



*The Abduction of Europa
(on a wall fresco in Pompeii)*

Technical Note:

Who and what is Europa?

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Europa – either derived from Semitic 'ereb' = evening and Phoenician 'erob' = dark, the lands where from the view of the early Fertile Crescent civilizations the sun was setting, or derived from the Greek 'eurys' = broad and 'op' = face, the broad open lands available for settling

Europa – the official name of Europe as decided by the European institutions, following the Latin and old Greek spelling

The European Union

The European Union and its citizens

Legally, the European Union is the result of a treaty signed in the Dutch city of Maastricht in 1992 by governments of what then were member states of the European Communities. Technically, the European Union possesses almost all factual and symbolic trappings of an independent country: it has an anthem (of Beethoven's Symphony No 9 the final movement incorporating the text known as *Ode to Joy* by Friedrich Schiller, expressing his idealistic vision of the human race joining hands in brotherhood), a national day (though not a holiday, the 9th of May commemorates Robert Schuman's proposal in 1950 to create commonality in organized Europe), a flag and emblem (12 golden stars on dark blue, the number 12 standing for perfection, unity and completeness – designed by the Council of Europe in 1955, adopted by the EC in 1985), a common currency (the euro in use since 1999 and in circulation since 2002, formerly the ECU), a common passport, a common driver's licence system, a common road numbering system, and a number of other symbolic and substantive common features.

The European Union has a *de facto* capital (Brussels) and a long-term secured budget for use at independent discretion. It maintains quasi-embassies around the world, a separate military command structure (60,000 troops in the European Rapid Reaction Force), and its own police force (Europol). It is governed by a democratically elected parliament with a well practiced legislative process, high court jurisdiction empowered to overrule national courts of justice (European Court of Justice), a ministerial bureaucracy with a staff of 25,000 (the DGs and agencies), and an executive government (Council and Commission). Finally, as agreed by ratified law, every member state citizen is also a citizen of the European Union.

If the European Union does not feel like an independent country in its own right, the reason may be that no majority in any of the member states identifies first with Europe, and then with nationality in the homeland. The question whether this important, and yet missing property of countryhood will ever exist in the EU may bring some of the most interesting political answers of the 21st century. Will the Europeans eventually develop a sense of European citizenry by spending the same money, travelling and working without borders, electing a common parliament, graduating from universities with European degrees (in effect from 2010), or having their speeding tickets enforced across Europe, to name a few of the commonalities? Or will the undeniable and deep diversity of cultural, historical and linguistic features among the European nations prevent them from growing together for many more generations? The official guiding principle of Europe is: "*United in Diversity*". How the European citizens put this into practice has significance beyond the borders of Europe.

The European Union and its Member States

Pre-2004 members of the EU are usually referred to as the EU 15. That group comprises: the six west-central countries France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, and Austria; the four southern countries Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece; the two Atlantic coastal countries Ireland and The United Kingdom; and the three Scandinavian countries Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. In 2004 ten new members joined the EU, namely the five east-central countries Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia; the three Baltic nations Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia; and the two southern islands Malta and Cyprus. In 2007, two more east-central countries, Romania and Bulgaria, joined. From this year on, the total is referred to as the EU 27.

Three countries have candidacy status at this time: Croatia, Macedonia, and Turkey. Croatia is expected to join the EU in 2010, Macedonia might join in 2012. Entry negotiations with Turkey began in October 2005, but have largely stalled since then. It is not expected that Turkey can attain membership in less than ten years. So-called potential candidates are the remaining four Balkan nations Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Albania, which could attain candidate status in 2008 and could join at the earliest in 2015.

Eight countries in Western Europe are neither members of the European Union, nor likely to become so in the foreseeable future. These are Switzerland, Norway, and Iceland, and the five tiny countries Vatican City, Monaco, San Marino, Liechtenstein, and Andorra. Political leaders in Switzerland and Norway have repeatedly proposed entering the EC/EU, but their citizens have repeatedly rejected these proposals.

Governments of the East European countries Georgia, Ukraine, and Armenia have openly stated that eventual membership in the EU is a target. The countries Byelorussia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan are not expressing interest. None of these seven are considered close to fulfilling membership criteria. It is considered that Israel would be quickly eligible, and 85% of Israelis look at membership favorably, but the issue has been stalled mainly due to the on-going Palestinian crisis in Israel. Morocco applied for EU membership in 1987, but was not deemed eligible on the grounds that it is not a European country. The government of the Cape Verde Islands is considering application.

All neighbouring countries of the EU, that is all the North African countries, plus Israel, Syria, Jordan, the three Caucasus nations, Byelorussia and Moldavia are members of the *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument*. Russia objected to this assumed junior status and defined a separate instrument called the *Four EU-Russia Common Spaces*, which fulfills essentially the same function of providing a framework for aligning Russia's and the EU neighbour's political and economic policies with the European Union.

The European Communities

Since 1949, the European Project has created numerous treaties, three of them constituting the *European Communities*: the European Economic Community (EEC of 1957), the European Steel and Coal Community (ECSC of 1951), and Euratom (also 1957). Two other significant treaties are the Economic Monetary Union (EMU of 1992, emerging from the EMS of 1979), and the Schengen Acquis (in force since 1995). It must be noted that participation in the latter two treaties is not identical with membership in the three organizations of the European Communities.

When the Maastricht Treaty established the European Union in 1992, the Three Pillars were introduced – which together constitute the European Union. The First Pillar comprises of the previously established three communities, but is authorized to take greater responsibility (notably health and food safety). The Second Pillar is built on the *Common Foreign and Security Policy*, which subsumes treaties of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) of 1970, the *Single European Act* (SEA) of 1986, and the *Western European Union* (WEU) of 1948. The Third Pillar is *Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs*.

In legislative and administrative practice the European Union uses the legal framework and established institutions of the European Economic Community (EEC) for the most part, which explains why most of these institutions were renamed in 1993. That is when the EEC became The European Community or EC (dropping the word reference "economic").

However, the legal situation of the European Union remains highly complex. For instance, even though the European Monetary Union (EMU) continues to function outside of the Three Pillars, the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) is installed under the EC (First Pillar) Article 8. So today the "European Community" is one of three "European Communities" which together are one of "Three Pillars" of the "European Union", of which most "Member States" use the common currency (EUR) in the EMU framework supervised by the wholly independent European Central Bank (ECB). A different group of countries are signatories to the Schengen Acquis, which abolishes internal border controls. Again a different group of members are part of the defense-oriented WEU, while yet another group of members and non-members alike participate in the economic Single Market through the EEA/EFTA, and so on and so forth. This institutional melange has led to *Europa à la carte*, where member and non-member states choose whatever best suits their needs from the menu that Europe offers.

Furthermore, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which established the EU, has been renegotiated and superseded or partially replaced by the Amsterdam Treaty in force since 1999 and the Nice Treaty in force since 2003. These three and the 1986 SEA, (which provided for the transformation of the Common Market into a Single Market on 1 January 1993) are the four major Inter-Governmental Treaties, known as IGTs.

As the legal state of affairs surrounding the multiple, overlaying treaties is both cumbersome to operate and almost impossible to communicate to any stakeholder, it was decided in 2001 in the Belgian town of Laeken that a single encompassing treaty would be developed which would subsume all previous ones within a single framework. This single treaty was to be the European Constitution and the fifth IGT.

European Constitution

The European Constitution was formulated between 2002 and 2004 in what was called the European Convention. The outcome of the convention was a "Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe". To come into force, this treaty, as all treaties before, had to be ratified by the governments of each EU Member State. But then, in contrast to previous practice, many European governments decided to hold a national referendum in order to achieve popular mandates for the ratification. When the French and Dutch referenda both failed at the end of May 2005, it became clear that the constitution would not be ratified.

During their summit meeting of June 2007, EU government leaders agreed on a compromise that implements a "Reform Treaty" which preserves most elements of the constitution draft, but does not require national referenda for ratification.

The European constitutional effort was an attempt to achieve many ambitious targets all at once. For one, the convention tried to accomplish its original legal task of streamlining the legal framework of the European Union, which was thought to be essential on expansion of the membership to 27 and more countries. That is the principle reason why the constitution developed into a document of 500+ pages and offered so many inherent contradictions that it became a feast for a critical press. Most of the contradictions, however, did not originate in the constitution draft, but were much more the contradictory essence of current treaties that could not be resolved under the limited authority of a constitutional convention.

The need to achieve this streamlining becomes apparent when considering that legislative powers of the European Union meanwhile encompass more than those invested in the federal government of the United States of America, both in quantity and in areas of responsibility. More than 70% of all legislation in the member states is caused or triggered by initiatives of the European Union, and essentially all their national legislation must now be harmonized with EU law in one way or the other.

Secondly, the constitution was intended to adjust the balance of power between EU Member States, which is widely acknowledged to be unduly unproportional under the currently valid Treaty of Nice. Third, the drafters of the constitution tried to further enlarge the powers of the European institutions at the expense of the national governments. Fourth, the proposed constitution was to create a fundamental political framework for the sovereign basis of a European Union – i.e. to achieve the function that a constitution normally has in any legal context of an independent country. Fifth, this constitution was written for Europe and not for the European Union, thus implying a far reaching validity for everybody and every country that considers itself European, something that a 500 page document cannot possibly achieve on that level of detail, even under the best of circumstances.

In retrospect it could be claimed that the failure of the European Constitution was due to an attempt to achieve too much in one step with too few resources and too little support, or even that it was a doomed and wrongful project from the beginning. Never before in the history of Europe, or anywhere else for that matter, has a common political effort been undertaken with such broad and intensive stakeholder involvement. If it had succeeded, it would have been a stunning advance in defining the future of Europe. However, it should be considered that the political momentum in the EU Member States for starting the constitutional effort began before September 11, 2001. The drafting and ratification period coincided with the years 2002–2005, a time of economic stagnation and geopolitical insecurity, and neither of these factors were conducive to the success of such a far reaching project.

EU Institutions

The institutions of the EU are, in a narrow definition, the three "triangle institutions" and seven others such as the European Central Bank (ECB) plus a few executive agencies such as the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). In a broader definition, "EU Institutions" sometimes refers to the countless official and semi-official governance systems of the EU, though "European Architecture" is a more frequently used term to cover this broader range.

The three triangle institutions are the *Council of the European Union*, *European Parliament*, and the *European Commission*. They are called the triangle institutions because in a mixture of formal and informal procedures, these three institutions working together manage the entirety of decision making processes and power flow inside the European Union.

The power balance between the triangle institutions is in constant flux, and it is heavily influenced by personal leadership constellations. It is said that when the Commission was headed by Jacques Delors in the 1990s, power shifted to a large degree from the Council towards the Commission and the Parliament. During the Prodi Commission, some of that power supposedly swung back to the Council. The Barroso Commission got off to a rocky start, then established itself as a competent operator of the system, rather than its driver.

Technically, since the Council holds the purse strings and since the EU Member State governments of which it is composed generally enjoy a higher degree of legitimacy with the citizens than the Eurocrats do in Brussels, the Council could be the strongest of the triangle institutions. However, the Council is handicapped in that its governance structure rotates every six months to a different member state government – who often have widely diverging views on how to advance the European agenda.

The Council is addressing this weakness by strengthening the Brussels system of Permanent Representation (member state embassies or missions) and two so-called "Corepers" (regular meetings of the deputy permanent representatives, stationed in the member state missions). The latter position is rising in status and becoming one of the most important posts that a national government has to staff. There have also been unsuccessful attempts to establish a 5-year term for the Council presidency to match the term of the Commission president. For the Council this is an irresolvable dilemma: providing itself with more permanent Brussels-based structures will automatically weaken the direct national influence on the European agenda as it is exerted in the rotation principle. If the Council does not go ahead with that, however, the established Brussels-based institutions are likely to maintain their momentum and keep the initiative in their hands. It seems that, institutionally speaking, the long-term trend of increasingly Europeanized political governance mechanisms, moving away from national governments and towards the center, is likely to continue.

European Commission

The European Commission consists of 27 commissioners, one of whom is the president. First, a candidate is proposed by the EU Council for the office of Commission President (filled now and until the year 2009 by José Manuel Durão Barroso). This candidate selects the 26 commissioner colleagues, and the proposed commission is presented to the EU Parliament for approval – the Commission also reports regularly to Parliament. Although one

commissioner each is appointed from every member state, the role of EU Commissioners is not to represent their respective countries, but to represent and guide a functional portfolio. The European Commission embodies a unique power position in that this organ is solely empowered to initiate legislative processes.

European Parliament

The European Parliament has 785 members, who were directly elected in 2004 by citizens in all the EU Member States. The European Parliament functions similarly to any other national parliament, with two exceptions. First, it cannot enact legislation alone – most EU legislation has to be agreed upon in a complicated co-decision process with the EU Council. Second, the EU Parliament does not have sovereign budget control – that is still vested in the Council.

Council of the European Union

The "Council" (in short) is the institution through which the member state governments are represented in the legislative process of the EU. By participation in the co-decision process with the EU Parliament, the European Union achieves its ultimate legitimacy, as each member government is granted these executive powers by their national political systems.

European Council

The European Council is the quarterly meeting of all the heads of government of EU Member States. These meetings used to take place in the country of the current Council Presidency, which changes every 6 months. Since 2004, all councils are held in Brussels.

Agriculture (Farm) Council

All the ministers of agriculture in the member states meet officially on a regular schedule (as do nine other subject-oriented minister level councils with other names).

DGs

DGs are the "Directorates General" of the European institutions. The nearest description would equate them with the functional ministries of a European government, but there are some significant differences. The DGs typically work very closely with the Commission, but they are *de jure* not under its direct or sole control. Likewise, the EU Commissioner position is invested with some chancellery powers, so they are not exactly only ministers. While the commissioners are matched to the functional portfolio of a corresponding DG, the DGs are not headed by their commissioner, but by a Director General. Also, the commissioners (27 in total) outnumber the DGs. Where DGs used to be designated with Roman numerals, they have acquired informal short names. The DG for agriculture and rural development is called "DG Ag", and the DG in charge of food safety is called "DG Sanco" (Health and Consumer Protection).

European Court of Justice

The Court of Justice of the European Communities was set up under the ECSC Treaty in 1952. Based in Luxembourg, its role is to ensure that EU legislation is applied in the same way in all EU countries, so that the law is equal for everyone. It ensures, for example, that national courts do not give different rulings on the same issue. The Court also makes sure that EU Member States and institutions do as the law requires, and it has the power to settle legal disputes between EU Member States, EU institutions, businesses and individuals. The Court is

composed of one judge per member state, so that all 27 of the EU's national legal systems are represented. For the sake of efficiency, however, the Court rarely sits as the full court. It usually sits as a "Grand Chamber" of just 13 judges or in chambers of five or three judges.

Some other European keywords

Euro-zone, euro countries, Euroland

The above terms cover those countries that have adopted the euro as their currency. These are the EU 15 countries without the UK, Denmark, and Sweden, but with the addition of Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City, and also Andorra although it does not mint its own euros. Slovenia adopted the euro in 2007, Cyprus and Malta will adopt the currency in 2008, but no others are likely to adopt the euro soon. Contractually speaking, all present and prospective EU countries have the obligation to adopt the euro as soon as their macroeconomic condition allows them to do so. Only the UK and Denmark enjoy contractual opt-outs, while Sweden remains more or less in technical violation of the treaties. Iceland has expressed interest in adopting the euro. In West Africa 14 countries are *de facto* using it in their currency union, the CFA franc zone, which is pegged to the euro. Initially, the euro coins only showed the individual EU countries. As per January 2007, they show a geographical map of Europe, as do the banknotes.

European Economic Area (EEA)

EEA refers to an agreement of the EU with Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein, allowing their full participation in the economic Single Market of the EU without having to assume full responsibilities of the political EU membership. The EEA was supposed to emerge from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1994, but Switzerland, the fourth EFTA member, decided by referendum not to participate in the EEA. Therefore, both organizations exist and are typically referred to as EEA/EFTA.

Lisbon Agenda

A 10-year plan agreed upon by the Council in the year 2000, called the "Lisbon Agenda", aims to make Europe the "most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010". One of the most valuable outcomes of the Lisbon Agenda to date has been the institutionalization of widespread benchmarking procedures (Open Method of Coordination) across all sectors of economic and political life in Europe. These procedures provide frequently used opportunities for EU Member States to compare and learn from each other.

Eurojargon

The European institutions have developed a eurospeak nomenclature in which targets or coordination processes are called by the name of the city in which these matters were originally decided upon. For instance, the Lisbon Agenda was decided upon during the Council meeting in 2000 that happened to have been held in Lisbon. The Maastricht Criteria evaluate the fiscal performance of EU Member States because the corresponding treaty was signed in that city. The Copenhagen Criteria are those that applicant countries have to fulfill before they can join the EU, as decided in 1993 in Copenhagen. The Bologna Process dictates that in the year 2010 all European university degrees and professorships must be compatible, and credits earned must count towards a degree anywhere in Europe – a decision

taken in 1999 in Bologna. Even though the naming of several hundreds of such processes, targets and criteria with city names is confusing to the outsider, it is rather practical. Using city names removes the need to translate the matter into all of the 23 official languages of the EU (which include Irish Gaelic and Maltese), possibly eliminating a source of even greater confusion. It also prevents ideological wrangling over the titles of these acts. There are many other EU specific terms such as "communitisation", "comitology", "eurocrat", "Open Method of Coordination", "Qualified Majority Voting", "Four Freedoms", "Single Market", "harmonization", "federalisation" – all of which are special political terms that need to be employed with care when communicating inside European political circles. The correct usage and knowledge of such terms differentiates Brussels insiders from outsiders.

Brussels

Most of the European institutions have their seats in the Belgian capital of Brussels, with only few exceptions. For instance, the Parliament officially resides in French Strasbourg, but *de facto* works in Brussels. The ECJ Court and EuroStat reside in Luxembourg a three-hour drive away, the European Central Bank resides in German Frankfurt, EFSA resides in Italian Parma, and the Office for the Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM) is in Spanish Alicante. In the press and casual jargon (like "Brussels decided / is responsible for") Brussels is an unofficial abbreviation that actually describes the whole decision making machinery of the European Union.

Schengenland or Schengen countries or Aquis

Technically, the Schengen Aquis is an "umbrella" understanding under which a number of different agreements and protocols are in operation concerning internal and external border controls. The practical ultimate effect is that for most members of the European Union there are no internal border or custom controls. All EU 27 members plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland have signed the Schengen Aquis, though the UK and Ireland are not participants in the immigration elements of the agreement. The recent EU entrants will implement the Schengen Aquis by March 2008, Switzerland by November 2008, Romania and Bulgaria by 2011. Schengen is a city in the country of Luxembourg.

European Patent Office

The patent office is the second largest European organization after the European Union. It has 32 member countries, a staff of 6000, a budget in excess of EUR 1 billion, and it is headquartered in Munich, Germany. The member countries are all EU 27 plus Turkey, Switzerland, Iceland, Monaco, and Liechtenstein.

Council of Europe (COE)

This sounds similar to, but is very different from the European Council. It refers to a political institution that was started in 1949 and today has 47 members (every European country except Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, and the Holy See; the last entrant was Montenegro in May 2007). Any European country can become a member of the COE, if it accepts the principles of the rule of law (which precludes the Holy See) and guarantees the human rights and fundamental freedoms (so far ruling out the other two). The COE and the European Union are completely separate organizations.

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was drawn up within the Council of Europe. It was opened for signature in Rome on 4 November 1950 and entered into force in September 1953. Taking as their starting point the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the framers of the Convention sought to pursue the aims of the Council of Europe through the maintenance and further realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Convention was to represent the first steps for collective enforcement of certain rights set out in the Universal Declaration. In addition to laying down a catalogue of civic and political rights and freedoms, the Convention set up a mechanism for the enforcement of obligations entered into by the contracting states.

Three institutions were entrusted with this responsibility: the European Commission of Human Rights (set up in 1954), the European Court of Human Rights (set up in 1959), and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the latter organ being composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states or their representatives. The ECHR resides in Strasbourg.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was established in 1991 when communism was crumbling in Central and Eastern Europe and ex-soviet countries needed support to nurture a new private sector in a democratic environment. Today the EBRD uses the tools of investment to help build market economies and democracies in 29 countries from Central Europe to Central Asia. The EBRD is the largest single investor in the region and mobilizes significant foreign direct investment beyond its own financing. It is owned by 61 countries and two intergovernmental institutions. Despite its public sector shareholders, it invests mainly in private enterprises, usually together with commercial partners.

European Broadcasting Union (EBU)

The EBU was started in 1950 in order to exchange newscasts among the European TV and radio stations. Since 2005, the EBU has listed members from 56 countries. Members from outside the European continent include Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Armenia, and Georgia.

Eurovision Song Contest

In this annual tele-voting event, Europeans select their favorite pop song among national candidates previously determined in each country. Any nation that is a member of the EBU can take part and in 2007 the participants came from 42 nations, among which Israel has been a long-standing and successful participant.

UEFA

The governing body of European football (soccer) is known by its abbreviation UEFA. Besides members from the European continent this organization includes Cyprus, Israel, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kazakhstan. It also lists Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Faeroe Islands among a total membership of 52 nations.

General Definitions for Europe

Geographical Europe

The geographic extent of the European continent is not uniformly defined. Commonly, the continent is held to include Iceland and the Atlantic Ocean islands of the Azores in the west, but to exclude the Danish territory of Greenland (North America) and the Spanish Canary Islands (Africa). To the south it includes all islands of the Mediterranean Sea, except for Cyprus which belongs to Asia. The geographic border to the east (running north to south) passes along the Arctic Kara Sea, the Ural Mountains, following the Ural River to the Caspian Sea, further in a western direction into the Kuma-Manych Depression to the Sea of Azov, leaving the Crimean peninsula inside Europe, and then following the Black Sea into the Sea of Marmara south of Istanbul and further to the European Mediterranean Sea.

This geographic demarcation at the eastern reaches includes only small percentages of the areas of the mostly Asian countries Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey (though the European landmass of Russia represents a quarter of the whole European landmass). Both Russia and Turkey have major cities located on the European peninsula: Moscow and Istanbul. This definition of Europe includes fully the countries of Byelorussia and Ukraine, but excludes fully the Caucasian countries of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The Caucasian mountain ridge serves as another commonly used definition of the eastern demarcation of the European continent. This would then partially include the countries of Georgia and Azerbaijan as well, but still not Armenia. Regardless of geographic definition, the European continent is the second smallest continent after Australia, but the one with the longest inhabited coastline of 37,000 km.

Political Europe

The nations which are either part of or have defined aspirations to join the European Project are considered to fall under the term "Political Europe". Besides essentially every nation of Western and Central Europe, this definition also includes Ukraine, Georgia, and Turkey in the East. It typically excludes the European nations of Byelorussia, Moldova, and Russia.

Outermost Regions (OR) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT)

These include islands and regions around the world that are still sovereign territory of various European countries but where numerous exceptions to EU law are granted. The OR are the Portuguese Azores and Madeira, the Spanish Canary Islands, three French Caribbean islands and French Guyana in South America. OR are part of the EU, and therefore for instance are shown on every euro banknote. The OCT are 12 British island groups sprinkled around the world, 6 French island groups, Danish Greenland, and the six islands of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco enjoy yet another status. The OCT are not part of the EU.

European Identity

The concept of European Identity refers to all the nations that share or strive towards some form of common identity based on the cultural history of the European continent. This definition typically includes Georgia and Armenia in the Caucasus, and Israel, Turkey, and Cyprus in Asia Minor. In a wider definition, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia share European identity due to the 20th century Soviet-Russian domination. Parts of West Africa are still culturally and legally oriented to France, and parts

of British Commonwealth countries in Africa and South Asia are culturally and legally oriented to England, as are Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. In an even wider definition, virtually all North and South American nations share cultural roots of European identity.

European Project or Agenda

The words "project" and "agenda" are typically used to describe the encompassing effort of European nations to achieve European commonality and a better future for the European citizens through supranational institutions to which some sovereign powers are ceded. The European Union is the major such supranational organization, but not the only one.

Europeans and European countries

By the most common usage, 50 countries are considered to be European. There are roughly 700–800 million people who call themselves Europeans, or about 11–13% of the world's population (493 million of whom are citizens of EU Member States). Those 50 countries include Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan mostly for geographic reasons, and they include Georgia, Armenia, and Cyprus for cultural reasons, although the latter two are geographically located in Asia. Though the list includes Turkey, it excludes Israel.

Besides the difficulty of defining an eastern border of Europe, there is also the contention of what constitutes a country. The above list of 50 includes the tiny countries of the Vatican City (Holy See), Monaco, San Marino, Liechtenstein, and Andorra, in addition to the not so tiny, but still very small countries of Luxembourg, Malta, and Montenegro. But it does not recognize the Faroe Islands or Greenland as separate countries, even though these two for all practical intents and purposes are independent countries with their own independent political and economical systems. Legally these two still fall under Danish territory, but by their own popular vote they decided to stay outside the European Union.

There are various other regions with varying degrees of autonomous government and special status illustrating European idiosyncrasies of country-, state-, and nationhood. To mention only a few, consider the Finnish Åland Islands, the Greek Mount Athos, German Helgoland, the Finnish lease of the Russian Saimaa Canal, or Gibraltar, the British Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The latter two are not part of the UK (they belong to the Crown) and are therefore also not part of the EU, but Gibraltar is. Gibraltar's British sovereignty is, however, contested by Spain, which among other things prevented harmonization of European air traffic control until 2006, as well as preventing Gibraltar from becoming a member of UEFA. While the Finnish Ålanders voted to become part of the European Union, they remain outside its value added tax (VAT) system. So do two cities, German Büsingen and Italian Campione, which are enclosed by Swiss territory and are economically and fiscally part of Switzerland, but politically part of the EU. The Italian Alpine valley of Livigno is not part of the customs union. Northern Cyprus is officially part of the EU and its citizens may vote for the European Parliament, but their accession is suspended until reunion of the Republic of Cyprus occurs.

Only one more European nation contends for an independent countryhood recognized by the United Nations: Kosovo, currently under UN administration. Other secessionist movements are either subsiding or not given much of a long-term chance, like the Basque movement in Spain, the Corsica troubles of France, the left river bank or Transdnistria slice of Moldava and seceded regions of South Ossetia, and Abkhazia in Georgia.

Historical Europe

In Greek mythology, Europa is a Phoenician princess who became the mistress of Zeus, who appeared to her as a gentle white heifer. Zeus persuaded Europa to take a ride on his back, then abducted her away across the sea to the island of Crete where she gave birth to Minos, a semi-legendary Cretan king.

Typical of Greek mythology, this account of the European abduction provides an allegorical explanation (or justification) of the rise of Greek civilization. The Phoenicians, settled on the coast of today's Lebanon, were the first maritime superpower on the Mediterranean Sea and held trading posts as far west as the Atlantic Ocean. That culture flourished from 1200 to 900 BCE. Their role as maritime trading power was succeeded by the Greeks whose expansion began around 700 BCE, and who in turn were succeeded by the Romans. Before 500 BCE, Europa was the customary name for the Greek mainland peninsula, while after that date the definition gradually extended to the lands further north. In later Greek times, Europa became the name for one of three parts of the world known to them, the other two being Asia (to the east) and Libya (to the south).

During Roman and medieval times, the term Europa was barely used. For instance, the speech by Pope Urban II in 1095, calling for the crusades against "that accursed race from Persia utterly alienated from God" in order to free Jerusalem, is generally seen by historians as one of the key founding moments of a European sense of cultural and political identity (alas not the most flattering part of it). However, Pope Urban II did not refer directly to Europe in his speech. The 10th and 11th century historians and thinkers only occasionally used the term Europae to describe its geographic extent as far as the Caspian Sea, thus demarcating themselves against peoples and lands on the unknown land masses to the east and to the south of the European peninsula, following the ancient Greek naming tradition.

Only during and after the Renaissance did the term Europae enter into more general usage. The leading Austrian humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464, Pius II from 1458) was the first historian and intellectual who frequently referred to Europe as having a cultural and ideological identity. He used the name to describe those nations who derive and rediscover much of their cultural identity from the ancient Greek polis and civilization. Progressive Renaissance thinkers and leaders also hoped this connection would promote assimilation of the liberal, scientific, and democratic mindset of ancient Greece into a European continent torn and worn by hegemonic and ideological battles between an outmoded aristocracy and an even more outmoded Roman Catholic church, neither of them in tune with the economic and political needs of the time.

While Europe has been many things to many people in many ages – the most consistent theme since the Renaissance has been to associate the European Idea with humanist ideals and progress. The draft European Constitution for instance referred in its first paragraph to "...the values underlying humanism: the equality of persons, freedom, respect for reason".

The well known contemporary Italian intellectual Claudio Magris recently defined Europe as

"the Dignity of the Individual above all that is Totalitarian".

Exhibit 1

EU Member States and Trade Partners in Comparison

2006		GDP/cap ppp (EU 25 = 100)	Employment 15–64 yrs. (%)	Population (millions)	Fertility (reprod. rate)	GDP growth (real%)	Public debt (% of GDP)
	EU 27	99	64	493	1.5	2.9	62
	EU 15	108	66	390	1.5	2.7	63
	USA	151	72	295	2.0	2.2	63
	Japan	112	70	128	1.3	2.3	164
Benelux	Netherlands	132	74	16.4	1.7	2.8	49
	Belgium	121	61	10.5	1.6	2.3	89
	Luxembourg	269	64	0.5	1.7	5.0	7
Alpine	Germany	115	68	82.5	1.3	2.5	68
	France	110	63	62.5	1.9	2.4	64
	Italy	102	58	59.1	1.3	1.9	107
	Austria	127	70	8.3	1.4	2.9	62
	Slovenia	88	67	2.0	1.3	4.3	29
Mediterranean	Spain	101	65	44.4	1.4	3.7	40
	Greece	89	61	11.0	1.3	3.7	105
	Portugal	72	68	10.6	1.4	1.8	65
	Cyprus	91	70	0.8	1.4	3.8	65
	Malta	77	55	0.4	1.5	3.0	67
Atlantic	UK	122	72	60.1	1.8	2.8	44
	Ireland	145	69	4.2	1.9	5.0	25
Scandinavia	Sweden	121	73	9.1	1.8	3.8	47
	Denmark	126	77	5.4	1.8	2.3	30
	Finland	117	69	5.3	1.8	3.1	39
Baltic	Lithuania	60	64	3.4	1.3	7.3	18
	Latvia	59	66	2.3	1.3	9.6	10
	Estonia	71	68	1.3	1.5	8.7	4
Central	Poland	55	55	38.1	1.2	6.1	48
	Czech Rep.	81	65	10.3	1.3	4.9	30
	Hungary	66	57	10.0	1.3	2.4	66
	Slovakia	66	59	5.4	1.3	8.5	31
Southeast	Romania	39	59	21.6	1.3	6.7	12
	Bulgaria	38	59	7.7	1.3	6.1	23
Candidates	Croatia	52	56	4.4	1.4	4.8	44
	Macedonia	27		2.0	1.5	4.3	
	Turkey	29	46	73.4	2.5	4.9	70
EFTA	Switzerland	130	78	7.5	1.4	2.1	26
	Norway	178	75	4.7	1.9	3.2	0
	Iceland	131	84	0.3	2.0	1.0	37

 two lowest EU 27 values
 two highest EU 27 values

Source: Eurostat

Exhibit 2 Geopolitical map of Europe



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