

Bridge to the Future: Enlarging the European Union



A curriculum resource for teachers

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BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE: ENLARGING THE EUROPEAN UNION

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OVERVIEW

This curriculum deals with one of the most crucial events in current affairs: the enlargement of the European Union. As the EU grows, it faces an array of political, social, and economic challenges that could reshape the world we live in. For that reason, this is an important topic for American students to study.

One of the objectives of this curriculum is also to inform students about Europe and its increasing economic, cultural, and political importance in an interdependent and interconnected world.

The curriculum can be used in a five-day format, if the teacher elects to devote one day to each unit, or it can easily be expanded, such as by including more time for research, student presentations, or the optional sixth unit.

Unit 1: What is EU enlargement?

This first unit can be run primarily as a lecture; it covers the basic questions on the history and purpose of the European Union, what new countries joined in 2004, and how and why the EU is enlarging.

Unit 2: Guided web research

In this unit student teams will begin research for a presentation on a specific country. Alternatively, students can be assigned to begin this research on the first day of the curriculum, and this day can be used for teams to do research and for the teacher to supervise.

Unit 3: Teamwork day for presentations

Country teams work in groups to prepare their presentations.

Unit 4: Team presentations

Teams of students present information on their country's history, politics, culture, and economy. This unit may occupy one or multiple days, at the teacher's discretion.

Unit 5: EU Futures

This day is intended as a guided discussion on what the future holds for the EU. The ideal is to generate a dialogue wherein students realize the broader implications of these issues, including the possible relevance to the United States and to students' own lives.

Unit 6: How big should the EU grow?

This final unit presents several options for extending the curriculum, and is most suited for advanced students. The unit's objective is for students to apply what they have learned from the previous units by thinking about how the EU may enlarge in the future.

Appendix

The appendix includes: 1) a bibliography of web resources for teachers to gather information; 2) newspaper articles for students to read, along with suggestions for discussion questions; 3) a map exercise for students, including a blank map; 4) a detailed EU map; 5) a "Milestones on the Road to European Integration" timeline; 6) a handout "What is the EU?"; 7) a handout "Brief History of the EU"; 8) a European Union timeline activity worksheet; 9) a European

Union timeline quiz; 10) an EU Facts and Figures quiz; and 11) a series of Country Fact Sheets for every EU member state and several prospective members.

Units 1 and 5 of the curriculum begin with a “Backgrounder,” which is designed as a briefing for the teacher that can also be used as a lecture or a basis for class discussion. The first unit also incorporates a “Key Issues” component that can provide students with valuable background political information for their presentations.

The first and fifth units also include a list of possible discussion questions that students can answer in class or as homework. Suggestions for further reading are provided, for either the teacher’s or students’ needs. Where appropriate, web links and visual materials are also included.

Teachers who have used the curriculum in class are encouraged to e-mail feedback to the European Union Center at euc@u.washington.edu. The curriculum is also available online at <http://jsis.artsci.washington.edu/programs/europe/euc.html>.

Acknowledgements

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UNIT 1: WHAT IS EU ENLARGEMENT?

Objective: To provide students with a basic overview of the history and issues of European Union enlargement.

Backgrounder

The European Union is the most important development in European history since World War Two. Nothing else has had such a broad, deep, and lasting effect on the lives of Europeans, whether shopkeeper or statesman, all the way from Lisbon to Helsinki.

The European Union is not one single development, however. In fact, the process of European integration is ongoing. With leadership from Brussels, where many of the most important governing institutions of the EU are located, the EU member states are engaged in a project of both *deepening* and *widening*. Deepening refers to the degree to which the member states are integrated: in other words, how closely they are bound together, politically, economically, and even culturally. It is the goal of leaders in Brussels and in national capitals such as Paris, Berlin, Madrid, and Budapest, to pursue “ever closer union.”

Widening is the central concern of this curriculum. The process of expanding the number of states that belong to the EU is known as enlargement. From a core membership of six countries at the outset in 1957, in 2004 the EU’s membership reached 25 countries, with a total population of more than 470 million.

What is the EU?

The European Union is a grouping of sovereign states that have committed to pursue common policies in certain areas. These member states—25 as of 2004—are integrating economically above all, but politically as well. The EU itself is not a state: it is rather a unique creation in which the independent member states *pool their sovereignty*, surrendering the right to make independent decisions in certain areas such as fiscal, environmental, or employment policy.

The EU is different from the United Nations, as member states of the UN actually do not surrender their sovereignty. The UN leadership has no power to make member states comply with directives. The EU’s central decision-making institutions, however, do have the power to force members to comply. This power derives from the treaties that member states sign upon their entrance into the EU. Hence the EU is a *treaty-based* organization, and a series of treaties govern the operations of the Union. The EU, unlike the United States, does not as of yet have a constitution that applies to society, politics, and economics of all the member states. While a draft constitution has been approved, the member states have yet to ratify it and thereby bring the constitution legally into effect.

The process of European integration that has led to the European Union today began shortly after the Second World War, and was in large part inspired by the experience of that catastrophic conflict. European leaders such as Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, both French, determined that never again should a war devastate the countries of Europe. The best insurance against such

destruction, as Monnet and Schuman saw it, was to tie the countries of Europe so closely together that they simply could not make war on each other. (See the Preamble, “What is the EU?”, in the Appendix.)

Prominent in their calculations was assuring that Germany’s main war-making industries—coal and steel—be bound to those of France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Thus in 1951 the European Coal and Steel Community was born, and marked the first major step towards the European Union of today. In the years immediately following, the treaties establishing the European Economic Community were negotiated, increasing cooperation across a wide spectrum of issues. (See timeline in the appendix.)

The process of European integration began to take on a momentum of its own, impelled not so much by a fear of Germany as by a goal of strengthening the European economy through combining countries’ resources. This process continues today: European countries face no significant military threats in the world, but instead strive to realize the benefits of closer union. The past 50 years of expanding European integration have shown that such integration can bring peace, stability, and even prosperity to formerly troubled lands—and this is one of the continuing motivations for EU enlargement.

What is the history of EU enlargement?

The EU has gone through four previous rounds of enlargement. From the original six members of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, nineteen new states have joined over the course of the last 30 years: (See map in the appendix.)

1973: Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom

1981: Greece

1986: Portugal, Spain

1995: Finland, Sweden, Austria

2004: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta

The 2004 enlargement is unprecedented: it featured three times as many entering countries as any previous enlargement, it increased the geographical expanse of the EU by 34%, and it added over 100 million people. It is no surprise that this enlargement is known as the EU’s “big bang.”

Why is the EU enlarging?

Most of the countries that joined the EU in 2004 are located in Central and Eastern Europe, behind what was once the Iron Curtain. These countries have had functioning democracies only since the fall of communist regimes in 1989-91. Also, most of the new countries are significantly poorer than the remainder of the EU member states. The size, diversity, and complexity of this enlargement pose some significant challenges for the EU. (See Key Issues, below.)

Nonetheless, the reasons for integrating these new states into the EU fold remain the very same as those on which the EU was founded: ensuring peace and prosperity on the European continent. The end of the Cold War presents a clear parallel with the end of World War Two. European leaders have decided that the best way to ensure peace and to increase stability is to embrace the former opponents. Where once it was Germany, today it is the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe—though Russia itself may never be invited to join.

EU enlargement promises benefits for both the older member states and the newer members, and it is no wonder that the leaders in most of the new member states were eager to join as quickly as their countries were able. The EU itself points to five particular benefits of enlargement:

- The extension of the zone of **peace, stability and prosperity** in Europe will enhance the security of all its peoples.
- The addition of more than 100 million people, in rapidly growing economies, to the EU's market of 370 million will **boost economic growth and create jobs** in both old and new member states.
- There will be a **better quality of life for citizens** throughout Europe as the new members adopt EU policies for protection of the environment and the fight against crime, drugs and illegal immigration.
- The arrival of new members will enrich the EU through increased cultural **diversity**, interchange of **ideas**, and better **understanding** of other peoples.
- Enlargement will **strengthen the Union's role in world affairs** - in foreign and security policy, trade policy, and the other fields of global governance.

Who can join? Enlargement criteria

There are three key criteria according to which prospective member states are judged:

Democracy: Is the country a stable democracy, with a rule of law, respect for human rights, and the protection of minorities?

Market Economy: Does the country have a functioning market economy, able to compete in the EU's common market?

Adhering to EU Regulations: Can the country adopt all the common rules, standards, and policies that make up the body of EU law and participate in political, economic, and monetary union?

What are the key issues in EU enlargement?

The following four issues are among the most important challenges posed by taking 10 new members into the EU.

Institutional reform: One big question for the EU in its enlargement is how institutions that were designed to govern a union of 15 states will be able to work with 25 members. Many countries are therefore calling for the EU's core institutions to be reformed. However, the reforms countries desire can actually vary significantly from country to country. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one example: this policy subsidizes farmers very heavily in some states (such as France and Spain), but given that new member states such as Poland have very large agricultural sectors in their economies, subsidies should switch away from benefiting the older member states in favor of the newer, poorer members. France and Spain are understandably reluctant to see their farmers' subsidies dwindle. Yet since the CAP is already hugely wasteful in terms of both money

and agricultural production, it must be reformed in some way to make it equitable. Equality also plays into the issue of institutional reform through the weighting of member states' votes in the important decision-making body known as the European Council. Under the current arrangements, Germany receives 29 votes, as many as Italy even though Germany's population is larger by 20 million. More controversial still is that Spain and Poland receive 27 votes though their populations are half that of Germany's. Reforming this weighted voting is difficult, though, because states are extremely unwilling to surrender their voting power—particularly since smaller countries such as Denmark or Lithuania are afraid of letting the big countries dictate the EU's policy. To ensure that all countries are represented fairly in some way, then, the voting system must also be reformed.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP): The EU's attempts to speak with a unified voice on the international stage represent a prominent goal of deeper integration. Here again, though, different countries have very different desires for what a CFSP should be. Some, such as France, are intent on creating a European military force that could eventually lead to the EU becoming a global superpower in many of the same areas as the US. Other countries, among them Britain, do not want to see this much coordination in the foreign policy and military fields.

External relations: Closely related to the last issue, the question of external relations is complicated by the fact that some countries are much more friendly to the US than are others. Obviously, France's relationship to the US is more problematic than are Britain's or Poland's. Relationships with Russia can also vary widely in their importance to member states, as can relationships with other countries, such as Cyprus' with Turkey. Possible divisions between what has been called "New Europe" (i.e., the newer EU members) and "Old Europe" (the more established members) are one of the major difficulties that the enlarged EU will have to manage.

Democratic support for European integration: The fourth key issue deals with what is known as Europe's "democratic deficit." Scholars, European policymakers, and European publics have alleged that the EU is too much a collection of unaccountable bureaucrats who take decisions without consulting the people. Bringing more democracy and transparency into decision making is another important goal of the institutional reform process. Enlargement adds an additional dimension to this issue, since publics in the new member states have had to vote on whether or not to join the EU. While these votes all passed, some commentators have claimed that people in these countries did not really understand what they were voting for—in short, that EU enlargement is also an elite-driven process that can be seen as almost forcing policies upon apathetic populaces.

Student Presentations: Directions

At the end of this first class day, teachers should have the students divide up into teams and pick a country that they will research. The size of the teams will depend on the teacher's class and how many countries he or she wants to cover, but an optimal team size would be two to four students. To outline for students what will be expected of them in the presentations, please see the explanation at the beginning of Unit 2. Once the students know which country they will be representing, they can begin researching that country's position on the issues below.

Students can choose from any of the 25 European Union members: Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg,

Germany, Italy, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, or Denmark.

Begin by explaining the assignment: students will give a presentation of roughly ten minutes. The presentation should include information from the four topics (history, politics, economics, and culture, explained more fully in Unit 2). It must be detailed enough that other students will be able to gather sufficient information a later assignment comparing two or more countries. Multimedia aids are strongly encouraged, and can include items such as flags, souvenirs from the country, music, pictures, or even food dishes.

Activity: This is an activity for first and second-year students. Students will receive the included handout “A Brief History of the EU” (in the appendix). Working from this handout, they will then create a timeline of the major events or dates in the history of the EU. Each student should complete his or her own timeline.

Questions for teachers to discuss with the class:

- What happened in 1989 that changed the relationship between the US and Europe (West and East)? Why is 1989 a defining date for Europe?
- Some of the enlargement countries were communist until the early 1990’s. What impact might that have upon their new status as EU members?
- What are some of the challenges for the EU in expanding to 25 countries?
- What are the problems and promises of adopting the euro for enlargement countries?

Questions for students (in-class assignment or homework):

1. Explain at least three challenges the EU will face after the expansion to 25 countries.
2. Pick an enlargement country and explain three challenges its government and citizens face now that they are in the EU.
3. In your opinion, what should a country do to be able to join the EU and/or the euro.

Optional homework assignment: Have the students begin their research for the Unit 4 presentations.

For further reading:

<http://www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/euguide.htm>
http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/index_en.htm

UNIT 2: GUIDED WEB RESEARCH

Objective: For students to gain experience with research and to learn about several aspects of an individual European Union member country.

This day will be an in-class guided research session to gather information for the country team presentations. Students can refer to the included Country Fact Sheets to help begin their research (see appendix). At the teacher's discretion, students can be required to use books in addition to internet sources for their research.

History: Students should prepare 3-5 paragraphs on their country's history, covering only the major developments or events. They should be prepared to answer questions such as: how long has the country been in existence? Who are the country's most important leaders? What periods in the country's history were the most turbulent, and why?

Politics: Students should discuss the country's current political situation, answering questions such as: What form of government does the country have—is it a monarchy, a parliamentary democracy, or something else? Who is the country's current leader? How long has the country had this political system—have there been major changes in the last 100 years? What are the most controversial issues in the country's politics today?

Economics: Relevant questions here are: What is the country's economy like? What are its major industries, imports, and exports? Are there any famous companies or products that come from the country? What is the country's system of welfare policies like? Have there been any major changes or upheavals in its economy in the last 100 years?

Culture: Questions to answer in this section include: What are the principle languages in the country? What is the religious makeup of the country? What are some of the typical foods of the country? Who are some of the great artists, and what are some of the great works of art, whether literature, painting, music, or architecture?

Optional assignment: For advanced students, the teacher can add additional structure to the students' research and presentations by having them answer the following three questions, either during their presentations or in writing:

- 1) What is your country's position on the further enlargement of the European Union? Should new members be invited to join, and if so, which countries? If no new members should be invited to join, why not?
- 2) What is your country's position on a European Security and Defense Policy and a Common Foreign and Security Policy? Should Europe have one united defense and foreign policy?
- 3) What is your country's position on cooperation with the United States and/or NATO?

Below are some suggestions on websites where students might start to gather their information.

http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/doemoff/gov_eu.html

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/enlargement.htm>

http://www.dw-world.de/english/0,3367,1433_A_1180570,00.html

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/europe/2002/eu_enlargement/default.stm

Optional homework assignment: Students should turn in a 2-3 page paper connected with their presentation, outlining each of the four areas of their research.

UNIT 3: TEAMWORK DAY

Objective: Student teams organize and prepare their country presentations.

During this day, students should work in their country groups to organize the information they have previously gathered. Students need to make sure they can present relevant information from all four topics in a brief, concise manner. They also need to decide who will present which topic.

The teacher should also make the students aware of the two assignments that will be expected of them in relation to the other students' presentations (see Unit 4 for details).

UNIT 4: COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

Objective: To have students teach other students about European Union member countries. To give students practice with public speaking.

Team presentations can last anywhere from ten to twenty minutes, depending on the teacher's wishes. The teacher can grade these presentations based on organization, accuracy of information, and clarity of communication.

The first assignment below is designed to ensure that students pay attention to the other students' presentations. Optionally, teachers may add a writing component so that students have to turn in a short paper based on their presentations.

Questions for teachers to discuss with the class:

- Get students to compare the enlargement countries with the older member states by asking them what some of the general differences are between the two. Are there any broader conclusions we can draw about their different histories, politics, economics, or cultures? Are there any common trends that differentiate or unite these countries?

Assignment: Based on what they learned from each other's presentations, students should write a paragraph on what country they think is most similar to the country they researched, and another paragraph on which country they think is most different. Students should explain why and how they find the countries they're writing about similar and different.

Optional assignment: Based on what they hear during each other's presentations, students can create their own fact sheets for another country. These fact sheets should include one important bit of information in each of the four categories of the presentation, i.e., history, politics, culture, and economics. Assign the countries ahead of time to make sure that not all students choose to do a fact sheet on the same country.

UNIT 5: FUTURES

Objective: To engage students in thinking about what the EU may become, and what role an enlarged EU may play in the world.

Backgrounder

As in the first unit, teachers can present this information as a lecture, or provide it in written form for students.

EU Futures

Experts talk about four main potential future trajectories for the European Union. These futures revolve around questions of whether the EU should continue enlarging or focus more on intensifying its integration (the “wider versus deeper” debate) and, similarly, what the end goal of European unification should be, either a superstate or a looser confederation of national states.

Future 1) A “United States of Europe” superstate: In this scenario, the EU continues to deepen its integration, eventually becoming a federal state with a structure similar to that of the United States. Individual countries would lose much of their sovereignty, though they would retain limited powers in some areas such as education and economic policy, much as states in the US have. As Brussels becomes more powerful vis-à-vis national capitals such as Berlin, Madrid, or Warsaw, so the power of the EU as an international actor would also increase. Hence the idea of a United States of Europe tends to presuppose that the EU would increasingly become a global superpower rivaling but not hostile to the US.

Future 2) A continuation of the status quo: This scenario sees the EU embarking on some further enlargement, including Romania, Bulgaria, and perhaps eventually other countries like Croatia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The current level of integration among the member states, however, would not increase significantly. The EU would remain largely an economic bloc, with some aspects of political unity such as centralized regulation of environmental and social policy. This option obviously favors widening over deepening.

Future 3) A “two-speed” Europe: A kind of compromise between the two previous possibilities, in this scenario a core of willing member states proceeds to deepen political integration while the other members remain in the status quo. The “core” countries—usually envisioned as France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and possibly others like Italy or Austria—would work to create a common foreign policy and military force and cooperate ever more closely in other areas such as justice and home affairs, definitively dismantling national borders in governance and approaching true unification. The remaining countries like Britain, Denmark, and many of the new Eastern European members would be content with the benefits of economic cooperation and not seek to join this core.

Future 4) A disintegrating Europe: While far-fetched, some experts do not rule out this possibility, which sees the dreams of true European unification as overambitious. It could be that an EU of 25 members will suffer from “overstretch,” trying to incorporate too many countries with too many different histories, economies, and policy objectives. The governing mechanisms as they now exist in the EU may not work with such a large Union, and due to disagreements about what form future

European integration should take (the widening versus deepening debate again), those mechanisms may not be reformable. There is even the outside possibility that some members could eventually secede from the EU, which would gradually lose its powers, decaying into ineffectiveness.

Activities: A) Write “United States of Europe” on the board and ask the students to react.
B) With help of students, list the reasons why many Europeans believe a “United States of Europe” would be desirable. List the reasons why they think some Europeans would be opposed to the idea.

There are optional homework questions based on questions for teachers below; for advanced students or teachers, there can be an optional two-page paper on what they think the future of the EU should be based on what they learned in class.

The Future of the EU: Questions for Students

1. If you had to speculate, what do you think will be the future of the EU? What do you think the EU *should be* in the future? Should it become a United States of Europe, totally unified and a superstate, or should it be a looser union not much deeper than now? Should the EU become a global rival to the United States, a second superpower to balance the US internationally?
2. What other countries do you believe the EU may still invite to join? What problems might they create? Should EU enlargement include Turkey? Should it include Russia? What about Ukraine or Croatia? What are the reasons for either including or excluding these countries?
3. Can the EU function as a union of 25 members? Can decisions be taken effectively to get anything done? Can consensus—the basis for most decisions among EU members hitherto—be achieved among 25 countries? How should the power to make decisions be balanced between big countries and small countries?

UNIT 6: HOW BIG SHOULD THE EU GROW?

Objective: To get students to apply their understanding of how and why the EU has enlarged in the past to future prospective member countries. To practice skills of negotiating, compromise, and to gain knowledge of how political decisions are made.

This unit has two components: 1) student research on countries' policies on EU enlargement; and 2) a simulated summit meeting where students representing current EU members and prospective EU members debate which countries should be allowed to join.

Research Day

The teacher can divide the class into student groups that will represent current member countries and prospective member countries. It is up to the teacher's discretion to decide on how many total teams there will be and how many students will represent each team. The prospective countries can include: Norway, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Croatia, Serbia, and Switzerland.

Note that not all these countries have applied or necessarily ever will apply for EU membership, nor is this the total number of countries that may be interested in joining the EU. The point is rather that these are all potential countries that could in theory *someday* be considered for membership, and this list of countries represents a wide spectrum of the difficulties or issues the EU faces when considering new members. It is recommended that at a minimum teachers assign students to do Turkey, Russia, Croatia, and Norway, since these countries capture most of the major questions of which countries will join and which will not.

The teacher should also assign students to represent several current EU member countries. At a minimum, the teacher should ensure that the UK, Germany, France, Poland, and Spain are represented, since these countries are some of the major players in deciding on future EU enlargement.

For the research, students need to focus on the single theme of *what their country's policy towards enlargement is*. Students representing prospective countries will need to find out 1) if their country has already applied for EU membership, and if so, what has happened with that application; 2) how political leaders and the general populace in the country feel about the idea of joining the EU; and 3) what are the most difficult issues the country faces in joining. The answers to these questions should be readily available through web research, for instance through opinion polls of a country's citizens regarding EU membership. Students can also use the Prospective Country Fact Sheets that are provided with this curriculum; these fact sheets supply the basic information they would need to investigate for their research.

Students representing current EU members will similarly need to research 1) how their country's leaders and populace feel about further enlargement; 2) what are the deciding factors in shaping that country's policy on enlargement (i.e., for France the desire to preserve the Common Agricultural Policy, or for Germany the desire to reform the weighted voting system); 3) if the country has firmly stated opposition or support for any particular prospective country.

As with the guided research day in Unit 2, teachers can supervise students as they're researching to make sure they use relevant and accurate information.

Summit Simulation

Teachers can make this simulation as formal or informal as they like. In the spirit of a true diplomatic summit, students could dress up, sit around tables conference-style with name placards for their countries, and observe formalities like referring to each other by "Mr.," "Ms.," and their surnames.

The simulation can proceed as follows:

1. In alphabetical order by country name, prospective countries' representatives stand and deliver a very short (two to three sentences) statement as to their country's position on enlargement.
2. After each prospective country has given its position, representatives from the current member countries may question the prospectives on particular issues. For instance, the UK representative might want to question the Turkish representative as to whether Turkey has done enough to ensure protection for human rights in the Turkish legal system. For countries such as Norway or Russia that are ambivalent or opposed to EU membership, the EU countries can still question exactly why that country is opposed.
3. Following the question and answer session, the representatives of the current member countries can break for a private meeting. At this meeting they can discuss adopting a formal EU policy on which countries will be invited to join. They may need to hold a vote amongst themselves to decide, country by country, which will be offered membership.
4. While the current member countries are meeting, the prospectives can discuss their own similarities and differences and whether they might strengthen their case for membership by collaborating with each other on certain areas, for example to reform their economies or improve their democracies.
5. To conclude the summit, all the representatives will re-convene. The representatives of the current member states will then announce their decisions on which countries will be invited to join. Alternatively, the discussion/negotiation sessions of numbers 3 and 4 can be skipped, and the current member countries can take an official vote in the presence of the prospectives to decide which of the candidate countries will be invited.

Grading the simulation

Teachers can grade this simulation according to: how well-prepared the students are; how accurately they represent their country's interests; how well they work in teams; how effectively they participate; and the quality of the students' speaking and self-presentation.

Optional Writing Assignments: There are several writing assignments that may work with this unit. **A)** Teachers could assign students to write a few paragraphs outlining their research findings on their countries' positions on enlargement. **B)** Or students could write brief summaries on how the summit outcome was achieved, answering what the key principles were that helped determine which countries were offered to join the EU and which

were not. **C)** Finally, students could also write a simple reaction paper in which they discuss what they learned from simulating the process of EU enlargement, or possibly speculate on which of these countries may actually join the EU someday.

APPENDIX

The appendix includes: 1) a bibliography of web resources for teachers to gather information; 2) newspaper articles for students to read, along with suggestions for discussion questions; 3) a map exercise for students, including a blank map; 4) a detailed EU map; 5) a “Milestones on the Road to European Integration” timeline; 6) a handout “What is the EU?”; 7) a handout “Brief History of the EU”; 8) a European Union timeline activity worksheet; 9) a European Union timeline quiz; 10) an EU Facts and Figures quiz; and 11) a series of Country Fact Sheets for every EU member state and several prospective members.

Bibliography

General information on the EU, including enlargement

<http://www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/euguide.htm>

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/index_en.htm

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/enlargement.htm>

<http://www.european-movement.org/enlargement/>

<http://www.useu.be/Categories/US&EUEnlargement/>

The BBC’s enlargement website

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/europe/2002/eu_enlargement/default.stm

Deutsche Welle’s EU website

http://www.dw-world.de/english/0,3367,1433_A_1180570,00.html

European Union/United States statistical comparison

<http://www.eurunion.org/profile/EUUSStats.htm>

The *Guardian* Newspaper’s EU Special Report

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/0,7368,396838,00.html>

Sources

The information for the Country Fact Sheets was compiled from the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.org, and the Lonely Planet’s website (www.lonelyplanet.com).

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March 11, 2004

THE NEW EUROPE

Union, but Not Unanimity, as Europe's East Joins West

By **JOHN DARNTON**

PARIS — When the European Union expands eastward this spring, it will end the 65-year divide caused by the 20th century's hot and cold wars and shift the union from a plush club of 15 like-minded nations into a street bazaar of countries differing in wealth, stature and outlook.

What is today a tight configuration huddled around France and Germany that seeks to offset American power will on May 1 become an amalgam of 25 highly diverse states, including eight strongly pro-American former Soviet satellites.

Therein lies a paradox. The new European Union, stretching from the rocky shores of Ireland to Poland's forest border with Ukraine, will be in a better position than ever to serve as a counterweight to the United States. Yet the incoming members look more to Washington than to Berlin and Paris.

"In historical terms it's an extraordinary moment," noted Timothy Garton Ash, an Oxford specialist in European studies. "It's been said that Europe has had a name for 2,500 years but is still in the design stage.

"France and Germany have led European integration for 40 years, and now that's clearly over. We have to wrestle with the question of who is going to set the agenda for this huge, sprawling entity of 25 states and 455 million people."

Scarred by their postwar existence in the shadow of the Soviet Union, most of the new members bring a different mentality and different habits. They are apt to be suspicious of distant bureaucracy in Brussels, as they were of Moscow, but eager to receive European Union handouts.

They tend to be idealistic, wanting to spread freedom and oppose totalitarianism, but also cynical about politicians and accustomed to corruption in everyday life.

"When we say Europe in Eastern Europe," said Andrei Plesu, a former Romanian foreign minister, "we usually think about something in the past, something we lost and have to regain.

"It's something in an old, faded photograph, the world between the two World Wars, a nostalgia, a longing. In the West, Europe is a project. In the East, it's a memory."

For both groups it is a bit of a chore.

In Eastern Europe, the once paradisiacal vision of “rejoining Europe” has lost its sheen, whittled down by years of slightly humiliating negotiations to join the union and new fears of being swamped by the powerful West.

In Western Europe, support for the enlargement is tempered by concerns that the Eastern countries will drain away wealth and jobs, complicating problems of economic stagnation and tensions over illegal immigration. The door is being opened reluctantly, with a shoulder-shrugging sense of noblesse oblige.

“We’re not in a very good mood right now,” said Olivier Duhamel, a professor at the École des Sciences Politiques in Paris. “We’re worried about unemployment, immigration and the French identity, and when you put all that together, you fear enlargement. The only people talking about a bigger Europe these days are those talking against it.”

In the formerly Communist East, the sense of anticlimax is almost palpable. “Entering the E.U. was always a dream,” said Maciej Karpinski, a film producer with Polish Television, “but now that it’s here it just doesn’t feel substantial.”

Few people in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and other new member countries would go so far as to try to slam the door closed. Many still see the advantages — especially the young, who will now be able to travel to the West more easily — no passport required, just a quick flash of a national ID card — and to join student exchange programs.

But those of working age are particularly bitter that almost all of the 15 current Western members are imposing restrictions to keep out Eastern workers for several years. Others worry that Western products will push their own off the shelves or raise prices or push small-scale local farmers into oblivion.

As a result, May 1 — a day for workers observed under Communism with mandatory parades and lackluster banner-waving — is not likely to see a spontaneous outpouring of celebration. Even some dramatic official plans have fizzled, like one in Warsaw that would have wrapped the skyscraper called the Palace of Culture, infamous as Stalin’s gift to postwar Poland, in gold.

Europeans have waked up to the fears and palpable differences that arise when borders come down, as seen in the unification of East and West Germany, where after more than a decade, disparities in wealth and spirit persist.

Up to now the belief in Europe was that as in Germany, most economic transformation would flow largely in one direction, from west to east. The unstated assumption was that the 380 million Westerners would be at the helm and that the 75 million Easterners would be lucky enough to be on board.

But now West Europeans worry that too many Easterners may sink the boat. They envision poor immigrants coming the other way, flooding their cities and burdening their bountiful welfare systems.

At the same time, the West is apprehensive about the combative mentality displayed by battle-hardened anti-Communist dissidents in many East European elites, and both sides worry about the political schizophrenia of “old Europe” and “new Europe” that emerged over the war in Iraq.

Poland, with a history of rebellion and its strong pro-American feelings, made plain at a failed summit conference in December that it does not expect to be treated as a second-class state.

“We can’t put up with an E.U. in which France and Germany have the final say,” said Adam Michnik, the former Polish dissident who now runs *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the major daily. “And we don’t want an anti-American E.U.”

That position springs, he and many others insist, not from blind lockstep obedience to Washington, but rather from a distinct East European sensibility.

Petr Pithart, president of the Senate in the Czech Republic, described it this way: “Why do we care about solidarity between Europe and the United States? It’s the experience of two totalitarian regimes — the Nazis and the Communists. We’re conscious of the fragility of democracy. That sense doesn’t exist in Western Europe.”

In Western Europe, said Jiri Pehe, director of New York University’s Prague center, “it’s anti-intellectual to think in a simplistic way about good and evil. Here, we say we know what’s good and evil — it is simple. We’ve lived under it. We have a less foggy view of the basics.”

It is of course unclear how long Eastern Europeans will cling to their cold war vision of the United States as the gravitational center of the West.

As long as they do, the scales of loyalty are likely to tip toward the Atlantic alliance so fundamental to British governments of the last 50 years. Yet most believe that those differences will eventually melt away, much as they have as Western Europe knits itself ever closer together.

“Geography will triumph over history,” declared Tony Judt, a Europe specialist at New York University. “It will eventually matter more to the Eastern Europeans to be in the favor of Brussels, because day to day they will need Brussels.”

Dennis MacShane, Britain’s minister for Europe, observed: “The great fallacy is that as Europe gets bigger, somehow it gets more disintegrated. The evidence is that every new previous enlargement has been followed by the need for more sharing of sovereignty and someone to set the rules in Brussels.”

Over time, too, the union’s voluminous codification of laws and standards, some 80,000 pages long, may wear down Eastern Europe’s rough edges, fostering political stability and reducing ingrained corruption.

An unknown factor here is the United States foreign policy. Officially and historically, Washington is on record as favoring a strong and united Europe, but what if the Continent becomes a monolithic competitor in economics and foreign policy?

Already there are divisions over the delicate question of whether the union should admit Turkey, a country of 70 million. Washington is pressing for admission on the ground that Turkey is a NATO member and a secular democracy that needs to find stability in the arms of Europe.

Europeans are deeply split over the question. Some say it would be impossible to conceive of a governing structure that could accommodate, say, Turkey and Germany, countries with comparable size of population but hugely different levels of development.

Others say opening the door to millions of Islamic immigrants — in addition to the millions of Muslims that Europe is already struggling to absorb — is asking for trouble because it will set off religious and ethnic feuding and provide fodder for far-right movements.

For some the question boils down to an often fruitless attempt to fix Europe's natural boundaries. For others it becomes an effort to define what it means to be a European.

Quickly, such conversations turn to intangibles, to talk of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and definitions offered centuries earlier by Dante and Voltaire. Some talk of a feeling of belonging that overcomes them in a Central European coffeehouse or of alienation when they visit the United States.

"It's paradoxical," Mr. Pehe said. "Here I'm a Czech. But when I go to the U.S., I'm looked at as a European, and then I feel I'm a European. It's one of those concepts that you see better from the outside."

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March 11, 2004

THE NEW EUROPE

Union, but Not Unanimity, as Europe's East Joins West

Comprehension Questions

What are some of the ways the new member states entering the EU are different from the more established member states?

Why are some people in the new member states disillusioned about joining the EU? Why are some people in the more established member states disillusioned about EU enlargement?

What is the "distinct East European sensibility" that the new member states are bringing in to the EU?

According to scholars cited in this article, what are the future prospects for Europe's integration?

From the *New York Times*:

March 27, 2004

THE NEW EUROPE

After May 1, East Europe's 'Haves' May Have More

By ALAN COWELL

SYTNA GORA, Poland — For 60 years in this place of lakes and forests, Gerard Pakura's life has unfolded in step with Europe's history, from the Nazi occupation of his land to the rise and fall of Soviet Communism.

But when his country enters the European Union on May 1 as one of 10 new members, Mr. Pakura may well discover that this latest redrawing of the political landscape is one upheaval too many for peasant farmers like him with no evident niche in the big and brawny Europe that Poland is about to join.

As Europe expands in a quest for prosperity and elusive unity, many among its new members in the East fear that hundreds of thousands of people may be left behind in a new underclass, throwbacks to the lost era of command economies and state control.

The European Union has always known its relative disparities, and to create a unified whole it has over the decades self-consciously transferred wealth from richer countries like Germany and Luxembourg to poorer ones like Portugal, Greece and Ireland.

But never before has the union invited into its well-padded ranks the kind of economic malaise to be found in rural Poland, the eastern reaches of Slovakia and Hungary and the countryside of the Baltics.

So daunting is the challenge that the 15 current members have decided that leveling the playing field is not an option, at least not fully, not for the foreseeable future.

Most of the agricultural subsidies that take up almost half of the European Commission's annual budget of \$120 billion will not be available to farmers like Mr. Pakura and his neighbors in the other new eastern members, because extending the benefit was deemed too costly.

Farm subsidies for the new entrants will start at just a quarter of the western levels, rising to parity only by 2013. In the meantime, small-scale farmers in the East worry that they will be wiped out by agribusiness in the West, where subsidies on average provide a quarter of the income of most current European Union farmers.

"Everybody is trying to find a job," said Sylvester Frankowski, 18, who earns around \$200 a month as a foot soldier in the Polish Army and has just returned to this hamlet of eight houses from a six-month stint in Iraq.

"They don't want to stay on the farm," he said, "they are afraid that in the E.U. the farms will be too small to exist."

Among new entrants, Poland is a particularly extreme example of dependence on small-scale agriculture and the biggest challenge among the group to the system of farm subsidies that both underpins European agriculture and inspires such furious arguments in the broader debate over the global trade in farm products.

In Poland about one-fifth of the work force is still on the land — five times the current European Union average. More than half of those farms cover less than 12 acres, about a quarter of the European average, according to Andrzej Zedura, a government official.

Poland employs 19 percent of its work force on the land compared with, say, about 6 percent in Hungary or, among the “old” Europeans, about 4 percent in France, according to European Union figures.

It has 45.5 million acres under cultivation — almost as much as the 48.4 million acres of the nine other new member countries combined.

So for Poland the potential disruption to the economy and to generations of rural life is enormous. But even as Poles seek to leave the farm, jobs are hardly plentiful in the rest of the economy, and wages compared with current members are barely more than a pittance.

The European Union, for instance, estimated the relative purchasing power of Poland’s 38 million people at just 39 percent of the union’s existing average. That put Poland fourth from the bottom, ahead of only the three Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — which are also joining in May.

As a whole, the 10 new members will expand the union’s population by about one-fifth, from 380 million to 455 million, but they will add only 5 percent to its economy.

“Now there are two Polands,” said Bogdan Tatarkiewicz, the deputy manager of Farm Frites, a huge plant 50 miles from here in Lembork that makes frozen and packaged French fries for McDonald’s and others.

“There’s a very rich Poland,” Mr. Tatarkiewicz said, “and a Poland B team, who are not accepted by employers because they have no skills. There are those with the ability to work with foreign investors, and the rest, like peasant farmers, left on the ice.”

Poles like Mr. Frankowski and his 78-year-old grandfather, Leon, express certainty that the economic juggernaut that is the European Union will overtake the small, slow rhythms of life that Poles have sustained through centuries of war and trauma, often on the most modest of holdings.

Others, like Mr. Pakura, one of Poland’s 1.9 million farmers, appear to be gloomy about their fate.

“During the Communist time we sold everything we produced,” he said in an interview in the cramped parlor of his wooden farmhouse, across the way from a barn and a silent, frozen lake. “The state was obliged to buy it. Now it’s not even worth trying to sell milk.”

Today Mr. Pakura's farm — with its seven acres of poor land, two cows and a modest assortment of pigs and chickens — does little more than feed his family, which includes three of six children still living at home. Mr. Pakura's wife, Jadwyga, milks the cows by hand.

The family budget of some \$500 a month depends mostly on a daughter's paycheck from a clothing store, a \$100 monthly pension for Mr. Pakura and earnings from odd jobs.

Soon this mom-and-pop operation will be competing in the same marketplace as better subsidized industrial farmers like Ulrich Pöggel, who manages 7,000 acres of what used to be a state-run cooperative in East Germany spread across flat, damp lands at Altenhof, about 90 miles north of Berlin.

Not long ago it, too, was part of the Communist East. But since Germany reunited in 1990, Mr. Pöggel (pronounced PER-gel) has benefited not only from the hundreds of billions of dollars that the government spent to refurbish eastern Germany, but also from the European Union's ample farm subsidies.

Mr. Pöggel says his German subsidies, calculated according to the acreage of his land, yield some \$1.1 million a year, not counting other contributions from the European Union for each slaughtered cow or animal kept for breeding.

Today his outfit, which combines dairy farming with a lucrative and expanding business leasing tractors, machinery and expertise to other farms, has 800 cows and 750 calves. Each cow in his plump and well-fed herd produces around 2,000 gallons of milk a year.

"I don't think we will have any major competition in the next few years" from the countries newly joining the union, Mr. Pöggel said in an interview.

That is not least because most of the subsidies he receives will not be available to small Polish farmers like Mr. Pakura or any of his East European counterparts.

"We can't compete with subsidized European food," Mr. Pakura said, his words revealing how little he feels part of the "Europe" he is to join.

The European Union has set aside some \$600 million for grants to small farmers in Eastern Europe, encouraging them to use their land for other purposes, like tourism. But that will not be easy.

"There are 20 pages of application forms, and the same for a business plan," said Grzegorz Lepkowski, a consultant in Kartuzy, 10 miles south of here, who specializes in helping people deal with Poland's notoriously arcane bureaucracy. "You need a computer to fill it all out. So for a normal farmer it's impossible."

Some local officials have come to see opportunities for private enrichment in the changeover to West European ways.

"Everybody who is higher up — to the very top level — can take money from the ordinary people for doing something they are supposed to do for free," said Mariusz Kasprzak, 38, a

local councilman who campaigns against corruption. “The money doesn’t go where it’s supposed to go, because it has to go through all these hands first.”

Indeed, as the European Commission said in a recent report, corruption is increasing in Poland as membership in the union approaches, and it “is considered to affect all spheres of public life.”

By contrast, people like Mr. Pöggel benefited not just from being quicker into Europe, but from being German. Altenhof, Mr. Pöggel said, enjoyed the good fortune of an adventurous and wealthy western investor, Lorenz Peter Stotz, who after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 swiftly struck a deal to turn part of the former Communist enterprise into a capitalist agricultural business.

“The old party functionaries and the western investors found each other very quickly and worked out how to get the subsidies from Brussels,” said Klaus Schröder, head of a research group at the Free University in Berlin.

That may yet happen in Poland, or in other new member states like Latvia, where newspapers report that farmland is already being snatched up by investors from Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands. But even in the case of eastern Germany, the new investment was not always to the advantage of all.

In the old days, Mr. Pöggel said, the cooperative employed 50 people to look after some 300 cows and 200 calves. Now, in a development that bodes ill for Poland and the other new European Union states, only 12 people are needed to tend 800 cows and 850 calves.

“There is a lot of envy here now,” Mr. Pöggel said, “envy of who has a job by who has not.”

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THE NEW EUROPE

After May 1, East Europe's 'Haves' May Have More

Comprehension Questions

What are some of the economic difficulties in EU enlargement?

Why is farming such a major issue in EU enlargement?

How did membership in the EU affect the German farm mentioned in this article?

From the *New York Times*:

December 6, 2004

In Eastern Europe, Skepticism Over the Euro

By **MARK LANDLER**

FRANKFURT

THE euro is rising to record levels against the dollar, winning favor as a reserve currency in central banks from Russia to China, and flexing its muscles in bond markets. Yet Europe's common currency, which replaced marks, francs and other national currencies for 300 million Europeans in 2002, is not likely to reach the 75 million people in the newest European Union countries for several more years.

When Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and seven other nations joined the union in May, there was heady talk about advancing swiftly to the next step in European integration: the euro.

Now that enthusiasm has cooled. Several countries have pushed back their timetables for joining the monetary union until the end of the decade, while they struggle to clean up their red-ink-stained public finances. As the dates keep slipping, skeptics wonder how the 10 newest members will ever meet the economic conditions for adopting the currency.

"There was an unjustified optimism about these countries joining the euro," said Katinka Barysch, the chief economist at the Center for European Reform, a research institute in London. "It wouldn't be in their interest to be in the euro zone right now."

It is not just that the new arrivals are recognizing their shortcomings. Even if they were eligible, the Central and East Europeans have little economic incentive to rush into a club dominated by the lumbering giants of Western Europe. A strong euro may give Europeans bragging rights, but it has also hobbled their exports - a fact not lost on the new members, with their faster-growing, export-driven economies.

Even some longtime European Union members have had doubts about the euro. Sweden voted last year not to adopt the currency, mostly out of fear of losing control over its economic policy, while Britain continues to ponder the matter and Denmark opted out.

Lectures from Brussels and from Frankfurt, where the European Central Bank is based, about the need for fiscal discipline are also sounding hollow to the new members. Germany and France are in chronic violation of the limits on budget deficits, and Greece was recently found to have fudged its deficit figures to gain entry.

Then, too, there is Europe's one-size-fits-all monetary policy. The European Central Bank has kept interest rates at historically low levels to prop up the fragile recoveries in Germany and France.

That would be exactly the wrong tack for Poland, with its brisk growth and ballooning deficits. "If Poland had euro-zone interest rates, inflation would go through the roof," Ms. Barysch said.

The pessimism does not extend to all new members. Estonia, which already ties its currency to the euro and has spic-and-span public finances, plans to adopt the euro as early as 2006. Lithuania and Slovenia, which are also tied to the euro, aim to adopt it in 2007.

Even countries with a more cautious timetable view the currency as a potential windfall. The finance minister of Slovakia, Ivan Miklos, said at a recent banking conference here that joining the euro zone would add half a percentage point to a full point to his country's annual economic growth. That is modest, in light of Slovakia's expected growth rate this year of 5.4 percent.

But Mr. Miklos said that the requirements for adopting the currency - known as the convergence process - were forcing Slovakia to continue overhauling its economy, which still bears the scars of Communism.

Under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty, which created the union, members must bring budget deficits below 3 percent of the gross domestic product. Inflation and long-term interest rates must fall within certain ranges, and members' central banks must be free of political interference. "There is an artificial fear on the part of politicians to do these reforms because of the political consequences," Mr. Miklos said.

Evidence of backsliding has grown since May, when these countries won entry into the European Union. Freed from the pressure of passing muster with the bureaucrats in Brussels, where the union is based, some politicians in Hungary, the Czech Republic and elsewhere have reverted to some bad old habits.

"There is a sense of: 'Now we're in, we can relax. The need for reform is not as strong,' " said Samuel Fankhauser, the director of policy studies at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. "The new E.U. members are pretty close, but they're not there yet," he added. "They've still a got a lot of work to do with institutions and their financial sector."

In Hungary, the government recently passed a law that gives it more control over the central bank's governing board by allowing the prime minister to pick a majority of its members. The bank's president, Zsigmond Jarai, said that he would challenge the law in the nation's supreme court, and President Ferenc Madl of Hungary has refused to sign the law.

Mr. Jarai, an outspoken central banker, has also cast doubt on Hungary's goal of adopting the euro by 2010. Hungary, he said, would fail to meet its deficit target for the third consecutive year. The country needs to bring the deficit, which was 6.1 percent of gross domestic product in 2003, to below 3 percent by 2008, to be ready for the euro two years later.

The Hungarian government insists that it will meet the target by cutting its budget deficit each year between now and 2008. The government blamed a shortfall in the collection of value-added taxes for its higher-than-expected deficit this year.

In other ways, though, Hungary has made impressive progress using its own currency, the forint. Its comparatively low labor costs have made it an attractive place for Western European manufacturers to set up factories. Audi assembles its upscale TT Roadster in a plant in the western city of Győr.

In a reversal of the usual trend in a global economy, Hungary is being sought out by Chinese-owned businesses that want to use its low-cost assembly lines to churn out television sets for sale in Western Europe. Such labor-cost advantages will inevitably erode, as Hungary's wages catch up to those in the West. Full-fledged membership in the European Union probably means living with the more sedate growth of its mature economies.

For all the doubts about the euro, that is a trade-off the new members are still willing to make because the currency will give them an anchor they have not had since the Communist era.

In 2003, Hungary got a reminder of the risks of going it alone, when the central bank modestly devalued the forint, and traders promptly dumped the currency. The forint has traded up and down widely since then, which has unnerved Hungarian exporters and government officials.

"Hungary can no longer afford to have its own funny money," said Peter Akos Bod, a former central bank president. "Hungary is already the last of the lot to join the euro. If we wait any longer, we'll have a problem."

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December 6, 2004

In Eastern Europe, Skepticism Over the Euro

Comprehension Questions

Why would it *not* be in the enlargement countries' interest to join the euro right away?

Why *do* some of the enlargement countries want to join the euro soon?

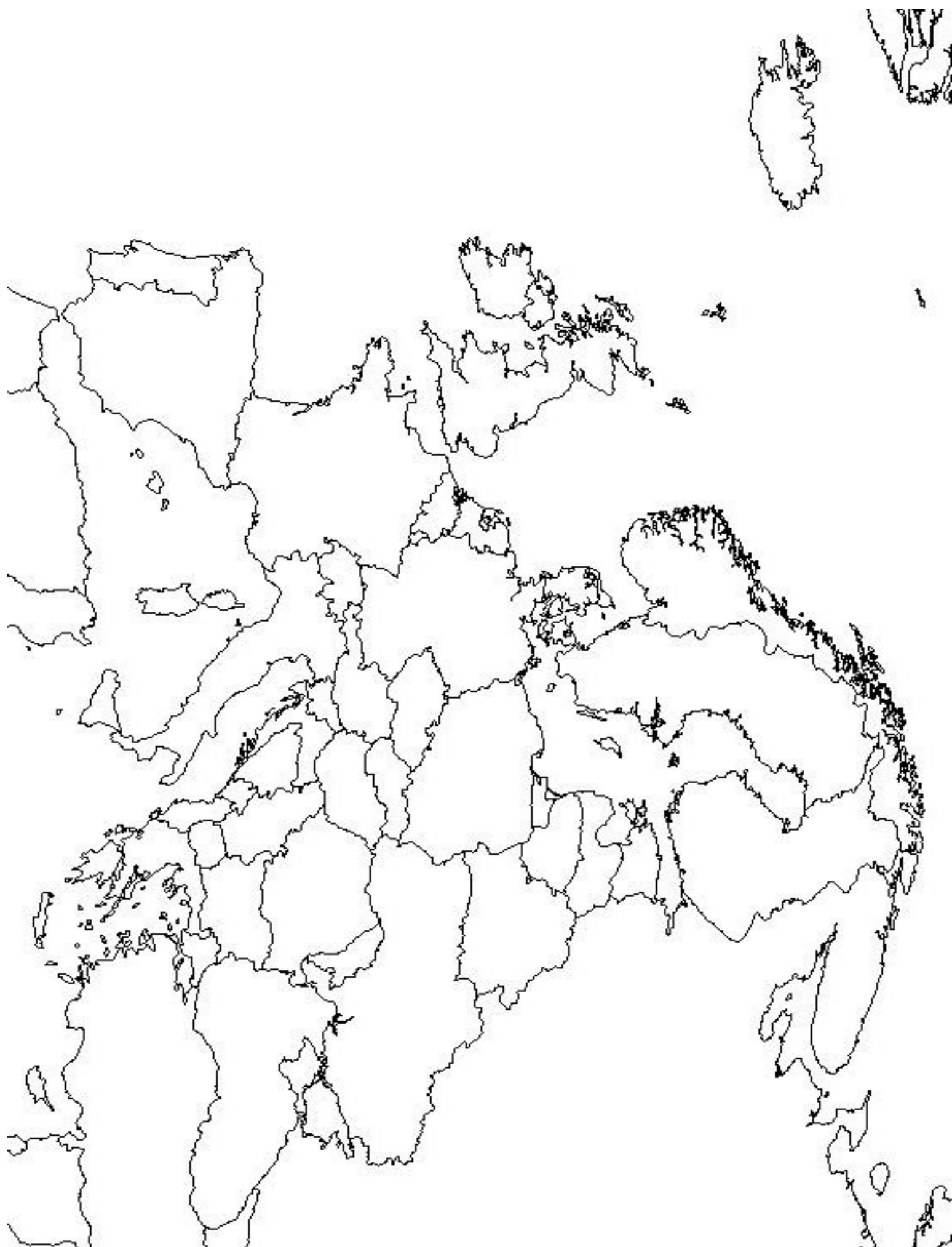
What do these countries need to do in order to be able to join the euro?

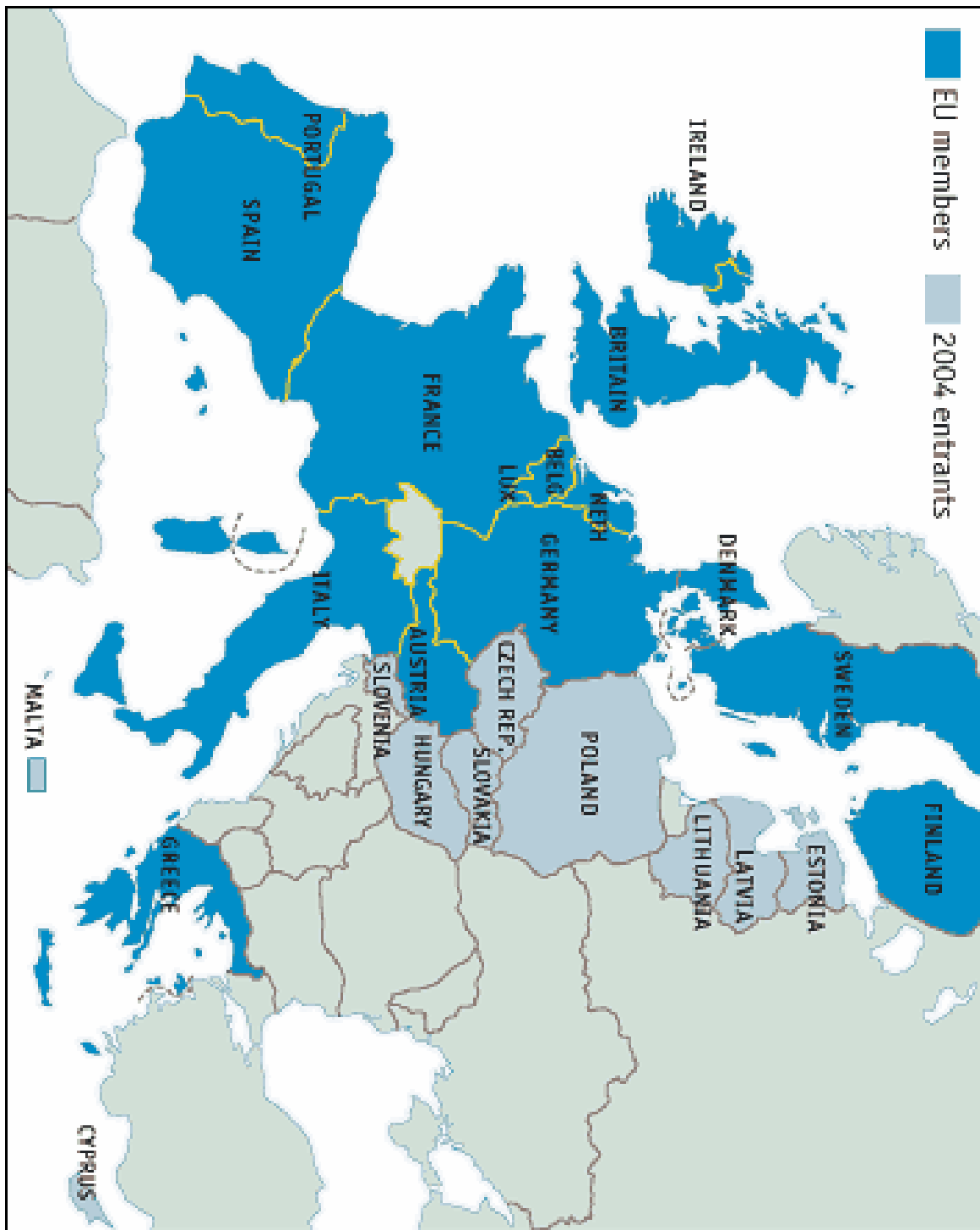
What are some of the problems posed by the euro?

EUROPE MAP EXERCISE

Correctly locate and label of the geographical locations below. Make a map key as well.

Countries	Cities	Bodies of Water	Landforms
Albania	Amsterdam	Adriatic Sea	Alps
Austria	Athens	Aegean Sea	Apennines
Belgium	Berlin	Arctic Ocean	Balkan Peninsula
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Dublin	Atlantic Ocean	Carpathian Mountains
Bulgaria	Helsinki	Baltic Sea	Corsica
Croatia	Lisbon	Bay of Biscay	Iberian Peninsula
Czech Republic	London	Danube River	Italian Peninsula
Denmark	Madrid	English Channel	Pyrenees
Estonia			
Finland	Oslo	Mediterranean Sea	Sardinia
France	Paris	North Sea	Scandinavian Peninsula
Germany	Rome	Po River	Sicily
Greece	Stockholm	Rhine River	
Hungary	Vienna	Rhone River	
Iceland	Belgrade	Seine River	
Ireland	Bucharest	Strait of Gibraltar	
Italy	Prague	Vistula River	
Latvia	Sarajevo		
Lithuania	Warsaw		
Luxembourg	Zagreb		
Macedonia	Geneva		
Malta	Zurich		
The Netherlands			
Norway			
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Spain			
Serbia & Montenegro			
Slovakia			
Slovenia			
Sweden			
Switzerland			
United Kingdom			





Source : http://www.ecdel.org.au/eu_guide/enlargement/enlargement.htm

Milestones on the Road to European Integration

May 9, 1950

Robert Schuman proposes pooling Europe's coal and steel industries.

April 18, 1951

European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) Treaty signed in Paris.

March 25, 1957

European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) Treaties signed in Rome.

April 8, 1965

Treaty merging the institutions of the three European Communities signed.

July 1, 1968

Customs union completed eighteen months early.

January 1, 1973

Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom join the Community.

February 28, 1975

First Lomé Convention with African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries signed.

March 13, 1979

European Monetary System (EMS) becomes operational.

January 1, 1981

Greece joins the European Community.

June 29, 1985

European Council endorses "White Paper" plan to complete single market by end 1992.

January 1, 1986

Spain and Portugal join the Community.

July 1, 1987

Single European Act (SEA) enters into force.

June 26-27, 1989

Madrid European Council endorses plan for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

October 3, 1990

The five Laender of the former German Democratic Republic enter the Community as part of a united Germany.

October 21, 1991

European Community and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) agree to form the European Economic Area (EEA).

December 11, 1991

Maastricht European Council agrees on Treaty on European Union.

December 16, 1991

Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia sign first Europe Agreements on trade and political cooperation.

January 1, 1993

European single market is achieved on time.

November 1, 1993

Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty) enters into force after ratification by the member states.

January 1, 1995

Austria, Finland, and Sweden join the European Union.

June 17, 1997

Treaty of Amsterdam is concluded.

March 12, 1998

European conference in London launches Europe-wide consultations on issues related to Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA).

March 30-31, 1998

EU opens membership negotiations with Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia.

May 2, 1998

Eleven EU member states qualify to launch the euro on January 1, 1999.

June 1, 1998

European Central Bank (ECB) inaugurated in Frankfurt, Germany.

January 1, 1999

EMU and euro launched in eleven EU countries.

May 1, 1999

Treaty of Amsterdam enters into force.

September 15, 1999

European Parliament approves new European Commission led by Romano Prodi.

December 10-11, 1999

European Council meeting in Helsinki decides to open accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and the Slovak Republic and to recognize Turkey as a candidate country.

June 23, 2000

A new partnership agreement (2000-2020) between the EU and the ACP countries is signed in Cotonou, Benin.

December 7 – 11, 2000

European Council agrees on Treaty of Nice (to be ratified by all member states). EU leaders formally proclaim the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* of the European Union.

January 1, 2001

Greece joins the euro area.

February 26, 2001

Regulation adopted establishing the Rapid Reaction Force.

January – February 2002

The euro becomes legal tender and permanently replaces national currencies in EMU countries.

December 12 – 13, 2002

Copenhagen European Council declares that Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia will become EU members by May 1, 2004.

February 1, 2003

The Treaty of Nice enters into force.

April 16, 2003

Treaty of Accession (2003) is signed in Athens.

May 1, 2004

Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia became EU member states.

Source: www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/milestones.htm#milestones

What is the EU?

- DETERMINED to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe,
- RESOLVED to ensure the economic and social progress of their countries by common action to eliminate the barriers which divide Europe,
- AFFIRMING as the essential objective of their efforts the constant improvements of the living and working conditions of their peoples,
- RECOGNIZING that the removal of existing obstacles calls for concerted action in order to guarantee steady expansion, balanced trade and fair competition,
- ANXIOUS to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions,
- DESIRING to contribute, by means of a common commercial policy, to the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade,
- INTENDING to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and the overseas countries and desiring to ensure the development of their prosperity, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,
- RESOLVED by thus pooling their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty, and calling upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts,
- HAVE DECIDED to create a EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The Preamble to the Treaty of Rome, 1957

Brief History of the European Union

For centuries, Europe was the scene of frequent and bloody wars. In the period 1870 to 1945, France and Germany fought each other three times, with terrible loss of life. A number of European leaders became convinced that the only way to secure a lasting peace between their countries was to unite them economically and politically.

So, in 1950, the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed integrating the coal and steel industries of Western Europe. As a result, in 1951 the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was set up, with six members: Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Netherlands. The power to take decisions about the coal and steel industry in these countries was placed in the hands of an independent, supranational body called the "High Authority". Jean Monnet was its first President.

From three communities to the European Union

The ECSC was such a success that, within a few years, these same six countries decided to go further and integrate other sectors of their economies. In 1957 they signed the Treaties of Rome, creating the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Economic Community (EEC). The member states set about removing trade barriers between them and forming a "common market".

In 1967 the institutions of the three European communities were merged. From this point on, there was a single Commission and a single Council of Ministers as well as the European Parliament.

Originally, the members of the European Parliament were chosen by the national parliaments but in 1979 the first direct elections were held, allowing the citizens of the member states to vote for the candidate of their choice. Since then, direct elections have been held every five years.

The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) introduced new forms of co-operation between the member state governments - for example on defence, and in the area of "justice and home affairs". By adding this inter-governmental co-operation to the existing "Community" system, the Maastricht Treaty created the European Union (EU).

Integration means common policies

Economic and political integration between the member states of the European Union means that these countries have to take joint decisions on many matters. So they have developed common policies in a very wide range of fields - from agriculture to culture, from consumer affairs to competition, from the environment and energy to transport and trade.

In the early days the focus was on a common commercial policy for coal and steel and a common agricultural policy. Other policies were added as time went by, and as the need arose. Some key policy aims have changed in the light of changing circumstances. For example, the aim of the agricultural policy is no longer to produce as much food as cheaply as possible but to support farming methods that produce healthy, high-quality food and protect the environment. The need for environmental protection is now taken into account across the whole range of EU policies.

The European Union's relations with the rest of the world have also become important. The EU negotiates major trade and aid agreements with other countries and is developing a Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The Single Market: banning the barriers

It took some time for the Member States to remove all the barriers to trade between them and to turn their "common market" into a genuine single market in which goods, services, people and capital could move around freely. The Single Market was formally completed at the end of 1992, though there is still work to be done in some areas - for example, to create a genuinely single market in financial services.

During the 1990s it became increasingly easy for people to move around in Europe, as passport and customs checks were abolished at most of the EU's internal borders. One consequence is greater mobility for EU citizens. Since 1987, for example, more than a million young Europeans have taken study courses abroad, with support from the EU.

The Single Currency: the euro in your pocket

In 1992 the EU decided to go for economic and monetary union (EMU), involving the introduction of a single European currency managed by a European Central Bank. The single currency - the euro - became a reality on 1 January 2002, when euro notes and coins replaced national currencies in twelve of the 15 countries of the European Union (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland).

The growing family

The EU has grown in size with successive waves of accessions. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined in 1973 followed by Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986 and Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995. The European Union welcomed ten new countries in 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania expect to follow in 2007; Croatia and Turkey are beginning membership negotiations in 2005. To ensure that the enlarged EU can continue functioning efficiently, it needs a more streamlined system for taking decisions. That is why the Treaty of Nice lays down new rules governing the size of the EU institutions and the way they work. It came into force on 1 February 2003. It will be replaced, in 2006, by the new EU Constitution - if all EU countries approve this.

From the European Union's EUROPA website: http://europa.eu.int/abc/history/index_en.htm

European Union Timeline



Instructions: Read the handout “Brief History of the European Union.” Then plot the key dates and events in the EU’s history on this timeline. You can also include events that have yet to happen, such as predicted future rounds of enlargement.

European Union Timeline Quiz

1. In 1951 the first step toward a united Europe was taken with the formation of the _____.
2. The six original member states of the European Union are: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.
3. The treaty of Rome created the European Economic Community in this year: _____.
4. The first direct elections for the European Parliament were held in this year: _____.
5. The European Community officially became the European Union by the signing of the _____ in 1992.
6. Which countries joined the European Union during its first enlargement in 1973? _____, _____, _____.
7. The euro replaced national currencies in this year: _____.
8. In 1992 the _____ was completed, removing most trade barriers between EU countries.
9. Bulgaria and Romania are expected to join the European Union in this year: _____.
10. French Foreign minister _____ proposed the integration of industry in Western Europe in 1951, and _____ was the first president of the resulting supranational body.

European Union Timeline Quiz

Answer Key

1. European Coal and Steel Community
2. Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy, the Netherlands
3. 1957
4. 1979
5. Maastricht Treaty
6. the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark
7. 2002
8. common market or single market
9. 2007
10. Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet

EU Facts and Figures Quiz

1. Which EU country has the largest economy?
 - (A) Germany
 - (B) Malta
 - (C) Bulgaria
 - (D) the United Kingdom
2. Which EU country covers the most area?
 - (A) France
 - (B) Germany
 - (C) Spain
 - (D) Sweden
3. Which EU country has the smallest population?
 - (A) Malta
 - (B) Luxembourg
 - (C) Slovenia
 - (D) the Netherlands
4. In which country did the Velvet Revolution take place?
 - (A) Spain
 - (B) Poland
 - (C) Austria
 - (D) Czech Republic
5. Which country is divided between Flemings and Walloons?
 - (A) Cyprus
 - (B) Ireland
 - (C) Lithuania
 - (D) Belgium
6. Which country invented flamenco?
 - (A) Portugal
 - (B) Latvia
 - (C) Spain
 - (D) Italy
7. Which country does not have a monarch?
 - (A) Belgium
 - (B) Austria
 - (C) Luxembourg
 - (D) Denmark
8. In which country did the Renaissance begin?
 - (A) Germany
 - (B) Italy
 - (C) Greece
 - (D) France
9. Greece was not ruled by which empire?
 - (A) Roman Empire
 - (B) Habsburg Empire
 - (C) Ottoman Empire
 - (D) Byzantine Empire

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10. Which two countries divided the world with the Treaty of Tordesillas?
 - (A) the Netherlands and Belgium
 - (B) France and the United Kingdom
 - (C) Spain and Portugal
 - (D) Lithuania and Poland
 11. Finland was once ruled by which two countries?
 - (A) Sweden and Russia
 - (B) Norway and Denmark
 - (C) Germany and Austria
 - (D) Lithuania and Poland
 12. Which country is known in the local language as Suomi?
 - (A) Hungary
 - (B) Slovakia
 - (C) Malta
 - (D) Finland
 13. Which country used to be part of Yugoslavia?
 - (A) Austria
 - (B) Czech Republic
 - (C) Slovenia
 - (D) Slovakia
 14. Because of its rapid economic growth in the 1990s and 2000s which country became known as the Celtic Tiger?
 - (A) the United Kingdom
 - (B) Ireland
 - (C) Iceland
 - (D) Denmark
 15. In what country is the former capital of the Habsburg empire located?
 - (A) Austria
 - (B) Slovakia
 - (C) Germany
 - (D) Poland
 16. Which two countries separated on New Year's Day in 1993?
 - (A) the United Kingdom and Ireland
 - (B) Czech Republic and Slovakia
 - (C) Estonia and Russia
 - (D) Slovenia and Croatia
 17. Which country is the home of goulash?
 - (A) Germany
 - (B) Latvia
 - (C) Hungary
 - (D) Poland
 18. What country was home to painters Rembrandt van Rijn, Johannes Vermeer, and Vincent Van Gogh?
 - (A) France
 - (B) Italy
 - (C) Spain
 - (D) the Netherlands
-

Which country, alongside Poland, ruled much of Eastern Europe in the 16th century?

- (A) Latvia
 - (B) Estonia
 - (C) Germany
 - (D) Lithuania
19. Which three countries were part of the Soviet Union until 1991?
- (A) Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
 - (B) Finland, Latvia, Estonia
 - (C) Latvia, Lithuania, Poland
 - (D) Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia
20. Which one of the following is not one of the Low Countries?
- (A) Belgium
 - (B) Luxembourg
 - (C) Denmark
 - (D) the Netherlands
21. Which one of the following is not one of the Baltic states?
- (A) Latvia
 - (B) Lithuania
 - (C) Slovenia
 - (D) Estonia
22. Which country has had the most governments since World War II?
- (A) Greece
 - (B) Italy
 - (C) Spain
 - (D) Cyprus
23. Which country exports the most olive oil?
- (A) Italy
 - (B) Greece
 - (C) Portugal
 - (D) Spain
24. Which EU country is a union of four different countries?
- (A) Germany
 - (B) the United Kingdom
 - (C) Poland
 - (D) France
25. What country is home to the fable, "the Little Mermaid?"
- (A) Cyprus
 - (B) Malta
 - (C) Sweden
 - (D) Denmark
26. Ericsson, Saab, and Volvo are from which country?
- (A) Sweden
 - (B) Finland
 - (C) Denmark
 - (D) the Netherlands

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27. The Sun King ruled which country in the 17th century?
- (A) France
 - (B) Lithuanian
 - (C) the United Kingdom
 - (D) Portugal
28. Which country was first united in 1871 and then reunited in 1990?
- (A) Poland
 - (B) Austria
 - (C) Germany
 - (D) Estonia
29. Which country invented football (soccer)?
- (A) Italy
 - (B) Germany
 - (C) Spain
 - (D) the United Kingdom
30. Where will the 2006 World Cup be played?
- (A) Italy
 - (B) France
 - (C) Germany
 - (D) the United Kingdom

Facts and Figures Quiz Answer Key

1. A
2. A
3. A
4. D
5. D
6. C
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. C
11. A
12. D
13. C
14. B
15. A
16. B
17. C
18. D
19. D
20. A
21. C
22. C
23. B
24. D
25. B
26. D
27. A
28. A
29. C
30. D
31. C

Austria

(Österreich)

Year of entry: 1995
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Vienna
Total area: 83 858 km²
Population: 8.1 million
Currency: Euro



History

Austria was ruled by the Habsburg family from the 13th to the 20th centuries. After the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, the Empire of Austria was founded, which was transformed in 1867 into the double-monarchy Austria-Hungary. The empire was split into several independent states after the defeat of the Central Powers in World War I, leading to Austria as it is today. Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938 and became a fully independent, neutral country again after World War II. After the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Austria became increasingly involved in European affairs, and in 1995, Austria joined the European Union, and the Euro monetary system in 1999.

Politics

Austria has been a federal, parliamentary democracy republic since the Federal Constitution of 1920, which was again reintroduced in 1945 to the nine states of the Federal Republic. The head of state is the Federal President, who is directly elected. The chairman of the Federal Government is the Federal Chancellor, who is appointed by the president and voted into office by the majority of the *Nationalrat*, the National Council of Austria. The Austrian parliament consists of two chambers elected by proportional representation. The *Nationalrat*, the lower house, is the dominant chamber in the formation of legislation in Austria.

Economics

Austria, with its well-developed market economy and high standard of living, is closely tied to other European Union economies, especially Germany's. Slow growth in Germany and elsewhere in the world affected Austria, slowing its growth to 1.2% in 2001. To meet increased competition from both EU and Central European countries, Austria will need to emphasize knowledge-based sectors of the economy, continue to deregulate the service sector, and lower its tax burden.

Culture

Though a small country today, Austria's cultural impact has been immense thanks to its imperial, Habsburg past. Vienna is one of the great musical centers of Europe, and has been home to Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and the Strauss family, among many other famous composers. Austria's legacy in painting runs the gamut from many ornate Baroque churches to the Art Nouveau of painter Gustav Klimt. The country's folk culture is also rich, with many songs, dances, and characteristic costumes from its beautiful alpine regions. Last but not least, Austria has made some notable culinary contributions to the world, including strudel and the *Wienerschnitzel*.

Belgium

(België – Belgique)

Year of entry: Founding member
Political system: Constitutional monarchy
Capital city: Brussels
Total area: 30 158 km²
Population: 10.2 million
Currency: Euro



History

Geographically and culturally, Belgium is at the crossroads of Europe, and is a true melting pot, with French, Dutch, Spanish, and Austrian influences. Though long part of the Netherlands, the revolution of 1830 established the independent Belgian state. Belgium participated in nineteenth century imperialism through its colony in the Congo, which became the private property of the Belgian king Leopold I. The first world war began when Germany invaded Belgium, and much of the fighting took place on Belgian soil. After World War II, Belgium abandoned its historic policy of neutrality and joined NATO. It was also one of the founding members of the European Economic Community.

Politics

Belgium's politics are divided between the country's two main cultural groupings, the French speakers and Flemish speakers, each of whom have their own political parties and control their own local institutions. The political system is thus federalized, with the federal government holding jurisdiction over foreign affairs, defense, social welfare, and telecommunications, among others. Regional governments control regional issues such as housing and transportation, and community governments take responsibility for language, culture, and education. Brussels, though predominantly French, counts as its own region.

Economics

At the heart of one of the most densely populated and industrialized parts of the world, Belgium is very closely linked to its main trading partners: Germany, the Netherlands, France, and the UK. Belgium exports automobiles, food products, iron and steel, and diamonds. Its city of Antwerp is one of the world's diamond centers, and is also Europe's second-busiest port. One problem affecting Belgium's economy is its public debt, which is one of the highest in western Europe.

Culture

Belgian culture is perhaps best represented by its artists and its food. Many great painters in history came from Belgium, including Peter Paul Rubens, Jan van Eyck, Pieter Breughel, and the famous surrealist René Magritte. In music, among Belgium's contributions has been the saxophone, which was invented by Adolph Sax in 1840. Belgium's food, though perhaps not as well-known as France's, is often equally highly regarded. Belgian chocolate is among the best in the world, as is Belgian beer. The most ubiquitous Belgian culinary contribution to the world is fried strips of potato called *frietten* (in Flemish) or *frites* (in French)—inaccurately known as “French fries” almost everywhere else.

Cyprus

(ΚΥΠΡΟΣ – Kibris)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Nicosia
Total area: 9 000 km²
Population: 800 000
Currency: Cyprus pound



History

Cyprus has always been an important trading post between the empires of Europe, Africa and the Middle East. It belonged to, among others, the Phoenicians, the Persians, the Romans, the European Crusaders, the Ottoman Turks, and then in 1925 became a Crown colony of the UK. For several centuries the island's inhabitants have been divided between majority Greek and minority Turkish populations. The Greeks began a guerrilla war against the British in the 1950s, pressing for union with Greece. Nonetheless, when in 1960 Britain granted Cyprus independence, political leadership was shared between a Greek president and a Turkish vice-president. Unrest between the two communities grew, despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping force, until 1974 when Turkey invaded the island and took its northern third. Cyprus remains divided despite recent peace talks, and it was only the Greek portion of the island that officially joined the EU in 2004.

Politics

The Republic of Cyprus is the internationally recognised government of the island, and it controls the southern two-thirds of the island. Almost all foreign governments and the United Nations recognise the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus over the whole island of Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots, together with Turkey, do not accept the Republic's rule over the whole island and call it the "Greek Authority of Southern Cyprus." The United Kingdom also maintains military bases on the island. A 2004 United Nations plan to reunify the island was favored by the Turkish side but rejected by the Greek side.

Economics

The Greek Cypriot economy is prosperous but highly susceptible to external shocks. Erratic growth rates in the 1990s reflect the economy's vulnerability to swings in tourist arrivals, caused by political instability on the island and fluctuations in economic conditions in Western Europe. The Turkish Cypriot economy has about one-fifth the population and one-third the per capita GDP of the south. Because it is recognised only by Turkey, it has had much difficulty arranging foreign financing, and foreign firms have hesitated to invest there. The economy remains heavily dependent on agriculture and government service, which together employ about half of the work force.

Culture

Cypriot culture, like much else on the island, is divided between Turkish and Greek. The northern part is Sunni Muslim and culturally closely tied to Turkey. The south, tied to Greece, is Greek Orthodox. Beyond these more recent divisions, however, Cyprus has a cultural heritage including ancient Greek temples, Roman mosaics, medieval frescoes, and many folk handicrafts such as pottery, basketweaving, and lacework. Cypriot cuisine features both Turkish and Greek specialties, including the *mezedes* beloved across the eastern Mediterranean.

Czech Republic

(Česká Republika)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Prague
Total area: 79 000 km²
Population: 10.3 millions
Currency: Czech koruna



History

The Czech lands were an independent kingdom for hundreds of years, with great monarchs such as Charles who brought much wealth and power to Prague. Charles also founded the university named after him in 1348, making it one of the oldest universities in Europe. In the 16th century the Habsburgs became the Czech rulers and integrated the territory into their empire centered on Vienna. Following the collapse of Austria-Hungary after World War I, the Czechs and neighbouring Slovaks joined together and formed the independent republic of Czechoslovakia in 1918. Hitler annexed this country in 1938, and after World War II it fell into the Soviet sphere of influence. In 1968, an invasion by Warsaw Pact troops ended the efforts of Czechoslovak leaders to liberalise party rule and create “socialism with a human face” during the Prague Spring. In 1989, Czechoslovakia regained its freedom through a peaceful “Velvet Revolution” and the country split into separate Czech and Slovak Republics a few years later. The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004.

Politics

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy, whose head of state is a president, indirectly elected every five years by the parliament. The famous former dissident Václav Havel was president until 2003. The president appoints the prime minister, who sets the agenda for most foreign and domestic policy, as well the other members of the cabinet on a proposal by the prime minister. The Czech parliament is bicameral, with a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate. Major issues in recent Czech politics have included controversy over exposing informers who worked for the communist regime, and corruption involved in the privatization of the economy in the 1990s.

Economics

One of the most stable and prosperous of the post-Communist states, the Czech Republic has been recovering from recession since mid-1999. Recent growth has been led by exports to the EU, especially Germany, and foreign investment. The Czech economy is highly industrialized and modern, exporting products around the world such as Škoda cars and Semtex plastic explosive. Tourism is also a major boost to the economy, particularly in Prague.

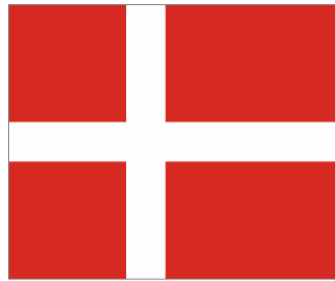
Culture

Internationally, Czechs are most known for their great music and composers. Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, and Leoš Janáček are the most famous, with works such as *The Bartered Bride* and the “New World” symphony. In the graphic arts, the Czech Alfons Mucha is one of the major figures in the Art Nouveau movement. The great Czech culinary contribution is beer, often considered the finest in the world. Prague, with its dramatic castle and ornate Baroque architecture, is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

Denmark

(Danmark)

Year of entry: 1973
Political system: Constitutional monarchy
Capital city: Copenhagen
Total area: 43 094 km²
Population: 5.3 million
Currency: Danish kroner



History

Up into the 11th century the Danes were a Viking tribe, colonizing, raiding and trading in much of Europe. At various times Denmark has ruled England, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland. The Swedish possessions were lost in 1658 and the union with Norway was dissolved in 1814. After a war in 1864 Denmark was forced to cede Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia, in a defeat that left deep marks in the Danish national identity. After this point Denmark adopted a policy of neutrality, following which Denmark stayed neutral in World War I. During World War II Denmark was again invaded by Germany. After the war, Denmark became a member of NATO and the European Economic Community.

Politics

In 1849 Denmark became a constitutional monarchy with the adoption of a new constitution. The monarch is formally head of state, a role which is mainly ceremonial, since executive power is exercised by the cabinet ministers, with the prime minister acting as the first among equals. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the Danish parliament, known as the *Folketing*, which consists of (no more than) 179 members. The courts of Denmark are functionally and administratively independent of the executive and the legislature. Elections for parliament must be held at least every four years; but the prime minister can call for an earlier election, if he so decides. Should parliament succeed in a vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister the entire government resigns.

Economics

This thoroughly modern market economy features high-tech agriculture, up-to-date small-scale and corporate industry, extensive government welfare measures, comfortable living standards, a stable currency, and high dependence on foreign trade. Denmark is a net exporter of food and energy and has a comfortable balance of payments surplus. The Danish economy is highly unionized; 75% of its labor force are members of a union in the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions. In a September 2000 referendum, Denmark reconfirmed its decision not to join the 12 other EU members in the euro. Even so, the Danish currency remains pegged to the euro.

Culture

Denmark's most famous cultural representative on the world stage is Hans Christian Andersen, writer of fairy and folk tales. Another important writer is the early existentialist philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Carl Nielsen is the country's foremost composer, best known for his Fourth Symphony, nicknamed "the Inextinguishable." In recent years there has been a wave of influential filmmakers from Denmark inspired by the so-called "Dogme" movement; Lars von Trier is the most famous of them. Contemporary Danish design, in areas such as furniture and architecture, counts among the world's most innovative.

Estonia

(Eesti)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Tallinn
Total area: 45 000 km²
Population: 1.4 million
Currency: Estonian kroon



History

Estonia has been populated by the native Finno Ugric Estonians since prehistory. Foreign powers, including Denmark, Sweden, Poland and finally Russia, have controlled Estonia through most of its history. Following the collapse of Imperial Russia after the October Revolution, Estonia declared its independence as a republic on February 24, 1918. Forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in June 1940, it regained its freedom on August 20, 1991, with the so-called “Singing Revolution” and collapse of the Soviet Union. Since the last Russian troops left in 1994, Estonia has been free to promote economic and political ties with Western Europe and beyond, becoming a member of NATO and the EU in 2004.

Politics

Estonia is a constitutional democracy, with a president elected by its unicameral parliament (elections every five years). The government or the executive branch is formed by the prime minister, nominated by the president, and a total of 14 ministers. The government is appointed by the president after approval by the parliament. Legislative power lies with the unicameral parliament, the *Riigikogu* or State Assembly, which consists of 101 seats. Members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms. The supreme judiciary court is the National Court or *Riigikohus*, with 17 justices whose chairman is appointed by the parliament for life on nomination by the president.

Economics

In 1999, Estonia experienced its worst year economically since it regained independence in 1991, largely because of the impact of the August 1998 Russian financial crisis. Privatization of energy, telecommunications, railways, and other state-owned companies is a continuing process. Estonia now has one of the strongest economies of the new members states of the European Union, partly due to a number of Finnish companies relocating their routine operations, and has a strong IT sector. In 1994, Estonia became among the first in the world to adopt the flat tax, with a uniform rate of 26% regardless of the income a person makes.

Culture

Estonia has a strong folk culture, with many centuries’ old songs and verses. Songs in general play a prominent role in Estonian cultural life, and the strength of choral groups helped give rise to the Singing Revolution. The most famous collection of folk tales is called the *Kalevipoeg*. The Estonian language is closely related to Finnish and more distantly to Hungarian; it is very different from other nearby languages such as Russian or Latvian. Estonians like to drink a very sweet, very strong liqueur, Vana Tallinn, that traditionally goes with coffee or milk.

Finland

(Suomi)

Year of entry: 1995
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Helsinki
Total area: 338 000 km²
Population: 5.1 million
Currency: Euro



History

For nearly 700 years Finland was ruled by Sweden. Swedish became the dominant language of administration and education; Finnish chiefly a language for the peasantry, held useful mainly for printing religious literature. In 1808 Finland was conquered by Russia and remained a part of the Russian Empire until 1917, when Finland declared its independence. During World War II Finland fought the Soviet Union and was allied for a time with Germany. After the war, the Soviet Union exerted pressure on Finland to remain neutral and occasionally interfered in Finnish domestic politics. When the USSR fell in 1991, Finland was free to integrate more fully into western Europe.

Politics

Finland has a semi-presidential system in which the President of Finland is formally responsible for foreign policy. Most executive power, however, lies in the cabinet headed by the prime minister chosen by the parliament. Constitutionally, unicameral parliament, the *Eduskunta* (Finnish) or *Riksdag* (Swedish), is the supreme legislative authority in Finland. Finland was one of the first countries to grant women's suffrage, in 1906. The Finnish political system remained democratic during the Cold War although the political atmosphere was largely influenced by the neighboring Soviet Union.

Economics

Finland has a highly industrialized, largely free-market economy, with per capita output roughly that of the UK, France, Germany, and Italy, and a high standard of living. Its key economic sector is manufacturing—principally the wood, metals, engineering, telecommunications (especially Nokia), and electronics industries. Trade is important, with exports equaling almost one-third of GDP. Since it joined the EU, Finland pursued rapid integration with western Europe, joining the euro in 1999.

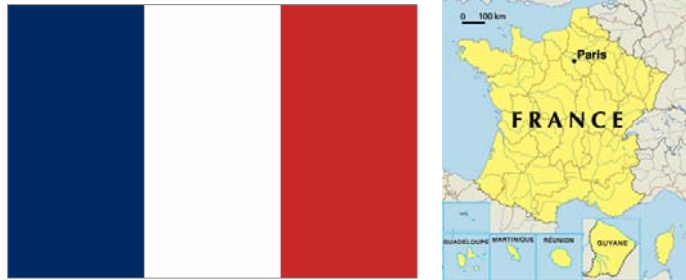
Culture

For Finns, the greatest monument of their culture is the *Kalevala*, a collection of folk stories compiled in the 19th century. Many later Finnish artists made use of these folk stories in their own works, including Jean Sibelius, the country's most accomplished composer. In more recent decades, Finland has produced outstanding filmmakers such as Aki Kaurismäki, and a number of excellent architects such as Alvar Aalto and Eero Saarinen.

France

(France)

Year of entry: Founding member
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Paris
Total area: 550 000 km²
Population: 60.4 million
Currency: Euro



History

Tracing its history back to Charlemagne's kingdom of the Franks, France was ruled by other powerful kings, including Louis XIV, until 1792 when the French Revolution established a republic. Napoleon Bonaparte seized control soon after, and following his defeat France reverted to a monarchy. During the later nineteenth century France enjoyed an economic and cultural flourishing symbolized by the construction of the Eiffel Tower and the acquisition of colonies abroad. A victor in the first World War, France was defeated in the second, after which it lost its empire. Nonetheless, France reasserted its leadership role in Europe particularly through its leadership of European integration, even burying the hatchet with old enemy Germany to form a close alliance.

Politics

Under France's current constitution, the executive branch is very strong in relation to the parliament. The president names the prime minister, presides over the cabinet, commands the armed forces, and concludes treaties. The National Assembly (*Assemblée Nationale*) is the principal legislative body. Its deputies are directly elected to 5-year terms, and all seats are voted on in each election. The second house of the legislature, the Senate, has limited powers. French politics, for the past 30 years, have been characterised by the opposition of two political groups: one left-wing, and one right-wing. The extremist National Front, a far-right party advocating tougher law-and-order and immigration policies, has made inroads since the early 1980s and seems to remain stable at around 16% of the votes.

Economics

France's economy combines extensive private enterprise with substantial (though declining) government intervention. The government retains considerable influence over key segments of infrastructure sectors with majority ownership of railway, electricity, aircraft, and telecommunication firms. France ranked as the fifth-largest economy in the world in 2003. With over 77 million tourists a year, France is ranked as the major tourist destination in the world. France has an important aerospace industry (lead by Airbus Industrie) and is also the most energy independent Western country due to heavy investment in nuclear power, which also makes France the smallest producer of carbon dioxide among the seven most industrialised countries in the world.

Culture

French culture is one of the richest in the world, with notable contributions in nearly every area. The Impressionist movement of the late 19th century stands for many as the quintessence of French style: painters such as Monet, Degas, and Seurat, composers such as Debussy, and poets such as Rimbaud or Verlaine are all associated with the movement. In the 20th century writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus were very influential, and French "New Wave" filmmaking—embodied by artists such as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut—swept the world. French cuisine, embracing everything from croissants to fine wines, is especially beloved.

Germany

(Deutschland)

Year of entry: Founding member
Political system: Federal republic
Capital city: Berlin
Total area: 356 854 km²
Population: 82 million
Currency: Euro



History

For hundreds of years Germany was split up into many smaller states and principalities united only by the German language. The state now known as Germany was unified only in 1871, when the Kingdom of Prussia, through a series of wars, created the German Empire with the Kaiser at its head. Germany enjoyed an enormous boom up until the First World War, after which it suffered serious economic problems that helped give rise to Adolf Hitler's Nazi movement. After the Nazi defeat in World War Two, Germany was divided between a democratic western part and a Soviet-dominated eastern part. Finally in 1990 Germany was once again united, with Berlin as its capital.

Politics

Due in part to its legacy of many smaller independent states, the German constitution is built on a strong federal system in which the component regions, known as *Länder*, hold a wide range of powers. The head of government, the chancellor, is chosen by the parliament, and the parliament is elected every four years by popular vote in a complex system combining direct and proportional representation. Germany is regarded as the most powerful country in the European Union and in recent years has begun to assert that power more internationally. Issues in recent German politics include the ongoing difficulties of integrating the backward, formerly socialist East, and debates over the number of Turkish immigrants in the country.

Economics

Germany possesses the world's third most technologically powerful economy after the US and Japan. There are many famous German companies such as BMW, Mercedes, and Siemens, and the German economy is hugely export-driven. In recent years economic growth has been somewhat weak, however, often blamed on the difficulties modernizing the East's economy, and the drain on the whole system caused by the country's very generous social welfare benefits. Despite these problems, and a relatively high rate of unemployment, Germany remains Europe's economic powerhouse.

Culture

Germany's contributions to the world's cultural heritage are numerous, and the country has been known as "the Land of Poets and Thinkers." Germany was the birthplace of composers such as Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, and Wagner; poets such as Goethe and Schiller; philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche; scientists such as Einstein; and artists such as Albrecht Dürer. The German language remains one of the most taught foreign languages worldwide, and the second most popular in Europe after English.

Greece

(ΕΛΛΑΔΑ - Ellada)

Year of entry: 1981
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Athens
Total area: 131 957 km²
Population: 10.5 million
Currency: Euro



History

Greece's historical golden age dates from around 800BC, with the era of the great city-states such as Athens and Sparta and the accompanying bloom in art, science, architecture, and literature. Greece was later conquered by a series of foreign powers, including the Roman Empire and in the 15th century the Turkish Ottoman Empire. The country won its independence only in 1829 but continued to fight with the Turks over the following century. Invaded by Italy during the Second World War, Greece's democracy also suffered from a military coup in the 1960s. It was not until 1981 that Greece stabilized, and thanks to funds from the European Economic Community its economy grew more prosperous.

Politics

The 1975 constitution includes extensive specific guarantees of civil liberties and vests the powers of the head of state in an indirectly-elected president. The prime minister and cabinet play the central role in the political process, while the president performs some governmental functions in addition to ceremonial duties. The parliament elects the president for a five-year term and can re-elect once. Greece uses a complex reinforced proportional representation electoral system which discourages splinter parties and ensures that the party which leads in the national vote will win a majority of seats. A party must receive 3% of the total national vote to gain representation.

Economics

Greece has a mixed capitalist economy with the public sector accounting for about half of GDP. Tourism has great importance, providing a large portion of GDP and foreign exchange earnings. Greece figures prominently as a major beneficiary of EU aid, equal to about 2.4% of GNP. Major challenges remaining include the reduction of unemployment and further restructuring of the economy, including privatizing several state enterprises, undertaking social security reforms, and overhauling the tax system. Greece successfully joined the euro when it was launched, though it was later revealed that government statistics had been falsified so that Greece would be eligible to join.

Culture

Contemporary Greeks like to count ancient-world greats such as Homer, Socrates, Aristotle, and the Parthenon among their cultural achievements. More recent writers and achievements are not as famous, including names such as authors Nikos Kazantzakis or Odysseus Elytis, though the modern Olympics do have a worldwide impact. One of the greatest aspects of Greece today is its cuisine, featuring delicacies such as *tzatziki*, *spanakopita*, and *moussaka*. Many tourists come to enjoy Greece's Mediterranean lifestyle, sipping some *ouzo* amid the many cultural monuments of the country's Aegean islands.

Hungary

(Magyarország)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Budapest
Total area: 93 000 km²
Population: 10.2 million
Currency: Forint



History

Tradition holds that Hungary was founded by Árpád, who led the Magyars tribes into their present location in the 9th century. The Kingdom of Hungary was then established in 1000 by King St. Stephen I, and historically the territory of Hungary was much larger than today, including parts of neighboring Slovakia, Croatia, and Romania. Hungary suffered greatly during the 13th century invasions of the Mongol armies. Hungary was ravaged again by the conquering Ottoman Turks in the early 1500s, and when the Turks were driven out the country now belonged to the Austrian Habsburgs. Defeated in World War One, the Austro-Hungarian Empire split and Hungary became independent again. Allied with the Nazis in World War Two, Hungary became a Soviet satellite after the war, though the Soviets had to crush brutally the Hungarians' revolt in 1956. With the collapse of communism in 1989, Hungary was well-positioned to rejoin the West, as its economy had begun to make reforms already years earlier.

Politics

The President of the Republic, elected by the parliament every 5 years, has a largely ceremonial role, but powers also include appointing the prime minister. The prime minister selects cabinet ministers and has the exclusive right to dismiss them. The unicameral, 386-member National Assembly (the *Országgyűlés*) is the highest organ of state authority and initiates and approves legislation sponsored by the prime minister. Control of Hungarian politics since 1989 has oscillated between center-right and former socialist parties. A controversial issue has been the Hungarian government's policies toward the remaining Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Romania.

Economics

Hungary continues to demonstrate strong economic growth. Inflation and unemployment—both priority concerns in 2001—have declined substantially. Economic reform measures such as health care reform, tax reform, and local government financing have not yet been addressed by the present government. Hungary's largest export market is Germany, and its leading industries include metallurgy, construction materials, processed foods, textiles, chemicals (especially pharmaceuticals), and motor vehicles.

Culture

The capital Budapest is one of the great culture cities of Europe, with especially strong traditions in architecture (Art Nouveau in particular) and music. Hungary has produced a number of excellent composers, including the virtuoso pianist Franz Liszt, and Béla Bartók, who was particularly influenced by the country's incredibly rich folk music. Folk art in general is popular, embracing everything from embroidery, painting, wood carving, and elaborate costumes. For many centuries Hungary has enjoyed a reputation for fine wines—particularly the sweet Tokaj wine—and its quite varied cuisine, with such specialties as *gulyás* ("goulash") or fruit soup.

Ireland

(Éire)

Year of entry: 1973
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Dublin
Total area: 70 000 km²
Population: 3.7 million
Currency: Euro



History

Ireland has been inhabited for about 9,000 years, most famously by the Celts, who colonized Ireland in a series of waves between the 8th and 1st centuries BC. Tradition maintains that in AD 432, St. Patrick arrived on the island and, in the years that followed, worked to convert the Irish to Christianity. England's power over Ireland expanded in the 16th century, and Ireland was effectively an English colony for several hundred years. The potato famine in the middle of the 1800s drove waves of Irish abroad, particularly to North America and Australia. Increasing resistance to English rule finally brought independence to the southern part of the island (now known as the Republic of Ireland) in 1921; northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom. In the last several decades of the 20th century, Ireland burst out of its historical economic and social backwardness, becoming more prosperous, socially liberal, and culturally dynamic.

Politics

For at least the last century, Irish politics have been in large part dominated by the religious divisions of the island. The south, the Republic of Ireland, is overwhelmingly Catholic, while the north, which is ruled by the United Kingdom, is mixed between Protestants and Catholics. Animosity between the two sides, and violence particularly in the north, were a major fact of Irish life. In recent decades, however, concerted and somewhat successful efforts have been made to solve the ongoing conflicts, though some politicians in both the north and the south still aim for unification of the entire island. In recent years Irish politics have liberalized, as society becomes more relaxed and multi-cultural.

Economics

Long backward and underdeveloped, thanks to reformed governmental policies the Irish economy has boomed in recent years, earning the country the nickname "the Celtic Tiger." Where agriculture once accounted for most of the economy, now high tech dominates: for example, Ireland has become the second-largest exporter of software in the world, after the US. Ireland's main trading partners are the UK, the US, and Belgium. Ireland's recent prosperity has pushed it into the ranks of richer EU countries, which in turn has spurred immigration into the country, a pronounced change from the long Irish history of emigration.

Culture

For a comparatively small country, Ireland has made a disproportionate contribution to world literature in all its branches, mainly in English. Ireland has produced four winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature: George Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats, Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney. The Irish tradition of folk music and dance is also widely known, including such famous groups as The Dubliners and The Chieftains. During the 1970s and 1980s, the distinction between traditional and rock musicians became blurred, with many individuals regularly crossing over between these styles of playing. This trend can be seen more recently in the work of bands and individuals like U2, Sinéad O'Connor and The Pogues.

Italy (Italia)

Year of entry: Founding member
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Rome
Total area: 301 263 km²
Population: 57.6 million
Currency: Euro



History

At its zenith in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, the Roman Empire influence much of the known world. Equally vibrant during the later middle ages, Italy's second golden age is the Renaissance during the 14th and 15th centuries. Long divided politically between foreign rulers, independent city states, and territory controlled by the Church, the drive for Italian unification took off during the 19th century and finally succeeded in 1870. The country continued to have a king even under the fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini after 1922, but once the fascists were defeated in World War II, Italy became a republic. One of the founding members of both NATO and what became the European Union, Italy's economy experienced tremendous growth during the latter 20th century, though the southern half of the country remains much poorer.

Politics

Italy's history of division has persisted into its politics, which since 1948 have been very fragmented and unstable. The executive branch is headed by the prime minister, a post that often been a revolving door, with prime ministers remaining in office often around a year before a new change in government. One cause of the instability was Italy's proportional representation system that made it difficult for one party to win a clear majority of seats in parliament. That system was reformed in 1993, and in recent years the center-right party of business magnate, politician, and (according to some investigations) criminal Silvio Berlusconi has been in power. For many years Italy also had the strongest communist party in western Europe, though since the fall of the Soviet Union that strength has largely faded.

Economics

Italy has a diversified industrial economy with roughly the same total and per capita output as France and the United Kingdom. The economy remains divided into a developed industrial north, dominated by private companies, and a less developed agricultural south, where unemployment hovers near 20%. Famous Italian firms include Fiat, Olivetti, Ferrari, and Sanussi. Over the past decade, Italy has had some difficulty adhering to a tight fiscal policy so that the country could join the euro. The current government has tried to implement certain reforms such as overhauling Italy's rigid labor market, but has met opposition from unions.

Culture

Italy is well-known for its art, culture, architectural monuments, and of course its food. The leaning tower of Pisa and the Roman Colosseum are instantly recognizable buildings, artworks by Leonardo, Boccaccio, Raffaello, and Michelangelo are known the world over, musically Italy contributed composers such as Rossini, Verdi, and Puccini, not to mention the form of opera itself. Italy also has world-class wine, filmmakers such as Bernardo Bertolucci, and fashion designers such as Versace. Italian cities are some of the most touristed in Europe, including Rome, Venice, and Florence.

Latvia

(Latvija)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Riga
Total area: 65 000 km²
Population: 2.4 million
Currency: Lats



History

Known for the most part as Livonia, the area that now constitutes Latvia was under the influence of the German Sword Brethren from the 13th century onward. However, in the 18th and 19th centuries, Russia gained control over Latvia and neighboring regions. With Russia devastated by revolution and World War I, Latvia declared its independence on 18 November 1918. From 1934 Latvia was an authoritarian state. This period of independence lasted only briefly, as the Soviet Union annexed the country on 17 June 1940 in accordance with the Soviet-Nazi agreement (Ribbentrop-Molotov pact) of 1939. Except for a brief period of German occupation during World War II, Latvia remained Soviet territory until reforms in Soviet communism such as glasnost stimulated the Latvian independence movement, and the country regained its independence on 21 August 1991. It has since reinforced its links with the West and in 2004 became a member of both NATO and the European Union.

Politics

The 100-seat unicameral Latvian parliament, the *Saeima*, is elected by direct, popular vote every four years. The president is elected by the Saeima in a separate election also every four years. The president appoints a prime minister who, together with his cabinet, forms the executive branch of the government. On 20 September 2003 in a nationwide referendum 66.9% of the Latvians voted in favor of joining the European Union.

Economics

Latvia is a transitional economy. It has had high GDP growth since 2000. In 2003, GDP growth was 7.5% and inflation was 2.9%. Unemployment was 8.8% in 2003, almost unchanged compared to the previous two years. Privatization is mostly complete, except for some of the large state-owned utilities. Latvia officially joined the World Trade Organization in February 1999.

Culture

While little is known outside of Latvia about the country's artistic culture it could be because of the scarcity of Latvian speakers throughout the world. Latvian is one of only two surviving languages from the Baltic family and only half of the people speak it as their first language. Famous Latvian works include the national poem *Lacplesis* (The Bear Slayer) by Andrejs Pumpurs. Also popular in Latvia are short verses called *dainas* which are often compared to Japanese haikus. The Latvians are fans of smoked meats, with seafood particularly popular, including smoked herring, flounder, eels, and specially-preserved lampreys.

Lithuania

(Lietuva)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Vilnius
Total area: 65 000 km²
Population: 3.5 million
Currency: Litas



History

First mentioned in 1009, Lithuania was once a significant power as an independent, multi-ethnic Grand Duchy that stretched across much of Eastern Europe. In the 16th century, it joined with Poland as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This union remained until 1795 when Lithuania was annexed by the Russian empire. Under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, a smaller Lithuania established its independence in February 1918. It subsequently was plagued by territorial disputes with Poland and Germany, and it became a dictatorship in 1926. It was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 during World War II. Communist rule ended after the advent of glasnost and Lithuania proclaimed its renewed independence on 11 March 1990, the first Soviet republic to do so, though Soviet forces unsuccessfully tried to suppress this until September 1991.

Politics

The Lithuanian head of state is the president, elected directly for a five-year term, who also functions as commander in chief overseeing foreign and security policy. The president, on the approval of the parliament, also appoints the prime minister. The unicameral Lithuanian parliament, the Seimas, has 141 members that are elected for a four-year term. About half of the members of this legislative body are elected in single constituencies (71), and the other half (70) are elected in the nationwide vote by proportional representation. A party must receive at least 5% of the national vote to be represented in the Seimas.

Economics

In 2003 Lithuania had the highest economic growth ratio among all European Union candidates, reaching 8.8%. Before 1998 Lithuania conducted most of its trade with Russia, however the 1998 Russian financial crisis forced country to orient toward the West. Accession to the EU reduced previously high unemployment, to 7.0% in 2004. Lithuania has almost finished privatization of the large, state-owned utilities, with one of two power distribution networks and railways left. In 2006 Lithuania is expected to one of the first accession countries to begin using the Euro as its currency.

Culture

Lithuania has the most homogeneous population of the three Baltic countries. In all of Europe its language is related only to Latvian. The most famous Lithuanian food is *cepelinai*, whose name comes from the word "zeppelin": these are big, round dumplings made of potato dough and stuffed with meat, mushrooms, or cheese. Important writers in Lithuanian literature include Kristijonas Donelaitis, Jonas Maciulis, and Czeslaw Milosz the winner of the 1980 Nobel prize for literature. Traditional Lithuanian folk art includes large wood carvings placed in prominent places. These carvings often take the form of crosses, suns, or saints.

Luxembourg

(Luxembourg)

Year of entry: Founding member
Political system: Constitutional monarchy
Capital city: Luxembourg
Total area: 2,586 km²
Population: 429,200
Currency: Euro



History

The Congress of Vienna gave formal autonomy to Luxembourg in 1815, but it was taken over by Prussian forces following Napoleon's defeat. In 1867 Luxembourg formally became independent after a brief period of civil unrest against plans to annex the country to Belgium, Germany, or France. German troops invaded Luxembourg in 1914, but the government was allowed to remain in office throughout the occupation, bringing accusations of collaboration from France. Through the intervention of the United States, Luxembourg was not annexed to Belgium in 1918, as France had wanted. A second German invasion on 10 May 1940 swept away the government and monarchy. After World War II, Luxembourg abandoned its politics of neutrality and it became a founding member of NATO, the United Nations and the European Economic Community.

Politics

Luxembourg has a parliamentary form of government with a constitutional monarchy by inheritance. Under the constitution of 1868, executive power is exercised by the Grand Duke and the cabinet, which consists of a prime minister and several other ministers. Legislative power is vested in the Chamber of Deputies, elected directly to 5-year terms. A second body, the "Conseil d'État" (Council of State), composed of 21 ordinary citizens appointed by the Grand Duke, advises the Chamber of Deputies in the drafting of legislation.

Economics

The stable, high-income economy features moderate growth, low inflation, and low unemployment. The industrial sector, until recently dominated by steel, has become increasingly more diversified to include chemicals, rubber, and other products. Financial services, especially banking, account for a growing proportion of the economy. Luxembourg possesses the highest GDP per capita in the world.

Culture

Luxembourg's culture is defined by the two world powers bordering it, France and Germany. Luxembourgers are famed as the most multilingual in Europe: French and German are spoken in all aspects of Luxembourgian life, but the common language on the street is Luxembourgish, a blend of old German and Frankish elements. English is also spoken as well as Portuguese, since roughly 10% of the population is Portuguese. Luxembourg's cuisine shares much with its immediate neighbors, with a meat and potatoes emphasis like German food, and good wines from the Moselle river area. Few Luxembourgers are known outside of their country, though the most famous may be Edward Steichen, the American photographer born in Luxembourg.

Malta

(Malta)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Valletta
Total area: 316 km²
Population: 400 000
Currency: Maltese lira



History

Malta has been inhabited since around 5200 CE. It was the Phoenicians who named the main island *Malat*, meaning “safe haven.” In 1530 the islands were given to the Order of Knights of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem by Spain. Their reign ended when Napoleon conquered the islands in 1798. In 1814, as part of the Treaty of Paris, Malta officially became a territory of the British Empire and was used as a shipping waystation and fleet headquarters until the mid 1930s. Malta played an important role during World War II, owing to its proximity to Axis shipping lanes. After the war, Maltese independence was granted on 21 September 1964. Under its constitution, Malta initially retained Queen Elizabeth II as sovereign of Malta and a Governor-General exercised executive authority on her behalf, but on 13 December 1974, Malta became a republic within the Commonwealth, with the President as head of state. Although Malta had been fully independent since 1964, the British services stayed on until 31 March 1979, when the last British troops left the island.

Politics

The President is elected by the Maltese parliament, who appoints as Prime Minister the leader of the party with a majority of seats in the unicameral House of Representatives, known in Maltese as *Kamra tar-Rappreżentanti*. The president also nominally appoints the individual ministers to head each of the government departments. The House of Representatives consists of between 65 and 69 members elected on the basis of proportional representation.

Economics

Malta’s major resources are limestone, a favorable geographic location, and a productive labor force. Malta produces only about 20% of its food needs, has limited freshwater supplies, and has no domestic energy sources. The economy is dependent on foreign trade (serving as a freight transshipment point), manufacturing, and tourism.

Culture

Traditional Maltese music includes what is known as *l-ghana* (pronounced as “lana”). This consists of background folk guitar music, while two or three persons take turns to argue a point in a melodic voice. The aim of the lyrics are to create a friendly yet challenging atmosphere, and it takes a number of years of practice to be able to combine the required artistic qualities with the ability to debate effectively. Many linguists trace the origin of Malti, the native Semitic language of Malta, to the Phoenician occupation of the islands. Maltese cuisine has strong Sicilian influences though some popular foods are British. Local specialties include *pastizzi* (savory cheese pastries), *timpana* (a macaroni, cheese and egg pie), and *fenek* (rabbit), which is usually fried or baked in a casserole or pie.

The Netherlands

(Nederland)

Year of entry: Founding member
Political system: Constitutional monarchy
Capital city: Amsterdam
Total area: 41 864 km²
Population: 15.8 million
Currency: Euro



History

The Netherlands was one of the major seafaring and economic powers of the 17th century. In the period referred to as the Golden Age in the Netherlands, colonies and trade posts were established all over the globe. After (briefly) being incorporated in the French empire under Napoleon, the Kingdom of the Netherlands was formed in 1815, consisting of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The Netherlands possessed several colonies, most notably the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and Suriname. During the 19th century, the Netherlands was slow to industrialize compared to neighboring countries, mainly due to its unique infrastructure of waterways and reliance on wind power. After remaining neutral in World War I, the country was occupied by Nazi Germany in May 1940, to be fully liberated only in 1945. After the war, the Dutch economy prospered again, being a member of the Benelux (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) and European Economic Community unions. The Netherlands also became a member of NATO. The Netherlands was among the six founding members of the European Coal and Steel Community, which would later evolve into the European Union.

Politics

The Netherlands has been a constitutional monarchy since 1815. The head of state since 1980 is Queen Beatrix of the House of Orange-Nassau. Dutch governments always consist of a coalition, as there is not (and has never been) a single political party large enough to get the majority vote. The head of the government is the Prime Minister who is usually also the leader of the largest party in the coalition. The parliament consists of two houses. The 150 members of the Lower House are elected every four years in direct elections. The provincial parliaments are directly elected every 4 years as well. The members of the provincial parliaments vote for the less important Senate. Together, the First and Second Chamber are known as the States General.

Economics

The Netherlands has a prosperous and open economy in which the government has successfully reduced its role since the 1980s. Industrial activity is predominantly in food-processing, chemicals, petroleum refining, and electrical machinery. A highly mechanized agricultural sector employs no more than 4% of the labor force but provides large surpluses for the food-processing industry and for exports. The Dutch rank third worldwide in value of agricultural exports, behind the US and France.

Culture

The Netherlands has a history of many great painters. The 17th century, when the Dutch republic was prosperous, was the age of the "Dutch Masters" such as Rembrandt van Rijn, Johannes Vermeer, Jan Steen and many others. Famous Dutch painters of the 19th and 20th century are Vincent van Gogh and Piet Mondriaan. M. C. Escher is a well-known graphics artist. The Netherlands is the country of philosophers Erasmus of Rotterdam and Spinoza, and all of Descartes' major work was done here. *The Diary of Anne Frank* was also written in the Netherlands.

Poland

(Polska)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Warsaw
Total area: 313 000 km²
Population: 38.6 million
Currency: Złoty



History

Poland started to form into a recognizable unitary territorial entity around the middle of the 10th century. A golden age occurred in the 16th century during its union with Lithuania. In the 18th and 19th centuries Poland was partitioned repeatedly between Prussia, Austria, and Russia, and eventually disappeared off the map as an independent country. During World War I all the Allies agreed on the restitution of Poland, and shortly after the surrender of Germany Poland regained its independence as the Second Polish Republic. The Second Polish Republic lasted until the start of World War II when Germany and the Soviet Union invaded and split the Polish territory between them. After the war the USSR installed a Stalinist regime, which was threatened in 1980 by the formation of the trade union Solidarity, led by Lech Walesa. Thanks in part to Solidarity, the communist party's power eroded, and in 1989 Poland finally had democratic elections.

Politics

Poland is a democratic republic whose current constitution dates from 1997. The government structure centers on the Council of Ministers, led by a prime minister. The president, elected by popular vote every 5 years, serves as the head of state. The parliament consists of 460 members in the Lower House (*Sejm*) and 100 members in the Senate (*Senat*). Chosen by a proportional representation, only political parties receiving at least 5% of the total vote can enter the parliament.

Economics

Poland is one of the most successful and open examples of the transition from communism to a market economy. Nonetheless, Poland has a large agricultural sector, and private farms are still a major portion of the country's economy. Once oriented towards Russia, Poland's trade now goes predominantly west, with Germany and Italy as its largest trading partners. The country's resources include significant amounts of coal, and its major industries are machinery and transport equipment, metals, chemicals, and food products. There is much speculation as to when Poland will adopt the euro, although estimates put the entry date somewhere between 2009 and 2013.

Culture

Polish art was strongly affected by communism for most of the 20th century. During communist rule most art was in the style of Socialist Realism. Despite the communist regime's official atheism, Poland remains very strongly Roman Catholic. Pope John Paul II may be the most famous Pole of the last century. Polish artistic has produced celebrated figures such as authors as Isaac Bashevis Singer and Ryszard Kapuscinski and composer Henryk Gorecki. Polish cuisine is composed largely of thick soups, dumplings, potatoes and meat. The beet soup known as borscht (*barszcz* in Polish) is a popular item on Polish menus.

Portugal

(Portugal)

Year of entry: 1986
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Lisbon
Total area: 92 072 km²
Population: 10.8 million
Currency: Euro



History

Though briefly swallowed by Spain in the 16th century, Portugal has a rich history as an independent kingdom with a global empire. Its golden age came during the era of overseas exploration, when Portuguese merchants and explorers colonized South America, Africa, India, and China. After this period, Portugal entered a long decline in its influence. A 1910 revolution deposed the Portuguese monarchy and installed the First Republic. This government was marked by chaos, and came to an end in 1926 when a nationalist military coup d'état gave birth to the Second Republic, a period of almost fifty years of repressive rule. The Carnation Revolution of 1974 was a bloodless military coup, which created the Third Republic. In 1975, Portugal granted independence to its provinces in Africa. With the independence of its colonies, the 560 year old Portuguese Empire had effectively ended. Also many Portuguese returned from the colonies, coming to comprise a sizeable sector of the population and starting an economic recovery.

Politics

The President of the Republic is elected to a 5-year term by universal suffrage, and presidential powers include appointing the Prime Minister. The Parliament is a unicameral body composed of 230 deputies who are elected according to a system of proportional representation. Deputies serve terms of 4 years, unless the president dissolves the assembly and calls for new elections. The Council of Ministers is headed by the Prime Minister. A newly elected government is required to define the broad outline of its policy and present it to the Parliament for a mandatory period of debate. Unless a majority of the Parliament votes against the policy platform the Prime Minister and his council are confirmed into office.

Economics

Portugal has developed an increasingly service-based economy since joining the European Union in 1986. Over the past decade, successive governments have privatized many state-controlled firms and liberalized key areas of the economy, including the financial and telecommunications sectors. Today, Portugal is a developed nation. It joined the Economic and Monetary Union in 1998 and began circulating its new currency, the euro, on 1 January 2002 along with 11 other EU members.

Culture

Portugal is sometimes known as “a country of poets” and in fact Portuguese poetry has a larger influence in the country’s literature than prose. The best-known Portuguese poets internationally are Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa. In modern Portuguese literature the best known author is José Saramago, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for literature. Other important authors include Almeida Garrett, Alexandre Herculano and. *Fado* is a form of melancholic music and its origins are probably from a mixture of African slave rhythms with traditional music of Portuguese sailors, with some Arabic influence. Sweet wine called port is made in Portugal and is largely exported.

Slovakia

(Slovenská Republika)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Bratislava
Total area: 49 000 km²
Population: 5.4 million
Currency: Slovak koruna



History

Slovakia became a part of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 11th-14th centuries. After the Ottoman Empire started its expansion into present-day Hungary in the early 16th century, the center of the Kingdom of Hungary shifted towards Slovakia, and Bratislava became its capital in 1536. By the end of the 18th century Slovakia's influence decreased. In the revolution of 1848-49 the Slovaks joined the Austrians to separate from the Kingdom of Hungary within the Austrian monarchy. During the time of Austria-Hungary, i.e. 1867-1918, the Slovaks experienced one of the worst oppressions in their history in the form of Hungarization promoted by the government. In 1918, Slovakia joined with the regions of Bohemia and neighboring Moravia to form Czechoslovakia which lasted until it was broken up by the Munich Agreement of 1938. Slovakia became a separate republic that was tightly controlled by Nazi Germany. After World War II, Czechoslovakia was reassembled and came under the influence of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact from 1945 onward. The end of communist rule in Czechoslovakia in 1989 during the peaceful Velvet Revolution was followed once again by the country's dissolution, this time into two successor states. Slovakia and the Czech Republic went their separate ways after 1 January 1993.

Politics

The Slovak head of state is the president, elected by direct popular vote for a five-year term. Most executive power lies with the head of government, the prime minister, who is usually the leader of the major party or a majority coalition in parliament and appointed by the president. Slovakia's highest legislative body is the 150-seat National Council of the Slovak Republic. Delegates are elected for 4-year terms on the basis of proportional representation. Slovakia highest judicial body is the Constitutional Court, which rules on constitutional issues.

Economics

Slovakia has mastered much of the difficult transition from a centrally planned economy to a modern market economy. Major privatizations are nearly complete, the banking sector is almost completely in foreign hands, and foreign investment has picked up. Slovakia's economy exceeded expectations in the early 2000s, despite recession in key export markets.

Culture

Hungary's 900 year domination of Slovakia ended in the 19th century. During this period of transition a national revival occurred with the creation of the Slovak literary language by L'udovít Štúr. A leading figure in this revival was poet Pavol Hviezdoslav. The Slovak language is distinct from Czech, though closely related. Folk music was the primary method of Slovak language preservation during Hungarian rule and it still plays an important role in village life. Slovakia is famed for its mountain scenery, with the spectacular High Tatras the greatest mountain range in Eastern Europe.

Slovenia

(Slovenija)

Year of entry: 2004
Political system: Republic
Capital city: Ljubljana
Total area: 20 000 km²
Population: 2 million
Currency: Slovenian tolar



History

The Slavic Duchy of Carantania, the first Slovenian state, was formed in the 7th century. In 745, Carantania lost its independence, being largely subsumed into the Frankish empire. During the 14th century, most of Slovenia's regions passed into ownership of the Habsburgs whose lands later formed the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1848 a strong program for a United Slovenia emerged as part of the "Spring of Nations" movement within Austria. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1918, Slovenians joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Following the re-establishment of Yugoslavia at the end of World War II, Slovenia became a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, officially declared on 29 November 1945. Present-day Slovenia was formed on 25 June 1991 upon its independence from Yugoslavia. Slovenia joined NATO on 29 March 2004.

Politics

The Slovenian head of state is the president, who is elected by popular vote every 5 years. The executive branch is headed by the prime minister and the council of ministers or cabinet, which are elected by the parliament. The bicameral Slovenian parliament holds elections every four years and consists of the National Assembly and National Council. The National Assembly has 90 seats, which are filled by both direct election and proportional representation. The National Council has 22 seats, and is made up of representatives of social, economic, professional and local interest groups.

Economics

Slovenia continues to enjoy the highest GDP per capita of the transitioning economies of the new member states, and Slovenes tend to be quite prosperous. However, much work remains to be done in the areas of privatization and capital market reform. During 2000, privatizations were seen in the banking, telecommunications, and public utility sectors. Restrictions on foreign investment are slowly being dismantled, and foreign direct investment is expected to increase over the next two years. Tourism is also becoming more important, centered on the beautiful Lake Bled area.

Culture

Since World War II many Slovenian folk traditions have been lost, but traditional musicians and old-style cooking (heavily dependent on fish, venison and the dumpling) are still prized. The most famous Slovenian writer is poet France Prešeren (1800-49), whose lyric poems set the standard for Slovenian literature. Slovenian cuisine traditionally relies on venison and fish while borrowing many dishes from its neighbors. Slovenia produces some noticeable red and white wines, a strong brandy called *zganje* and Union and Zlatorog brand beers.

Spain

(España)

Year of entry: 1986
Political system: Constitutional Monarchy
Capital city: Madrid
Total area: 504 782 km²
Population: 39.4 million
Currency: Euro



History

Modern Spain began to take form during the Reconquista, the struggle between the Christian kingdoms arising in the northern regions and the Muslim kingdoms. After the Muslims were finally driven out in 1492, Isabel funded Christopher Columbus in his attempts to reach Asia through a western route across the Atlantic Ocean—resulting in the “discovery” of the “New World.” During the 16th century, with Carlos I and Felipe II, Spain became the most powerful European country and was known as the Spanish Empire. Spain lost most of its colonies in the Americas during the 19th century, a trend which ended with the loss of Cuba and the Philippines after the Spanish-American War of 1898. The republic ended with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936. Following the victory of the nationalist forces in 1939, General Francisco Franco ruled until his death in 1975. Upon his death his personally-designated heir Prince Juan Carlos assumed the position of king and head of state. He played a key role in guiding Spain further in its growth into a modern democratic state.

Politics

Spain is a constitutional monarchy, with a hereditary monarch and a bicameral parliament. The executive branch consists of a Council of Ministers presided over by the President of Government, proposed by the monarch and elected by the National Assembly following legislative elections. The legislative branch is made up of the Congress of Deputies with 350 members, elected by popular vote and proportional representation to serve four-year terms. The Senate has 259 seats of which 208 are directly elected by popular vote and the other 51 appointed by the regional legislatures to also serve four-year terms.

Economics

Spain's economy has benefited enormously from membership in the European Union, and its finances were stable enough that it successfully joined the euro when it was launched. Spain has had chronically high unemployment, and though it has fallen in recent years, Spanish young people often have difficulty finding good jobs. Nonetheless, Spain is an industrial power with global influence: many Spanish companies have important stakes in Latin American economies, for instance. Tourism is a major economic boost, and Spain receives the second highest number of tourists in the world, after France.

Culture

Spanish culture has produced some of the most important works of the last several centuries. Among these is *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, written in the early 17th century by the author Miguel de Cervantes. It is one of the earliest novels in a modern European language and many people consider it the finest book in the Spanish language. Spain is also known for its renowned painters who include Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Francisco Goya, and Velázquez. Much influence on Spanish cuisine comes from the Jewish and Moorish traditions. The most well-known variety of Spanish folk music is likely flamenco, a diverse genre created by Andalusian Roma. The style has produced many of the most famous Spanish musicians, including singer Camarón de la Isla and guitarist Carlos Montoya.

Sweden

(Sverige)

Year of entry: 1985
Political system: Constitutional monarchy
Capital city: Stockholm
Total area: 450 000 km²
Population: 8.9 million
Currency: Swedish kronor



History

During the 9th and 10th centuries, the Viking culture flourished in Scandinavia, with trade, raiding and colonization primarily going eastward to the Baltic states, Russia and the Black Sea. In 1389, the three countries of Norway, Denmark and Sweden were united under a single monarch. Sweden ultimately broke away in 1521, when Gustav Eriksson Vasa, known as King Gustav I of Sweden from 1523, re-established separation of the Swedish crown from the union. The 17th century saw the rise of Sweden as one of the great powers in Europe, due to successful participation, initiated by King Gustavus Adolphus, in the Thirty Years' War. This position crumbled in the 18th century when Imperial Russia took the reins of northern Europe in the Great Northern War, and eventually conquered the eastern half of Sweden, thereby creating Finland as a Russian Grand Duchy. Sweden continued to remain a neutral country during World War I and World War II. It was non-aligned during the Cold War and is today not a member of any military alliance.

Politics

Sweden has been a monarchy for almost a millennium. Constitutionally, the 349-member *Riksdag* holds supreme authority in Sweden, and its acts are not subject to judicial review. Legislation may be initiated by the Cabinet or by members of Parliament. Members are elected on the basis of proportional representation for a four-year term. The monarch remains as the formal, but merely symbolic, head of state with mainly ceremonial duties. Social Democracy—left-leaning politics with a strong welfare state—has played a major role in Swedish politics since World War II.

Economics

Aided by peace and neutrality for the whole of the 20th century, Sweden has achieved an enviable standard of living under a mixed system of high-tech capitalism and extensive welfare benefits. The state has recently been trying to reduce its control of the private sector as the Swedish population ages and welfare benefits become more expensive. Timber, hydropower, and iron ore constitute the resource base of an economy heavily oriented toward foreign trade. Well-known Swedish companies include IKEA, Volvo, and Ericsson.

Culture

Swedish 20th century culture is noted for pioneering works in the early days of cinema, with Mauritz Stiller and Victor Sjöström. Later on, moguls like Ingmar Bergman and actresses such as Greta Garbo, Zarah Leander, Ingrid Bergman and Anita Ekberg made careers abroad. Swedish literature is also vibrant and active; Sweden ranks third in the list of countries with most Nobel Prize laureates in literature. Notable Swedish musicians include composers such as Hugo Alfvén and William Stenhammar and bands such as Abba. Swedish cuisine is traditionally rich in fat, due in part to long winters, which explains the lack of fresh vegetables in many traditional recipes.

United Kingdom

Year of entry: 1973
Political system: Constitutional monarchy
Capital city: London
Total area: 242 500 km²
Population: 58.6 million
Currency: Pound sterling



History

With the Act of Union 1707, the separate kingdoms of England and Scotland agreed to a permanent union as the Kingdom of Great Britain; Ireland became formally joined to the kingdom in 1800. In 1922, after bitter fighting which echoes down to the current political strife, the Anglo-Irish Treaty partitioned Ireland into the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, with the latter remaining part of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom was the dominant industrial and maritime power of the 19th century and played a leading role in developing Western ideas of property, liberty, capitalism and parliamentary democracy. At its zenith, the British Empire stretched over one quarter of the earth's surface. The first half of the 20th century saw the UK's strength seriously depleted in two World Wars. The second half witnessed the dismantling of the Empire and the UK rebuilding itself into a modern and prosperous European nation.

Politics

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy, with executive power exercised by a government headed by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Executive power is vested in the monarch but in reality Her Majesty's Government is answerable and accountable to the House of Commons, the lower house of Parliament. In modern Britain, the monarch's role is mainly ceremonial. In day to day politics real executive political power is exercised by the Prime Minister and cabinet. Parliament is bicameral, composed of the 659-member elected House of Commons and the appointed House of Lords. Historically, the House of Lords has featured members of nobility who were granted seats by nature of birthright, although this feature has been abolished.

Economics

The United Kingdom is a leading trading power and financial centre and one of the largest economies of Western Europe. Agriculture is intensive, highly mechanized, and efficient by European standards, producing about 60% of food needs with only 1% of the labor force. The UK has large coal, natural gas, and oil reserves; primary energy production accounts for 10% of GDP, one of the highest shares of any industrial state. Services, particularly banking, insurance, and business services, account for by far the largest proportion of GDP while industry continues to decline in importance. Tourism is also important: with over 23.9 million tourists a year.

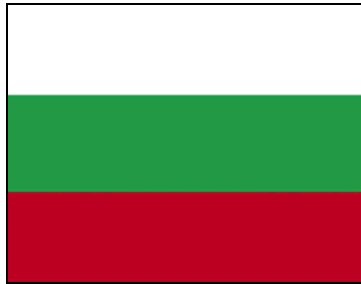
Culture

The United Kingdom has produced great names in nearly every field: scientists such as Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin; writers including William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Dickens; poets such as Lord Byron, Robert Burns, Thomas Hardy and Dylan Thomas; and composers such as Thomas Tallis, Henry Purcell, Edward Elgar, and Benjamin Britten. More recently, the UK has been one of the main contributors in the development of rock and roll, providing many famous bands, including the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, the Sex Pistols and the Clash.

Bulgaria

(Bǎlgarija)

Political system: Republic
Capital city: Sofia
Total area: 111 000 km²
Population: 7.9 million
Currency: Lev



History

Bulgaria gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878 as an autonomous principality and was proclaimed a fully independent kingdom in 1908. During 1912 and 1913 it became involved in the Balkan Wars, a series of conflicts with its neighbors, during which Bulgaria both lost and gained territory. During World War I and later World War II, Bulgaria found itself fighting on the losing side. The country fell within the Soviet sphere of influence after World War II and became a People's Republic in 1946. Communist domination ended in 1990, when Bulgaria again held multiparty elections. Bulgaria joined NATO on March 29, 2004 and is set to join the European Union on January 1, 2007.

Politics

The president of Bulgaria is directly elected for a 5-year term with the right to one re-election. The president serves as the head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces. The Bulgarian unicameral parliament, the National Assembly or *Narodno Sabranie*, consists of 240 deputies who are elected for 4-year-term stretches by popular vote. The votes are for party or coalition lists of candidates for each of the nine administrative divisions. A party or coalition must garner a minimum of 4% of the vote in order to enter parliament.

Economics

Bulgaria's economy contracted dramatically after 1989 with the loss of the Soviet market, to which the Bulgarian economy had been closely tied. The standard of living fell by about 40%, but it regained pre-1990 levels in June 2004. The first signs of recovery emerged in 1994 when the GDP grew and inflation fell. During 1996, however, the economy collapsed due to poor economic reforms and an unstable banking system. Since 1997 the country has been on the path to recovery, with GDP growing at a 4-5% rate, increasing foreign investment, and general economic stability.

Enlargement

Bulgaria is set to join the EU in 2007. Bulgaria has already taken steps to integrate itself with the EU, including unilaterally linking its currency to the Euro (Lithuania and Estonia also did this before entry). It closed entry negotiation talks in June 2004 and received confirmation from the EU that it would join in 2007 as planned. Work still remains to be done, however: the EU wants Bulgaria to press forward with continued privatization of its state industries and reform of labor market regulations. Other important steps for Bulgaria include improving the quality of its education system, restructuring its judiciary, and combating organized crime.

Croatia (Hrvatska)

Political system: Republic
Capital city: Zagreb
Total area: 57 000 km²
Population: 4.4 million
Currency: Kuna



History

The Battle of Mohács in 1526 led the Croatian Parliament to invite the Habsburgs, under Ferdinand I, to assume control over Croatia. Habsburg rule eventually did prove to be successful in thwarting the Ottomans, and by the 18th century much of Croatia was free of Turkish control. Following World War I and the demise of Austria-Hungary, Croatia joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (which became Yugoslavia in 1929). Yugoslavia was invaded during World War II and Croatia was made into a fascist puppet-state named the Independent State of Croatia. After the defeat of the Axis powers, Yugoslavia became a federal socialist state under the strong hand of Josip Broz Tito. Although Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, it took four years of sporadic and often bitter fighting with the Serbs before the end of the war in 1995. Peaceful reintegration of all rebel territories was completed in 1998 under UN supervision.

Politics

Since the adoption of the 1990 Constitution, Croatia has been a parliamentary democracy. The President of the Republic (*Predsjednik*) is head of state and elected for a five-year term. In addition to being the commander in chief of the armed forces, the president has the procedural duty of appointing the prime minister with the consent of the parliament, and has some influence on foreign policy. The Croatian Parliament (*Sabor*) is a unicameral legislative body of up to 160 representatives, all elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms. The Croatian Government (*Vlada*) is headed by the prime minister who has 2 deputy prime ministers and 14 ministers in charge of particular sectors of activity.

Economics

Croatia has an economy based mostly on various services and some, mostly light, industry. Tourism is a notable source of income. The Gross Domestic Product per capita in purchasing power parity terms for 2002 was USD 9,800 or 42.7% of the EU average. After the fall of communism, Croatia's main economic problems included massive structural unemployment followed by an insufficient amount of economic reforms. The country has since experienced faster economic growth and has been preparing for membership in the European Union, its most important trading partner.

Enlargement

Croatia applied for EU membership in February 2003 and at the European Council in June 2004, it was granted candidate status by the EU. It has been decided that Croatia will start negotiations in March 2005. Croatia has been aiming for membership in 2007 alongside Romania and Bulgaria, although this is unlikely because it would have to break Slovakia's record of 2.5 years of negotiations to complete the process. A more realistic date circulated by EU officials has been 2009. However, Croatia's EU bid may be hampered with several mainly political problems, most of which are remnants of the break-up of Yugoslavia. The relations with the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal have repeatedly been cited by the EU officials as something that requires further improvement, and some EU countries stalled the ratification of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Croatia because of this.

Norway

(Norge)

Political system: Constitutional Monarchy
Capital city: Oslo
Total area: 385 199 km²
Population: 4.6 million
Currency: Norwegian kroner



History

An independent country during the Viking period (9th to 11th centuries), the Norwegian royal line died out in 1387 and control of Norway passed to Denmark. After the Danes sided with Napoleon in the Napoleonic Wars, Norway was ceded to Sweden in 1814. Dissatisfaction over this union with Sweden grew during the 19th century, and Norway finally gained full independence in 1905, choosing its own monarch. Norway was neutral in World War I, and attempted to remain neutral during World War II but was invaded by the Nazis in 1940. In the post-war period Norway abandoned its traditional neutrality and joined NATO. The country has also become one of the richest in the world, thanks partly to its oil deposits in the North Sea.

Politics

Though a constitutional monarchy, the functions of the king are mainly ceremonial, such as serving as the symbol of national unity. Most power lies with the Council of State or cabinet, which consists of a Prime Minister and his council, appointed by the king. Since 1884, parliamentarism has ensured that the cabinet must have the support of the parliament, so the appointment by the King is a formality. The 165 members of the unicameral Norwegian parliament, the *Storting*, are elected from the 19 counties for 4-year terms according to a system of proportional representation. The regular courts include the Supreme Court or *Høyesterett* (17 permanent judges and a president), courts of appeal, district courts and conciliation councils. Norwegian politics is known for its consensual nature and its commitment to a strong welfare state.

Economics

The Norwegian economy is a prosperous bastion of social capitalism, featuring a combination of free market activity and government intervention. The government controls key areas, such as the vital petroleum sector (through large-scale state enterprises). The country is richly endowed with natural resources—petroleum, hydropower, fish, forests, and minerals—and is highly dependent on its oil production and international oil prices; in 1999, oil and gas accounted for 35% of exports. Only Saudi Arabia and Russia export more oil than Norway, which is outside OPEC.

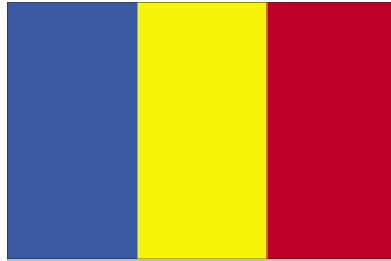
Enlargement

Norway, like most other Scandinavian states, is reluctant to surrender sovereignty to a supranational entity. The Norwegian government also wishes to keep control of fishery resources in its territorial waters. Norway has applied twice for EEC and EU membership, but the two referenda on the issue were defeated by the populace. Another referendum could take place in 2005 as the majority of the population now favors integration. In late 2004, Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik suggested that the debate about joining the EU might be restarted in 2007. Another prominent politician, Thorbjørn Jagland, has proposed that Norway and Iceland should prepare a common strategy before launching membership negotiations with the EU.

Romania

(România)

Political system: Republic
Capital city: Bucarest
Total area: 238 000 km²
Population: 22.4 million
Currency: Romanian leu



History

Modern Romania was formed by the merging of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859 under Alexandru Ioan Cuza. At the end of the WW I, which brought the disintegration of the empires of Russia and Austria-Hungary, Romania gained control of the formerly-Hungarian territory of Transylvania. In 1941 Romanian dictator Carol II abdicated and Romania joined the Axis. In August 1944 Romania turned against Germany and joined the Red Army. In 1947 King Michael I Hohenzollern abdicated, and Romania became a communist state under the military and economic influence of the USSR. The decades-long reign of communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu ended in a coup in late 1989 when revolution swept Romania. Following the end of the Cold War, Romania developed closer ties with Western Europe, joining NATO in 2004 becoming a candidate for EU membership.

Politics

Romania is a democratic republic. The legislative branch of the Romanian government consists of two chambers, the *Senat* (Senate), which has 137 members, and the *Camera Deputaților* (Chamber of Deputies), which has 332 members. The members of both chambers are chosen in elections held every four years. The president, the head of the executive branch, is also elected by popular vote, every five years. The president appoints a prime minister, who heads the government, the members of which are in turn appointed by the prime minister.

Economics

After the collapse of the communist bloc, Romania was left with an obsolete industrial base and a pattern of industrial capacity wholly unsuited to its needs. In February 1997, it embarked on a comprehensive stabilization and structural reform program. Restructuring programs include liquidating large energy-intensive industries and major agricultural and financial sector reforms. Unemployment in Romania is at 6.2% (2004), which is very low compared to other large European countries. Despite the improvements, corruption remains a major problem at all levels and threatens to stifle economic growth.

Enlargement

On 8 December 2004, Romania concluded accession negotiations with the EU by agreeing to take on the EU's body of laws (known as the *acquis communautaire*). Romania is set to sign a common Accession Treaty with Bulgaria in the spring of 2005 and join the EU in 2007. However, before becoming a full member Romania must fulfill all its outstanding promises and reforms agreed during the negotiation phase. A safeguard clause has been included that gives the EU the possibility of delaying entry to Romania (and Bulgaria) for one year if commitments made by these countries are not met. It is believed that Romania's accession is more likely to require such a delay than Bulgaria's.

Russia (Россия)

Political system: Federation
Capital city: Moscow
Total area: 17,075,200 km²
Population: 144,526,378
Currency: Ruble



History

Peter the Great, who ruled from 1689 to 1725, succeeded in bringing ideas and culture from Western Europe to Russia. In 1917 a revolution overthrew the tsarist dynasty and Vladimir Lenin seized power to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The subsequent brutal rule of Joseph Stalin forced rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture at the cost of tens of millions of lives. After the USSR's victory in World War II, Stalin imposed communist governments throughout Eastern Europe. Beginning in the mid-1980s Mikhail Gorbachev attempted to modernize communism, but inadvertently released forces that brought about the end of the USSR in 1991. Since then, Russia has struggled in its efforts to build a stable, democratic political system and market economy.

Politics

The Russian Federation is a federative republic with a president, directly elected for a four-year term, who holds considerable executive power. The president nominates the highest state officials, including the prime minister or premier, who must be approved by parliament. The president can pass decrees without consent from parliament and is also head of the armed forces and of the national security council. Russia's bicameral parliament, the Federal Assembly consists of an upper house known as the Federation Council and a lower house known as the State *Duma*. Deputies are elected by direct popular vote from single member constituencies and 225 are elected by proportional representation from nation-wide party lists.

Economics

More than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia is still trying to establish a modern market economy. Russia remains heavily dependent on exports of commodities, particularly oil, natural gas, metals, and timber, which account for over 80% of exports, leaving the country vulnerable to swings in world prices. In recent years, however, the economy was also driven by growing internal consumer demand that has increased by over 12% annually in 2000-2004, showing the strengthening of its own internal market. Russia's GDP has shot up to reach \$1.5 trillion dollars in 2004, which made it eleventh largest economy in the world. The country's capital region of Moscow contributes 30% to the country's GDP.

Enlargement

At present, the prospect of Russia joining the EU any time in the near future is slim. Under the new voting system proposed in the draft EU Constitution, Russia would cause a huge imbalance within the union due to its large population. It also faces the problem that its territory is mostly in Asia, similar to Turkey (although unlike Turkey, most major population centers, and the centers of power, are in European Russia). The gap between the rich and the poor is extremely large, the economy needs improvement, and corruption is widespread. Russian leaders are also thought to be too authoritarian. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations have recently declared the Russian press to be not fully free.

Serbia

(Србија/Srbija)

Political system: Republic
Capital city: Belgrade
Total area: 88 361 km²
Population: 11.2 million
Currency: Serbian dinar



History

Though some trace the Serbian state's history to the 11th century, the history of modern Serbia begins with the country's uprisings against its Ottoman Turk rulers in 1804 and 1815. Serbia was proclaimed a kingdom in 1882 and was attacked by Austria-Hungary in 1914, which launched World War I. Following the war, Serbia was joined with Croatia and Slovenia in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Serbia was occupied by Germany during World War II. Re-united with Slovenia and Croatia into Yugoslavia in 1945, the country became socialist under its leader Josip Broz Tito. Roughly a decade after Tito's death, Yugoslavia split up and Serbia, under new ultra-nationalist leader Slobodan Milošević, was locked in a devastating war with Croatia. Milošević also went to war with NATO in 1998 over persecution of Serbia's Albanian minority. Serbia's difficult road to democracy began with the ouster of Milošević in 2000.

Politics

Serbia has a mixed presidential/prime ministerial system. The president is directly elected while the prime minister ordinarily comes from the political party with the most votes. Serbia is still loosely linked to another former member of Yugoslavia, Montenegro. There is a joint Parliament of Serbia and Montenegro, and also a legislative body specific to Serbia, the Serbian National Assembly. The current President of Serbia is Boris Tadić, leader of the Democratic Party. The current prime minister is Vojislav Kostunica, who once replaced Slobodan Milosevic as Yugoslav president in October of 2000.

Economics

Wheat, corn, hemp, sugar beets, and flax are the chief crops. Serbia proper has extensive vineyards and is one of Europe's major regions for fruit growing (notably plums). Mining and manufacturing are the largest contributors to the economy; manufactures include steel, iron, transport vehicles, and plastics. Serbia's mineral wealth includes coal and lignite, copper, gold, antimony, marble, and millstone. Kosovo is the poorest and least developed region, although it does have large coal reserves. The political turmoil of the 1990s greatly exacerbated Serbia's already severe economic problems, and much remains to be done to correct corruption and the legacy of socialism in the economy.

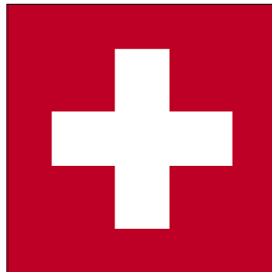
Enlargement

Serbia and Montenegro may join the EU separately because of economic disputes between the two republics, which still have to settle the decision of whether to continue in a union. Serbia has to deal with the ethnic tensions in the region of Kosovo as well as poverty in the south of Serbia and widespread corruption. Serbia and Montenegro started the reform process in 2000. The European Commission and the government of Serbia and Montenegro are currently planning to prepare the country for joining in 2012, together with Bosnia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Switzerland

(Schweiz/Suisse/Svizzera)

Political system: Federation
Capital city: Bern
Total area: 41,285 km²
Population: 7,399,100
Currency: Swiss Franc



History

Under the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, European countries recognized Switzerland's independence from the Holy Roman Empire. In 1798, armies of the French Revolution conquered Switzerland and in 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte imposed a new constitution, largely restoring Swiss autonomy. As a consequence of a civil war, Switzerland adopted a federal constitution in 1848, amending it extensively in 1874. Since then, continued political, economic, and social improvement has characterized Swiss history. Switzerland proclaimed neutrality in World War I and was not involved militarily in the conflict. Neutrality was again proclaimed in the Second World War and Switzerland once again managed to escape the war without being a part of major fighting. Women were granted the right to vote only in 1971. In 2002 Switzerland became a full member of the United Nations.

Politics

The bicameral Swiss parliament, the Federal Assembly, is the primary seat of power apart from the Federal Council. Both houses, the Council of States and the National Council, have equal powers in all respects, including the right to introduce legislation. Members of both houses serve for 4 years. Through referenda citizens may challenge any law voted by federal parliament and through initiatives introduce amendments of the federal constitution, making Switzerland a semi-direct democracy. The top executive body and collective head of state is the Federal Council, a collegial body of seven members elected by the Federal Assembly. The President of the Confederation is elected from the seven members of the Council. During a one year term, he assumes special representative functions.

Economics

Switzerland is a prosperous and stable modern market economy with a per capita GDP higher than that of the big western European economies. The Swiss in recent years have brought their economic practices largely into conformity with the European Union's to enhance their international competitiveness. Full EU membership is a long-term objective of the Swiss government. In order to minimize the negative consequences of Switzerland's isolation from the rest of Europe, Bern and Brussels signed agreements to further liberalize trade ties in 1999.

Enlargement

Switzerland took part in negotiating the European Economic Area agreement with the EU; it signed the agreement in May 1992 and submitted an application for accession to the EU the same month. However, a Swiss referendum held in December 1992 rejected EEA membership. As a consequence, the Swiss Government decided to suspend negotiations for EU accession until further notice, but its application remains open. Further referenda have shown a majority against EU membership, however, it is a "long-term aim" of the Federal Council. The Swiss federal government has recently undergone substantial U-turns in policy, however, concerning specific agreements with the EU on issues such as freedom of movement for people and workers, and tax evasion in the Swiss banking system.

Turkey

(Türkiye)

Political system: Republic
Capital city: Ankara
Total area: 775 000 km²
Population: 69.2 millions
Currency: Turkish lira



History

The history of modern Turkey begins with the foundation of the republic on October 29, 1923 from the Turkish remnants of the Ottoman Empire, with Kemal Atatürk as its first president. For the next 10 years, there was a steady process of secular westernization, guided by Atatürk. When all its western neighbors were under Axis occupation during World War II, Turkey signed a peace treaty with Germany and officially remained neutral until near the end of war. In 1971 Turkey carried out an operation in Cyprus in order to prevent a coup intended to unify the island with Greece, creating a conflict that to this day is still not resolved. In 1991 the government began major economic reforms and renewed Turkey's orientation toward Europe.

Politics

Turkey is a secular, republican parliamentary democracy. Its current constitution was adopted on November 7, 1982 after a period of military rule, and enshrines the principle of secularism. Executive power rests in a president. Legislative power is invested in the 550-seat Grand National Assembly of Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*), representing 81 provinces. Issues such as the Turkish involvement in Cyprus, the allegations of genocide against Armenians in the Ottoman era, and the increasing appeal of political Islam continue to fuel public debate in Turkey and influence its international relations.

Economics

Turkey's economy is a complex mix of modern industry and commerce along with a traditional agriculture sector that in 2001 still accounted for 40% of employment. It is estimated that 50% of the population lives under the international standards of poverty, especially in the conflict-prone south-east areas. Turkey has a strong and rapidly growing private sector, yet the state still plays a major role in basic industry, banking, transport, and communication. The most important industry and largest export is textiles and clothing, which is almost entirely in private hands.

Enlargement

The status of Turkey with regard to the EU has become a matter of major significance and considerable controversy in recent years. Turkey, an Associate Member of the EU and its predecessors since 1963, formally applied in 1987 and was recognized as a candidate in 1999. Some believe that the EU cannot refuse Turkey anymore as it has had an open candidacy for 40 years. Arguments against Turkey's accession are diverse. Firstly, only a small fraction of Turkish territory lies in Europe. More importantly, Turkey refuses to recognize Cyprus, a current EU member, and is waging an economic war against Armenia. Many opponents also argue that Turkey's current government still does not respect many of the key principles of the secular democracy because it maintains discrimination against non-Muslims, women and ethnic minorities, and it allegedly appears unwilling to fully respect the EU rules and values.

Ukraine

(Україна)

Political system: Republic
Capital city: Kiev
Total area: 603 700km²
Population: 47.7 million
Currency: Hryvnia



History

The territory of present-day Ukraine has been invaded and occupied by many peoples throughout history, including Scandinavian tribes, the Mongols, Tatars, and eventually the Slavs. Much of the territory came under the control of Poland in the 14th century. Then in the 18th century western Ukraine became part of the Habsburg Empire centered on Vienna, while eastern Ukraine was assimilated into the Russian Empire centered on Moscow. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, most of Ukraine became a constituent republic of the Soviet Union, and underwent an intense collectivization of agriculture that resulted in a devastating famine. Ukraine gained its independence following the breakup of the USSR in 1991. In the “Orange Revolution” of 2004, many Ukrainians fought to increase democracy in their country and to move it away from Russia and toward a more pro-Western orientation.

Politics

Ukraine is transitioning from an authoritarian past toward democracy under a semi-presidential system with separate legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The President of Ukraine (elected by popular vote) nominates the prime minister, who must be confirmed by the 450-seat parliament, the *Verkhovna Rada*. The president appoints members of the Cabinet of Ministers, as well as heads of all central agencies and regional and district administrations. Laws, acts of the parliament and the cabinet, and presidential edicts may be nullified by the Constitutional Court of Ukraine. Guaranteeing judicial independence has been an important step in Ukraine’s drive to be more democratic.

Economics

Formerly an important agricultural and industrial region of the Soviet Union, Ukraine now depends on Russia for most energy supplies, especially natural gas. After 1991 the government liberalized most prices and erected a legal framework for privatization, but widespread resistance to reform within the government soon stalled reform efforts and much more needs to be done. Output by 1999 had fallen to less than 40% of the 1991 level. The GDP in 2000 showed strong growth of 6%—the first growth since independence—and industrial production grew 12.9%. This recent growth is largely attributed to a surge in steel exports to China.

Enlargement

In 2002, the EU Expansion Commission said that “a European perspective” for Ukraine does not necessarily mean membership in 10 or 20 years, however, that does not mean it is not a possibility. However, many in the EU are wary of Ukraine’s size, and other problems also exist: a Ukraine-EU “Troika meeting” in April 2004, on the eve of the newest wave of expansion, dealt a blow to Ukraine’s European aspiration when the EU ministers failed to grant market economy status to Ukraine. For the time being, Ukraine will most likely develop some sort of intermediate relation with the EU. In 2004 Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko hinted that he would press the EU for deeper ties, and described a four-point plan: the acknowledgement of Ukraine as a market economy, entry in the World Trade Organization, associate membership with the European Union, and finally full membership.