

### 3. Why Study the EU?

#### a) Applicability to students in British Columbia.



Your students might ask, “what does the European Union have to do with me?” Although the European Union seems far away, it will be increasingly relevant for young British Columbians in the coming years, and there is a good chance that it was already significant for them. Perhaps issues that are important to young people in the EU are also important for young people in B.C. too (such as economic and employment issues, immigration, the environment and climate change, or populist politics)? Perhaps they have relatives who come from or live in the EU? Perhaps they want to attend university or complete a semester abroad in the EU? Perhaps the things they consume on a daily basis comes from an EU country?

Ways to compare Canada and the EU:

- Comparing Canadian and European Union political institutions to illustrate that the EU is neither a federal system or an international organization; rather, it is ‘sui generis’
- Comparing the Canadian (or BC) Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Comparing trade relations. The EU is Canada’s second largest trading partner in the world. Canada and the EU had had official bilateral trade agreements since 1976.
- Comparing foreign policy. Both Canada and the EU favour multilateral solutions to international problems.

## b) Travel and business opportunities



- What is the one thing that people regret about their university years? Many alumni will say they wish they had taken the opportunity to travel or study abroad.
- Traveling is a great way to sample different cultures and experience how the rest of the world lives. Travelling is important for personal development, building new relationships, and employers and graduate schools recognize the value and importance of international experience, and it is certainly a desirable quality in potential candidates.
- As the smallest of all the continents and with 28 countries located within the European Union alone, Europe offers a variety of travel experiences from both long and short visits. A trip to Europe can provide experiences to last a lifetime. Given the variety of historical reference points, architecture, landscapes, and climates, it is no exaggeration to state that nearly anyone could find something to enjoy. There is plenty to see and do for all types of travellers, and exploring Europe has been made that much easier thanks to the European Union.



- Helpful travelling information
  - [Europa-Traveling in Europe](#)
  - [Lonely Planet](#)
- Working and studying in the EU
  - [EUROPA-European Youth Portal](#)
  - [University of Victoria resource center on exchange programs](#)
  - [EU Study tour information](#)
- Travel information (What documents you need to travel around Europe? How can you obtain a work/study visa?)
  - [Passport Canada](#)
  - [Canadian Consular Affairs](#)

## Market economics and power of EU internationally



- The single market is the EU's greatest achievement. It is an area without internal borders in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is, guaranteed. The creation of the internal market encouraged EU member states to liberalize their markets.
- The euro is the single currency shared by 19 of the EU's member states, which together make up the euro area. The introduction of the euro in 1999 was a major step in European integration. The euro coins have a common side and a national side. The national side indicates the issuing country.
- The EU is a major world trading power. EU economic policy seeks to sustain growth by investing in energy, transport and research- while minimizing the impact of further economic development on the environment.
- European businesses selling in the EU have unrestricted access to nearly 500 million consumers. The single market is also attractive to foreign investors.
- Europe has become deeply integrated into global markets. Europe is the world's largest exporter of manufactured goods and services.
- The EU is the most open market to developing countries in the world.
- The EU's action on the international scene is guided by principles of human rights and democracy.
- The EU will continue to enhance its trade and political relations with other countries and regions of the world, including by holding regular summits with its strategic partners such as Canada, Russia, United States, Japan, India, and China. The United States is the EU's main trading partner.

## c) Multiculturalism and diversity

### a) Multiculturalism and diversity



- “United in diversity”, the motto of the EU, first came into use in 2000.
- Being composed of so many different nations, Europe has a rich and varied culture that has developed over thousands of years.
- The EU works to preserve Europe’s shared cultural heritage and help make it accessible to all. It also supports and promotes the arts and creative industries in Europe.
- Since 1985, the EU has chosen at least one “European Capital of Culture” every year in order to showcase that city’s cultural life. This enables them to celebrate their European identity, and step up cooperation with arts organizations at home and abroad.
- There are 23 official EU languages (Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, and Swedish are national or administrative languages in more than one member state).
- The EU has made multilingualism an official policy. Making its institutions accessible to all the EU’s citizens is designed to increase the transparency and legitimacy of the EU.
- As enlargement continues in the EU, we can expect the number of official languages to grow as well.
- The Treaty of Lisbon places great importance on culture.
- The issues of migration, integration of immigrants and xenophobia have developed into ongoing debates with EU member states. For some EU countries these phenomena are familiar, while for the formerly communist member states have only recently had to deal with these issues. The varying backgrounds and traditions of each state mean that the ways the countries approach these issues differ.

## d) Globalization



- Part of the EU's foreign affairs is to ensure that the EU has a recognizable face around the world. The EU strives to be an international player. The EU sends a commission to countries around the world to foster relations between the EU and non-EU countries.
- The range of the EU's activities around the world is immense. Some of these activities include trade agreements, as well as political cooperation agreements to promote democracy, development and human rights.
- Globalization has had both positive and negative impacts on the EU
- Positive
  - Power of attraction- the euro has become the world's second reserve currency. From a political point of view, the number of candidates for enlargement is constantly growing.
  - Economic power- world's leading economic power. It is the biggest area of democratic stability
- Negative
  - The Union's share in world trade is declining to the benefit of emerging countries especially China.
  - Energy- its economy is dependent on oil and gas supply from Russia, the Middle East and Africa.

### e) Decision-making exercises



- EU's overall decision-making process is based on compromise.
- The EU's standard decision-making procedure is known as 'codecision' or Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP). This means the European Parliament has to approve EU legislation together with the Council based on a proposal from the Commission.
- EU decision-making involves 3 main institutions:
  - The European Commission which represents the interests of the EU as a whole,
  - The Council of the European Union which represents the individual member countries,

The European Parliament which represents EU citizens and is directly elected by them.