teachers may feel inspired to suggest further readings in more languages, too. The books listed below have been selected for their quality and accessibility - meaning that they are neither too hard nor too simplistic; they can therefore serve as a useful entry point for students that are tipping their toes in non-fiction and academic books.

Medieval Europe

The Birth of Europe - Jacques Le Goff

In this book, Jacques Le Goff, one of the foremost medieval historians in France, takes the reader for a journey in search of Europe's roots. The French original title, "was Europe born in the Middle Ages?" reveals Le Goff's main focus, though he does not ignore deeper roots from earlier periods.

Who is this book for? This is a book for students who have displayed a clear interest not just in history, but in historiography and would like to try their hands at questioning the origins and developments of how societies build and see their mental worlds. The book was written with the general public in mind and as such it may be a good introduction to historiography.

The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000 - Christopher Wickham

Christopher Wickham is an authoritative scholar of early medieval Europe. This book, written as part of a Penguin series on the history of Europe, is an overview of how different parts of Europe dealt with "the inheritance of Rome" during and after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Readers will be able to glean an idea of how early medieval Europe developed into the modern social and political landscape we know today.

Who is this book for? This book is a challenging read - it is dense with information and may require a (high-school level) good knowledge of Europe at the fall of the Western Roman Empire. However, the book is well structured, both geographically and temporally: we suggest that teachers could recommend sections of it as relevant to the students.

Modern European History

Postwar A History of Europe Since 1945 - Tony Judt

Tony Judt was a prominent British historian, known for the depth of his historical skills and reflection. In this book, Judt weaves a narrative of postwar Europe, from the rubbles of the Second World War to the end of the Soviet Union. Written during the first decade of the 21st century, it has become a reference book for the postwar period in European history.

Who is this book for? Classes and students that have displayed a particular interest in postwar European history and would like to see examples of recent historical interpretations. This book is meant for the general public, so it may be a good first history book for students to try. If Judt catches their interest, teachers may even suggest they read his long essay "A Grand Illusion?: An Essay on Europe" (originally a 1995 speech), where he criticises, somewhat pessimistically, the state of the EU - not as a Eurosceptic but rather as an advocate for political change: it may be an interesting read for classes whose teacher would deem ready.

Homelands - Timothy Garton Ash

Timothy Garton Ash is Professor of European Studies at the University of Oxford and a prominent and outspoken public intellectual. This book is an atypical memoir. Garton Ash draws on his own recollections and contemporary notes, and compounds them with further visits to many places where contemporary European history was made, starting with post-war Europe all the way to Brexit and beyond.

Who is this book for? This book is for classes and students who show a particular interest in political history and would like to take on a challenge with a more politically minded commentator (perhaps with the teacher's assistance). Garton Ash, though an Oxford professor, writes in relatively simple English. His style relies on personal memories and anecdotes and as such it may be helpful to keep students interested. Yet, he does not shy away from wading into politics - so teachers choosing to suggest his books will want to prepare their students to use their critical skills.

European Union Integration History

Reinventing Europe - The History of the European Union, 1945 to the Present

This book is a collection of essays that explore the developments of EU integration from many different angles, from its postwar origins to 2021.

Who is this book for? This is an academic book, but it is not an impossible read for high schoolers, if supported. Teachers could pick any of the essays in the book to focus on subjects of interest - which could even be linked to other items in their history curricula.

Patel, Kiran Klaus, Project Europe: A History

This book deals with the development of the EU, considered as a long term project; it looks at the history of its integration in a thematic rather than chronological way, from its values to the image it has of itself as well as its projection on the global stage.

Who is this book for? It may be challenging for students, but its thematic approach gives teachers the opportunity to focus on certain themes and maybe assign portions of it as classroom reading.

Contemporary EU - How it works and its global impact

The European Union: A Very Short Introduction

The "A very short introduction" series of Oxford University Press is known for its informative and authoritative presentations of a very wide range of topics, including this one on the EU. Make sure that you are consulting the latest edition (the website will indicate the date of publication): the editors keep information up to date.

Who is this book for? Short yet informative, this book may be useful for reference, or for some further reading on some details of how the EU works. It is mostly an accessible read, especially as further reading after a class on the EU.

The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World

This very interesting book looks at the so-called Brussels effect - an expression created to explain the impact that the EU has on the world. When the EU sets certain standards in the fields of environment, consumer protection, or technology, many other countries in the world will modify their own rules to be able to participate in the EU market. This means that the EU has the opportunity to effect positive - or negative! - change in many domains…

Who is this book for? It may feel like an academic book on a niche subject, and teachers will probably not want to assign this entire text to their students; it is, however, a very innovative and well-written account of the great influence that EU citizens may have on the rest of the world, for good and bad. Teachers may therefore choose to introduce the topic via chosen portions of this book.

The Passage to Europe How a Continent Became a Union and Alarums and Excursions: Improvising Politics on the European Stage - Luuk Van Middelaar

Luuk Van Middelaar, historian and philosopher, has worked for the EU institutions and as an insider has produced two interesting works: the first one, "Passage to Europe", focuses on the history of EU integration,with an emphasis on the political structures and developments that drove its evolution; his second work, with its telling title, is a more contemporary account of how the EU has been living in a permanent "crisis management" mode since the financial crisis of 2008.

Who are these books for? Meant for a general public interested in EU affairs, these books are genuine further reading for students who may have a particular interest in EU politics and its history. Students preparing to go to university, perhaps, might find them useful as well as interesting.

Constitutional Change in the European Union - Towards a Federal Europe

Former British MEP Andrew Duff's latest book (2022), it charts the evolution of the EU and argues that its lack of federal features is what is slowing its development down. Duff is a long-time federalist and member of the Liberal-Democratic party.

Who are these books for? This is an overtly political book, so teachers should suggest it only advisedly. Andrew Duff is an extremely well respected former operator and now observer of EU politics, so he is a very trustworthy source and he does not hide his political leanings. This book is very informative but it does have an agenda. It is most interesting for classes that teachers know would be open to a frank debate as a most accomplished presentation of the current arguments for a federal Europe.

EU and other Publications

The European Project in Crisis: Myth and Realities
https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2017/11/the-european-project-in-crisis-myths-and-realities?lang=en

This article from Pierre Vimont, Carnegie Europe -although published in 2017-, is about Crisis the EU faced and the need to rediscover the reason for its existence. It perfectly matches the main document about the Historical Context for the European Union.

The European Parliament and EU democracy, Lessons from 70 years of reforms https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/747121/EPRS_BRI(2023)747121_EN.pdf. The article, written by Wolfram Kaiser, Sandro Guerrieri and Ariadna Ripoll Servent (European Parliament History Service) offers an overview of the evaluation of the European Parliament.

The European Parliament and the development of European citizenship, from Tindemans to Spinelli (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2024)762345) and
The European Parliament and the development of European citizenship, from Fontainebleau to Maastricht (1984-1992)
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/762426/EPRS_BRI(2024)762426_EN.pdf

These articles, written by Gilles Pittoors, EP Members' Research Service offer an overview of the development of European citizenship. He also dived into the concept of The European Union. The article adds extra context to the Information Sheet *What is the European Project About?*

Fiction - Books

Grand Hotel Europa - Leonard Pfeijffer Ilja
From its US publisher: "Grand Hotel Europa is Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer's masterly novel of the old continent, where there's so much history that there hardly seems space left for a future. Cinematic, lyrical, and brimming with humor, this is a novel about the European condition, which like the staff and residents of the Grand Hotel Europa may have already seen its best days."
Who is this book for? It is a sort of ode to all things that unite and divide Europe and the Europeans. This fiction book can be a way to get students to read and get a feeling of the classic European novel but via a recent book that can speak more easily to younger generations.

The Capital - Robert Menasse
From its UK publisher: "Brussels. The fiftieth anniversary of the European Commission approaches, and the Directorate-General for Culture is tasked with organising an appropriate celebration. When Fenia Xenopoulou's assistant comes up with a plan to put Auschwitz at the very centre of the jubilee, she is delighted. But she has neglected to take the other EU institutions into account. Meanwhile the city is on the lookout for a runaway pig. And what about the farmers who take to the streets to protest against restrictions blocking the export of pigs to China?
Who is this book for? This satirical take on life in the EU capital is well written and fun, but also full of details on the inner workings of the EU. Teachers could pick selected chapters to read in class, but also suggest reading during holiday periods. If fiction is often an excellent bridge to learning, there is hardly a better novel than The Capital to do so about the EU.

Fiction - Movies

Parlement (TV Series, 2020 - 2024)
This TV series has received multiple awards for best comedy. It ran for four seasons and follows Samy, a young, new Parliamentary Assistant at the European Parliament. He does not know much and will have to learn fast. The series is shot on location and viewers learn about the European Parliament with Samy. It is a French-Belgian-German co-production and its main languages are English, French, and German. See: https://www.france.tv/series-et-fictions/series-comedie/parlement/.

Articles, Speeches, Essays

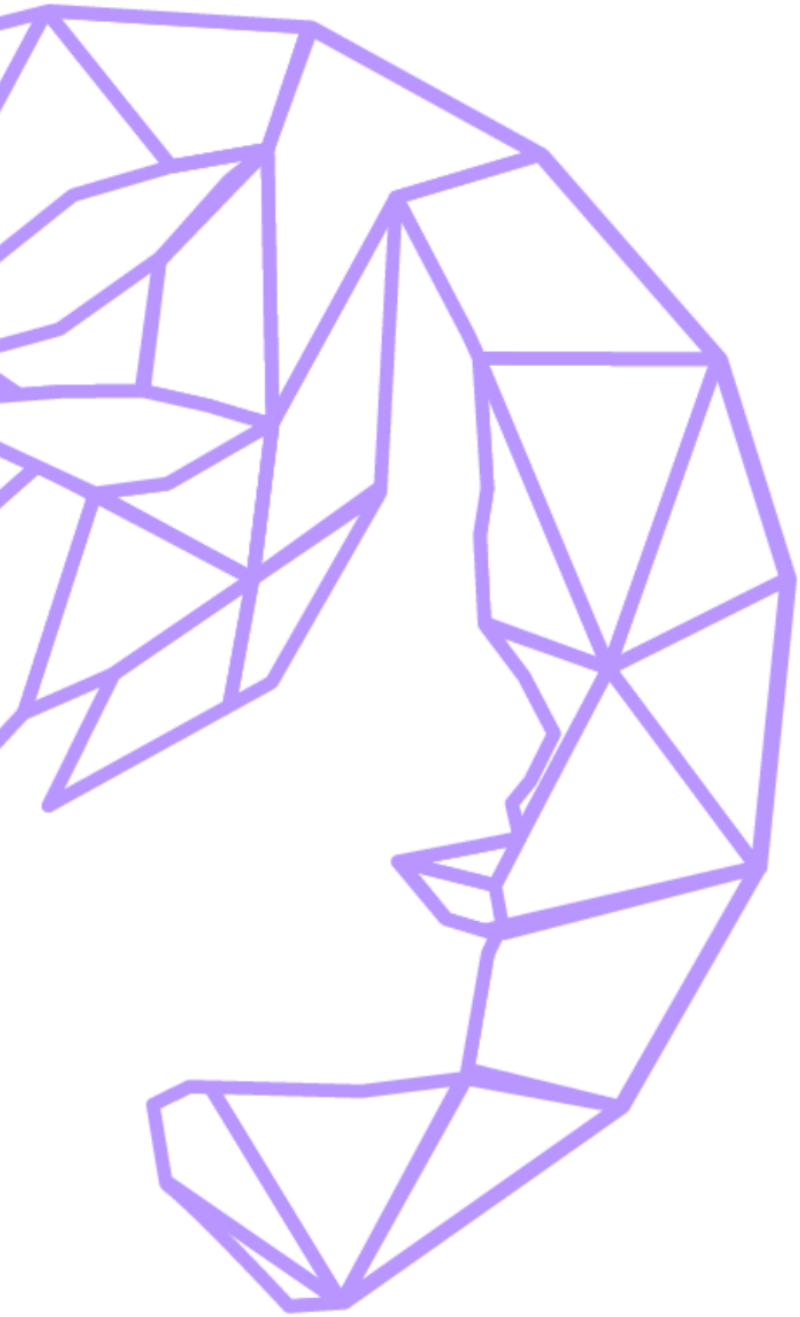
What Remains: On the European Union (The Nation, 2012)

Mark Mazower's Speech "Europe in crisis" (2015)

Three things the EU must do to survive **(**The Guardian, 2017)

Interview with Mark Mazower (KU Leuven, 2019)

So long, we'll miss you – we Europeans see how much you've helped to shape us (The Guardian, 2020)



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