



Federal Foreign Office



EUROPE AND YOU



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For sixty years, the countries of Europe have been growing closer together. We have more prosperity, security and freedom. The European Union is also your Europe.

It all started just 12 years after the end of the Second World War. Six countries shook hands in Rome and became partners: France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. This was the forerunner of the EU as we know it today. Since then, this community has grown and has become a political and economic success story. But our Europe is more than a single market or a monetary union. It is home to 510 million people in all their diversity, where a Belgian national has the same rights and freedoms as a German, Greek or Czech national. You are one of them and this is your Europe too.



EU population as a percentage
of world population in 2015
(2060: 4%)

58.6 %

of German exports in
2016 went to other EU
member states

1

THE EU MAKES YOUR LIFE EASIER, BETTER AND HEALTHIER.

If the European Union did not exist, your life would be very different. Just imagine that you had to pay with marks again in Germany, with pesetas in Spain and with francs in France. If you had to change your money into the currencies of all EU countries, you would have a lot less in your pocket in the end due to the exchange fees. Without the EU, you would have fewer rights for returning purchases made online. If your flight were seriously delayed or cancelled, you would not have any right to compensation. Would you still have the right to receive medical treatment in other member states? No. And the moment you used your mobile phone in other EU countries, the roaming charges would explode your bill.

9

million



ERASMUS students since the exchange programme was introduced

2

THE EU GIVES YOU PROSPERITY, DIVERSITY AND FREEDOM.

We are unique in the whole world – in Europe, you can cross borders without controls (at least in the 25 Schengen countries). If you want to, you can even stay on the other side of those borders – as an EU citizen you have the freedom of establishment. You even benefit from these freedoms in your everyday life. Your shopping at the supermarket costs you less because retailers and producers can get their products on the shelves more easily. Without the EU, you would not have so much choice, e.g. a German Riesling, Greek olives and Italian cheese.

31

million



jobs in the EU depend on exports



3

THE EU PROTECTS THE CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Europe is united in its commitment to better environmental protection. You can return toxic electronic scrap material, such as your old mobile telephone, to your dealer. Diesel cars and coal-fired power stations must reduce their harmful emissions because EU legislation requires it. And so that electricity does not run out with our coal, Europe is investing in wind, water and solar power. The EU also ensures that you drink clean water.

14

million



EU citizens live long-term in an EU member state that is not their own



112



is the single emergency number throughout Europe.

4

THE EU ENSURES YOUR SECURITY.

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been peace between EU member states. The EU is a peace project. That is why your world today is safer than it was before. But we are also facing new dangers. Terrorists and members of organised crime use the open borders to disappear. EU member states work together to try to avoid this. Thus, national authorities in Europe work closely together with Europol and Eurojust. The EU also takes care of your security at its external borders, for example with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).



56 %

of world humanitarian and development aid comes from EU member states

5

THE EU IS ALSO HELPING TO SHAPE GLOBALISATION.

Your country is part of Europe and Europe is part of the world. A world that is becoming increasingly more interconnected. If your country is part of a strong Europe, you have more of a say in things. A united Europe carries more weight when we decide how globalisation will be shaped. In international negotiations, the EU can thus insist on higher standards in areas such as the environment and the economy, as well as in social affairs, health and food safety. It can insist on quality of life – your life – in a globalised world.





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