

## Introduction:

# EU Treaties, Institutions and Decision making of the European Union

Economic and political integration is often identified with a decrease of the sovereignty of the states and an increase of the influence of the supranational central authority.

## **1. Institutions of the EU**

The Treaties entrust the operation of the EU (European Union) to 6 principal institutions:

- 1. Council of Ministers of the EU**
- 2. Commission**
- 3. European Parliament**
- 4. Court of Justice**
- 5. Court of Auditors**
- 6. European Council**

**1.-Council of Ministers of the EU:** 6-month rotating presidency by the Heads of government (Head of State for France, the French Republic President) of the Member States.

The Council is the EU's main decision-making body. It represents the member states, and its meetings are attended by one minister from each of the EU's national governments.

Which ministers attend which meeting depends on what subjects are on the agenda. If, for example, the Council is to discuss economic and financial issues, the meeting will be attended by the Economy and Finance Minister from each EU country and it will be known as the "*ECOFIN Council*" or if there were the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers attending them is the *Agriculture and Fisheries Council* or for security and judicial regulation the *Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council*.

The EU's relations with the rest of the world are dealt with by the *General Affairs and External Relations Council*. But this Council configuration also has wider responsibility for general policy issues, so its meetings are attended by whichever Minister or State Secretary each government chooses.

**2.-Commission:** The Commission is the politically independent institution that represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole. 5-year term;

### **Roles:**

- Guardian of the Treaties;
- Monopoly of PROPOSALS (No subject can be discussed without a Proposal, but now

the BCE can have initiatives in his area of responsibilities);

- Mediator at meetings of the Council;
- Negotiates for the Community (International Treaties only one voice at the EU); - Limited power to legislate (mainly in the implementation of the CAP);
- Certain powers in administering EU rules;
- Management of EU funds.

**3.-European Parliament:** Directly Elected by EU citizens every 5 years, Parliament expresses the democratic will of the Union's 374 million citizens, and it represents their interests in discussions with the other EU institutions: after the enlargement to 25 countries the number of seats is 732 (see below).

**4.-Court of Justice:** Its job is to ensure that EU legislation (technically known as "Community law") is interpreted and applied in the same way in each member state. In other words, that it is always identical for all parties and in all circumstances. The Court has the power to settle legal disputes between member states, EU institutions, businesses and individuals.

[Link to Court of Justice](#)

#### 5.- Court of Auditors

The mission of the European Court of Auditors is to audit independently the collection and spending of European Union funds and, through this, to assess the way that the European institutions discharge these functions. The Court examines whether financial operations have been properly recorded, legally and regularly executed and managed so as to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

[Link to Court of Auditors](#)

#### 6.- European Council

Who is in the European Council?

The Heads of government (Head of State for France) and the President of Commission (currently Mr. Van Rompuy), foreign ministers of the Member States, and 2 commissioners.

The origins of the European Council are in the European Summits: For very important decisions about EU politics, e.g.: Single market, Euro, enlargement,...

Heads of government (Head of State for France) of the member states had Informal meetings at the beginning, now meeting officially every 6 months formally.

#### 7.- Other institutions:

- Court of Auditors; Court of First Instance;
- Economic and Social Committee (ESC);
- Committee of Regions (CR);
- European Investment Bank (EIB)

## **Web page of the EU institutions and other bodies**

### **Link to Web page of the EU institutions and other bodies:**

[http://europa.eu/institutions/inst/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/institutions/inst/index_en.htm)

### **According with Commissions Web you use the following links:**

## **EU institutions and other bodies**

The European Union (EU) is not a federation like the United States. Nor is it simply an organisation for co-operation between governments, like the United Nations. It is, in fact, unique. The countries that make up the EU (its 'member states') remain independent sovereign nations but they pool their sovereignty in order to gain a strength and world influence none of them could have on their own.

Pooling sovereignty means, in practice, that the member states delegate some of their decision-making powers to shared institutions they have created, so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level.

The EU's [decision-making process](#) in general and the [co-decision procedure](#) [*The EU's standard decision-making procedure is known as 'Ordinary Legislative Procedure' (ex "codecision"). This means that the directly elected European Parliament has to approve EU legislation together with the Council (the governments of the 27 EU countries). The Commission drafts and implements EU legislation.*]

The EU's [decision-making process](#) in particular involve three main institutions:

- the [European Parliament \(EP\)](#), which represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them;
- the [Council of Ministers of the European Union](#), which represents the individual member states;
- the [European Commission](#), which seeks to uphold the interests of the Union as a whole.

This 'institutional triangle' produces the policies and laws that apply throughout the EU. In principle, it is the Commission that proposes new laws, but it is the Parliament and Council that adopt them. The Commission and the member states then implement them, and the Commission ensures that the laws are properly taken on board.

Two other institutions have a vital part to play: the [Court of Justice](#) upholds the rule of European law, and the [Court of Auditors](#) checks the financing of the Union's activities.

The powers and responsibilities of these institutions are laid down in the Treaties, which are the foundation of everything the EU does. They also lay down the rules and procedures that the EU institutions must follow. The Treaties are agreed by the presidents and/or prime ministers of all the EU countries, and ratified by their parliaments.

In addition to its institutions, the EU has a number of other bodies that play specialised roles:

- the [European Economic and Social Committee](#) represents civil society, employers and employees;
- the [Committee of the Regions](#) represents regional and local authorities;
- the [European Investment Bank](#) finances EU investment projects, and helps small businesses via the [European Investment Fund](#);
- the [European Central Bank](#) is responsible for European monetary policy;
- the [European Ombudsman](#) investigates complaints about maladministration by EU institutions and bodies;
- the [European Data Protection Supervisor](#) safeguards the privacy of people's personal data;
- the [Office for Official Publications of the European Communities](#) publishes information about the EU;
- the [European Personnel Selection Office](#) recruits staff for the EU institutions and other bodies;
- the [European Administrative School](#) task is to provide training in specific areas for members of EU staff.

In addition, [specialised agencies](#) have been set up to handle certain technical, scientific or management tasks.



## 2. From the European Community to the European Union (History)

From the EC to the EU – Communities, Treaties, Members, InstitutionsCommunity Law

1.- Treaty of Rome (TEEC) (1959)

2.- Single European Act (1985)

3.- Maastricht Treaty (TEU) (1993)

4.- Lisbon Treaty<sup>1</sup> (2009)

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<sup>1</sup> <<The treaty is designed to streamline decision-making and give the EU greater influence in world affairs. It creates two new posts - President of the European Council and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs. The BBC's Jonny Dymond, in Brussels, says the introduction of the treaty may appear low-key but the way decisions are made in the EU will change. (...) As High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Lady Ashton will command a more powerful position with a new, and eventually vast, European diplomatic service.

One of the treaty's key areas is the removal of national vetoes in a number of areas. These include the fight against climate change, energy security and emergency aid.

Unanimity will still be needed in tax, foreign policy, defence and social security.

Mr Reinfeldt said that "in the future, when we make decisions concerning citizens' freedom, security and justice, our main principle will be to make them together with the European Parliament".

The treaty makes the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding for EU institutions and, according to Mr Reinfeldt, "we make clear equality between men and women and protection of children's rights within all policy areas". >> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8387648.stm>

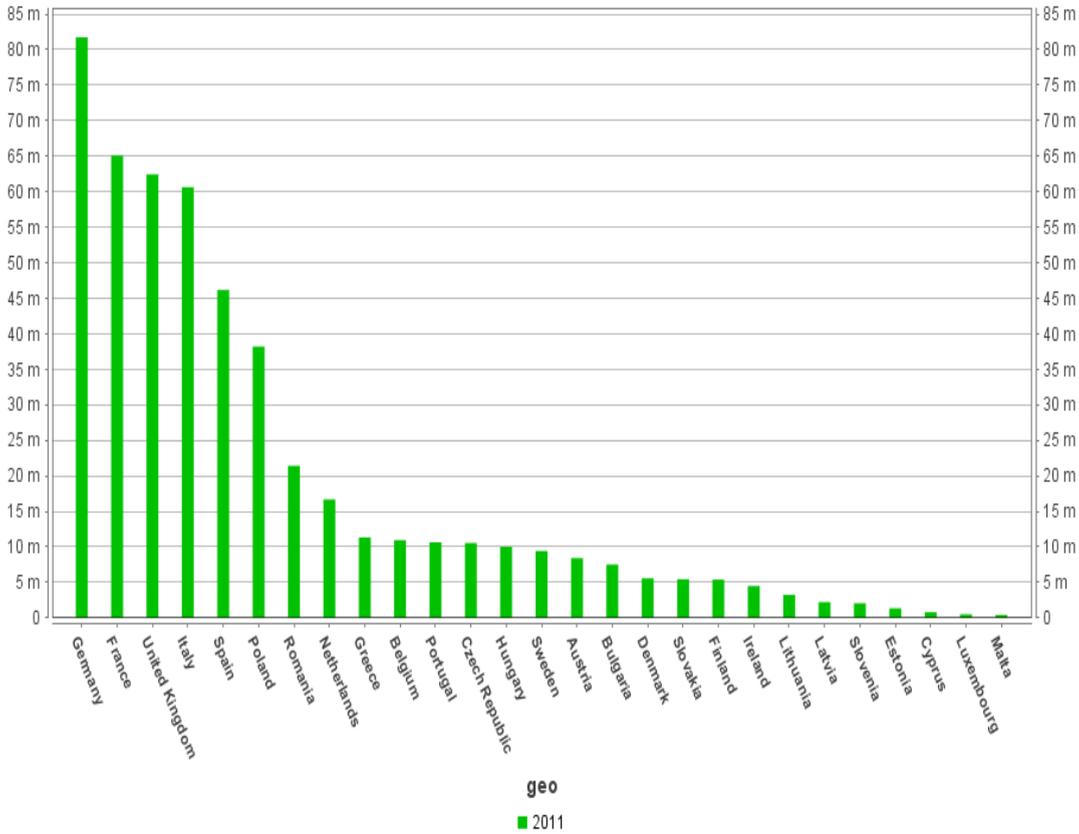
The **Lisbon Treaty** also establish a permanent **president of the European Council** (from 2009 Mr. Herman van Rompuy)

Basic reforms in the decision making process:

- **Qualify majority in the Council for more affairs**
  - Fewer topics require unanimity: including the fight against climate change, energy security and emergency aid.
- **Double majority: 55% of M.E. and 65% of the population**
- **President of the Council elected for 2,5 years (from 2009 Mr. Herman van Rompuy)**
- **Greater visibility and coherence in external policy, home affairs and a Vice-President for the Commission (Catherine Ashton from 2009).**
- **Greater powers for the European Parliament: co-decision for most of the legislation with the Council**
- **Citizens initiative: at least one million citizens form different M.E. can make proposal to the Commission.**

## Population at 1 January

Persons



Source of Data: Eurostat

Last update: 07.12.2011

Date of extraction: 14 Dec 2011 16:37:42 MET

Hyperlink to the graph: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/drawGraph.do&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00001&toolbox=legend>

Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible.

General Disclaimer of the EC: [http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal\\_notices\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal_notices_en.htm)

Short Description: The inhabitants of a given area on 1 January of the year in question (or, in some cases, on 31 December of the previous year). The population is based on data from the most recent census adjusted by the components of population change produced since the last census, or based on population registers.

Code: tps00001



The EU as a structure based on three main pillars:

1<sup>st</sup>) EC (European Community policies: CAP Common Agricultural Policies, Environment, Energy, R&D)

2<sup>nd</sup>) CFSP Common Foreign and Security Policy

3<sup>rd</sup>) CJHA Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs

4.- **Treaty of Amsterdam** (1997) Target: the consolidation of the three pillars

1. - Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – objectives & tasks

2. -Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs (CJHA) – common action

3. -Application for entry – preconditions & history

5.-**Treaty of Nice** (2001) Current EU “constitution”; encompasses all Rome, Maastricht and Amsterdam.

6.-The European Constitution (not approved): Treaty signed October,29 2004 (published on the Official Journal December, 16 2004) will be enforced once approved in each member state, article IV-447 of the Treaty. But did not pass referenda in France and Netherlands.

7.- Lisbon Treaty (2009) current “constitutional” treaty of the EU.

### **3. European Union Institutions**

European Institutions have overlapping roles, functions and powers, leading to the sharing of legislative and executive power by the Commission, the Council and Parliament. The judicial power is independent. The following paragraphs synthesize the main institutional roles

#### **1.- Council of Ministers of the European Union**

##### **Who is in the Council?**

The ministers of the Member States national governments and the commissioners.

E.g. Council of Agriculture and Fisheries: Agriculture Commissioner plus the 25 ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries of the member states.

The President is one of the Heads of government (or Head of State for France) rotating between the Member States every 6 months.

Altogether there are nine different Council configurations:

- General Affairs and External Relations
- Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN)
- Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)
- Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs
- Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry and Research)
- Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
- Agriculture and Fisheries
- Environment
- Education, Youth and Culture

Nevertheless, the Council remains one single institution.

**How many votes per country?**

## **Qualified majority**

**A new rule from 1 November 2014**

### **The 'standard' voting method in the Council**

Qualified majority is the most widely used voting method in the Council.

It's used when the Council takes decisions during the ordinary legislative procedure, also known as co-decision. About **80% of all EU legislation** is adopted with this procedure.

From 1 November 2014 a **new procedure for qualified majority voting** applies in the Council. Under this procedure, when the Council votes on a **proposal by the Commission or the High Representative** of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, a qualified majority is reached if two conditions are met:

- **55% of member states vote in favour** - in practice this means 16 out of 28
- the proposal is supported by member states representing **at least 65% of the total EU population**

This new procedure is also known as the 'double majority' rule.

### **Blocking minority**

The **blocking minority** must include at least four Council members representing more than 35% of the EU population.

### **Special cases**

When not all Council members participate in the vote, for example due to an opt-out in certain policy areas, a decision is adopted if 55% of the participating Council members, representing at least 65% of the population of the participating member states, vote in favour.

When the Council votes on a **proposal not coming from the Commission or the high representative** a decision is adopted if:

- at least **72% of Council members** vote in favour
- they represent at least **65% of the EU population**

# Abstentions

An **abstention** under qualified majority voting counts as a vote against. Abstention is not the same as not participating in the vote. Any member can abstain at any time.

## The previous qualified majority rule

Until 31 March 2017, member states can still request to use the previous rule for qualified majority voting. Under this rule, each member state representative has a certain number of votes, as set out in the EU treaties. The **weighting of votes** roughly reflects the size of population of each member state.

The **352 votes** are distributed as follows:

- France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom: **29** votes each
- Spain, Poland: **27** votes each
- Romania: **14** votes
- Netherlands: **13** votes
- Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Portugal: **12** votes each
- Austria, Bulgaria, Sweden: **10** votes each
- Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Finland: **7** votes each
- Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovenia: **4** votes each
- Malta: 3 votes

Under this previous rule, a qualified majority is reached in the Council if the following **conditions** are met:

- a **majority of member states** - 15 member states - vote in favour
- a minimum of **260 votes out of the total 352** votes are cast in favour

A member state may ask for confirmation that the votes in favour represent at least **62% of the total EU population**. If this is found not to be the case, the decision will not be adopted.

See: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/qualified-majority/>

## ***What does the Council do?***

The Council has six key responsibilities:

- 1. To pass European laws. In many fields it legislates jointly with the European Parliament.**
- 2. To co-ordinate the broad economic policies of the member states.**
- 3. To conclude international agreements between the EU and one or more states or international organisations.**
- 4. To approve the EU's budget, jointly with the European Parliament.**
- 5. To develop the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, based on guidelines set by the European Council.**
- 6. To co-ordinate co-operation between the national courts and police forces in criminal matters.**

Most of these responsibilities relate to the *Community* domain - i.e. areas of action where the member states have decided to pool their sovereignty and delegate decision-making powers to the EU institutions. This domain is the **first pillar** of the European Union.

However, the last two responsibilities relate largely to areas in which the member states have not delegated their powers but are simply working together. This is called "**intergovernmental co-operation**" and it covers the *second and third "pillars"* of the European Union (CFSP and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters).

### **Co-ordinating the economic policies of member states**

The EU countries have decided that they want an overall economic policy based on close co-ordination between their national economic policies. This co-ordination is carried out by the economics and finance ministers, who collectively form the Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Council.

### **Concluding international agreements**

Each year the Council "*concludes*" (i.e. officially signs) a number of agreements between the European Union and non-EU countries, as well as with international organisations. These agreements may cover broad areas such as trade, co-operation and development or they may deal with specific subjects such as textiles, fisheries, science and technology, transport etc.

### **Approving the EU budget**

The EU's annual budget is decided jointly by the Council and the European Parliament. If the two institutions do not agree, the rules allow the Council to take the final decision on "*compulsory expenditure*" (mainly agricultural expenditure, and expenses arising from international agreements with non-EU countries), while Parliament has the last word on "*non-compulsory*" expenditure and the final approval of the budget as a whole.

### **Common Foreign and Security Policy**

The member states are developing a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). But foreign policy, security and defence are matters over which the individual EU member states retain independent control. They have not pooled their national sovereignty in these areas, so Parliament and the European Commission play only a limited role here.

## **2.- Commission**

### **Who is in the Commission?**

The Commission is committed to acting in the interests of the Union as a whole and not taking instructions from national governments; Current president of the Commission: Jean-Claude Juncker, who took office on 1 November 2014. Previous presidents: José Manuel Durao Barroso (2005-10-14).

### **What does the Commission do?**

The European Commission has four main roles:

1. to propose legislation to Parliament and the Council;
2. to manage and implement EU policies and the budget;
3. to enforce European law (jointly with the Court of Justice);
4. to represent the European Union on the international stage, for example by negotiating agreements between the EU and other countries.

### **1. Proposing new legislation**

Under the Treaty, the Commission has the “*right of initiative*”. In other words, it is responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, which it presents to Parliament and the Council. These proposals must aim to defend the interests of the Union and its citizens, not those of specific countries or industries.

Before making any proposals, the Commission must be aware of new situations and problems developing in Europe and it must consider whether EU legislation is the best way to deal with them. That is why the Commission is in constant touch with a wide range of interest groups.

It is obliged to consult two advisory bodies: the Economic and Social Committee (made up of employers’ and trade unions’ representatives) and the Committee of the Regions (made up of representatives of local and regional authorities). It also seeks the opinions of national parliaments and governments.

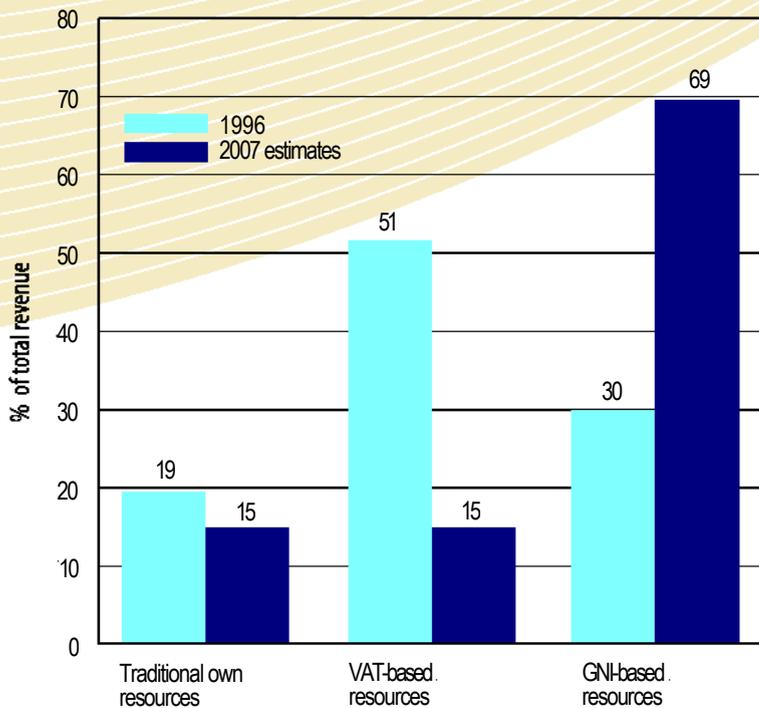
The Commission will propose action at EU level only if it believes that a problem cannot be solved more efficiently by national, regional or local action. This principle of dealing with things at the lowest possible level is called the “subsidiarity principle”. If, however, the Commission concludes that EU legislation is needed, then it drafts a proposal that it believes will deal with the problem effectively and satisfy the widest possible range of interests. To get the technical details right, the Commission consults the experts who make up its various committees and working groups.

## **2. Implementing EU policies and the budget**

*In order to promote its **overall harmonious development**, the Community shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its **economic and social cohesion**. In particular, the Community shall aim at **reducing disparities** between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions or islands, including rural areas.” TEC, Article 158*

Before the last big enlargement the income disparities were very significant between countries and regions:

## Where does the money come from?



Own resources of the EU budget

## 2.2 The budget

As the European Union's executive body, the Commission is responsible for managing and implementing the EU budget and the policies and programmes adopted by Parliament and the Council. Most of the actual work and spending is done by national and local authorities, but the Commission is responsible for supervising it.

One example of a policy actively managed by the Commission is competition policy: the Commission monitors cartels and mergers, and makes sure that EU countries do not subsidise their industries in such a way as to distort competition.

Examples of EU programmes managed by the Commission range from the "Interreg" and "Urban" programmes (creating cross-border partnerships

between European regions, helping regenerate cities and declining urban areas) to the "Community Framework Programme" for Europe-wide research and the "Erasmus" programme of student exchanges.

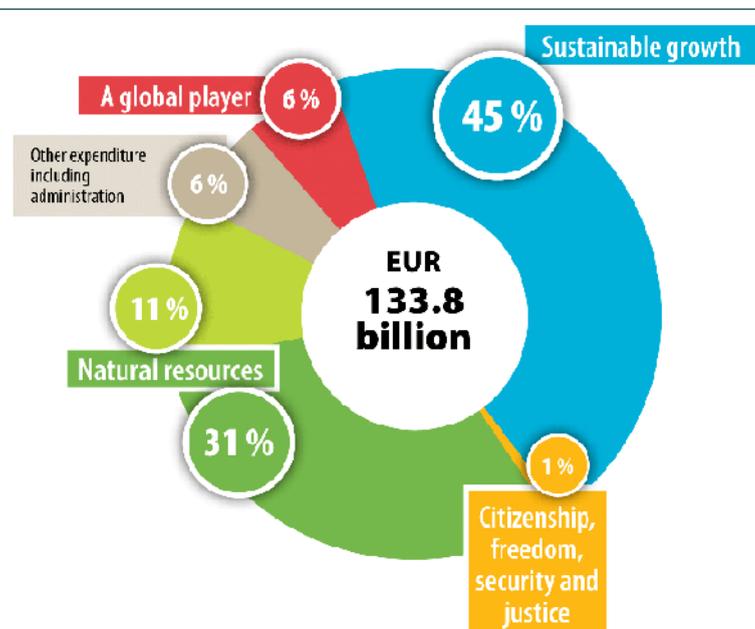
The Commission handles the budget under the watchful eye of the Court of Auditors. Both institutions aim to ensure good financial management. Only if it is satisfied with the Court of Auditors' annual report does the European Parliament grant the Commission discharge for implementing the budget.

## 3. Enforcing European law

The Commission acts as "guardian of the Treaties". This means that the Commission, together with the Court of Justice, is responsible for making sure EU law is properly applied in all the Member States.

If it finds that a particular Member State is not applying an EU law, and therefore not meeting its legal obligations, the Commission takes steps to put the situation right.

First it launches a legal process called the "infringement procedure". This involves sending the Member State an official letter, saying why the Commission considers it is infringing EU law and setting a deadline for the government to send the Commission a detailed reply.



If this procedure fails to put things right, the Commission must then refer the matter to the Court of Justice, which has the power to impose penalties. The Court's judgments are binding on the Member States and the European institutions.

#### **4. Representing the EU on the international stage**

The European Commission is an important mouthpiece for the European Union on the international stage. It enables the EU member states to speak "with one voice" in international forums such as the World Trade Organisation.

The Commission also has the responsibility of negotiating international agreements on behalf of the EU. One well-known example is the *Cotonou Agreement*, which sets out the terms of an important aid and trade partnership between the EU and developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

#### ***How is the Commission's work organised?***

It is up to the Commission President to decide which commissioner will be responsible for which policy area, and to reshuffle these responsibilities (if necessary) during the Commission's term of office. The President, with the Commission's approval, is also entitled to demand a commissioner's resignation.

The "college" of commissioners meets once a week, usually on Wednesdays in Brussels. Each item on the agenda is presented by the commissioner responsible for that policy area, and the college takes a collective decision on it.

The Commission's staff is organised into departments, known as "Directorates-General" (DGs) and "services" (such as the Legal Service).

Each DG is responsible for a particular policy area and is headed by a Director-General who is answerable to one of the commissioners.

It is the DGs that actually devise and draft the Commission's legislative proposals, but these proposals become official only when "adopted" by the College at its weekly meeting. The procedure is roughly as follows.

Suppose, for example, that the Commission sees a need for EU legislation to prevent pollution of Europe's rivers. The Directorate-General for the Environment will draw up a proposal, based on extensive consultations with European industry and farmers, with environment ministries in the Member States and with environmental organisations.

The proposed legislation will then be discussed with all relevant Commission departments and amended if necessary. It will then be checked by the Legal Service and approved by the commissioners' "cabinets" (personal political staff).

Once the proposal is fully ready, the Secretary-General will put it on the agenda for a forthcoming Commission meeting. At this meeting, the Environment Commissioner will explain to his or her colleagues why this legislation is being proposed, and they will then discuss it. If there is agreement, the College will "adopt" the proposal and the document will be sent to Council and the European Parliament for their consideration.

If there is disagreement among the commissioners, the President will ask them to vote on it. If a majority is in favour, the proposal will be adopted. Thereafter it will have the unconditional support

of all the Commission members.

### ***Limiting the size of the Commission***

A Commission with too many members would be unworkable. Until 1 May 2004 there were 20 commissioners - two from each of the most heavily populated member states and one from each of the other EU countries. When ten more countries joined the EU on 1 May 2004, the number of commissioners rose to 30.

From the date when the 2004-2009 Commission takes office (1 November 2004), there are only 25 commissioners - one per country.

Once Bulgaria and Romania join the Union it will have 27 member states. At that point, the Council – by a unanimous decision – will fix the maximum number of commissioners.

### **Composition in 2015**

The [28 Commissioners](#), one from each EU country, provide the Commission's political leadership during their 5-year term. Each Commissioner is assigned responsibility for specific policy areas by the President.

The current (2015) President of the European Commission is Jean-Claude Juncker.

Source: [http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission/index_en.htm)

## **3.- Court of Justice**

Who is in the Court of Justice?

15 judges, appointed by European Parliament for renewable 6-year terms.

The Court is composed of one judge per member state, so that all the EU's national legal systems are represented. Even after enlargement there will still be one judge per member state, but for the sake of efficiency the Court will be able to sit as a „Grand Chamber“ of just 11 judges instead of always having to meet in a plenary session attended by all the judges.

The Court is assisted by eight „advocates-general“. Their role is to present reasoned opinions on the cases brought before the Court. They must do so publicly and impartially.

The judges and advocates-general are either former members of the highest national courts or highly competent lawyers who can be relied on to show impartiality. They are appointed by joint agreement of the governments of the member states. Each is appointed for a term of six years, after which they may be reappointed for one or two further periods of three years.

To help the Court of Justice cope with the thousands of cases brought before it, and to offer citizens better legal protection, a „Court of First Instance“ was created in 1989. This Court (which is attached to the Court of Justice) is responsible for giving rulings on certain kinds of case, particularly actions brought by private individuals and cases relating to unfair competition between businesses.

## Legal instruments of the EU:

**Regulations** are of general application, binding in their entirety, and directly applicable in all member states without the need for individual member states to enact these domestically (see [community law](#)).

- Regulations
- Directives
- Decisions
- Recommendations
- Opinions

**Directives** are addressed to one or more member states and require them to achieve (by amending national law if necessary) specified results. They are not directly applicable—they do not create enforceable Community rights in member states until the state has legislated in accordance with the directive: the domestic statute then creates the rights for the citizens of that country. A directive cannot therefore impose legal obligations on individuals or private bodies, but by its **direct effect** it confers rights on individuals against the state and state bodies, even before it has been implemented by changes to national law, by decisions of the European court.

**Decisions** may be addressed either to states or to persons and are binding on them in their entirety.

Both the Council and the Commission may also make **recommendations**, give **opinions**, and issue **notices**, but these are not legally binding.

Read more: [Community legislation - Regulations, Directives, direct effect, Decisions, recommendations, opinions, notices](http://law.jrank.org/pages/19792/Community-legislation.html#ixzzofd46V1OP) <http://law.jrank.org/pages/19792/Community-legislation.html#ixzzofd46V1OP>

### Principles:

- **Acquis Communautaire**: the existing EU legislation and institutional framework
- **Mutual recognition** amongst Member States of legislature acts which are national (Member States) responsibility.
- **Precedence over national law**: any EU natural or legal person/ State may bring a complaint/action before the Court of Justice if infringement of Community law by (application of) national laws.

## 4.- European Parliament

### Powers:

- **Force Commission Resignation**; The Commission remains politically answerable to Parliament, which has the power to dismiss it by adopting a motion of censure. The Commission attends all the sessions of the European Parliament, where it must clarify and justify its policies. The Commission also replies regularly to written and oral questions posed by MEPs.
- Adopt/Reject **Community Budget**
- Assert/Refuse **treaties of association/accession**;
- **Committees of Enquiries** to Council/foreign ministers of Member States.

## **EP 2014 elections: less means more?**

**The European Parliament slim down from 766 MEPs to 751 after the 2014 elections, but how to decide which countries should give up a seat?**

### **Changes**

The EP currently boasts 754 MEPs but this will be increased to 766 once Croatia joins in July 2013. After 2014 elections, this number has been reduced to 751. Under the proposal adopted by MEPs on 13 March, Germany will lose three seats and 12 countries will each lose one seat: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Romania. EP elections took place in May 2014.

### **Why the reduction?**

When the Lisbon treaty was being negotiated, it was decided to put a cap on the total number of MEPs to prevent the European Parliament growing indefinitely every time a new member state joins the EU. This is why the treaty sets a number of restrictions:

- The maximum number of MEPs is 750 plus the president
- The maximum number of MEPs per country is 96
- The minimum number of MEPs per country is 6
- The division of seats should be according to degressive proportionality, meaning the more citizens a member state has, the more seats it will get, but also the more citizens each MEP will represent. So MEPs from smaller countries represent fewer people than their colleagues from larger states.

The allocation of seats is also being adjusted to take into account changes in the population of member states. While some got bigger, others got smaller.

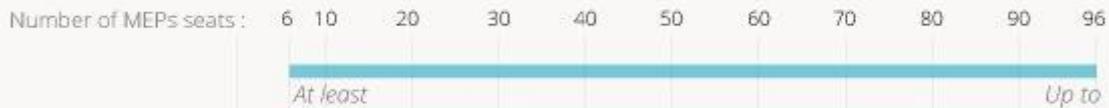
Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20130308STO06280/html/How-many-MEPs-will-each-country-get-after-European-Parliament-elections-in-2014>

# EP 2014 ELECTIONS: LESS MEANS MORE?

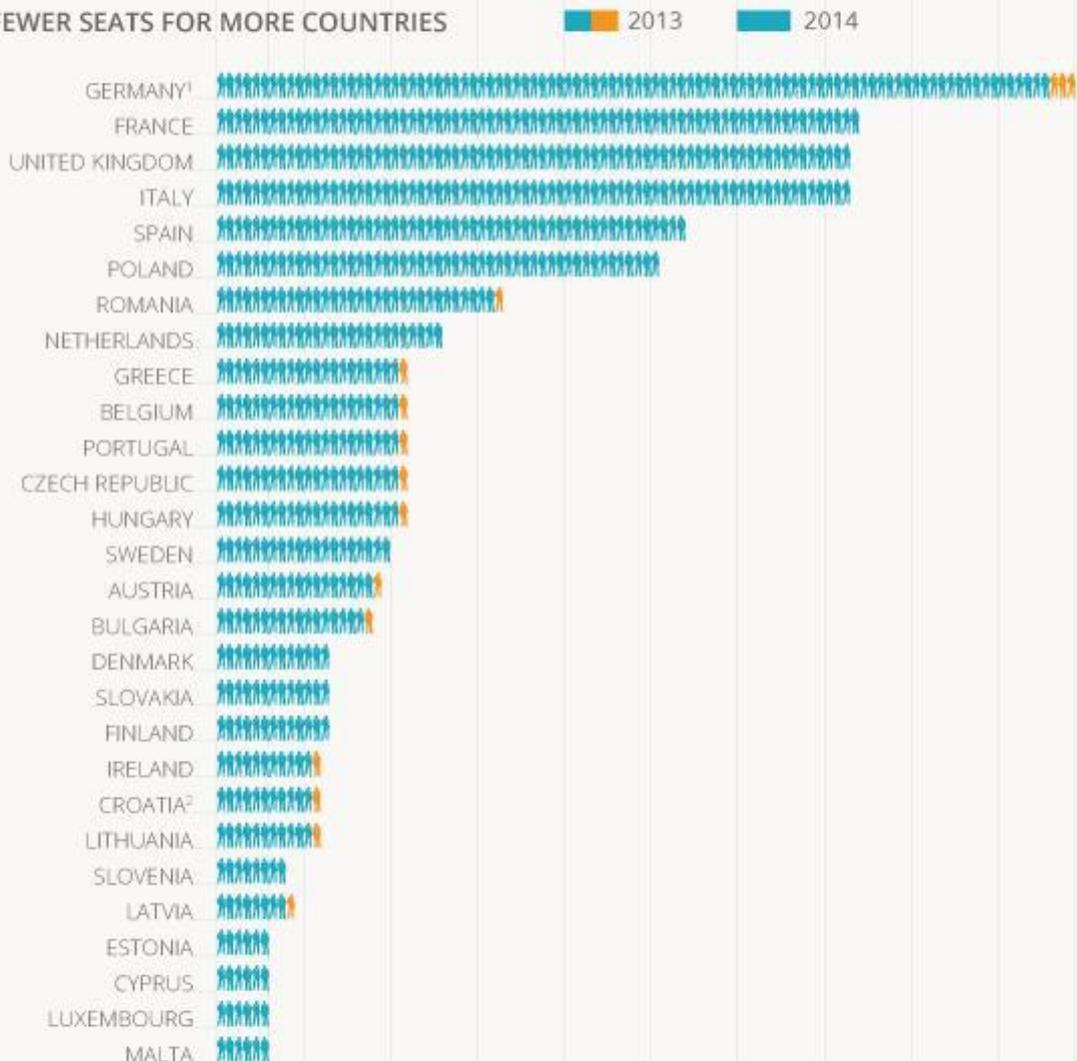
HOW MANY MEPS WILL WE VOTE FOR IN 2014?

**751** 750 MEPs + 1 President

## EACH EU COUNTRY GETS...



## FEWER SEATS FOR MORE COUNTRIES



TOTAL **766** | **751**

<sup>1</sup>Number of German MEPs will be cut from 99 seats to 96 (maximum allowed by the Lisbon treaty)

<sup>2</sup>Croatia will become EU member on 1 July 2013

## 5.- European System of Central Banks (ESCB)

Central Banks from Member States (monetary policy implementation)

European Central Bank (ECB) (monetary policy design)

For more information: <http://www.ecb.de/home/html/index.en.html>

Country	Is the in the eurozone in 2015?	Is the in the EMU-2 in 2005?	EU Member State since the year
<b>Belgium</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Bulgaria	No	-	2007
<b>Cyprus</b>	<i>Yes (from 2008)</i>	-	2004
Czech Republic	No	Yes	2004
Denmark	No, opted out in 1999	Yes and is in the ERM II	1973
<b>Germany</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
<b>Greece</b>	Yes (from 2001)	-	1981
<b>Spain</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1986
<b>Estonia</b>	<i>Yes (from 2011)</i>	-	2004
<b>France</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Hungary	No	Yes	2004
<b>Ireland</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1973
<b>Italy</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
<b>Latvia</b>	Yes (from 2014)	-	2004
<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Yes</b> (from 2015)	-	2004
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
<b>Malta</b>	Yes (from 2008)	Yes	2004
<b>Netherlands</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
<b>Austria</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1995
Poland	-	Yes	2004
<b>Portugal</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1986
Romania	-	-	2007
<b>Slovakia</b>	Yes (from 2009)	-	2004
<b>Slovenia</b>	Yes (from 2007)	Yes	2004
<b>Finland</b>	Yes (from 1999)	-	1995
Sweden	No, opted out in 1999	Yes	1995
United Kingdom	No, opted out in 1999	Yes	1973
Bulgaria	No	-	2007
Rumania	No	-	2007
Croatia	No	-	2013
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>

The Member states of the European Union, except for **Denmark** and the **United Kingdom** are obliged to adopt the euro as their sole currency once they meet the criteria.

For map of the Eurozone see: <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/euro/intro/html/map.en.html>

And for Information materials on euro banknotes and coins of the ECB: <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/euro/play/info/html/index.en.html>

## Economic and Monetary Union: the next steps

The Euro Summit of 24 October 2014 invited President Juncker, “to prepare next steps on better economic governance in the euro area.” The European Council of 18 December 2014 confirmed the mandate given to the Four Presidents. At the European Council on 12 February 2015, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker presented an Analytical Note on the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) prepared in close cooperation with the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the Eurogroup, Jeroen Dijsselbloem and the President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi.

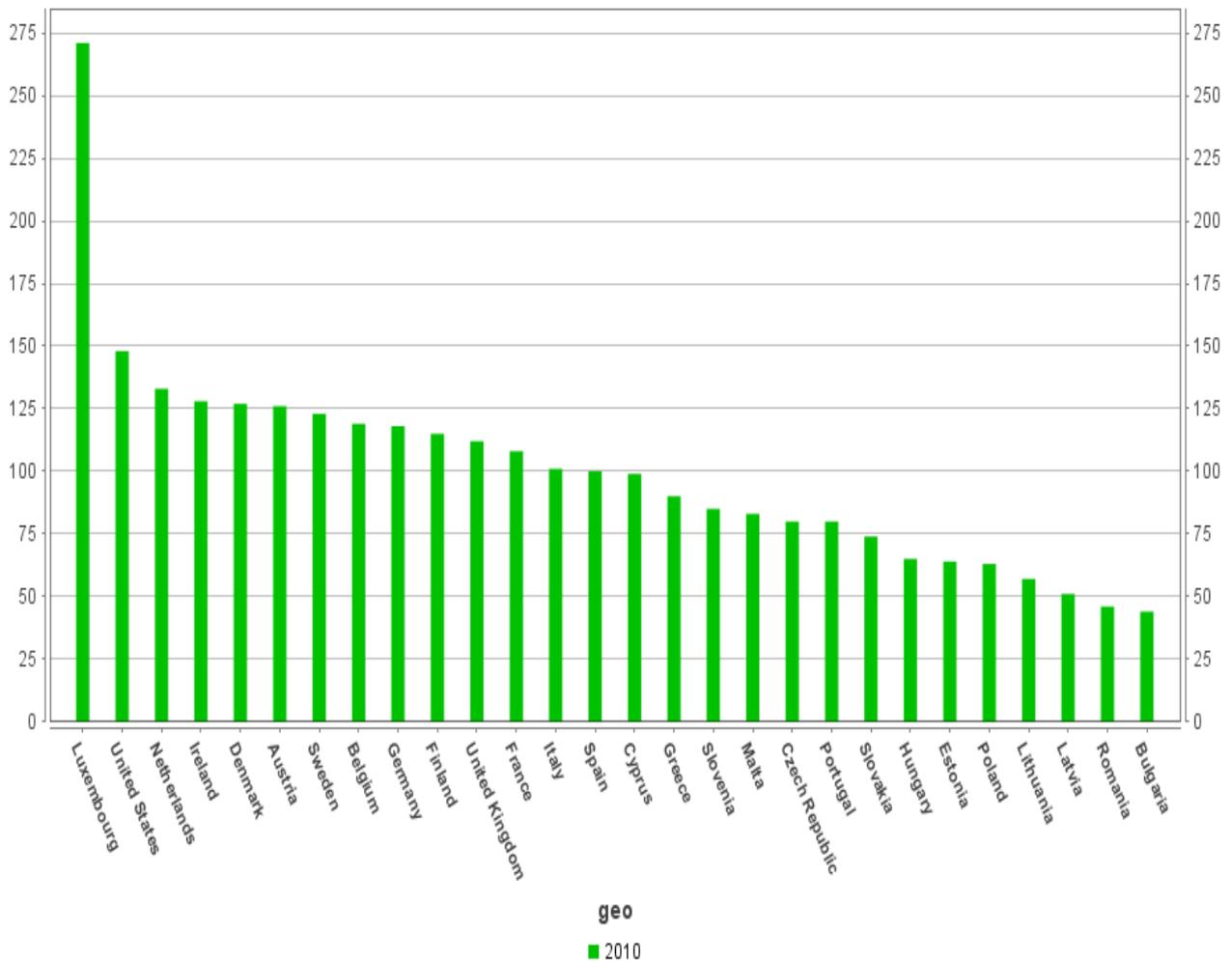
It takes stock of the current state of the EMU, identifies the main shortcomings of the EMU framework that were revealed by the crisis and describes the measures taken so far to address them. This analysis prepares the ground for discussion and is meant to be the first step towards a report of the Four Presidents on the future of the Economic and Monetary Union, expected for June 2015.

See: [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/economic-monetary-union/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/economic-monetary-union/index_en.htm)

A number of economic problems arise from the great diversity between and within the Member States of the EU:

### **What Disparities are we talking about?**

## GDP per capita in PPS



Source of Data: Eurostat

Last update: 13.12.2011

Date of extraction: 14 Dec 2011 16:51:22 MET

Hyperlink to the graph: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/drawGraph.do?init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114&toolbox=legend>

Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible.

General Disclaimer of the EC: [http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal\\_notices\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal_notices_en.htm)

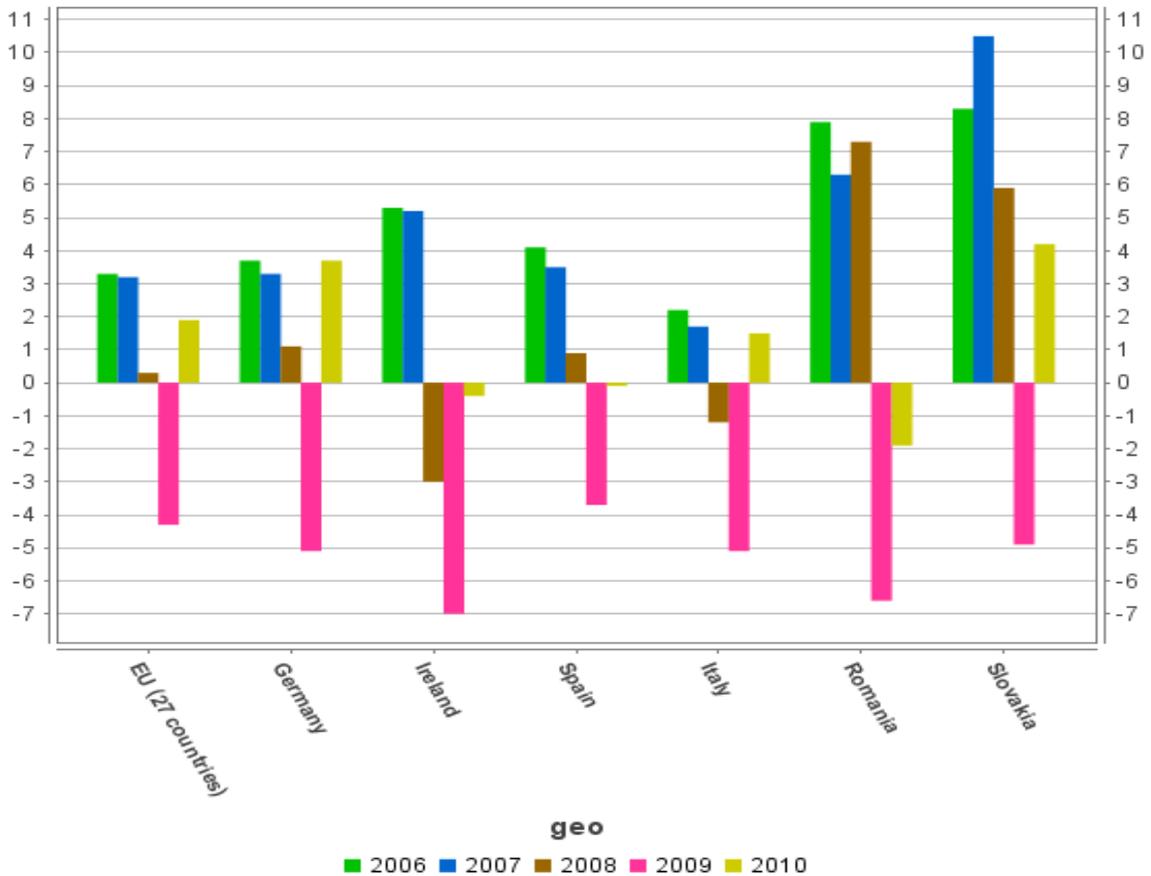
Short Description: Data from 1st of December 2011 For most recent GDP data, consult dataset nama\_gdp\_c.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is a measure for the economic activity. It is defined as the value of all goods and services produced less the value of any goods or services used in their creation. The volume index of GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) is expressed in relation to the European Union (EU-27) average set to equal 100. If the index of a country is higher than 100, this country's level of GDP per head is higher than the EU average and vice versa.

Basic figures are expressed in PPS, i.e. a common currency that eliminates the differences in price levels between countries allowing meaningful volume comparisons of GDP between countries. Please note that the index, calculated from PPS figures and expressed with respect to EU27 = 100, is intended for cross-country comparisons rather than for temporal comparisons.

Code: tec00114

**Real GDP growth rate - volume**  
**Percentage change on previous year**



Source of Data:: Eurostat

Last update: 12.12.2011

Date of extraction: 14 Dec 2011 16:59:23 MET

Hyperlink to the graph: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm./drawGraph.do&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsieb020&toolbox=legend>

Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible.

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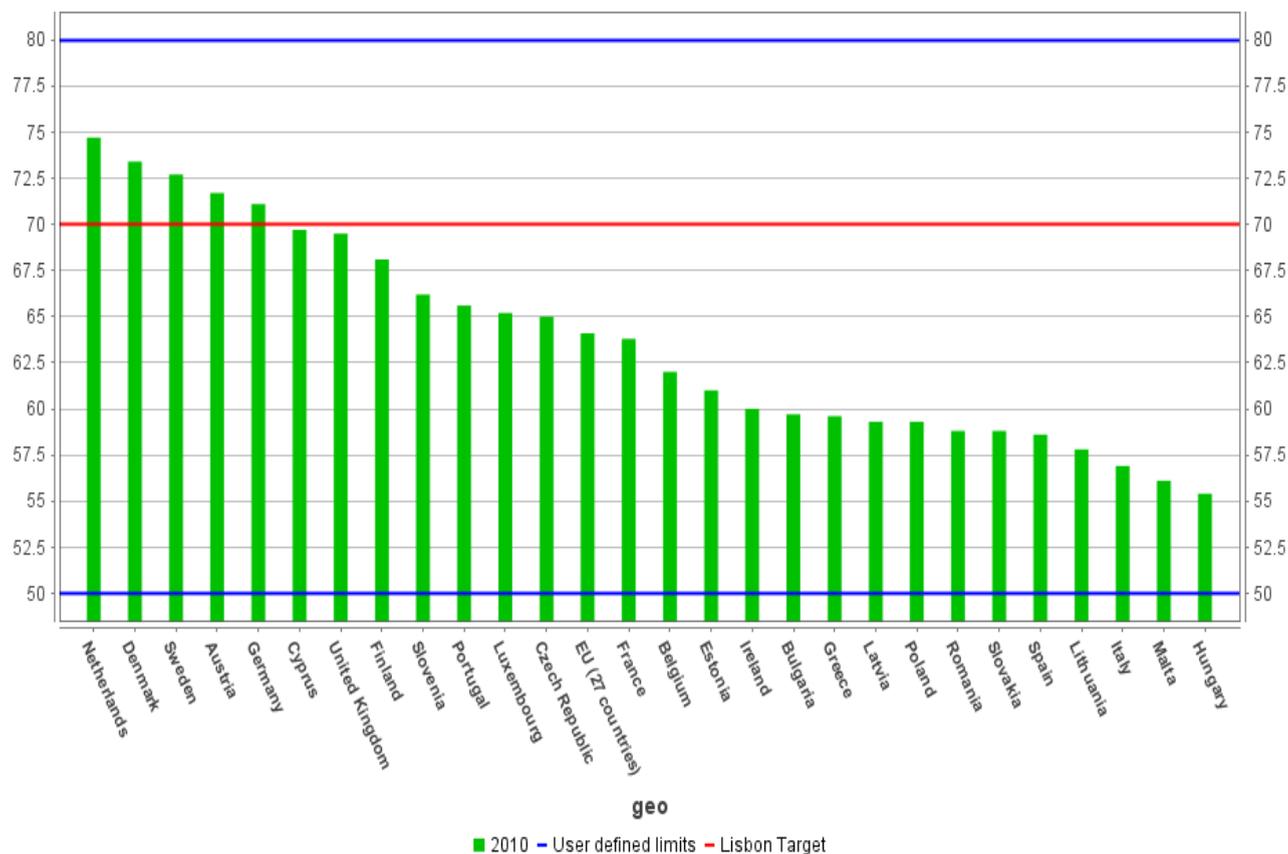
Short Description: Gross domestic product (GDP) is a measure of the economic activity, defined as the value of all goods and services produced less the value of any goods or services used in their creation. The calculation of the annual growth rate of GDP volume is intended to allow comparisons of the dynamics of economic development both over time and between economies of different sizes. For measuring the growth rate of GDP in terms of volumes, the GDP at current prices are valued in the prices of the previous year and the thus computed volume changes are imposed on the level of a reference year; this is called a chain-linked series. Accordingly, price movements will not inflate the growth rate.

Code: tsieb020

## Employment rate by gender, age group 15-64

%

Total



Source of Data:: Eurostat

Last update: 07.12.2011

Date of extraction: 14 Dec 2011 17:04:46 MET

Hyperlink to the graph: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm./drawGraph.do&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsiem010&toolbox=legend>

Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible.

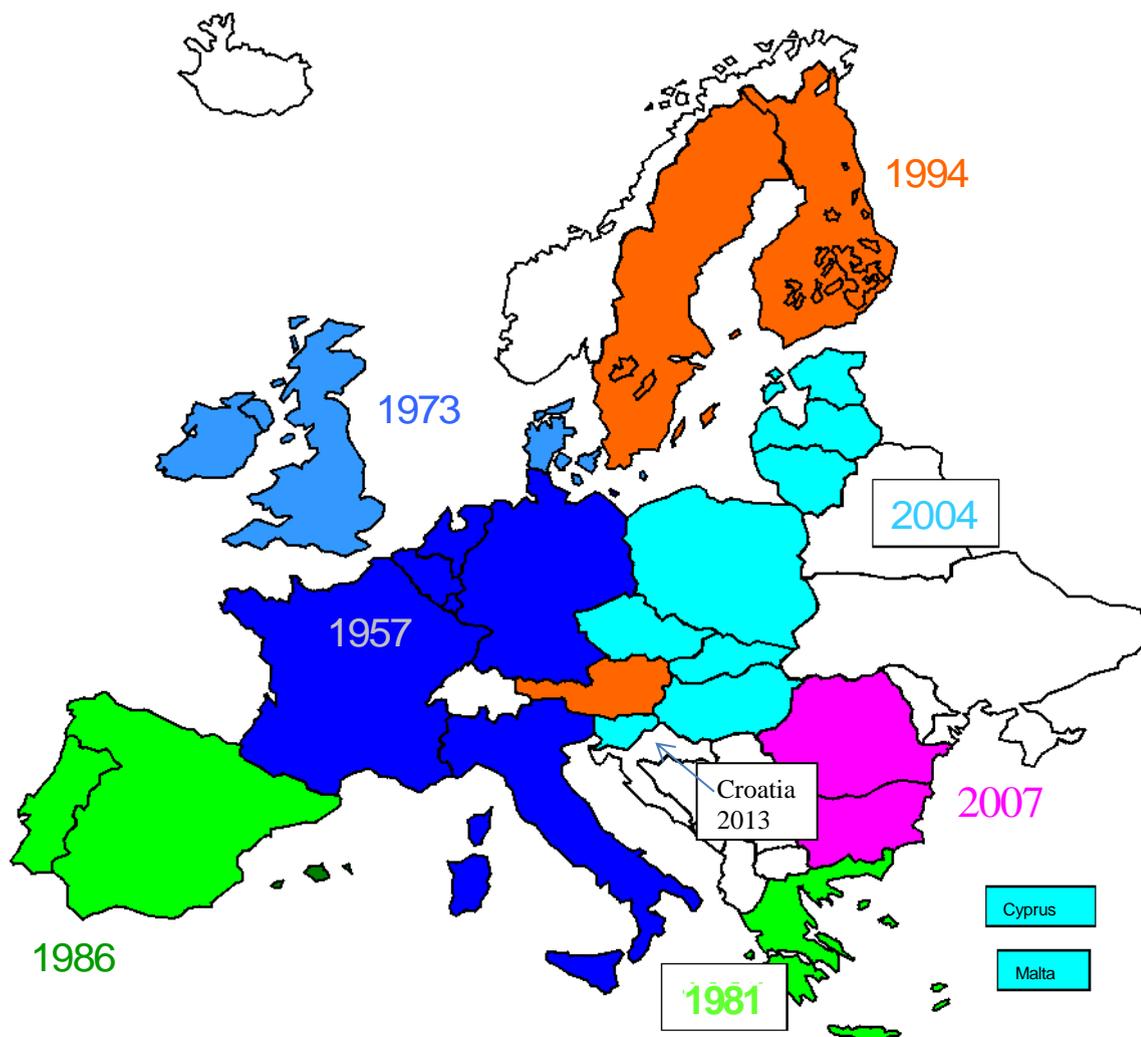
General Disclaimer of the EC: [http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal\\_notices\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal_notices_en.htm)

Short Description: This employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 15 to 64 in employment by the total population of the same age group. This is not the Europe 2020 employment rate indicator which refers to persons aged 20 to 64. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey. The survey covers the entire population living in private households and excludes those in collective households such as boarding houses, halls of residence and hospitals. Employed population consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.

Code: tsiem010

## 4.- An Overview of the Process of European Integration

### Fifth Enlargement



Currently (2015) Croatia became Member State of EU in 2013 since *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey* are candidate countries.

#### The integration process

- 1.- Customs Union: From 1957 to 1985 (EEC+EURATOM+ECSC, and EC1 0)
- 2.- Common Market: From 1986 to 1992. Integration of the internal market and Single European Act (EC12)
- 3.- Economic and Monetary Union: 1992 and beyond. Treaty on European Union: Common market & economic and monetary union. Treaty of Amsterdam and its four main objectives. Citizenship and individual rights.

## Monetary Union in 1999,

The Euro is only a virtual currency of 11 MS until 2002 with the introduction of Euro coins and banknotes: initially 12 countries in the Eurozone (after Greece join the single currency in 2001) with a single monetary policy and other 13 countries, still using their own national currencies, but in the EMU-2 European Monetary System with the Euro as central exchange rate. The Lisbon Treaty refers to them as “countries subject to an exception”

In 2015 the Euro is the official currency of 19 Member States (out of 28 MS), also referred to as the Eurozone. Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland. They are the original 11 Eurozone countries starting in 1999. Greece joined one year later. And subsequently incorporated Slovenia (2007), Cyprus and Malta (2008), Slovakia (2009), Estonia (2011), Latvia (2014), and Lithuania (2015).

And 12 other **non-EU countries** (former European colonies: e. g. Mauritius) and small states like Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican City also use the Euro even though they are not members of the EU (previously used currencies that were replaced by the Euro). The French territories of Mayotte and Saint Pierre and Miquelon also use the Euro under an agreement with the European Union, although they are not allowed to mint their own coins.

The other 11 EU states that **do not use the Euro** are Bulgaria, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic Romania and Croatia.

More detailed information about Member States of the European Union in:

<http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/>

From the December 1, 2002, North Korea has replaced the U.S. dollar by the Euro as its currency for international trade, as its own currency, the won, is not convertible

## Enlargement is a dynamic process:

The biggest recent enlargement includes 10 new countries going from EU15 to EU25 from May 2004. Next enlargement to EU27 was in January 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania become Member States.

Currently (2015) Croatia is Member State and remains as candidates countries, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

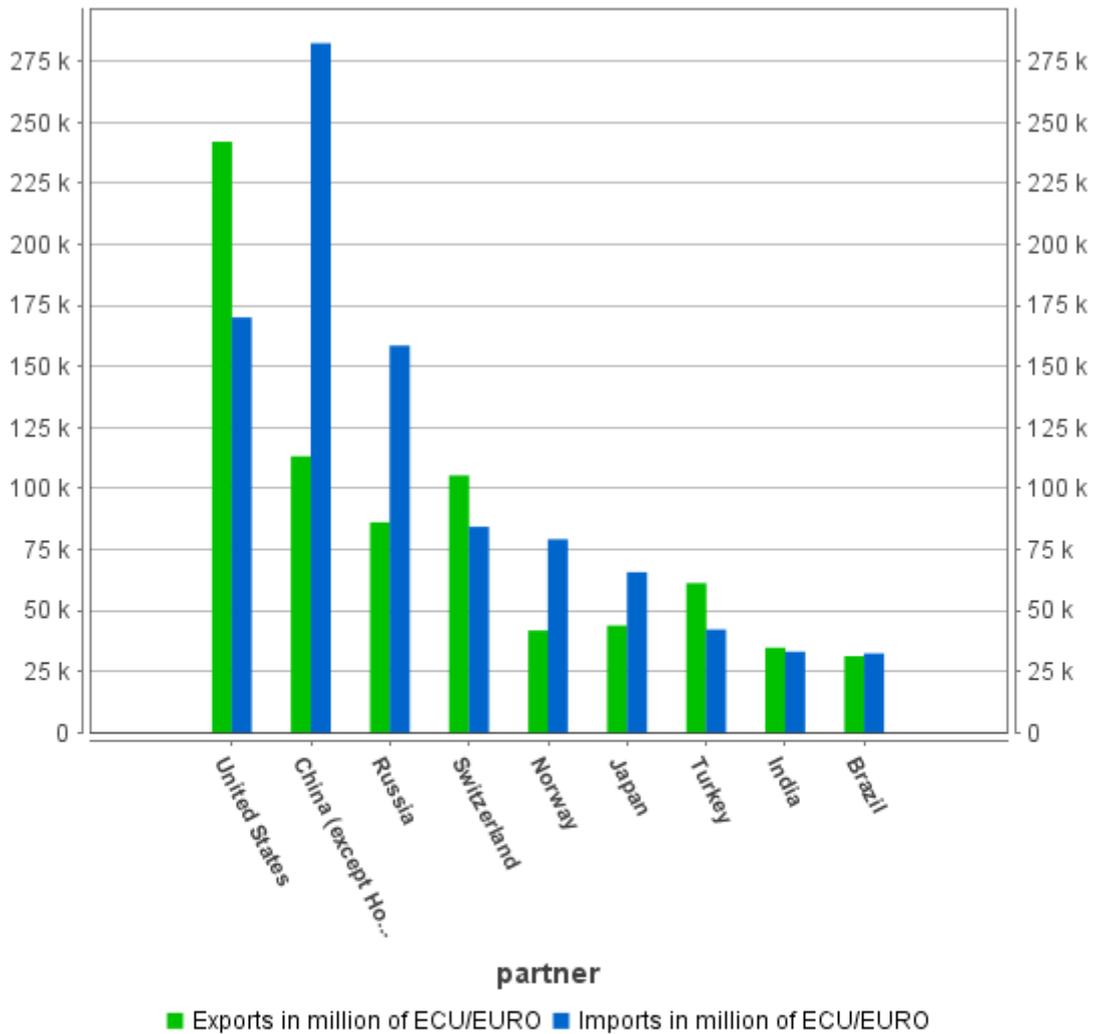
For more update information about enlargement: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:051:0004:01:EN:HTML>  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key\\_documents\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key_documents_en.htm)

Agriculture and enlargement:

The recent enlargements of the European Union have had the effect of increasing the significance of agriculture and have resulted in new economic and social challenges for the common agricultural policy (CAP). The new Member States have huge agricultural potential in terms of human resources and providing further farmland. However, this potential has yet to be fully realized. There is a considerable socio-economic divide between the old and the new Member States in the agricultural sector.

International trade with the EU

**Extra-EU27 trade, by main partners, total product value in EUR mio and share 2010**



Source of Data:: Eurostat

Last update: 08.12.2011

Date of extraction: 14 Dec 2011 17:15:08 MET

Hyperlink to the graph: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm./drawGraph.do&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tet00040&toolbox=legend>

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General Disclaimer of the EC: [http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal\\_notices\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/geninfo/legal_notices_en.htm)

Short Description: The table shows the 20 main partners of the EU27 (according to the sum imports+exports), expressed in value terms and in % of the total flow.

Code: tet00040