

The European Union or EU is an international organisation of European states, established by the Treaty on European *on European Union* (the [Maastricht treaty](#)). Its current legal base is the [Treaty of Nice](#) which entered into force on [February 1, 2003](#).

The European union comprises a large number of overlapping legal and institutional structures. This is a result of it being defined by successive international treaties. In recent years, considerable efforts have been made to consolidate and simplify the treaties, culminating with the proposed draft [Constitution of Europe](#).

Activities:...

being a common [single market](#), consisting of a [customs union](#), a single currency (though some member states retain their own), a [Common Agricultural Policy](#) and a [Common Fisheries Policy](#). The European Union also has various initiatives to co-ordinate activities of the member states.

The total area of the 25 member states (2004) of the European Union is [3,892,685 km<sup>2</sup>](#). if it would be a country, it would be the eighth [largest in the world](#) by area.

Europe South america afrika

(all EU member state citizens or subjects, under the terms of the Maastricht treaty) in the 25 member EU is approximately 453 million as of March 2004. This would be the [third largest](#) in the world after [India](#) and [China](#).

The important government cities of the E.U. are:

The residential of

- **Brussels:** Council, Commission, Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions
- **Strasbourg:** Parliament
- **Luxembourg:** Council, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, Investment Bank
- **Frankfurt am Main:** Central Bank

The flag of the Union shall be a circle of twelve golden stars on a blue background.

The 12 symbolize the harmony and perfection and have nothing to do with the count of the members

Although the flag is most commonly associated with the European Union, it was initially used by the [Council of Europe](#), and is thought to represent Europe as a whole as opposed to any particular organization such as the EU or the COE.

The motto of the Union shall be: United in diversity (*in varietate concordia*).

The currency of the Union shall be the euro.

The **European anthem** is based on the final movement of [Ludwig van Beethoven's ninth symphony](#), which is based on [Friedrich Schiller's ode An die Freude \(Ode to Joy\)](#). Due to the large number of languages used in the [European Union](#), the anthem is purely instrumental and has no [lyrics](#). (but in fact the german lyrics are used at international events)

The anthem was originally adopted by the [Council of Europe](#) in [1972](#).

It is played on official occasions by the Council of Europe and the [European Union](#).

EURO:

Following States uses the euro:

Germany

Finland

France

Greece

Ireland

Italy

Luxembourg

Netherlands

Austria

Portugal

Spain

Vatican City

San Marino

Monaco

On [9 May 1950](#), [Robert Schuman](#) presented his proposal on the creation of an organised [Europe](#), indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. This proposal, known as the "[Schuman declaration](#)", is considered to be the beginning of the creation of what is now the [European Union](#).

**Member states and enlargement**

## Legal history and governing treaties

In 1951, the [European Coal and Steel Community](#) is established by treaty.

In 1957, the [European Atomic Energy Community](#) is established by treaty.

Also in 1957 the [European Economic Community](#) is established by treaty. The treaty was consolidated in 1992, after the Treaty on European Union, after the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam and again in 2002 after the 2001 Treaty of Nice.

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From 1 May 2004, the European Union will comprise 25 member states. In [1952/1958](#) the six founding members were:

- [Belgium](#)
- [France](#)
- [Germany](#) (West)
- [Italy](#)
- [Luxembourg](#)
- [Netherlands](#)

Nine further states have joined in successive waves of enlargement:

- in [1973](#): [Denmark](#), [Ireland](#), and the [United Kingdom](#)
- in [1981](#): [Greece](#)
- in [1986](#): [Portugal](#) and [Spain](#)
- in [1990](#): the European Union territory and population was effectively enlarged when [East](#) and [West Germany](#) were united.
- in [1995](#): [Austria](#), [Finland](#), and [Sweden](#)

On [May 1, 2004](#) [Cyprus](#), the [Czech Republic](#), [Estonia](#), [Hungary](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Malta](#), [Poland](#), the [Slovak Republic](#) and [Slovenia](#) will join.

## Current problems

Currently, the EU is undergoing organizational difficulties, especially those dealing with the proposed [European constitution](#) and what some member countries see as severe and extreme bias in favour of [France](#) and [Germany](#) in regards to agreed-upon and allegedly EU-wide economic control measures. While smaller countries like [Portugal](#) have been called to the carpet for failing to meet EU goals, both France and Germany appear to have been given a free hand to ignore these EU rules at will.