

Practice
Solidarity
&
Shape
Europe

2017-2019

Dictionary of European values



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union



Introduction

Welcome to our Dictionary of European values. We have tried to collect the most important expressions, initiatives and programmes of the European Union to give you an idea what Europe means in practice. We hope our publication will assist you to better understand how the EU is present in and influence our daily life.

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1 CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

The aim of an ECI is to invite the Commission to put forward a proposal in any field in which it has the power to propose legislation. In order to increase citizens' involvement in the democratic life of the EU, Article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty establishes a citizens' initiative right. Article 24 outlines the general principles for an EU regulation setting down practical conditions and procedures of European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). An ECI requires the backing of at least one million citizens coming from at least 7 EU countries. The minimum number of signatories for each EU country is stipulated in the regulation. To launch an ECI, citizens must form a 'citizens' committee'. This must comprise at least 7 EU citizens who are resident in at least 7 of the 28 EU countries.

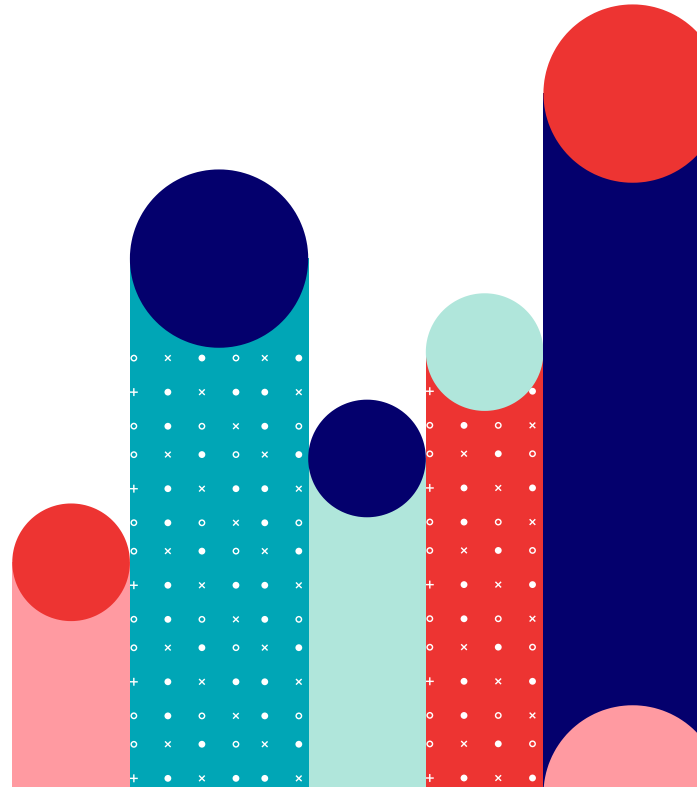
2 CONSULTATION PROCEDURE

Under Article 289 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), consultation is a special legislative procedure, as a form of exception to the ordinary legislative procedure in Article 294. It requires the Council to take into account the European Parliament's opinion and, where indicated in the Treaties, those of the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Central Bank. >>>

However, the Council is not actually bound by the Parliament's position but only by the obligation to consult it. The absence of such consultation makes the act illegal and capable of annulment by the Court of Justice. Furthermore, when the Council intends to substantially amend the proposal, it is required to consult Parliament again. This procedure is applicable in a limited number of policy areas, such as internal market exemptions and competition law, as well as financial matters and aspects of intellectual property and administrative issues. It is also used for the adoption of instruments such as recommendations and opinions issued by the Council and the Commission.

3 CONSUMER PROTECTION

EU consumer policy (Article 169 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU - TFEU) seeks to promote consumers' health, safety and economic interests, as well as their right to information, to education and to organise themselves in order to protect their interests. Article 12 of the TFEU also requires consumer protection to be taken into account when defining other EU policies. Consumer policy is a shared responsibility between the European Union and EU countries. Under Article 114 of the TFEU, decisions on measures to approximate EU countries' consumer legislation are decided using the ordinary legislative procedure and after consultation of the European Economic and Social Committee.



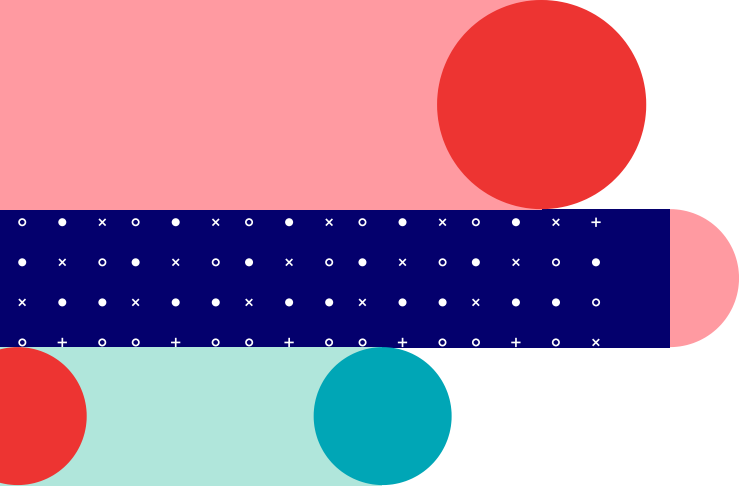


4 CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Cross-border cooperation is the collaboration between neighbouring areas across borders. In the EU this is one of the forms of territorial cooperation (in addition to transnational and interregional cooperation). The European model is very diverse with cooperation between border regions or municipalities, or through specific cooperation structures. These structures are usually composed by public authorities (municipalities, districts, counties, regions) from different countries organised in working communities, euroregions or EGTCs (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation). European Territorial Cooperation, also commonly known as Interreg, is a key instrument from the European Cohesion policy which aims to reducing disparities between regions of the EU.

5 CULTURE

According to the Lisbon Treaty "the EU shall bring the common cultural heritage to the fore by encouraging cooperation between EU countries while respecting their national and regional diversity". The Creative Europe (2014-2020) programme has been launched to support European cinema and the cultural and creative sectors. It should allow artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals in the performing arts, fine arts, publishing, film, TV, music, interdisciplinary arts, heritage and video games industries to contribute to jobs and growth.



7 DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCES

The Treaty of Lisbon clarifies the division of competences between the EU and its member countries. Alongside the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, sits the principle of conferral (Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union - TEU). This principle means that the EU can only act within the limits of the competences that have been conferred upon it by the EU treaties.

In certain areas the EU have exclusive competences, which means that only the EU can act in these areas e.g. customs union & trade policy; in case of shared competences between the EU and the Member States, they can act only if the EU has chosen not to, e.g. cohesion policy, energy & environment. EU countries may ask the Commission to repeal an adopted legislative act in one of the shared areas so as to better ensure compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

6 DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

'Democratic deficit' is a term used by people who argue that the EU institutions and their decision-making procedures suffer from a lack of democracy and seem inaccessible to the ordinary citizen due to their complexity. The real EU democratic deficit seems to be the absence of European politics. EU voters do not feel that they have an effective way to reject a 'government', they do not like, and to change, in some ways, the course of politics and policy.

The current form of European governance is such that there is no 'government'. The public are still generally pro-European, but they do not understand the political system that sometimes appears to threaten their way of life. Disaffection with Europe has been expressed in the low turnouts at European elections, which reached an all-time low in 2009 with an EU average of just 43%.

The Lisbon Treaty, has strengthened the European Parliament's financial, legislative and supervisory powers. The EP has acquired considerable influence in the appointment of the Commission and its President. In addition, the European Citizens' Initiative was created and the importance of dialogue between civil society and the European institutions was recognised. Lastly, certain (but unfortunately not all) Council sessions have been made public to improve citizens' information.





8 EDUCATION

Each EU country is responsible for the organisation of its education and training systems and the content of teaching programmes. In accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the EU contributes to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between EU countries and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action.

The Europe 2020 strategy highlights the important role to be played by education and training in achieving its targets. The EU thus plays a key role in supporting and supplementing efforts to improve and modernise EU countries' education and training systems. The objectives, instruments and arrangements for joint work at EU level are outlined in the strategic framework known as Education and Training (ET) 2020.

This policy aspect is complemented by the ERASMUS+ programme (2014-2020) which allows students, trainees and staff to spend time abroad to increase their skills and employability; and educational institutions to work together across borders to innovate in and improve the quality of education.

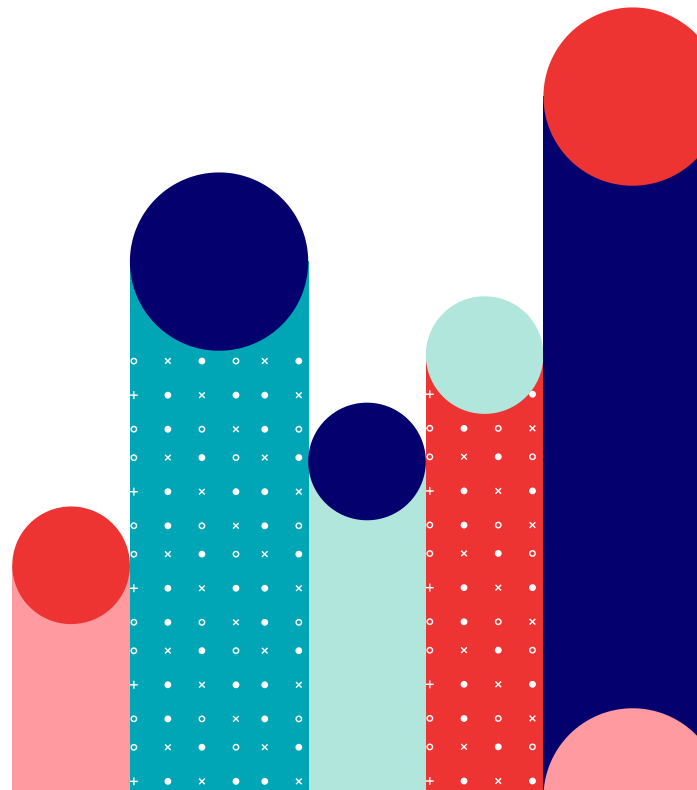
9 ERASMUS+

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, and gain experience abroad.

Set to last until 2020, Erasmus+ doesn't just have opportunities for students. Merging seven prior programmes, it has opportunities for a wide variety of individuals and organisations.

Erasmus+ is open to many individuals and organisations, although eligibility varies from one action to another and from one country to another. Individuals can take part in many of the opportunities funded by Erasmus+, although most will have to do so through an organisation taking part in the programme. The eligibility of individuals and organisations depends on the country in which they are based.

Eligible countries are divided into two groups, Programme countries and Partners countries. Although Programme countries are eligible for all actions of Erasmus+, Partner countries can only take part in some, and are subject to specific conditions.



10 EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

The principle of equality between men and women was established in the Treaty of Rome 1957, with regard to equal pay. Since then, a series of EU laws (directives) broadened the principle of equality to cover working conditions, social security, access to goods and services, maternity protection and parental leave. The principle of equality as a common value of the EU was established in the Lisbon Treaty.

The Commission adopted the Strategy for Equality between men and women 2010-2015, building on the Roadmap 2006-2010, and outlining the key actions planned, including the promotion of:

- equal economic independence for women and men;
- equal pay for work of equal value;
- equality in decision-making;
- dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence;
- promoting gender equality beyond the EU;
- horizontal issues (gender roles, including the role of men,
- legislation and governance tools).



11 EU CITIZENSHIP

European citizenship was first defined in The Lisbon Treaty. Any national of an EU country is considered to be a citizen of the EU. EU citizenship does not replace national citizenship: it is an addition to it. Citizenship gives them the right to:

- move and take up residence anywhere in the EU;
- vote and stand in local government and European Parliament elections in their country of residence;
- diplomatic and consular protection outside the EU from the authorities of any EU country if their country of nationality is not represented;
- petition the European Parliament and appeal to the European Ombudsman;
- address the European institutions in any of its official languages and to receive a reply in the same language;

- non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, gender, race, religion, handicap, age or sexual orientation;
- invite the Commission to submit a legislative proposal (citizens' initiative);
- access EU institutions' and bodies' documents, subject to certain conditions (Article 15 of the TFEU).

12 EUROPE 'À LA CARTE'

This refers to the idea of a non-uniform method of European integration which allows EU countries to select policies, as if from a menu, and involve themselves fully in those policies.

The EU would still have a minimum number of common objectives. However, different countries would integrate at different levels (variable geometry) or at different speeds (multi-speed). Europe 'à la carte' is already a reality with some countries being part of the eurozone and others not.



13 EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (ECHR)

Signed in 1950 by the Council of Europe, the ECHR is an international treaty to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. All 47 countries forming the Council of Europe (which is not an EU institutions) are party to the Convention, 28 of which are members of the EU.

The Convention established the European Court of Human Rights, intended to protect individuals from human rights violations. Any person whose rights have been violated under the Convention by a state party may take a case to the Court. This was an innovative feature, as it gave individuals rights in an international arena. Judgments finding violations are binding on the countries concerned. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe monitors the execution of judgements.

The Convention has several protocols, which amend its framework. The Treaty of Lisbon, in force since 1 December 2009, permits the EU to accede to the ECHR and a draft agreement for accession was finalised in 2013.

14 HUMAN RIGHTS

The term 'fundamental rights' is used in a constitutional context in the European Union to express the concept of 'human rights' which is the term used in international law.

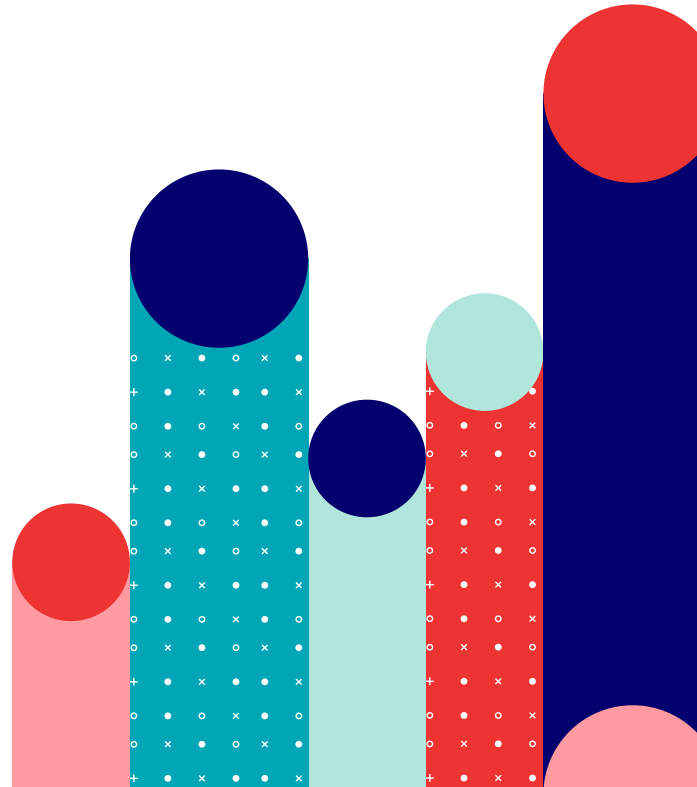
Respect for human rights and dignity is one of the EU's core values. Together with the principles of freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law, it guides EU action both within and beyond its borders.

Action in this field mainly focuses on:

- fighting discrimination, racism and xenophobia;
- protecting vulnerable groups, such as children, women and minorities.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights brings together in a single document the fundamental rights protected in the EU. It applies to the EU institutions, subject to the principle of subsidiarity, and cannot extend the powers and tasks conferred upon them by the treaties. It also applies to EU countries when they implement EU law.

Based on the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights, and originally proclaimed in 2000, the Charter became legally binding on the EU with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009.



15 FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD

The fight against fraud and corruption is based on Article 325 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), requiring the Council and the European Parliament to adopt the necessary measures in the fight against fraud affecting the financial interests of the EU.

The European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF), created in 1999, is charged with fighting fraud affecting the EU budget, as well as corruption and misconduct within the EU institutions. In 2013, the Commission introduced a proposal to establish a European Public Prosecutor's Office, under Article 86 TFEU, to investigate and prosecute crimes affecting the EU budget. The problem is that it is not compulsory to join the EPPO, so Member States can decide not to take part in this initiative.

16 FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

Article 10 of the Lisbon Treaty requires the EU, in the definition and implementation of its policies, to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. EU measures in the field of racism and xenophobia include

- the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia that addresses, by means of criminal law, public incitement to racial violence or hatred as well as racist motivation;
- the Race Equality Directive that prohibits discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin;
- the Employment Equality Directive that prohibits discrimination in employment, for example, on the grounds of religion;
- Legislation prohibiting discrimination at border controls;
- Audiovisual Media Services law that bans incitement to hatred in audiovisual media services and the promotion of discrimination in advertising.



17 FOOD SAFETY

EU food safety policy was reformed in the early 2000s following several human food and animal feed crises, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

The EU seeks to ensure:

- food and animal feed are safe and nutritious;
- there are high standards of animal health and welfare, as well as of plant protection (e.g. safe use of pesticides);
- information is clear about the content (e.g. additives or preservatives), origin (traceability) and use of food (e.g. special diets).

EU law covers the entire food chain - 'from farm to fork' - using an integrated approach. This addresses aspects ranging from labelling through packaging to hygiene. Decisions in the field are based on independent, sound scientific advice given by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The Food and Veterinary Office conducts on-the-spot inspections both in and outside the EU.

18 FOUR FREEDOMS

The 'four freedoms' of the European Union are the freedom of movement of goods, people, services and capital over borders.

These key principles lie at the heart of the EU and underpin the single market, originally known as the common market. The freedoms, which are enshrined in EU treaties, aim to remove trade barriers and harmonise national rules at a EU level.

The four fundamental freedoms have been legally guaranteed since 1986: They state that goods, services, capital and persons can move without restriction within the EU. Four out of five EU citizens believe that these four freedoms sit alongside peace on the continent as the greatest European achievement ever. These freedoms are cornerstones of the European Single Market. They strengthen trade within the EU.

Two-thirds of all goods produced in the EU are exported to another EU country. Since the EU is the world's largest single market, this free exchange generates positive welfare effects. Studies show that the EU's gross domestic product (GDP) has grown by several percentage points thanks to the Single Market. Brexit has reignited the discussion surrounding the free movement of people.

19 MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF), of which the latest runs for the period 2014-2020, sets out the annual amounts that can be spent on various policy areas. So to simply put it, this is the EU's budget.

The MFF ensures that EU spending remains both predictable and stays within agreed limits. It allows the EU to plan over the medium term rather than from year to year, resulting in more effective policies. This is as important for the EU as for the beneficiaries of its spending.

The MFF is both an expression of the EU's political priorities and a budgetary planning tool. The EU's annual budget must respect the ceilings agreed in the MFF.

The MFF is proposed by the European Commission and then discussed in the Council, as well as in the European Parliament (EP). To be adopted, the EP's consent and unanimity in the Council are required.

The MFF is accompanied by an agreement between the EU institutions to implement budgetary discipline and to cooperate on budgetary matters.



20 OMBUDSMAN

The position of Ombudsman was established by the Maastricht Treaty (1992) to ensure the sound administration and transparency of EU institutions.

The Ombudsman is completely independent and impartial in the performance of its duties. The main objective is to support the EU institutions in becoming more effective, transparent and accountable. The Ombudsman can open an investigation on its own initiative or following a complaint, if an institution or body of the European Union fails to respect:

- fundamental rights,
- legal rules or principles,
- the principles of good administration.

Any EU citizen, resident or enterprise or association in an EU country, can lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman about maladministration. Complaints may relate to access to information, administrative delay, unfairness or discrimination, lack of transparency.

The Ombudsman cannot investigate:

- complaints against national, regional, or local authorities in EU countries, even when the complaints are related to EU matters;
- the activities of national courts or ombudsmen;
- complaints against businesses or private individuals.

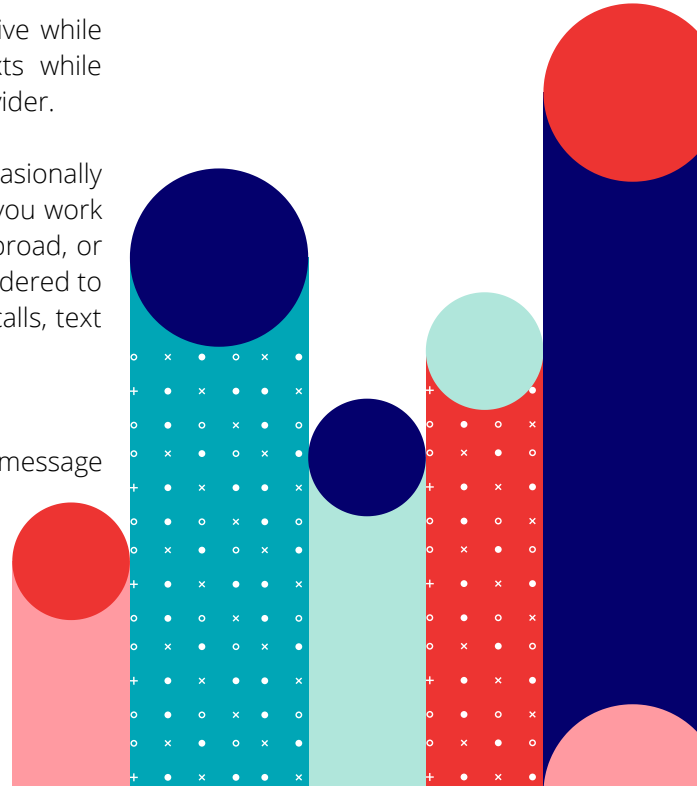
21 ROAMING: USING A MOBILE PHONE IN THE EU

When you travel outside your home country to another EU country, you don't have to pay any additional charges to use your mobile phone. This is known as "roaming" or "roam like at home". Your calls (to mobile and fixed phones), text messages (SMS) and data services are charged at domestic rates, i.e. the same price as calls, texts and data within your home country.

The same rule also applies to any calls or text messages you receive while you're abroad - you aren't charged extra to receive calls or texts while roaming, even if the person calling you is using a different service provider.

Roaming is when you use your mobile phone while occasionally travelling outside the country where you live or have stable links i.e. you work or study there. So, as long as you spend more time at home than abroad, or you use your mobile phone more at home than abroad, you are considered to be roaming. You will therefore be charged domestic prices for your calls, text and data use in the EU. This is considered a "fair use of roaming services".

Whenever you cross a border within the EU, you should get a text message from your mobile operator informing you that you are roaming, and reminding you of its fair use policy.





22 RULE OF LAW

According to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, the rule of law is one of the EU's fundamental values. It is the idea that both the EU itself and all EU countries are governed by a body of law (legal codes and processes) adopted by established procedures rather than discretionary or case-by-case decisions.

Along with having a functional democracy and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, the rule of law is one of the political criteria that countries wishing to join the EU have to meet. Having concluded that a tool was required at EU level to deal with systemic threats to the rule of law in EU countries, the European Commission adopted a 'rule of law framework' in 2014. Where EU law has been breached, the procedure under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union would come into play. At its most severe, an EU country's voting rights could be suspended in the event that its breach of EU values is 'serious and persistent'.

23 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development policy is the second pillar of the EU's common agricultural policy. It seeks to help the EU's rural areas address the economic, environmental and social challenges that they face. It has three long-term objectives:

- to foster competitive farming;
- to manage natural resources sustainably and implement climate action measures;
- to achieve balanced territorial development in rural areas, including creating and maintaining jobs.

Most EU funding available for rural development is available from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which runs for the 2014-20 period and has a budget of €95 billion.

The policy is implemented by means of 7-year rural development programmes drawn up in partnership with the EU.



24 SCHENGEN

By the Schengen Agreement signed on 14 June 1985, Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands agreed to gradually remove controls at their internal borders and to introduce freedom of movement for all nationals of the signatory countries, other EU countries and some non-EU countries. The Schengen Convention supplements the agreement and lays down the arrangements and safeguards for establishing an area without internal border control. It was signed by the same five countries on 19 June 1990, and entered into force in 1995. The agreement and the convention, as well as the related agreements and rules, together form the 'Schengen acquis', which was integrated in the framework of the EU in 1999 and has become EU legislation.

Twenty-two out of 28 EU countries form the Schengen area. Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania will join the area in time. Ireland and the United Kingdom have opt-outs and maintain their border controls and the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is one of the biggest challenges to be solved during the Brexit negotiations. Four further countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, also participate in the Schengen area.

EU accession candidate countries must accept the whole of the Schengen acquis at the time of their accession. However, border control at internal borders is only lifted (by unanimous Council decision) after an evaluation by Commission and EU country experts has been carried out to ensure that all accompanying measures allowing for the lifting of internal border control are in place.



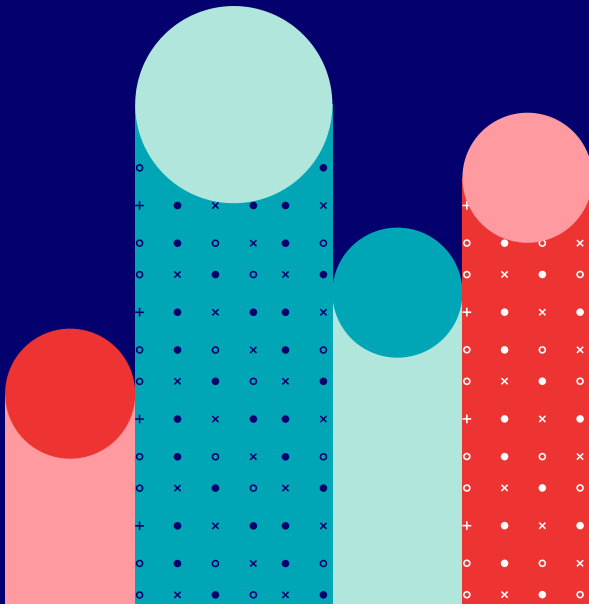
25 SUBSIDIARITY

The principle of subsidiarity is defined in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union. It aims to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made to verify that action at EU level is justified in light of the possibilities available at national, regional or local level.

Specifically, it is the principle whereby the EU does not take action (except in the areas that fall within its exclusive competence), unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level. It is closely bound up with the principle of proportionality, which requires that any action by the EU should not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.

26 TAX HARMONISATION

Who loves to pay taxes? The specific provisions regarding taxation aim to ensure that individuals and businesses do not have to face obstacles relating to cross-border economic activity. The European Commission does not consider that cross-the-board harmonisation of EU countries' tax systems is necessary to the extent that the establishment and functioning of the internal market is not hampered; countries should be able to choose what they consider to be the most appropriate system for themselves. According to the principle of subsidiarity, there should only be action at EU level where action at individual country level does not yield an effective solution, but can be better achieved at EU level. EU harmonisation efforts predominantly focus on legislation on taxes levied on goods and services (indirect taxes, such as value-added tax (VAT), excise duties levied on energy products, electricity, alcohol and manufactured tobacco) rather than taxes on incomes or profits (direct taxes).





27 TRANSPARENCY (ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS)

The institutions of the European Union have the responsibility of conducting their work as transparently as possible. Article 15(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union gives EU citizens, as well as any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in an EU country, the right of access to documents of the institutions.

However, there are two types of exceptions:

- absolute exceptions, covering cases where access is automatically refused (for reasons of public security, defence, international relations, economic, monetary or financial policy, or privacy);
- relative exceptions, covering cases where access is refused (for example, to protect the commercial interests of a firm or a private individual, legal advice, the decision-making process or ongoing investigations), except where there is an overriding public interest in disclosure.

Access to documents is facilitated by means of an electronic public register of documents. In their 2003 'Interinstitutional agreement on better law-Making', the EU institutions agreed to improve transparency and the accessibility of information to the public.

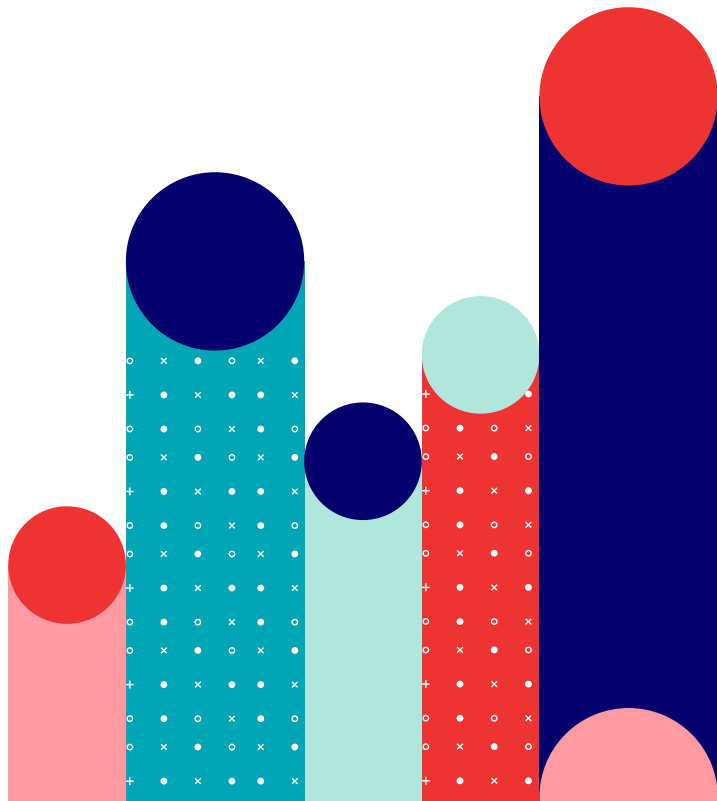
28 VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a great way of contributing to local communities at home or abroad, while developing new skills and making friends.

The European Voluntary Service offers opportunities to volunteer in another country in Europe or elsewhere in the world. EVS is open to all young people aged 18-30. Activities are unpaid, but all costs are covered.

You can spend between 2 and 12 months abroad as a volunteer, meet new friends, practice a foreign language.

A new complementary EU initiative in the area of volunteering is the European Solidarity Corps.



Practice Solidarity & Shape Europe

2017-2019

PROJECT PARTNERS

HU European House - project coordinator

AT Interessenvertretung Gemeinnütziger Organisationen

CZ Agora CE

DE Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement

DK Nyt Europe

FR Maison de l'Europe de Paris

IT European Movement Italy

RO Asociatia Pro Democratia

RS Local Democracy Agency Subotica

SK Slovak Foreign Policy Association



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