



Otázka: Over the map of the EU

Jazyk: Angličtina

Přidal(a): Natálie Řehová

Basic info

The European union is a group of 28-member states from all over the Europe. The aim/goal of the EU is to create a political and economic community across the Europe. The idea of creating united Europe appeared after WWII in order to make the peace. The idea first came up in a speech by the French foreign minister Robert Schuman on 9th of May in 1950. Every year, this day is celebrated as the Day of Europe.

The original six-member states included: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands

In the beginning, cooperation among the EU member states would be restricted mainly to trade and economy, but currently the EU deals with a number of issues directly linked to our everyday lives such as human rights, freedom, security and law, job opportunities etc. It controls regional development, environmental protection and globalisation.

The symbols of the EU

There are two official symbols of the EU:

- The anthem of the EU
 - Ode to Joy is used since 1972. Written by Beethoven
- The flag of the EU



- There is a circle of twelve golden stars on a blue background on the European flag. The number 12 is symbolic and it expresses perfection and unity

The member states of the EU

- In 1973 Denmark, Ireland and United Kingdom joined the EU.
- In 1981 Greece joined the EU.
- In 1986 Spain and Portugal joined the EU.
- In 1995 Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the EU.
- In 2004 the greatest enlargement came, with 10 new countries joining the EU: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Cyprus.
- In 2007 Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU.

While some people think that the EU is a nightmare, it works with and assists member countries in many ways. A significant portion of their of their budget is dedicated to promoting/supporting agriculture in member countries and protecting the environment. The EU also promotes growth and development in less wealthy member states, as well as providing funds for transportation and infrastructure, energy development and scientific research.

The Schengen Agreement

The Schengen Agreement was adopted in 1985 between five nations and later expanded to include most continental European nations. There are no border controls within the Schengen Agreement area, so EU citizens can travel from country to another without passport. There are a few exceptions but in general, you can buy anything anywhere and bring it back to your country. Not all EU members are part of the Schengen Agreement (e.g. the UK and Ireland did not sign it) and not all Schengen States are in the EU (e.g. Switzerland and Norway).

Euro - single currency for Europe

Euro is the name given to the European currency used since 1st January 2002. the symbol of the



euro is „€“. The Euro took the place of the former national currencies in 12 EU member states:

- Belgium
- Finland
- France
- Ireland
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Austria
- Greece
- Spain

Having single currency makes travelling easier, allows the comparison between prices, gives a stable environment for European trade and business, and stimulates economic growth and competitiveness.

Coins and bank notes

On the front side of bank notes there are designs for each of them have a common theme of European architecture in various artistic eras. The obverse of the banknote features windows or gateways while the reverse bears different types of bridges. The architectural examples are stylised illustrations, not representations of existing monuments.

All coins have a common reverse side showing how much the coin is worth, with a design by Belgian designer Luc Luycx. The design of the 1c, 2c and 5c coins shows Europe's place in the world as a whole. The 10c coins and above show either the 15 countries that were the European Union in 2002, or, if minted after 2007, the whole European continent. Coins from Italy, San Marino, the Vatican, Austria and Portugal show the new design if minted 2008 or later. The obverse side varies from state to state, with each member allowed to choose its own design. Each of the eight coins can have the same design (such as Irish coins), or can vary from coin to coin (such as Italian coins). In monarchies, the national side usually features a portrait of the country's monarch, often in a design carried over from the former currency (e.g. Belgian



coins). Republics tend to feature national monuments, symbols, or stylised designs (such as French coins).

Institutions of the European Union

- The European Parliament
 - Has legislative and monitoring powers, elected by member states
 - Make laws, pass laws
- The Council of the European Union
 - Represents the government of the member states
 - Defines the political directions and priorities
- The European Commission
 - Dynamic organ with executive powers
 - Proposes laws, protects interests of the EU, supervises how the money is spent
- The European Court of Justice
 - Coordinates application of the laws in all member states
- The Court of Auditors
 - Controls investments and monitors correct and lawful application of the EU budget

Important organs of the EU

- The European Economic and Social Committee
 - Voices the opinions of organized society on economic and social issues
- The Committee of Regions
 - Voices the opinions of regional and local organs
- The European Central Bank
 - Responsible for currency issues and the euro
- The European Investment Bank
 - Helps meeting EU objectives by funding investment projects



Leader of the EU

Since its beginning, the EU has had a rotating presidency in which member countries take turns being in charge for six months at a time. However, this position/role/function is mostly symbolic. The European Council consists of heads of state from all member countries, and they propose issues to be addressed/talked about at future meetings. The European Commission acts as the „executive branch” of the government and works directly with the two legislative houses: The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. These two houses actually make and vote on laws, similar to Parliaments in other countries. José Manuel Durão Barroso from Portugal is the current President of the European Commission.

Centre of a capital of the EU?

Brussels, located in Belgium, is the unofficial capital of the European Union. It is considered to be the administrative capital. It is where the European Commission, Council of the European Union and the European Council sit.

Strasbourg, located in France, is the official seat of the European Parliament.

Luxembourg is the seat of the European Court of Justice, the European Commission and the European Investment Banks as well as other European institutions. It is viewed as the judicial and financial capital of the EU.

The European Central Bank is located in Frankfurt in Germany.

Other important cities in the EU

London in the UK is the largest city by population in the European Union. Over 12 million people live in the UK's capital and it is well-known for being a very cosmopolitan city with over 300 different languages being spoken there. It is also a major centre for finance.

Paris is the capital of France and is the most popular city for tourists. It is famous for its culture and fashion and is home to such well known landmarks/sites as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre art gallery.

Berlin is the capital of Germany and is known for its culture/arts/film festival and nightlife. You can visit the famous Brandenburg Gate and Berlin Wall, which was once a symbol of the Cold War.

The European Capital of Culture

= title given to a city for a year. It is a chance for the chosen city to get some money from the EU to promote cultural events. The city uses this money for regeneration/to promote arts events/to attract tourists/to create awareness of the city throughout the EU. In 2013 two cities are holding the title: Marseille in France and Košice in Slovakia.

Freedom, education, enlargement towards stronger Europe

As an EU citizen you may travel, study and work in any of the 28 EU member states. The Union is constantly expanding the freedom of movement as a basic right of its citizens and takes measures against any discrimination based on nationality. In most EU countries travelling is possible without passports and border controls. There are a few exceptions but in general, you can buy anything anywhere and bring it back to your country.

The EU does not decide what schools have to teach but wants to make sure that education and qualifications are accepted in all EU countries. Everyone must have access to education both in their country and abroad, and this is achieved through partnership and exchange programmes and by abolishing red tape. For example, more than a million young people have joined ERASMUS programmes so far in order to develop personally and professionally.

Until 2004, the EU had 15-member states with a population of 380 million. In May 2004, another 10 countries from Central and Eastern Europe joined the EU. Bulgaria and Romania joined in January 2007, which increased the population to about 500 million. Turkey is another candidate country that may join the EU once it has met a membership condition.

In order to be accepted as an EU member, the candidate country must be a stable democracy guaranteeing law and order, human rights and minority protection. Its market economy must



work well and its administration must be able to implement EU rules.