**Top 20 EU Facts**

**1.** Since 2013, the EU has **27 members**

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

**2.**The **European flag** has a circle of 12 golden stars on a blue background which symbolize unity, solidarity and harmony among the European member countries.



**3.**The **European motto** is ‘United in Diversity’ and this motto was first used in 2000.

**4.**The **European anthem** is a melody that was composed by German composer Ludwig van Beethoven in 1823. The melody is part of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and referred to as “Ode to Joy” The anthem only consists of the musical tunes, there are no words to the anthem. The anthem is played at official ceremonies of the EU or when several countries share an European event.

**5.** The EU is home to **513 million inhabitants** in total living in the member countries. Thus the EU is the third largest population after [China](https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/china-facts.html) and [India](https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/india-for-kids.html).

**6.**Largest country by land area in the European Union is[**France**](https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/france-facts.html), while the biggest EU country by population is [**Germany**](https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/germany-facts.html).

**7. Smallest country of the EU**by land area and population is Malta.

**8. Largest city in the EU**: Paris in France with almost 11 million inhabitants is the EU's biggest city.

**9.** **The** **newest EU member** is Croatia from 2013

**10. What is the European Union?**The EU is a political and economic union that have common institutions and an EU parliament. The member states of the EU share common interests and common values.

The main purpose is to **uphold peace, promote economic and social solidarity and bring the European people together**. There is freedom to move in the European Union so people from a EU country can live, work and study in any other European country.

**11. When was the EU formed?**The first European Union was formed by six countries in **1958** although it was not called 'European Union' then.

**The six founding** countries are Germany, France, Italy and the three Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg).

**12. A little history on the EU**: The idea to form a common union was introduced by Robert Schuman, foreign minister of France, already in 1950.

The European Union as is, was first established with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993. The final EU constitution came into effect with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 which also established the election of a common president for the European Council.

**13. Important EU cities**: Four cities are very important for the European union:

* Brussels in Belgium (EU headquarters)
* Strasbourg in France (European Parliament)
* Frankfurt/Main in Germany (European Central Bank)
* Luxembourg City in Luxembourg (seat of the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice)

The **EU capital city is Brussels**, which is the capital city of Belgium.

**14. The presidency of the Council of the European Union rotates every six months**. The Council of the EU represents the governments of the member states and the presidency is held by the national government’s head of state.

**15.**There are **three important bodies** within the European Union:

* The **EU Parliament** that consists of directly elected members who represent the people of their member country.
* **The EU Council** that consists of the heads of state of the member countries who make the decision for and support the decision made prior in their country.
* **The EU Commission** represents the interests of the European Union member states and the proposes new laws that the parliament and the council then discuss and can then adopt.

**16.** **Languages in the EU**: There is no single European language, as all languages are considered equal and shall be respected by all people in the European Union. Thus, all information is available in 24 languages

**17. EU Day:**Europe Day is celebrated on 9 May. This is, however, not a public holiday, although in Brussels and Strasbourg many public institutions will hold various activities, concerts and open-door events for the interested public.

**18. The European economy:**The European Union is the **largest trade block in the world**. The majority of trade is with the EU member countries as there is free trade among the member countries. The so-called ‘single market’ was established in 1992. In terms of the total value of all goods and services produced (GDP), it is bigger than the US economy.

**19. Largest airport:**  Paris Charles de Gaulle in France is the busiest airport in the EU.

**20. The** **European currency was introduced in 2002**. The European currency is the **EURO** for 19 countries of the EU while other European countries still use their own national currency such as Denmark, Sweden, Croatia, Poland.