THE IEUSS GUIDE TO THE SUNY MODEL EUROPEAN UNION

21st Edition (SUNYMEU 2027)

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Questions about using this manual in educational activities? Please contact Laurie Buonanno, IEUSS Director (buonanl@buffalostate.edu).

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Table 1 List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean, Pacific
AFSJ	Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (see JHA)
AU	African Union
BREXIT	UK withdrawal from the EU
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CoR	Committee of the Regions
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DG	Directorate General
EAA	European Agency for Asylum
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EBCGA	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
EC	European Community
ECB	European Central Bank
ECJ	European Court of Justice
Ecofin	Council of Economic and Finance Ministers
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy (now CSDP)
ESF	European Social Fund
ETS	Emissions Trading System
Europol	European Police Office
Frontex	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (replaced in 2016 by EBCGA) – referred to as Frontex-EBCGA
FTT	Financial Transaction Tax
GNI	Gross National Income
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
MERCOSUR	Trade Association of six South American countries
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTB	Non-tariff barrier
OECD	Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development

OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SCOTUS	Supreme Court of the United States
SEA	Single European Act
SEM	Single European Market
SGP	Stability and Growth Pact
TEFU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TEC	Treaty establishing the European Community
TEU	Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAT	Value-added tax
WTO	World Trade Organization

SUNY and the Model European Union

The SUNY Model European Union (SUNYMEU) is a program activity of the Institute for European Union Studies at SUNY (IEUSS), the SUNY Office of Global Affairs, and Buffalo State University (BSU). BSU hosts the IEUSS office and its website.

The IEUSS sponsors research, teaching, and service through collaborations with institutions of higher education, K-12, nonprofits, and businesses. The IEUSS co-sponsors the SUNY Model European Union (SUNYMEU) with a SUNY campus and SUNY's Office of Global Affairs. The Institute also publishes this SUNYMEU training manual.

As a SUNY academic institution, IEUSS is guided by SUNY's mission of providing the highest quality affordable programs with the broadest possible access to the people of New York State. The IEUSS is governed by a board of SUNY faculty and administrators (with representation of EU scholars from European universities). The IEUSS Board Chair and its Director report the Institute's annual activities to the SUNY Office of Global Affairs and academic administration at partner SUNY campuses. The IEUSS also invites practitioners and academics with expertise in the European Union to serves as IEUSS fellows.

SUNYMEU is held in either March or April and is hosted by a SUNY campus. The IEUSS Board of Directors selects the SUNY campus through a Call for Proposals process.

Saturday SUNYMEU 2027 will be hosted by SUNY Buffalo State University, April 2-4.

The SUNYMEU homepage contains information about SUNYMEU and links to upcoming SUNYMEUs.

Testimonials about SUNYMEU

SUNYMEU 2027 webpage

Q & A about SUNYMEU



About the SUNY Model European Union

The SUNY Model European Union was founded in 1987 by the State University of New York (SUNY) as an adaptation of the popular Model United Nations (MUN), but differs in its conception, organization, roles, and outcomes. The MUN is, by and large, a simulation for students of diplomacy and foreign affairs, while the Model EU (MEU) simulates policymaking at the ministerial and head of government levels in the European Union. While the UN is an international organization, most scholars regard the EU as being more than this, though the terms they use to describe it vary. Some, for example, view it as a rather special type of international organization (IO). Some emphasize that it has state-like properties. And some suggest it is a quasi-federal system. Thus, the MEU offers students the opportunities to hone their skills both in diplomacy and governance.

SUNYMEU simulates a summit of the European Council. The summits that signal the end of an EU presidency take place each year in June and December, but with the EU facing a succession of crises in recent years "special" summits of European Councils occur much more often now. The European Council meets on average seven times per year and since March 2017 at the Europa Building in Brussels.

SUNYMEU is student-run and student-directed, with SUNYMEU faculty directors providing continuity, expertise in the EU, and fundraising (mainly grant writing) to support SUNYMEU. SUNYMEU student interns (playing the General Secretariat of the Council), and the (intercollegiate) SUNYMEU Student Leadership Team oversee the pre-simulation proposal phase and run the simulation itself. Unique among MEU programs, students are not required to have a faculty adviser or have a minimum number of students from a campus to participate because the IEUSS provides background on the EU through this manual, its resources pages, and videoconferencing.

Using this Manual

This is the 21st edition of the SUNYMEU Manual. European Union scholars, SUNYMEU faculty, and program coordinators have written this manual to assist students and faculty advisors to prepare for SUNYMEU 2026, which is a simulation of the **June 2027** European Council summit ending the Lithuanian Presidency. British spelling is used throughout this manual to conform with European Union English language usage.

We encourage participants to download and utilize this e-copy, which contains a dynamic (clickable) table of contents, embedded links to tables and figures, and many hyperlinks to internet sources.

SUNYMEU 2027 will be chaired by the European Council President, working in close cooperation with the **Lithuanian Presidency** of the Council (formerly called the "Council of Ministers"), which is in place from 1 January – 30 June 2027.

The "output" of the simulation will take the form of "**Conclusions of the European Council**," which will consist of a document of approximately 10-15 pages. These Conclusions will be posted to the SUNYMEU website to enable all participants to download and print for inclusion in their dossiers.

This manual is divided into five parts.

Parts I is written by EU scholars who have served as SUNYMEU faculty advisers and program directors. This part covers aspects of the European Union's history, institutions, and treaties that are relevant to the conduct of SUNYMEU.

Part II of each edition includes a section written by professors who teach courses in the EU as an information/research guide for students to learn about the current priorities of the EU, the trio programme of the Council Presidency, and the Council Presidency programme. There is also a link to a resource guide compiled by the IEUSS.

Part III, written by SUNYMEU student and faculty directors, contains information on the purpose, guidelines, and alter egos (roles) for SUNYMEU. Participants may find the step-by-step guide helpful for writing proposals for consideration on SUNYMEU's agenda. This section contains information as to the composition, purpose, and responsibilities of the SUNYMEU Student Leadership Team, preparation tips, and communication details. The last section of this part focuses on the alter egos (roles) simulated in SUNYMEU.

Part IV contains a list of the awards bestowed at SUNYMEU as well as the SUNYMEU 2027 program. The final program (with building and room locations) will be posted to the SUNYMEU 2027 website in March.

Part V lays out the rules of procedures for SUNYMEU.[1]

PART I: BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

This section[2] provides an overview of the European Union and is not intended as a substitute for the many excellent general texts. The following topics are considered: Member States, Treaties, Integration Typology, Institutions, and EU Policies.

[1] This manual serves as the official document of the rules and regulations of SUNYMEU. SUNYMEU rules are agreed by the IEUSS Board of Directors, with annual input from a variety of sources: SUNYMEU faculty and student directors, faculty advisers who were on site during the simulation, the student leadership team, and the post-event survey sent to all SUNYMEU participants.

[2] The principal sources for this section are Nugent, Neill. (2017). *Government and Politics of the European Union.* 8th ed. (Bloomsbury/Red Globe Press) and Buonanno, Laurie and Nugent, Neill. (2021). *Policies and Policy Processes of the European Union* 2nd ed. (Bloomsbury/Red Globe Press).

Figure 1 Map of the EU's 27 Member States



Source: Europa.eu

EU Member States & the EU's Neighbours

The European Union was established as the European Economic Community (EEC) with the Treaty of Rome (1957). The six founding states were: Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy, and West Germany (now Germany). States that wish to be considered for EU membership must be European and satisfy the Copenhagen Criteria.[3]

[3] Applicants must: have market economies; have democracies maintaining the highest standards for civil rights and civil liberties; and be capable of applying EU laws and policies (the *acquis)*.

Table 2 contains key information on the EU's 27 Member States.

Table 2 Key Information on EU Member States

Member State (listed in order of population size)	**2024 Population (millions)**	**% of Pop**	**Real GDP per capita 2024 (€)**	**Surface Area (1000 sq.km)**	**Euro Member***	**Schengen Member**
Germany	83,456,045	18.60	43,110	357	X	X
France	68,467,362	15.26	38,110	551	X	X
Italy	58,971,230	13.14	32,880	302	X	X
Spain	48,619,695	10.84	27,800	506	X	X
Poland	36,620,970	8.16	16,470	312		X
Romania	19,067,576	4.25	13,100	238		X
Netherlands	17,942,942	4.00	50,880	42	X	X
Belgium	11,817,896	2.63	37,040	31	X	X
Greece	10,400,720	2.32	19,020	130	X	X
Czechia	10,900,555	2.43	21,920	79		X
Portugal	10,639,726	2.37	22,350	92	X	X
Sweden	10,551,707	2.35	48,270	438		X
Hungary	9,584,627	2.14	16,190	93		X
Austria	9,158,750	2.04	45,140	83	X	X
Bulgaria	6,445,481	1.44	11,330	110	X	X
Denmark	5,961,249	1.33	58,160	43		X
Finland	5,603,851	1.25	43,110	338	X	X
Slovakia	5,424,687	1.21	19,110	49	X	X
Ireland	5,351,681	1.19	88,600	70	X	
Croatia	3,861,967	0.86	17,060	57	X	X
Lithuania	2,885,891	0.64	19,690	65	X	X
Slovenia	2,123,949	0.47	25,480	20	X	X
Latvia	1,892,183	0.42	16,910	64	X	X
Estonia	1,374,687	0.31	21,060	45	X	X
Cyprus	966,365	0.22	29,870	0.9	X	
Luxembourg	672,050	0.15	101,100	0.3	X	X
Malta	563,443	0.13	34,730	0.3	X	X
EU TOTAL	449,309,618	100	28,950	4,358		

Table Source: Eurostat

*Bulgaria is the eurozone's newest member, having joined 1 January 2026.

Enlargement

Accession of new member states to the European Union (EU) is governed by Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. A state that wishes to apply for membership of the Union must satisfy two conditions:

1. it must be a European state;
2. it must respect the common values of the Member States and undertake to promote them. These are human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities (Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union).

Membership in the EU is preceded by lengthy accession negotiations. See "How Enlargement Works."

There have been several "enlargement rounds" in the European Community's/EU's history, which has resulted in states joining the EU in the following years as listed in Box 1.

Box 1 Enlargement Rounds

1973	Denmark, Ireland, the U.K. (the UK left the EU January 31, 2020)
1981	Greece
1986	Portugal and Spain
1995	Austria, Finland, and Sweden
2004	Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Estonia, Cyprus, Malta
2007	Bulgaria and Romania
2013	Croatia

Membership in the European Union is formally recognized in **accession treaties**. There are currently several countries the EU has recognized as potential EU members. (See Table 3.) Negotiations take place in intergovernmental conferences (IGCs) between Member States and the candidate country. As the EU's executive administrative body, the European Commission provides support for the process.

The *acquis* (defined in Box 2) is divided into six clusters, which are further subdivided into "chapters."[4] There are up to 35 negotiating chapters. (The number of chapters can vary based on the circumstances of the candidate country.)

Box 2 *Acquis Communautaire*

The *acquis* is the body of common rights and obligations that is binding on all the EU Member States. It is constantly evolving and comprises:

- the content, principles and political objectives of the Treaties;
- legislation adopted pursuant to the Treaties and the case law of the Court of Justice;
- declarations and resolutions adopted by the Union;
- instruments under the Common Foreign and Security Policy;
- international agreements concluded by the Union and those entered into by the Member States among themselves within the sphere of the Union's activities.
-

[4] The six clusters are Fundamentals; Internal Market; Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth; Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity; Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion; and, External Relations.

Source: European Commission, Enlargement Glossary

Table 3 Candidate Status & Accession Negotiations

Potential Member State	European Council granted candidate status (Y/N)	Accession Talks approved by the European Council	State of Accession Talks
Albania	Y June 2014	Y approved March 2020	All clusters opened. Commission states on target to conclude accession negotiations by 2027.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Y December 2022	Y approved March 2024	Commission's 2025 report emphasized the need to adopt judicial reforms laws.
Georgia	Y December 2023	N	Georgia's government placed accession talks on hold until 2028. Commission concluded in its 2025 report that "there has been a significant backsliding across the nine steps set out in the Commission's recommendation for candidate status, moving the country further away from its EU path."
Moldova	Y June 2022	Y approved December 2023	Moldova invited in late 2025 to submit its negotiating position following September 2025 parliamentary elections, which resulted in a majority favouring EU membership.
Montenegro	Y December 2010	Y approved December 2011	First IGC June 2012. Montenegro

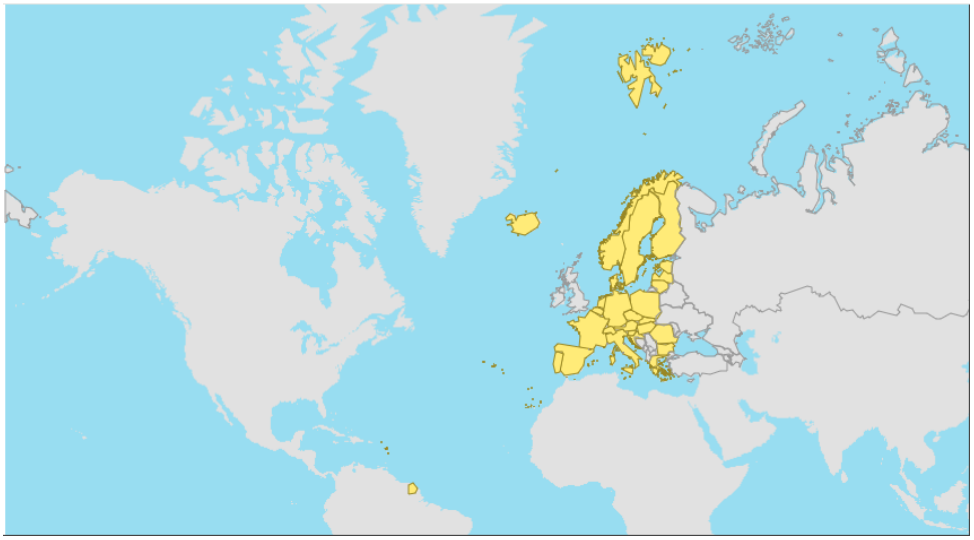
Potential Member State	European Council granted candidate status (Y/N)	Accession Talks approved by the European Council	State of Accession Talks
			has opened all 33 negotiating chapters, with 12 provisionally closed at the end of 2025. Commission expressed optimism that accession talks could close in 2026.
The Republic of North Macedonia	Y December 2005	Y approved March 2020	First IGC July 2022. No clusters opened as of end of 2025 due to the EU's requirement for North Macedonia to recognize minority rights in the country's constitution.
Serbia	Y February 2012	Y approved June 2013	First IGC January 2014. Serbia has opened 22 out of 35 negotiating chapters. Commission's 2025 Enlargement Package contained a critical report of Serbia's progress, especially with respect to "fundamentals."
Turkey	Y December 1999	Y approved December 2004	First IGC October 2005. Negotiations stalled since 2016 due to concerns over Turkey's adherence to democratic values.
Ukraine	Y June 2022	Y approved December 2023	Technical examination of the *acquis* (screening) completed in autumn 2025.

Potential Member State	European Council granted candidate status (Y/N)	Accession Talks approved by the European Council	State of Accession Talks
			Cyprus signalled opening negotiation clusters is a priority of its presidency.

Three other European countries—Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland—are not EU members, although they clearly qualify for membership. Kosovo has been promised the prospect of membership and is therefore considered a "potential candidate."

Schengen Area

Figure 2 Schengen Area Members



Most EU Member States are linked to other European states by what is known as the **Schengen Area** (named for the Schengen, Luxembourg village where the 1985 Agreement and 1990 Convention were signed)[5], which provides for passport-free travel between the 29 Schengen signatory states (including 25 of the 27 EU Member States) covering over 4 million square kilometres with a population of over 450 million people. Not all EU members have agreed to take part in the Schengen Agreement, but only certain countries that belonged to the EU prior to 2004 have the right to "opt-out" of Schengen. (Similar arrangements apply in respect of the adoption of the Euro, a subject to be covered under "policies.") Ireland, although not a member of the passport-free zone, participates in some of the judicial and police aspects of the Schengen Area as did the UK when it belonged to the EU. Four non-EU states are permitted to participate in the Schengen area—namely, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland (members of the European Free Trade Association).

[5] The location of this village is highly symbolic because it includes the tripoint there the borders of France, Germany, and Luxembourg meet.

Cyprus has not been admitted to Schengen.

EU Treaties

The EU is governed by treaties (rather than a constitution). Nevertheless, the treaties are interpreted and enforced (e.g., the levying of fines to constituent units in breach of treaty obligations) in a similar fashion as that of a federal constitution in federal states. Unlike the "anarchic" international system, the EU takes the form of a quasi-federal political system (though not a quasi-federal state). Until recently, a new treaty was negotiated every four or five years. The treaties are not stand-alone treaties but rather are reforming treaties that amend and build on the existing treaties. The latest reforming treaty is the Lisbon Treaty that came into effect in December 2009. Because the Lisbon Treaty was very difficult to ratify in some Member States, there is now no great enthusiasm for further treaty reforms, even though after the crises of recent years reforms are perhaps necessary.

Since the founding treaties of the 1950s, later treaties have thus consisted primarily of making amendments and additions to earlier treaties. Inevitably, as new treaty articles have been created and old treaty articles have been removed, the treaty system has become unwieldy, and virtually incomprehensible to the layperson. The key point to know is that there are two main treaties: **The Treaty on European Union (TEU)** and **The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)**. These treaties are of equal legal value. The TEU establishes the EU's constitutional framework, while the TFEU contains the detailed operating rules governing how the EU exercises its competences. Together, the TEU and the TFEU form the legal basis for governance in the European Union. The TEU contains 55 articles and the TFEU 358.[6]

The basic distinction between the two treaties is that:

the **TEU** establishes the constitutional framework (the broad principles and operating structures of the European Union). The TEU includes EU values and objectives, governing principles (conferral, subsidiarity, proportionality)[7], institutional structure, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and rules of membership.

the **TFEU** deals with how the EU exercises its power. It details how policies are made. Therefore, the TFEU focuses on EU competences (exclusive, shared, supporting – see Table 9), the internal market, EU policies (competition, agriculture, transport, environment, social policy), EMU, legislative procedures, enforcement mechanisms (judicial review, infringement proceedings).

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[6] Consolidated versions of the two treaties

[7] Article 5(2) TEU: "Under the principle of conferral, the Union shall act only within the limits of the competences conferred upon it by the Member States in the Treaties to attain the objectives set out therein." For American students, it may help to consider the 10th amendment of the US Constitution: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Judicial enforcement: EU – CJEU, US – SCOTUS. While Article 5(2) TEU and the Tenth Amendment both reserve non-conferred powers to the constituent states, the EU's principle of conferral operates within a quasi-federal system and imposes stricter formal limits on central authority than in the United States.

Integration Typology

The Hungarian economist, Bela Balassa (1962), was one of the earliest students of European integration. He thought the EU would need to pass through several stages before achieving the goal of political union that its founders had envisaged, explaining in economic terms the arguments advanced by the EEC's "founding fathers."[8] (See Table 4 Balassa's Theoretical Evolution of Political and Economic Integration.) And although Balassa constructed his paradigm in the early years of European integration, it continues to serve as a useful conceptual framework to examine the interconnectedness of economics, policy integration, and the evolution of European institutions.

Free Trade Area

A free trade area removes tariffs on goods among member countries. Current examples of an FTA are the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade (CETA) trade agreement and the Interim Agreement on Trade between the EU and MERCOSUR.[9] The six founding Member States of the EEC agreed to a free trade area, but within the framework of a more integrative economic area – a customs union. However, the internal free trade aspect of the customs union has always been problematical to the EU's trading partners, partly because of non-tariff barriers to free trade and partly because services have replaced manufactured goods as the major sector in which Europeans are employed. Should services—which must be delivered by people—be considered in the same category as "trade in goods"? The UK had originally wanted a preferential trade agreement (PTA) rather than a more integrated entity, a principal reason why the UK did not join the EEC at its founding.

[8] A list of the EU's "founding fathers" would most certainly include Jean Monnet (France), Konrad Adenauer (Germany), Robert Schuman (France), Alcide DeGasperi (Italy), Paul-Henri Spaak (Belgium), and Altiero Spinelli (Italy).

[9] There are two such agreements – the Interim Agreement on Trade between the EU and MERCOSUR and (goal) the Partnership Agreement between the EU and MERCOSUR (comprehensive agreement covering trade, political dialogue, and cooperation in several areas, e.g. environment, labour, food standards, governance). The Partnership Agreement requires ratification of all EU and MERCOSUR member states due to it being a mixed agreement (not just trade). The Interim Agreement, begin wholly focused on trade, falls under EU sole competence and therefore needs only EP ratification (rather than each EU Member State). The Interim Agreement is a "work around" while the EU and MEROCOSUR undertake the slow process, which could take years, for the many countries to ratify the Partnership Agreement. COREPER II passed the Interim Agreement on 9 January (qmv is used for trade agreements). Austria, France, Ireland, Hungary, and Poland voted against the Interim Agreement, but Italy decided to support it after receiving promises of compensatory safeguards, depriving these countries of a blocking minority. Belgium abstained.

Table 4 Balassa's Theoretical Evolution of Political and Economic Integration

Integration Type	Removal of Internal Tariffs	Common External Tariff	Free Flow of Capital & Labour	Harmonization of Social & Economic Policy	Single Currency	Political Integration
Free Trade Area	X					
Customs Union	X	X				
Common Market	X	X	X			
Economic Union	X	X	X	X		
Economic Federalism	X	X	X	X	X	
Political Union	X	X	X	X	X	X

Customs Union

In addition to removing internal tariffs, Member States surround themselves with a tariff wall. In other words, a U.S. exporter faces the same tariff whether exporting an automobile part to the Romania or France. The EEC had largely completed its customs union by 1968, well within the guidelines established in the Treaty of Rome. Tariffs are set by a common authority, in this case, the EU sets its Common Customs Tariff (CCT). Customs are collected by the Member State, an administrative fee collected, and the balance remitted to Brussels. These customs duties comprise a portion of the EU's budgetary revenue.[10]

Common Market

A common market extends free movement to capital and labour. The EU no longer uses the term "common market." Today, most frequently, the term "**internal market**" is used.[11] The internal market can be said to have accomplished the EU's goals of the *Four Freedoms*: freedom of movement of goods, services, people, and capital. The extent to which the EU

[10] The EU customs union manages trade worth over €4.3 trillion, accounting for around 14% of global trade.

[11] The "Single European Market" (SEM) and "single market" refer to the internal market.

has satisfied adequately common market criteria is debatable. Is Europe's trade in goods and services and its movement of people and capital as free of restrictions as that of federal systems such as Canada or the United States? Do barriers to trade and the circulation of people and capital continue to impede European (economic) integration?

Economic Union
Integration deepens substantially in an economic union because the Member States agree to harmonize their economic and social policies such as regional, environmental, and competitiveness. Nevertheless, most social policies remain under the jurisdiction of national governments. While Eurozone monetary policy is harmonized and the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG)[12] constrains fiscal manoeuvrability, the EU lacks the central fiscal authority of a modern state. For instance (and this is a big "for instance"), the EU does not have authority to levy direct taxes (personal, corporate) and has no direct power over Member States' citizens. As a result of reforms associated with the eurozone, banking and debt crises, the euro area has moved closer to fiscal federalism, but by no means to the extent found in a federal system.

Economic Federalism
Oddly enough, the Eurozone members have accomplished this stage while not fully completing the previous stages.[13] Some observers would argue that by skipping the *Economic Union* stage the Eurozone members set themselves up for fiscal difficulties. The next few years will see further cautious and tentative steps being taken in the direction of the building of economic and monetary union. (See "Economic and Monetary Union," below.)

Political Union
Political Union is quite simply a "United States of Europe." While no one suggests that the EU is a *federal state*, there is extensive debate amongst academics over the extent to which it displays characteristics of a federal *political system*. Most commentators suggest that to be *really* federal, the EU needs such features as stronger supranational institutions, a common immigration policy, a European army, a much larger EU-level budget, and a European Constitution.

EU Institutions

Introduction

The EU is constituted quite differently than sovereign nation-states. In democratic nation-states one thinks in terms of governmental branches—legislative, executive, judicial. See Table 5 for a list of the EU's institutions. The following pages summarize the EU's system of governance, with descriptions of the types of institutions and bodies and their roles and responsibilities in EU governance. We recommend that readers who are new to EU studies view this video, "How does the EU work?" (Other videos, such as the EU's history and the Eurozone, are linked on the IEUSS Resources webpage.)

[12] Title III of the TSCG, an extra-EU treaty due to the UK's refusal to sign on, contains a "Fiscal Compact."
[13] Interactive map of the Euro area: http://www.ecb.int/euro/intro/html/map.en.html. EU Member States that have adopted the euro are commonly referred to as the Eurozone, but euro area is its official EU name.

Table 5 EU Institutions

Institution	Number of Members /Entities	Who are they?	Role
Main Decision-Making Bodies			
European Commission (Supranational)	27	One per Member State. Most are former national Ministers	Several duties, including drafting legislation and overseeing policy implementation
Council of the European Union (Intergovernmental)	27	Ministers of the Member States plus the High Representative	Final decision-maker (increasingly with the EP) in respect of EU policies and legislation
European Parliament (Supranational)	751	Direct election (MEPs elected by country allotment)	Consultative & legislative powers depending upon "pillar"
European Council (Intergovernmental)	29	Heads of government + the President of the Commission + the European Council President	Sets agenda/priorities. Makes some final (political, not legal) decisions.
Court of Justice of the European Union (Supranational)	27	One appointee per Member State	Interprets the laws and treaties
European Central Bank (Supranational)		ECB President and Vice-President and governors of national central banks from all EU countries	The ECB and the European System of Central Banks are responsible for keeping prices stable in the euro area. They are also responsible for the monetary and exchange rate policy in the Eurozone and support EU economic policies.
European Court of Auditors (Supranational)	27	One per Member State	Examine EU revenues and expenses
Other Bodies			
European External Action Service		The EEAS is the European Union's diplomatic service. It helps the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission implement the EU's common foreign and security policy, and ensures the consistency and coordination of the EU's external action. It has a network of EU Delegations throughout the world.	
Economic and Social Committee	329	Interest groups	Consultative
Committee of the Regions	350	Reps of local and regional governments	Consultative

Institution	Number of Members /Entities	Who are they?	Role
European Investment Bank			
European Ombudsman	1	Elected by European Parliament	Uncovers "maladministration"
European Data Protection Supervisor		The EDPS ensures that EU institutions and bodies respect people's right to privacy when processing their personal data.	
European Data Protection Board		The EDPB is an independent body that ensures the consistent application of data protection rules throughout the EU, and promotes cooperation between national data protection authorities in the EU.	
European Public Prosecutor's Office		The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) is an independent public prosecution office of the European Union. It is responsible for investigating, prosecuting and bringing to judgment crimes against the financial interests of the EU.	
European Cybersecurity Competence Centre		The European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC), together with the Network of National Coordination Centres, supports innovation and industrial policy in cybersecurity. It also develops and implements with EU countries technological developments in areas of public interest and in businesses. The ECCC's work reinforces the EU's strategic autonomy and contributes to increasing the global competitiveness of the EU's cybersecurity industry.	
Agencies			
Decentralized Agencies	Over 30 agencies	Independent legal entities under EU public law	Specialized policy areas such as food safety, environment, fisheries, energy regulators, border control, banking
Common Foreign and Security Policy	3 agencies	European Defence Agency (EDA), European Union Institute for Security Studies, European Union Satellite Center	Defence, security
Executive Agencies	6 agencies		Research, fund management, manages Commission's green programs
Euroatom			
Euroatom	2 agencies	Peaceful use of nuclear energy.	Euroatom (nuclear fuel), Fusion

Decision-making bodies of the European Union

The major decision-making institutions of the EU are summarized in Box 3. SUNYMEU simulated the European Council and the Council of the European Union.

Box 3 The EU's Principal Decision-making Institutions

- **European Parliament** (Brussels/Strasbourg/Luxembourg)
  The only directly elected EU institution. Takes legislative decisions jointly with the Council of the European Union. Approves the EU budget.
- **European Council** (Brussels)
  The heads of state or government of the EU countries meet as the European Council to define the general political direction and priorities of the EU. The European Council is chaired by a president who is elected for a 2.5-year terms, renewable once. It does not adopt laws except for possible EU Treaty amendments.
- **Council of the European Union** (Brussels/Luxembourg)
  Represents the governments of EU countries. The Council of the EU where national ministers from each government meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies. Ministers meet in different configurations depending on the topic to be discussed. The Council takes decisions on European laws jointly with the EP.
- **European Commission** (Brussels/Luxembourg/Representations across the EU)
  Represents the common interests of the EU and is the EU's main executive body. It uses its "right of initiative" to put forward proposals for new laws, which are scrutinized and adopted by the EP and the Council of the EU (the EU's legislative bodies). The Commission manages the EU's policies (except for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, which is conducted by the High Representative for CFSP), the EU's budget, and ensures that Member States apply EU law correctly.
- **Court of Justice of the European Union** (Luxembourg) Interprets the laws and treaties. EU law, as provided for in the Treaties, has supremacy over national law.

More information about EU institutions

Commission



European Commission, 2024-2029

The Commissioners form, in effect, the board of managers of the European Union. They are supposed to provide the motor force to drive the EU toward ever-closer union by taking policy initiatives and supervising policy implementation. According to TEU Article 17 (3), Commissioners "shall be chosen on the grounds of their general competence and European commitment from persons whose independence is beyond doubt." They should "neither seek nor take instructions from any Government or other institution, body, office or entity." Most Commissioners have been active in the politics of their countries, some very prominently so. Although the President of the Commission is one of 27 in a collegial body (its name is the College of Commissioners), they are more than *primus inter pares*. Depending upon the personality and skills of the occupant, this can be a very powerful position. Policy areas are divided into Directorates General (DGs), which are grouped under individual Commissioners, who, together, make up the College of Commissioners.



Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission (since 2019)

The Commission has the power of sole initiation (akin to that of a government cabinet) in parliamentary systems in virtually all EU policy areas apart from foreign and defence policy.

The Council of the European Union

(Commonly referred to just as "the Council")

Ministers

Previously known as the "Council of Ministers," the Council of the European Union is

comprised of ministers from national governments. The Council meets in ten configurations (see Box 4), with ministers from each of the Member States represented on each of the councils.[14] While the Council sits in ten different configurations, its decisions are made in the name of "the Council." The Council's seat is in Brussels with some meetings taking place in Luxembourg. For students who are familiar with federal systems, one might think of the Council as the chamber representing regions, but one which sits in committees rather than in plenary. Indeed, it has sometimes been observed that while the Council is undoubtedly a legislative body, it is the only legislative body in democratic system that deliberates and legislates in committees rather than in the whole.

Box 4 Configurations, Council of the European Union

General Affairs[15]
Foreign Affairs
Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin)
Justice and Home Affairs
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research)
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
Agriculture and Fisheries
Environment
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

The Presidency of the Council
The Council Presidency rotates between states on a six-monthly basis (See Table 6 and Figure 3)

LITHUANIA HOLDS THE PRESIDENCY DURING SUNYMEU 2027.

The Presidency chairs the EcoFin meeting and is a prominent actor/organizer in all other meetings.

The Council Presidency is a key device for organizing and carrying out the work of the Council over the six-month period. While Member States bring one or two priorities that they hope will leave a positive legacy—"during the Swedish Presidency the EU achieved…."—real world (unexpected) events can sometimes derail proposed plans. Nevertheless, Council Presidencies do work from 18-month programmes developed as "trios": every 18 months, the three Presidencies due to hold office prepare, in close

[14] Council configurations
[15]The General Affairs Council (GAC) deals with policies that cut across several policy areas such as enlargement and preparation of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The GAC also coordinates the preparation and follow-up of European Council meetings. Its members can be foreign ministers, permanent representatives, European Affairs ministers—the choice of representative depends upon the policy area under consideration and the judgment of the Member State.

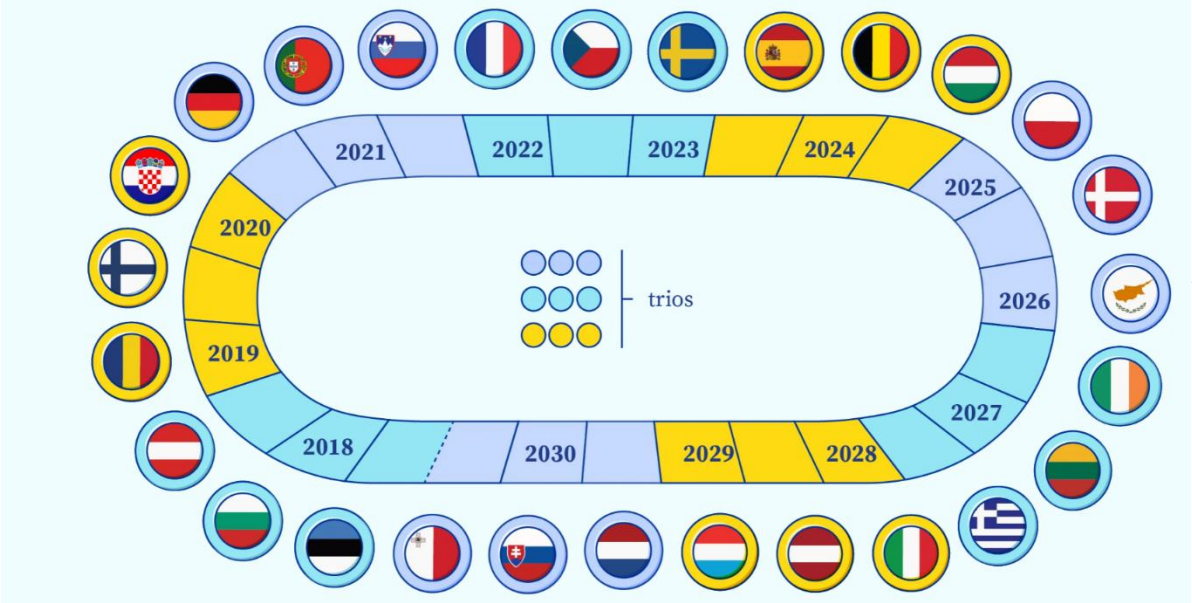
cooperation with the Commission, and after appropriate consultations, a draft programme of Council activities for that period.

Information about how the Council Presidency functions.

Table 6 Council Presidency Rotation of Trio June 2026-June 2027

Country	Term	Year
Ireland	July-December	2026
Lithuania SUNYMEU 2027	January-June	2027
Greece	June-December	2027

Figure 3 Council Rotation



Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper)

Each Member State has a national delegation in Brussels, called a permanent representation, which is best thought of as an embassy to the European Union. Each permanent representation is headed by a senior diplomat, known as the permanent representative. The Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper) is a key EU body. According to the TFEU, Coreper is "responsible for preparing the work of the Council and for carrying out the tasks assigned to it by the Council."

The ministers come and go from their nation's capital to Brussels and Luxembourg, while the permanent representatives remain in Brussels to carry out the day-to-day activities of the Council. The work of these permanent delegations is divided into Coreper 1 and

Coreper 2.

Coreper 1, headed by the deputy permanent representatives, deals mainly with routine business, while Coreper 2 deals with more high-profile matters and works for the most prominent Councils: General Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Ecofin. Reflecting its importance, Coreper 2, is composed of the permanent representatives.

Council committees and working groups prepare the work needed by Coreper to advise the Council.

The High Representative/Vice President of the Commission and the EEAS

In effect, the HR/VP is the "Union Minister for Foreign Affairs," but this "symbolically charged" title (in the failed Constitutional Treaty) was dropped and replaced with the more cumbersome title of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.



Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (since 2024)

The HR's institutional position is complex, with the incumbent having a base in both the Commission and the Council. In the Commission, the HR/VP is the Commissioner for External Relations. In the Council, the HR/VP chairs the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) – more on the FAC, below. The HR also heads the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU's diplomatic corps created in the Lisbon treaty (in a responsibility that parallels the foreign minister's management function in national governments).

The HR's roles are established in the TEU as being ones of proposer, promoter, facilitator, and implementer. The HR is not a major independent decision-maker: the making of key policy decisions is left to the European Council and the Council of Ministers.

It was hoped by many observers that the HR would be able to give the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) a significant external boost, not least by giving it a "human face." But the TEU built in uncertainty in this regard with Article 15, which covers the responsibilities of the European Council President: "The President of the European Council shall, at his level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy."

Council Voting (applies to European Council, the Council formations, and Coreper)
The Council utilizes three different types of voting procedures, as shown in Box 5.

Box 5 Council Decision-making

Decision-making in the Council

Ministers may take decisions in one of three ways:

By ***unanimity***. Although rounds of treaty reform have greatly reduced the number of decisions that require unanimity, it still applies to many types of decisions – including all major decisions in such key policy areas as foreign, defence, enlargement, and taxation.

By ***qualified majority (qmv)***. This consists of a double majority system in which majorities require the approval of at least 55% of the Member States (72% if the proposal does not come from the Commission) representing at least 65% of the EU's population. To safeguard against the possibility of three of the largest states joining together to limit a proposal, a blocking minority must consist of at least four states.

By ***simple majority***. This applies only to relatively minor and procedural matters.

In practice, there is always a preference for consensus whatever procedure applies.

Main Policy Areas Requiring Unanimity

Sanctions, military missions, foreign policy positions, defence cooperation, taxation, social security & social protection, EU accession (enlargement) and withdrawal, treaty change, EU own resources and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), Justice and Home Affairs (family law with cross-border implications, certain aspects of police cooperation, EU citizenship rules, official languages, territorial changes of Member States).

Main Policy Areas Falling Under QMV

Internal market, trade, agriculture, fisheries, environment, transport, digital regulation

Calculating QMV

The SUNYMEU Leadership Team will specify when an agenda item is to be decided by unanimity or qmv. For the purposes of SUNYMEU, it's assumed the proposals originated

with the Commission.

Note that in practice, the European Council rarely uses qmv or unanimity, preferring to make decisions by consensus. The Council, on the other hand, use qmv in about 80% and unanimity about 20% of legislation being considered because this body is dealing with laws that fall under policy areas governed by qmv. The European Council is more likely to consider issues for which the Treaties require unanimity because this body is not a law-making entity but rather acts like a board of directors.

To calculate QMV:

Step 1: Count Member States voting "yes."

15 or more?

Step 2: Add their population shares.

Does the total reach 65%?

Step 3: Check for blocking minority.

Are there 4 countries, 35% voting *"no"?*

If both thresholds are met, the proposal passes.

Table 7 is a worksheet that can be used to calculate QMV.

Table 7 Worksheet for Calculating QMV Thresholds

Member State	% of EU Population	Cumulative % Population
Germany	18.6	
France	15.1	
Italy	13.0	
Spain	10.5	
Poland	8.4	
Romania	4.3	
Netherlands	3.9	
Belgium	2.6	
Czechia	2.4	
Greece	2.3	
Portugal	2.3	
Sweden	2.3	
Hungary	2.1	
Austria	2.0	
Bulgaria	1.5	

Member State	% of EU Population	Cumulative % Population
Denmark	1.3	
Finland	1.2	
Slovakia	1.1	
Ireland	1.1	
Croatia	0.9	
Lithuania	0.6	
Slovenia	0.5	
Latvia	0.4	
Estonia	0.3	
Cyprus	0.2	
Luxembourg	0.1	
Malta	0.1	

NOTE: We suggest you download and use the EU's *Council Voting Calculator* app.

European Council

The European Council is a (normally) two-day gathering of "the big shots" of the European Union, i.e., the Heads of State or Government of the Member States. (The term "Heads of State *or* Government" is used because in semi-presidential systems, e.g., France, Poland, and Romania, the Head of State is also the Head of Government.)



"*Family Photo*" – *the European Council at the June 2024 summit*

Under the Lisbon Treaty, only Heads of State or Government, the European Council President, and the Commission President are European Council members, although the latter two cannot vote. The European Council thus has a membership of 29. The European Council member may be accompanied to formal summit sessions by one minister – without Foreign Ministers being prioritized. The High Representative also attends for external affairs agenda items. Beyond these people, the only others who are permitted into meetings are a few Council Secretariat and Commission officials, who undertake advisory and administrative tasks. Most European Council decisions are taken by consensus of the Member States (no formal vote is taken). But if a vote is taken, unanimity is more common than qmv. This is an important distinction from the Council (a co-legislative body with the EP), where qmv is common being provided for by the Treaties in many policy areas. The European Council is required by treaty to meet at least four times per year.

European Council meetings are chaired by the President of the European Council, who is elected by qualified majority of the members of the European Council for a 2½ year term, renewable once. In practice, all the prior European Council Presidents – Herman van Rompuy (2009-14), who was the Belgian Prime Minister at the time of his appointment, Donald Tusk (2014-19), who was the Polish Prime Minister, and the third President, Charles Michel (2019-2024), who was the Belgian Prime Minister at the time of his appointment, served five-year terms. The current President is António Costa. The powers of the President are defined only vaguely (in Article 15 TEU), but they are enough to give this individual the potential to exercise important policy roles.



António Costa, President of the European Council (since 2024)

European Council meetings are usually focused on between eight and ten agenda items, with discussions and negotiations being directed to getting agreed statements on these items. Everything that is agreed is included in a final document that is formally called "Conclusions of the European Council meeting of….."

These Conclusions usually provide **broad policy outlines**, with details and arrangements for their implementation being left to the Council (of Ministers) and the European Commission. The contents of the Conclusions are extremely important, with few major policy matters of concern to the EU not requiring to be at least passed through the European Council. In some policy areas, such as enlargement, treaty reform, and withdrawals from the EU, the European Council takes **final decisions**. In many other policy areas – from the identification of major foreign policy goals to considering which Member States should be permitted to join the euro system – the European Council sets out policy statements that act as guidelines other EU institutions must then follow.

There is no doubt that the European Council has been vital in shepherding the European integration process. But it has been at its best when it has focused on big picture issues more than when it has sought, or has been obliged, as has been occasionally the case, to become involved in policy details. The spotlight is too intense when the European Council meets: negotiations on the intricacies of policy are best left to the closed-door meetings of the Council and the Commission, where the different interests can negotiate without fear of initial positions leaking to the press and creating uproar among opponents in their respective Member States.

European Parliament

The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are the only EU representatives elected directly by the EU polity through universal suffrage. EP elections are, mainly, contests between national rather than European-wide political parties.[16] In the EP, most MEPs decide their policy positions on a partisan more than a national basis. The EP began as a strictly advisory body but, by treaty revisions and practice, it has become substantially

[16]The most recent EP elections were held in June 2024.

involved in policy making. Although it still has little influence in some highly sensitive areas—including foreign affairs and taxation—it is now a co-decision maker with the Council in respect of most EU legislation. Thus, the EP is a co-legislative body with the Council.

Other European Union Institutions

The EU has other important institutions – judicial (the Court of Justice of the EU, located in Luxembourg), economic and financial (the European Central Bank, located in Frankfurt), the European Court of Auditors (located in Luxembourg), and an extensive network of EU (decentralized) agencies that work to ensure proper interpretation, knowledge, and implementation of EU legislation. These agencies, which are located throughout the EU (see Table 8), are part of the executive "branch" of the EU's governance structure. Because the topics discussed in SUNYMEU often deal with policy issues such as climate change, irregular migration, public health, defence cooperation, and justice and home affairs, it is important for SUNYMEU participants to have a basic understanding of the function of the EU's decentralized agencies and have a quick reference guide (as provided in Table 8) of these agencies.

The EU's Decentralized Agencies

Since the 1970s, and more particularly since the early 1990s, a variety of quasi-independent EU agencies have been established to carry out policy tasks which otherwise would have been assigned to the European Commission. They have been created for two main reasons: to relieve work pressure on the Commission and to bring subject specialists together in a less political and bureaucratic working environment than exists within the Commission. These decentralized agencies, or as are sometimes called "independent agencies," have increasingly been a favoured mechanism in contemporary democracies and in Europe especially so since privatization of previously nationalized industries beginning in the 1970s (Majone, 1994, 1996). Though varying considerably in their responsibilities, powers and organizational structures, agencies are of two broad types: regulatory agencies and executive agencies.[17] The most important type of agencies for SUNYMEU negotiations are the EU's regulatory agencies, of which there are over 30. These agencies have a wide range of tasks to perform (see Box 6). They thus have relatively large staffs. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), for example, has a staff of over 500 and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) a staff of around 450. What is often assumed to be the largest agency, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) only directly employs around 300 officials because most of the front-line work in its areas of responsibility are undertaken on its behalf by national officials, of which there are thousands deployed at the sea, land, and air borders of the Member States (which, of course, are also the EU's borders). The European Police Office (Europol) is the largest agency with over 1,000 employees.

The tasks and powers of agencies vary considerably. Normally, however, most agencies are responsible within their subject area(s) for some mixture of undertaking research, collecting

[17] *Executive agencies* have narrower tasks to perform than regulatory agencies in that they are created to manage EU programmes on behalf of the Commission. This management is undertaken under the tight control of a "parent" Commission DG. Examples of executive agencies include The Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

and disseminating information, providing scientific and technical advice (mainly to the Commission), making policy recommendations, facilitating cross-border policy coordination, and – in the case of a few agencies – carrying out policy implementation (almost invariably within a limited scope and under Commission supervision).

Given the nature of SUNYMEU, participants debate current policy issues that may involve recommendations for devolving study, recommendations, and/or implementation to existing EU agencies. Therefore, SUNYMEU participants should consult the comprehensive list of decentralized EU agencies found in Table 8 when considering whether an agency should be assigned to take up a particular task. So, too, it is important for SUNYMEU participants to know that a particular agency exists rather than recommending the establishment of a new agency to deal with the policy problem under consideration.

Box 6 The main types of regulatory agencies

- *Agencies adopting individual decisions that are legally binding on third parties.* Notwithstanding the wide use of the term "regulatory agency" to encompass all the EU's non-executive agencies, most of the regulatory agencies do not in fact have direct regulatory power. However, a few do, although their scope for regulating is invariably tightly drawn and limited usually to not much more than issuing individual technical clarifications and updates within the framework of existing EU legislation. None are empowered to issue general regulatory measures, and none have significant discretionary regulatory powers. Examples of agencies with regulatory powers include the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (trademarks and designs) (OHIM), the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).
- *Agencies providing technical or scientific advice to the Commission and, where necessary, to the Member States.* Agencies in this category feed information directly into EU policy forums, principally the Commission, and make recommendations. They undertake regulatory work, but they are not regulators themselves. For example, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) assesses risks arising from food safety issues, but it cannot itself manage the risks. Because much of the information that the agencies feed into EU forums is highly technical and specialised in nature, it can be difficult for policymakers to challenge and ignore. In respect, for example, of the authorisation of pharmaceuticals, which is handled by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), Gehring and Kraphol (2007) have shown that although formally the EMA only advises the Commission, in practice it is almost invariably the real decision-maker and operates much like an independent agency. The EMA's power likely increased in this regard because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the prominent role the EMA played in authorizing vaccines. In addition to the EFSA and EMA, other examples of agencies of this type include the European Railway Agency (ERA) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

- *Agencies in charge of operational activities.* Some operational tasks are seen as being best handled not by the Commission but by agencies that have, or at least can be seen as having, a measure of distance and independence from it and, in some instances also, a subject specialism. The best-known agency of this type is Frontex, which has become a very prominent EU agency tasked with increased responsibilities since the onset of the 2015 migration crisis. While border checks are still mainly conducted by national officials and while Frontex is more of a coordination rather than an operational agency, it has an operational capacity – including via a rapid reaction pool of officers and equipment that can be used to undertake search and rescue operations and is increasingly involved in return operations (both in a supporting and lead role). In addition to the benefit of not being, or not being seen to be, too close to the Commission, an additional reason is that many of the activities covered by these agencies involving highly sensitive matters and the use of specialist practitioners. As for the three agencies created under the CFSP/ESDP policy umbrella – the European Defence Agency (EDA), the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), and the European Union Satellite Centre (EU Sat Cen) – the CFSP/ESDP policy areas remained, post-Lisbon, outside the TFEU and largely based on intergovernmental procedures.
- *Agencies responsible for gathering, analysing, and making available relevant information and/or networking.* In policy terms, these are the weakest of the regulatory agencies in that they are not usually direct policy practitioners. Many of them are akin to think-tanks, with their work focused on assembling and providing background information and, sometimes, on bringing policy practitioners together for exchanges on issues of shared interest. Examples of agencies of this type include the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), the European Environment Agency (EEA), and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

Sources: Buonanno & Nugent, 2021; European Commission, nd; Nugent, 2017

Table 8 EU's Decentralized Agencies

Agency Name	**Abbreviation**	**Location**	**Year Established**
Single Market Agencies			
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	EU-OSHA	Bilbao, Spain	1994
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training	Cedefop	Thessaloniki, Greece	1975
European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions	EUROFOUND	Dublin, Ireland	1975
European Environmental Agency	EEA	Copenhagen, Denmark	1994
European Training Foundation	ETF	Turin, Italy	1994

European Medicines Agency	EMA	Amsterdam (UK until 2019)	1995
European Intellectual Property Office	EUIPO	Alicante, Spain	1994
Community Plant Variety office	CPVO	Angers, France	1994
Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union	CdT	Luxembourg City, Luxembourg	1994
European Food Safety Authority	EFSA	Parma, Italy	2002
European Maritime Authority	EMSA	Lisbon, Portugal	2002
European Aviation Safety Agency	EASA	Cologne, Germany	2003
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	ECDS	Stockholm, Sweden	2002
European Union Agency for the Space Programme	EASA	Prague, Czechia	2005
European Railway Agency	ERA	Valenciennes & Lille, France	2004
European Fisheries Control Agency	EFCA	Vigo, Spain	2005
European Chemicals Agency	ECHA	Helsinki, Finland	2007
Body of European Regulators of Electronic Communications	BEREC	Riga, Latvia	2010
Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators	ACER	Ljubljana, Slovenia	2009
European Labour Authority	ELA	Bratislava, Slovakia	2019
Area of Freedom, Security and Justice Agencies			
European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	CEPOL	Budapest, Hungary (UK until 2014)	2005
European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation	Europol	The Hague, Netherlands	1998
European Union Agency for the Enhancement of Judicial Co-operation	Eurojust	The Hague, Netherlands	2002
European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice	EU-LISA	Tallinn, Estonia	2012
European Border and Coast Guard Agency	Frontex or EBCGA	Warsaw, Poland	Since 2004, transformed into a coastguard & border control agency in 2016

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction	EMCDDA	Lisbon, Portugal	1993
European Union Agency for Cybersecurity	ENISA	Athens, Greece	2005
European Union Agency for Asylum	EUAA	Valletta, Malta	2011 as European Asylum Support Office, transformed to EUAA in 2022
European Institute for Gender Equality	EIGE	Vilnius, Lithuania	2007
Fundamental Rights Agency	FRA	Vienna, Austria	2007
Common Security and Defence Policy Agencies			
European Defence Agency	EDA	Brussels, Belgium	2004
European Institute for Security Studies	EUISS	Paris, France	2001
European Union Satellite Centre	SatCen	Torrejón de Ardoz, Spain	2002

Decision-making Procedures and Terms

There are numerous procedures for the development and promulgation of EU policies and laws. In very broad terms, they can be dichotomized into two main forms: *supranational* (EU institutions are prominent and individual Member States do not have a veto) and *intergovernmental* (Member States determine the outcome and decisions are taken by unanimity). Given that the powers of the various political actors – notably the governments of the Member States and the EU institutions – vary enormously according to the policy and decision-making procedure that is used, the factors that determine the use of particular procedures are clearly very important. The single most important factor is treaty provision. For most forms of policy and decision-making, the treaties stipulate what type of procedure must be used. So, for example, if an EU law concerning an aspect of market regulation is being proposed, then decisions are made using the *ordinary procedure*. For the European Council, Article 15 TEU states: "Except where the Treaties provide otherwise, decisions of the European Council shall be decided by consensus." The Treaties do provide otherwise, but only in a very few cases.

So, formally all Member States have a veto on European Council decisions. However, it must be emphasized that such vetoes are rarely exercised, because:

- Member States usually want decisions to be made on agenda items.

- The working culture of European Council meetings is that all efforts will be made to find compromise solutions when differences exist.

- It is not usually in the interests of a Member State to exercise a veto, because it will not want an agenda item it supports to be vetoed by another Member state on a future occasion.

- It can be politically difficult for small states to veto matters on which the large states want a decision to be made.

EU Policies

After the previous brief overview of EU membership, treaties, integration theory, and institutions, this section is written as an introduction to what the EU actually *does*—its policies. The large number of American participants in SUNYMEU, many of whom are new to EU studies, will naturally compare the EU's policymaking reach to that of the US. Table 9 compares the EU and the US on the major policies. One can readily see, for example, that the US federal government has sole competence in foreign policy while in the EU foreign policy is shared between Brussels and the Member States.[18]

The Expanding Policy Portfolio

A central feature of the nature of the policy portfolio is that it has increasingly moved beyond its early focus on direct market issues. Immediately after the EEC Treaty came into operation

[18] Participants from Canadian universities may wish to consult the following excellent text comparing Canadian and European Union governance and policymaking. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, Achim Hurrelmann, and Amy Verdun. Eds. 2023. *European Union Governance and Policy Making: A Canadian Perspective*. 2nd Edition. University of Toronto Press.

in 1958 the main tasks were seen as the EEC Treaty obliged them to be: the creation of a common market in goods – which was achieved in 1968 when most internal tariffs and quota restrictions were removed, and a common external tariff established – and the construction of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). But once these early policy priorities had been reached, decision-makers began to widen their policy horizons, a process that continues to the present day.

Some of this widening has taken the form of identifying direct market-related policies that have needed to be developed to improve market performance. Since the late 1960s this has resulted in much attention being given to the removal of non-tariff barriers to internal trade. Since the early 1980s it has resulted in extensive policy activity directed at opening up the free movement of capital, services and labour and the outlawing of anti-competitive practices. Since the early 2000s it has resulted in strategic plans, such as Europe 2020, a ten-year blueprint for Member State governments and the EU to work cooperatively to achieve "smart, sustainable, inclusive growth as a way to overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy," with targets specified for employment; R&D; climate change and energy; education; and poverty and social exclusion.

Some of the widening has taken the form of developing policies that, though certainly market-related, are less concerned with creating market efficiency *per se* than with managing undesirable market consequences and problems that the market is not seen as being able to handle satisfactorily. Examples include environmental policy, which first began to appear on the EC's policy agenda in the early 1970s, social policies, supported from the late 1980s by an increasing acceptance that the internal market should have "a social dimension," and energy policy, which received increased attention beginning in the 2000s, in no small part because of concerns over supply problems. Some of the widening has taken the form of policy being developed in non-market policy areas that formerly were regarded as being national preserves. Until the late 1990s policy development in such areas – essentially a) foreign and security policy and b) justice and home affairs policy – was very slow because of the sensitivities involved, but development has since been rapid and considerable.

The former UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, was broadly correct when she compared EU policy development to being like a ratchet: once a notch is turned on the ratchet it is all but impossible to turn it back. And over the years there have been many such turns of the ratchet. But the turns have not occurred at a uniform pace. Rather, the pace of EU policy development has varied, both as regards general policy development and in specific policy areas.

As regards general policy development, the 1960s saw the rapid creation of the customs union and the CAP, but the next fifteen years or so, although certainly not – as is sometimes suggested – completely stagnant in policy development terms, witnessed a slow-down as the Luxembourg Compromise (the 1966 agreement between the Member States that resulted in all major decision-making having to be based, in effect, on unanimous decision-making) took its toll. The launch of the Single European Market (SEM) programme in the mid-1980s then led to a flood of policy activity, much of it as part of the programme itself but some of it a consequence of programme spillover into related policy areas – as with the attention given to the social dimension and with the movement towards Economic and Monetary Union

(EMU). Since the completion of the SEM program in 1992, general policy advancement has continued, though at a slower pace. This has partly been because as the easier negative integration has increasingly been achieved, what has remained has been in the most difficult and sensitive of policy areas.[19] It has been partly also because of the emphasis that has been given since the early 1990s to the principle of subsidiarity. In essence, subsidiarity means that policy actions should be taken at the level that is closest to the citizens as possible. So, the EU should not be engaging in policy activity unless it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the proposed activity cannot be sufficiently achieved at national levels. The subsidiarity principle is given bite by an obligation on the Commission to justify new policy proposals in terms of subsidiarity and by the application of the principle being subject to judicial proceedings.

Unquestionably, the EU policy portfolio has never ceased developing in an ever-expanding direction. A key question thus arising is whether it will continue doing so. The underdeveloped and only partially developed nature of many policy areas certainly indicates that there is no shortage of areas where further policy development could occur. Moreover, the strong pressures from some policy actors for the further development of EU policies—in such policy areas as macroeconomic coordination, the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ), Common European Asylum System (CEAS), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)—suggest that in some areas it will occur, albeit in some cases on a differentiated basis. But such development is likely mainly to take the form of incremental advances and to be confined to policy areas where a significant EU presence has already been established.

[19] Jan Tinbergen saw achieving the Four Freedoms as a process of negative integration: eliminating or reducing artificial barriers which impede the single market became the first priority of the common market project. Positive integration involves adopting common policies to promote integration. Tinbergen, J. (1954). *International Economic Integration*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Table 9 The Varying Depths of EU and US (national government) Policy Involvement

	Extensive EU/US Federal Involvement	**Considerable EU/US Federal involvement**	**Policy responsibilities shared between the EU and the Member States/US and states**	**Limited EU/US Federal involvement**	**Virtually no EU/US Federal policy involvement**
EU	External trade Agriculture Fishing (exclusive economic zone) Monetary (for eurozone members)	Market regulation Competition/Antitrust Asylum & Refugee	Regional/Cohesion Industry Foreign Development Environment Equal opportunity Working conditions Consumer protection Macroeconomic (especially for euro members) Energy Cross-border crime Civil liberties	Health Higher education Defence Social welfare Transport Immigration (except Blue Card) Housing	Domestic crime Primary and secondary education
US	Defense Foreign Monetary Agriculture Fishing (exclusive economic zone) Movement across external borders Macroeconomic Crime (federal statutes and federal penitentiaries) Immigration & Asylum Cross-border crime	Market regulation (include Financial Services Regulation) Competition/Antitrust	Environment Equal opportunity Working conditions Consumer protection Energy Interstate crime Civil liberties Health Social Welfare Transport Housing Industry Regional	Higher education (financial aid) Crime (local/state) Primary and secondary education (mainly involved through financial incentives offered to the states to implement federal education initiatives)	

Buonanno and Nugent (2015). *The New and Changing Transatlanticism: Politics and Policy Perspectives*. New York: Routledge. Updated January 2026.

Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)

The EMU project has always been controversial. At the centre of the controversy have been different views, among both policy practitioners and observers, as to whether a stable European currency system can exist when:

- there are great economic differences – in terms of both levels of economic development and the nature of economic structures – between the states participating in the system;
- the single currency is not underpinned by extensive economic integration; and
- the EMU system is accompanied by only weak political integration, with no strong central body with the authority to move significant economic and financial resources around the system or to impose necessary policies on states within the system.

Table 2 for a list of current Eurozone members.

Figure 4 Eurozone Members



Most EU states are obliged by their terms of accession to eventually adopt the euro. The Ecofin Council and the European Commission make recommendations as to the preparedness of Member States to join the Eurozone. Denmark and Sweden have chosen not to adopt the euro, even though both meet the accession criteria.[20]

There are two components of a full economic and monetary union: fiscal policy and monetary policy. The Maastricht Treaty laid down the basis for a "monetary" or "currency"

[20] Technically, Sweden did not qualify for an opt-out because the TEU was adopted prior to Sweden's accession. Denmark has an opt-out and therefore will never be required to replace its national currency with the euro.

union, with a single currency managed by a central bank. It did not, however, lay any such basis for a "fiscal union," which would have needed at its core an EU Finance Ministry or similar entity with strong fiscal (that is, revenue raising and spending) powers.

In the debate as to the proper sequencing of fiscal and monetary policy in the context of EMU, those who argued that monetary policy could precede fiscal policy gained the upper hand. As experts on EMU have observed, the debate was "won" by a brand of monetarists who argued that convergence between the economies would naturally result from monetary integration, thus there was no pressing need to coordinate and harmonize economic and monetary policies in advance of monetary union.

The eurozone debt crisis (2009-2015) was really comprised of two interrelated crises: a sovereign debt crisis and a banking crisis. The eurozone has enacted several reforms since 2010 that are designed to stabilize it. The three most important are: (i) the establishment of a permanent rescue (bailout) fund, called the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) that operates along the same lines as IMF funds loaned to countries on the verge of fiscal default; (ii) the strengthening of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) via a range of voluntary, legislative and (non EU-wide) treaty measures, and (iii) a banking union with the European Central Bank (ECB) as the supervising authority.

There is no shortage of suggestions from EU policymakers with respect to continued strengthening of the banking union and establishment of a fiscal union.

Attention has turned toward the extent to which the EU's budget could be used as a fiscal stability mechanism for eurozone countries.

Financing the EU[21]

One key to understanding the EU is to study its budget, which reveals a complex balance of power between the EU's institutions as well as its Member States.

The European Commission is responsible for proposing the EU budget. While a new budget is agreed each year, the overall framework of revenues and expenses is laid out in Multiannual Financial Frameworks (MFFs) in which the European Council and the EU institutions responsible for the budget (Council and the European Parliament) agree to seven-year budget programmes, which are then altered only slightly in each year of the MFF. This system has worked well in achieving its principal goal of containing institution-crippling disputes to once every few years rather than with each annual budgetary cycle but has diminished the ability of the EU to deal with emerging priorities.[22] It has also become useful as an exercise in which stakeholders and lawmakers debate the future of the EU in the run-up to the next MFF. The EU is currently operating under the 2021-2027 MFF.

The EU's budget is, in relative terms, very modest in size – accounting for only one per cent

[21]This section is based on Chapter 19 in Buonanno, L. and N. Nugent. 2021. *Policies and Policy Processes of the European Union*. Red Glob Press/Bloomsbury.

[22]Cipriani, G. (2018). The EU Budget. In N. Zahariadis & L. Buonanno (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of European Public Policy* (pp. 142-153). London: Routledge.

of total EU GNI. But notwithstanding this relative modesty, the nature of the budget's revenues and expenditures and the behaviour of the budget's decision-makers reveal much about the EU's policy priorities and policy-making processes. For, behind each revenue source are tugs-of-war between integrationists and intergovernmentalists and between "getters" and "spenders." And beneath each expenditure item lie an array of – often sharply clashing – policy priorities and images of the EU's purpose.

Expenditures

The 2021-2027 MFF uses the following headings:

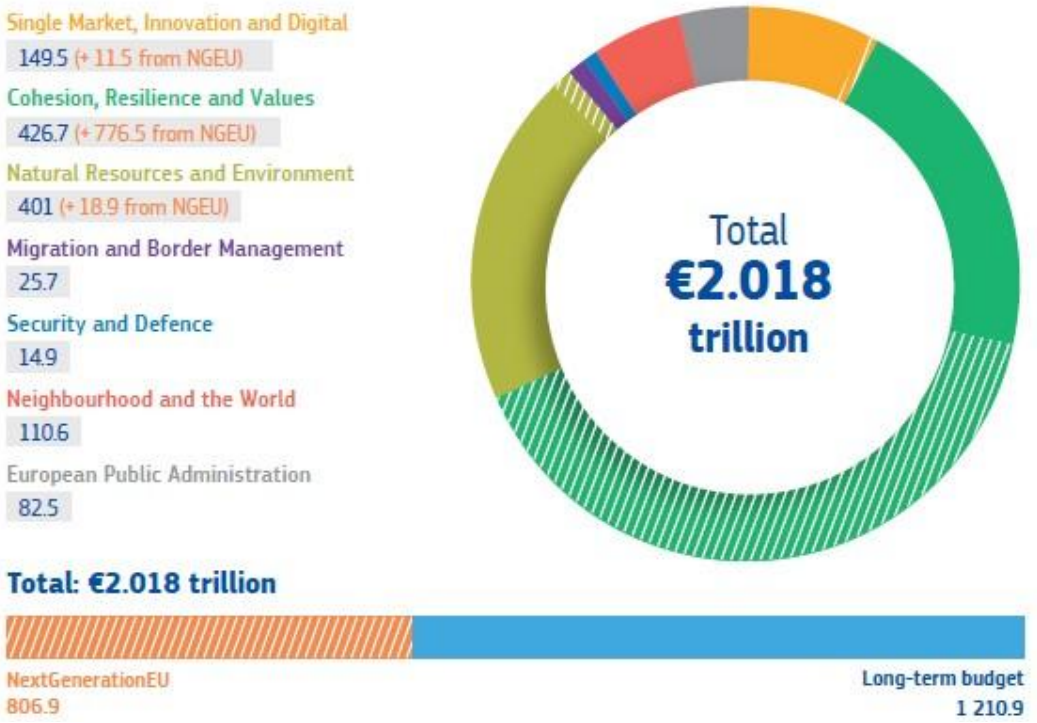
Category 1: Single Market, Innovation and Digital
Category 2: Cohesion, Resilience and Values
Category 3: Natural Resources and the Environment
Category 4: Migration and Border Management
Category 5: Security and Defence
Category 6: Neighbourhood and the World
Category 7: European Public Administration

A key innovation of the MFF 2021-2027 has been "NextGenerationEU," a €806.9 billion, a temporary instrument to power the COVID-19 recovery. Thus, the 2021-2027 MFF is €2.018 trillion (the long-term budget of 1.211 trillion plus the NextGenerationEU program of €806.9 billion).

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Cohesion/Structural policies continue to be the EU's budget largest categories, together accounting for 68.3 percent of the 2021-2027 MFF. Nevertheless, as per previous MFFs, CAP and cohesion funding spending have been decreasing. The areas with substantially more spending reflect the EU's current priorities: climate change (Green Deal objectives), the EU Health Programme, R& D (through Horizon Europe), Digital Europe (high-performance computing, AI, cybersecurity), and migration and border management. The NextGenerationEU (temporary) fund is designed to assist Member States with green technologies and digitalization as well as "repair the immediate economic and social damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic." [23] Figure 5 provides the expenditures for each of the seven categories.

[23]European Commission (2021). *The EU's 221-2027 Long-Term Budget and NextGenerationEU: Facts and Figures*.

Figure 5 Expenditure & Categories, MFF 2021-2027



Wrapping up this discussion of budgetary expenditures, Figure 6 is a pictograph with the size of the circles illustrating the relative weight with respect to other expenditures, allowing the reader to compare the continued dominance in the EU's budget of cohesion policy and the CAP vis à vis "newer and reinforced" priorities.

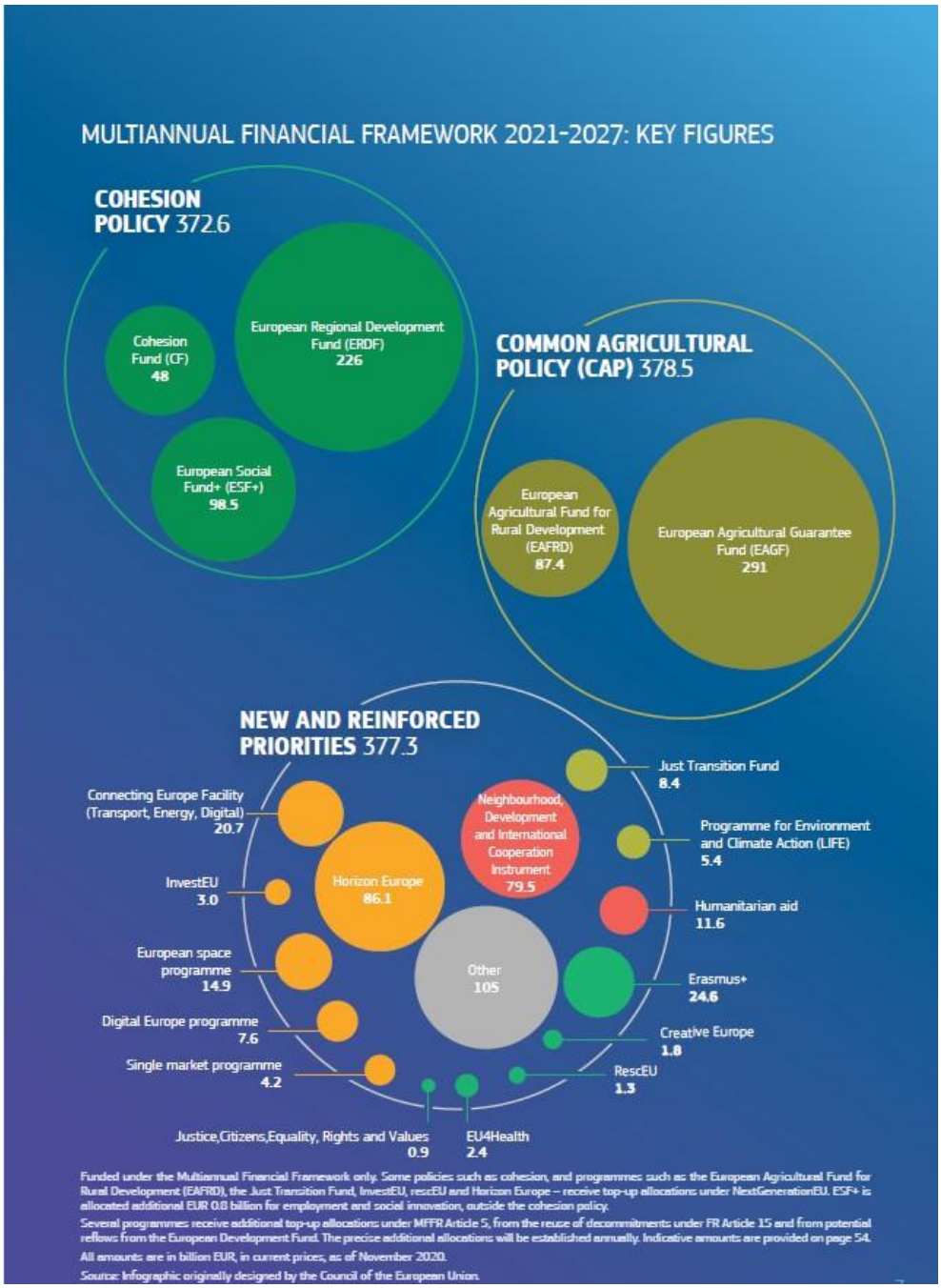
Revenues

Revenues are derived from four "own" sources. (Here are the percentage of revenues in the EU's 2022 budget):

1) customs tariffs and agricultural levies (Traditional Own Resources) (10.57%)
2) a VAT component collected from each Member State (11.26%)
3) *a Gross National Income (GNI)-based source* (67.09%)
The GNI resource takes the form of "contributions" to the budget from all Member States based on their size and wealth. So, it is based on ability to pay. The resource was conceived of as a "top-up" to bridge the gap between budgetary expenditure and income, and in effect is still treated as a budgetary balancing mechanism with the GNI resource makes up the shortfall. Naturally, the larger and richer Member States are the main contributors.
4) a new contribution started January 1, 2021, a contribution based on *non-recycled plastic packaging waste* (3.54%).
5) *other sources* – Additional resources come from fines imposed when businesses fail to comply with EU rules, taxes paid by EU employees, and unspent amounts from previous years.
6) *NextGenerationEU* –As part of the negotiations for the 2021-27 MFF, the European Council agreed – for the first time in the EU's history – to raise funds on the capital markets, using the EU budget as collateral. These funds are financing the NextGenerationEU, which

the European Council agreed to create to aid Member States to revive economies devasted by the coronavirus pandemic. The funds are to be used to help implement the EU's Green Deal (climate change initiatives) and enhance Member States' digital sectors. The borrowed amounts will be repaid over a long-term period, until 2058.

Figure 6 MFF 2021-27, Comparing Priorities



The debate on revenue sources

As has been implied in the above account of revenue sources, the existing system is unsatisfactory in several respects. Among its defects are its complexity, its lack of transparency, and its appearance of not being an own resources system at all but rather a system based on national contributions. This latter defect has been seen by many as being especially problematic because of its highlighting of the lack of financial independence of the EU and its encouragement of a *juste retour*[24] attitude amongst national governments in budgetary negotiations.

As a result of these perceived weaknesses, many proposals have been made over the years for a fundamental revision of the revenue raising system. Most of the proposals have focused on eliminating, or at least reducing, the GNI revenue source and replacing it with an EU tax or charge of some sort. In addition to the tax on non-recyclable plastics, the Commission has identified the following as being among the possibilities to reduce dependence on the GNI resource: a financial transactions tax; revenues from auctioning under the greenhouse gas Emissions Trading System; a charge related to air transport; a revised VAT; an energy tax; and a corporate income tax.[25] A personal income tax, however, would simply never be contemplated in today's EU not least because it undermines an essential power of the Member States.[26]

A central problem with proposals for EU taxes or charges is that they have always faced a major obstacle: the governments of some Member States – most notably the UK, but it has not been alone – have consistently opposed the idea of the EU being given a more independent financial base resting on some sort of direct taxation system. Their opposition has been based partly on sovereignty concerns and partly on concerns that EU budgetary processes should not become more independent. With the UK no longer an EU Member State, it is expected that this will be an issue that will receive more attention in the coming years and perhaps in the next MFF.

Another innovation in the MFF 2021-27 was the tying of funding from the NextGenEU to the rule of law, something that the European Parliament insisted on as a condition of their approval of the MFF. The EP was targeting particularly Hungary and Poland. To receive NextGen funding, Member States must submit national plans, which must be approved by the European Commission. The Commission withheld approval for Hungary and Poland based on concerns over undermining of media freedom and independence of the courts.[27]

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[24] The *juste retour* principle – Members States try to get as much out of the budget as they put in and thus undermines attempts for the EU budget to be an instrument of fiscal federalism (including redistribution from richer to poorer EU Member States).

[25] The rationale, for supporters of an EU corporate tax, rests with the single market. They argue that without the single market, which is a product of the EU, EU businesses would have lower revenues because sales would be depressed by both tariff and non-tariff barriers. See Begg, I. (2011). *An EU Tax: Overdue Reform or Federalist Fantasy*? Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/07819.pdf.

[26] Note that the US federal personal income tax was not permanently levied until World War I, over 100 years after the founding of the American republic.

[27] See, for example, EURACTIV (2021, September 2) "Commission Says its Holding up Recovering Money for Poland." https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/commission-says-it-is-holding-up-recovery-money-for-poland/

PART II: CURRENT ISSUES

Participants should be well versed in the priorities of the current Presidency of the EU, the trio presidency, and the Commission's strategic plan.

The EU's Strategic Planning & Priorities

These are your primary documents to begin your research. Once you have become familiar with the EU's priorities, particularly the trio programme and the Presidency Programme, you should then begin reading about current events.

Q: Why read the documents linked below?
A: You will be better able to contextualize current events if you are familiar with the EU's priorities.

1. The European Council
   European Union Strategic Agenda, 2024-2029.
   A good place to start learning about the EU's current concerns is with European Union Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029. "Following the European elections in June 2024, the EU set a number of priorities that shape the political and policy agenda until 2029…"

2. European Commission
   Priorities for 2024-2029.

3. The Trio (The three Member States, Presidency of the European Council (1 July 2026-December 2027).
   Trio Programme Website (Ireland, Lithuania, Greece)
   The Trio Programme (download and read for ideas for agenda items)

   Participants should become familiar with the priorities laid out in the trio programme and the Priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency.

   Available about mid-December 2026:

   Website of the Lithuanian Presidency
   Priorities of the Lithuania Presidency (January 1-June 30, 2027)

Reading articles in current periodicals

The Institute for European Union Studies at SUNY maintains a resource page "Staying Current on the EU."

We recommend you bookmark Politico Europe, which is a free daily resource that will help you to identify current challenges facing EU Member States and the EU.

PART III: GUIDELINES FOR SUNYMEU[28]

Introduction

The overall purpose of SUNYMEU is to provide a framework for a partial simulation of the decision-making process of the European Union. The advance preparations and the simulation should give all participants a better understanding of the EU; of international and supranational organizations in general; of the EU Member States, their peoples, politics, and policies; and of major current issues of international relations. Also, the simulation should provide the participants with opportunities to develop their skills and techniques at negotiation and conflict resolution, public speaking, debate, expository writing, logic and reasoning, small-group dynamics, leadership, and problem- solving.

SUNYMEU simulates the ending of a Council Presidency.

Purpose and Nature of the European Council Simulation

The purpose of the simulation is for the European Council to reach agreement on a minimum of three agenda items.[29]

SUNYMEU is student organized. Unlike many intercollegiate simulations, SUNYMEU participants discuss agenda items written and proposed by the students themselves.

Member State delegations and the European Commission submit agenda items for consideration to the SUNYMEU Leadership Team (SLT), which is comprised of the individuals listed in Box 7. The agenda items are crucially important to SUNYMEU and therefore recognizes and honours the extraordinary agenda writers by including outstanding, distinguished, and superior agenda awards.

[28] The editors of this volume wish to acknowledge the work of William Andrews, the founder of SUNYMEU (then called "SUNYMEC"). Professor Andrews wrote the SUNYMEU Guidelines from 1988- 1996. L. Buonanno wrote the guidelines for SUNYMEC (then operating under the name "Eurosim," from 2000-2005) and the first edition of the SUNYMEU Manual (2006). Because the guidelines have been revised each year, precise attribution of Professor Andrew's original language has become impossible. The editors take full responsibility for any errors.

[29] Each functional group (European Council, FAC, EcoFin, Coreper II) considers an agenda item. Sometimes a group will consider one or more alternative agenda items proposed the first evening of SUNYMEU.

Writing the Proposal and the Agenda-Setting Process

Researching and writing a proposal for consideration on SUNYMEU's agenda

Start Early!
Research with a purpose!

Research the government of your Member State. Go to the government's website and the political party website (of your alter ego). See what their priorities are. What are they saying about how the EU can help solve this policy dilemma. What is their concern? Why is that their concern?

Questions to consider:

1. What are your government's concerns with respect to the EU?
2. What is the political party of your alter ego and what is the party's ideological position on the political spectrum (for example, Center-Right? Far Right? Center-Left? Far Left?) To which European party group does your alter ego's national party belong (see alter ego list linked to the SUNYMEU website).
3. Is it a majority or coalition government?
4. If it is a coalition government, which political party is the HOG? Which political party is the foreign minister? And so forth…

Write the title!

The title should be descriptive of your government's proposal. This means your team should not attempt to be brief – make the title long enough to be descriptive. Anyone reading your proposal's title should know exactly what you are trying to accomplish.

Writing the background!

The background is a narrative about the nature of the problem that your delegation has identified. The problem is one that lends itself to EU involvement. Specifically, to what extent does the Member State think that the EU is needed to provide a solution to the problem? Include data, context, historical background, and so forth. The SUNYMEU Leadership Team may only consider proposals that include sufficient detail.

Offer recommendations!

Break recommendations down into subunits 1, 2, 3...n). The recommendations should include a call for action; specify the appropriate authority that should take action - for example, "The Commission should consult the relevant parties and produce a report with a recommendation by this date."

Role of the SUNYMEU Leadership Team in Agenda Setting

The work of the SUNYMEU Leadership Team (SLT) is crucial to the smooth functioning of SUNYMEU. The SUNYMEU Leadership Team is selected by the IEUSS, with advice and consultation from the SUNYMEU Faculty Directors from (typically) a pool of veteran SUNYMEU participants who indicated on the Member State/alter egos survey they were interested in these roles. The SLT is intercollegiate, sometimes the participants live in two or more different time zones, and therefore the team relies heavily on electronic communication and so forth. (See Box 7.)

Box 7 SUNYMEU Leadership Team

- European Council President
- European Commission President
- High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
- Presidency of the Council of the EU (HOG, foreign minister, finance minister)
- Secretary General of the Council General Secretariat

The Presidency of the Council of the EU (**Lithuania for SUNYMEU 2027**) organizes leadership meetings and provides support to the leadership team as needed in the months prior to the simulation. The SUNYMEU leadership team is intercollegiate, and therefore relies on electronic communication, google drive, and video conferencing. The General Secretariat of the Council of the EU sets up and shares the google drive folder with the leadership team, video conferencing, and all other support to do their work as needed.

After the SLT edits/amalgamates/selects the agenda items, this group produces an agenda document, which includes the agenda item assigned to each of the three functional groups (European Council, FAC, EcoFin).

Step-by-step explanation of the proposal process (for consideration as an agenda item)

Step 1: Delegations submit proposal for consideration through google forms. (See Figure 7.) This form is located under the "Forms" tab linked to the SUNYMEU 2027 website.

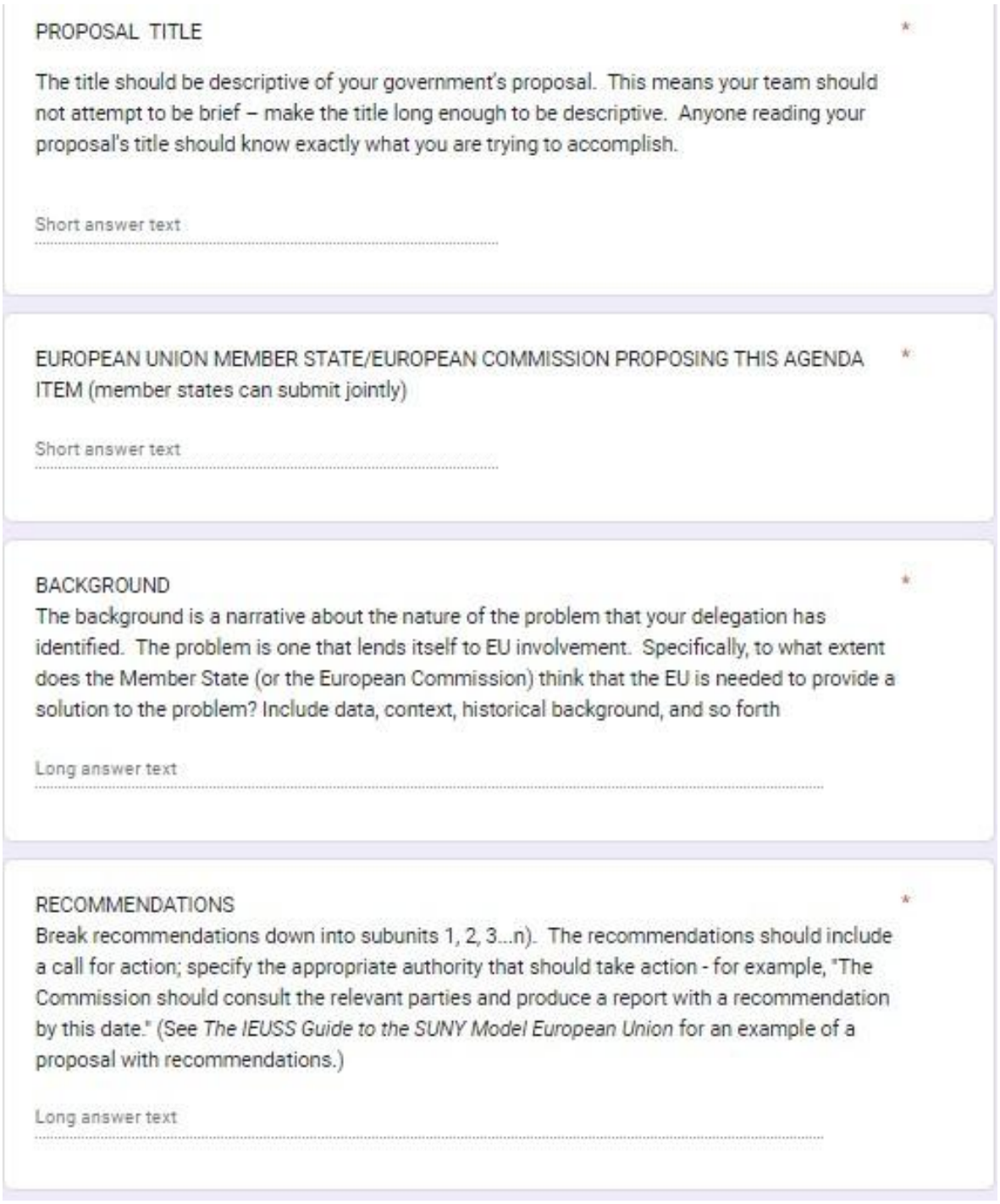
Step 2: The IEUSS faculty and General Secretariat of the Council read the proposals and combine similar proposals into single agenda items, when possible. For example, if more than one proposal is submitted dealing with energy, the IEUSS team will rewrite/edit/condense as needed to make one agenda item. (Each Member State and/or the European Commission that has submitted a proposal on the subject will be eligible for the SUNYMEU agenda item award.) The IEUSS team will also rewrite/add background material, if needed, before submitting proposals to the SLT.

Step 3: The IEUSS team forwards the document created in Step 2 to the SLT.

Step 4: The SLT discusses the proposals, edits them per their discretion, and designates them as agenda items for each of the functional meetings (European Council, FAC, and EcoFin).

Step 5: The Presidency of the European Council emails the SUNYMEU agenda to the IEUSS team, which will then email the document to all registered participants and upload to the SUNYMEU 2027 website. Those agenda items not selected by the SLT are designated as "alternative agenda items."

Figure 7 Screenshot of SUNYMEU Proposal Submission Form



Box 8 contains a sample of a proposal submitted by participants playing Romania in a recent SUNYMEU.

Box 8 Sample Proposal submitted by a delegation to the SLT – Competitiveness and Trade (2024)

Agenda Title: Competitiveness and Trade

EU Member State/EU institution proposing this agenda item:

Sweden

Background

The EU faces steep competition in today's growth industries. The EU's greatest asset—the internal market—must be truly integrated to realize its competitive advantage in global competition. Trade, external and internal security, and competitiveness are interrelated challenges that necessitate European action. The internal market and joint European R&D and production has made it possible for Europe to compete head-to-head with China and the US. The EU, however, has not realized the full benefits of its internal market in establishing industries that can realize the economies of scale in production. Some of this lack of competitiveness is the result of the EU's anti-competition rules, which undermine the ability of European industries to form mergers that can achieve economies in R & D, production, and markets. This is especially critical in the Defence and Communications industries; for example, Elon Musk's Starlink has no similarly sized European alternative for the encrypted satellite services governments need for secure communications. The EU has also been eclipsed in the rapidly growing A.I. sector, and steps must be taken to foster research and commercial growth in the market. Building on its global leadership with its AI Act, which established the regulatory structure for AI, the Union must now move forward in an AI industrial policy to marshal European ingenuity to become the global leader in AI technology.

The EU is also entering a new and difficult era with respect to Transatlantic Relations, particularly with respect to trade with the United States. This calls for a renewed effort to forge deeper trading relationships with other trading partners and expand on existing agreements.

Recommendations

1. Actions should be taken to revitalize/increase the size and scope of homegrown aerospace/telecommunications companies to compete with American dominance in both sectors. There should be a subsidization of industrial development with a focus on establishing a competitive foothold in domestic markets. There should be a coordinated national escape clause activation planned for if a Member State exceeds SGP restrictions.

2. Encourage the Union to build a collective state encrypted telecommunications services through the IRIS^2 (Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and

Security by Satellite) Project. Funding to speed up the design phase is imperative.

3. The European Council welcomes the 5 April 2025 publication of the European Commission's AI Continent Action Plan. To ensure the EU becomes the global leader in AI, the European Council directs the Commission and its partner, the European Investment Bank, to implement the action plan:
    a. €20 billion financing from InvestAI a network of AI factories and five AI Gigafactories across the Union utilising a public-private partnership model.
    b. ensure the network of AI factories and AI gigafactories are powered by carbon neutral electricity.
    c. establish specialised labs to improve access of startups to high-quality training data.
    d. enact a duty on sophisticated AI based goods (electronics/parts) and services developed/made outside the Single Market to help fund European AI initiatives.
    e. establish an AI Act Service Desk to help businesses comply with the AI Act.
    f. undertake Apply AI Consultation to gather feedback from stakeholders regarding the challenges of navigating the AI Act.
    g. open public consultation on the proposed *Cloud and AI Development Act* to triple the EU's data centre capacity in the next five years'
    h. focus on 'Made in Europe' components to drive the AI strategy.

4. The Council reiterates the importance of further strengthening the Capital Union to ensure maximum movement and investment across the Union, particularly to ensure the availability of venture capital for European startups in green technology, defence, communications, and AI.

5. The Commission should be urged to consider the European Council's recognition that EU firms are competing with very large American and Chinese corporations. Global competition must be a factor in considering merger requests by European corporations.

6. The European Council recognizes the volatility of the tariffs levied on European products by the Trump administration. The Union has suspended the €22 billion counter tariffs considering the Trump administration's "pause" on a 20% tariff on all European products, but condemns the unjustified 10% across-the-board import tariff and the 25% US tariffs on steel and aluminium imports, which involves a loss of €25.7billion to the internal market's economy. The European Council will continue to promote dialogue with US trade authorities and counsels the Member States to resist the temptation to strike unilateral deals with the Trump

administration.

7. The Commission must remain vigilant regarding imports from China. The Union cannot become a dumping ground for Chinese products diverted from the US due to the US-China trade war.

Preparation

Students preparing to participate in SUNYMEU should concentrate their efforts on these activities:

- Gaining an understanding of the structure and dynamics of the European Union, especially those institutions that are included in the simulation in which the student is participating.

- Learning as much as possible about the policies currently of concern to the European Union and its Member States.[30]

- Acquiring an understanding of the domestic and international concerns of the Member State to be represented.

- Gaining a good, general knowledge of some current international area or issue. If each member of a delegation takes a different area or issue, collectively it should be well-informed.

- Improving their skills at negotiating, conflict resolution, parliamentary procedure, parliamentary prose, public speaking, debate, and logic and reasoning.

- Learning about the specific person to be represented, i.e., the alter ego of the student-participant.

Communication

Questions about Member State and other assignments and the Council agenda can be sent to sunymeu@buffalostate.edu. The SUNYMEU team monitors this email address.

SUNYMEU utilizes web platforms for:

- Conference registration
- Submission of agenda items

[30]A good resource is Member States and the European Union by Bulmer and Lequesne, C. Download book review.

- Conference payment (when by credit/debit card)

Research Guide

The EU is widely studied and reported. The IEUSS maintains a website with resources for learning about and staying current about the EU. The visitor will find links to the official website of the European Union, thinktanks, current periodicals, report depositories, videos, and so forth. Please bookmark the IEUSS Resources page.

Alter Egos

A list of country delegation assignments will be sent to student and faculty organizers and linked to the SUNYMEU 2027 webpage. If national elections will be held in a Member State prior to SUNYMEU, the alter ego list will note this so that students can be aware that the name of the alter ego could change.

Each head of government will be given access to a google sheet listing all alter egos with student names and emails assigned to these roles. The individual chairing the particular meeting is responsible for setting up a chat group for each group: European Council President (European Council), High Representative (FAC), and Finance Minister (EcoFin).

Students can begin conversing and caucusing using the student run SUNYMEU Facebook site—post to wall for public viewing and use messaging function for private correspondence (e.g., negotiations). Naturally, participants can use other forms of communication once they have made contact via Facebook, What's App, Instagram, email, or the communication medium of their choice.

To facilitate communication prior to SUNYMEU, faculty advisors or student delegation leaders should include the name of the student, their email address, and their alter ego when sending delegation information to **sunymeu@buffalostate.edu**.

Each country will be represented by a head of government (prime minister, chancellor, or president), who acts as head of their delegation, a foreign minister and a finance minister. The Presidency of the Council, if they wish, can seat an additional member, Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe, who can float between meetings. The European Commission will be comprised of the Commission President and commissioners holding policy portfolios relevant to the agenda items.

Commission

The Commissioners are the only participants in the simulation who have an exclusive obligation to the welfare of the EU. In the simulation they have two main roles. First, they will meet to make appropriate decisions on the matters at issue in the simulation. Second, at all other times, they will act as problem-solvers, facilitating the decision-making process in such a way as to maximize the supranationalism of the result. The real-life Commissioners distribute among themselves the policy areas of the EU, but the simulation assumes they are working under the leadership of their President on the issue at hand. The Commission works closely with the Presidency of the Council to ensure that the simulation proceeds on a smooth

course.

Heads of Government

The Heads of Government (HOGS)[31] meet in the European Council (often called "EU summits"). At European Councils, key policy issues covering such matters as treaty reform, EU enlargement, membership of the eurozone, EU border controls, and pressing foreign policy matters are considered and negotiated. Sometimes, the HOGS need to step in at the last minute, when all other efforts have failed, to solve knotty problems by personal negotiation with peers. The European Council makes declarations, acting as a "board of directors," that it expects the Commission and/or Council to act on in the near future. So, while the Commission drafts legislation and the Council and the European Parliament labour over the legislation, the European Council meets in summits to discuss longer-range issues and issue policy statements. It sets the overall direction of the EU in these policy statements, especially in its "Conclusions." This means that its policies should be as clear as possible so that the institutions (Commission, Parliament, and Council) can draft the supporting legislation.

European Council meetings are prepared by the Presidency of the Council, "in cooperation with the President of the Commission, and on the basis of the work of the General Affairs Council."

In SUNYMEU, the Student Leadership Team (SLT) prepares the simulation agenda from proposals submitted by the Member States and the Commission.

SLT Members: European Council President, European Commission President, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Presidency of the Council of the EU (HOG, Foreign Affairs Minister, and Finance Minister) and the Secretary General of the Council General Secretariat. (See Box 7.)

European Council meetings are chaired by the European Council President.

SUNYMEU 2027 simulates (and anticipates) the **June 2027** European Council Summit. The outcome of SUNYMEU 2026 is the drafting of the **European Council Meeting – Conclusions (4 April 2027)**, a document which contains everything about which the summit participants have been able to agree. The Conclusions will be presented and voted on by the European Council at the closing session (Sunday afternoon) of SUNYMEU.

[31] Participants should be mindful of the distinction between head of government and head of state. In constitutional monarchies the prime minister is head of government, and the monarch is head of state. In European republics organized as parliamentary systems, typically the "president" is head of state, and the prime minister or chancellor is head of government. The French President is both head of government and head of state.

Ministers

Ministers represent their national governments through the EU institution called "the Council." All ministers act, in effect, as the representatives of the interests of their Member States in the policy areas for which they are responsible. As nearly as is possible in the European Union today, ministers are charged to look after their national interests rather than a vague European-wide interest, though they try to bring these two interests together. So, they are the guardians of the national interest. All ministers are active politicians in the partisan politics of their home countries, which gives them specific partisan and ideological orientations as well. They endeavour to ensure that nothing is decided that will undermine their respective national policies.

SUNYMEU ministers (foreign ministers and finance ministers) should learn about the political and ideological orientation of their alter egos. It is important to keep in mind that in coalition governments a minister's political party may differ from that of their HOG.

Chairing Meetings

The European Council is chaired by the President of the European Council, assisted by the HOG of the Member State holding the Council Presidency, followed by the other two members of the trio.

The FAC is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

EcoFin is chaired by the Finance Minister of the Member State holding the Council Presidency.

Foreign Ministers

This formation of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Foreign Ministers, who deal with all aspects of foreign policy, meet in the Foreign Affairs Council.

Ecofin Ministers

The EcoFin Council is chaired by the finance minister of the Member State holding the Presidency of the Council.

Economic and Finance Ministers (who are normally referred to as Ecofin Ministers) deal with most matters concerning economic and financial affairs.

European Parliament

SUNYMEU participants should keep in mind that legislation is proposed by the Commission, but that the European Parliament (EP) and the Council (of Ministers) are the EU's legislative decision-making bodies. Most EU law (directives and regulations) utilize the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP) in which the relevant Council (of Ministers) configuration (think of a configuration as a committee – there are 10 such configurations) and the EP "markup" and pass legislation. For Americans, the EP is roughly equivalent to the US House of Representatives in that the Members of European Parliament (MEPs) are directly elected, and the number of MEPs is based on Member State population. The Council (of Ministers) is somewhat analogous to the US Senate (in representing the states and even more so before the passage of the 17th Amendment to the US Constitution providing for the direct elections of US senators).

What makes the Council (of Ministers) so unusual in terms of democratic systems is its seating and decision-making as a committee of 27 (one Member State in each Council configuration) rather than in the whole (a Council of 270). As with the US Senate, Council seats are allocated by Member State (one per Member State) rather than by population.

The EP has a limited role in the European Council summits but has long sought a more significant role. As of the present time, "The President addresses the European Council prior to each of its meetings, stating Parliament's viewpoint on the subjects on the agenda in the framework of a debate with the heads of state and government."[32]

SUNYMEU includes this role of the EP's President in this capacity. The student playing the EP's President makes a speech at SUNYMEU's opening and lays out the EP's position on each of the agenda items.

Press Corps

Just as students are assigned alter egos and are expected to participate in the simulation as that alter ego, members of the Press Corps are expected to simulate the role of real journalists. Their function during the simulation is to cover the activities of the simulation and report on them through the production of a simulation newspaper, blogs, and videos. This includes attending simulation meetings, interviewing participants, and participating in press conferences.

Members of the Press Corps are expected to act in a professional manner and adhere to professional standards of journalism. Information obtained through covering meetings or interviews or press conferences should be reported in as accurate a way as possible. They

[32] See "The President of the European Parliament."

should remember that during meetings, their role is to cover the meetings and should not be engaged in an active way in topic discussions during those meetings. Nor should they interfere with the meeting process.

Participants working with the Press Corps should remember that an important experience of the simulation is learning how to work with the press. They are expected to cooperate with the press corps in terms of requests for interviews, participation in press conferences, etc.

All SUNYMEU meetings are open to the Press Corps, including the European Council. No member of the Press Corps may be asked to leave a meeting. If participants feel that a member of the Press Corps has not accurately reported information at a meeting they attended or did not accurately report information that they have given a reporter, they may write a letter to the editor of the Press Corps that may be published on the SUNYMEU Facebook site or an outlet provided by the Press Corps.

The SUNYMEU Press Corps reports on SUNYMEU through various media (e.g., newspapers, social media, and video) prior to and during the event. It is the Press Corps decision as to which media to employ.

Faculty Advisors

Students are not required to be accompanied by a faculty or graduate student adviser to SUNYMEU. Nevertheless, the Institute for European Union Studies at SUNY welcomes faculty and graduate student advisers and sponsors two events for them—teaching/research panels and a Saturday evening faculty/graduate student advisor dinner. Faculty and graduate student advisors are, of course, free to organize their relationship with their students during the simulation as best suits their needs. Experience, however, suggests that the simulation proceeds best if the advisors avoid coaching the students or assisting them too much in solving problems. They serve informally as sources of information and in counselling the students on how to maintain the integrity of the simulation. For this reason, no formal arrangements for such consultation are included in the simulation schedule.

Expert Witnesses

Academic specialists or professionals testify at sessions of the full European Council on relevant matters (items on the simulation agenda). Their roles will be to provide the participants with information and ideas on the institutions and issues involved in the simulation. Participants and witnesses should bear in mind that the witnesses are not supposed to lecture to the participants. They will summarize their testimony in brief, five-minute statements and then, respond to the questions of the participants. The participants should behave as though they are in full charge of those sessions and not be intimidated by the status and expertise of the witnesses.

Official Observers

Participants who are not representing EU Member States will have the status of official observers. This will enable them to attend all sessions, to lobby participants, and to speak or pose questions at plenary sessions when given special leave, but not to vote.

SUNYMEU Dispute Mechanism

The STL is responsible for settling disputes during SUNYMEU regarding procedure and the like. The STL should refer to this manual for guidance in mediating disputes. The procedures laid out in this manual are the rules for conducting SUNYMEU. However, in the event of a dispute or other misunderstanding during SUNYMEU the STL feels unable to resolve because it is not addressed in this manual, the STL will bring this dispute to a student council comprised of **four students from different campuses and the President of the European Commission**. They will resolve the dispute in consultation with the IEUSS board members and fellows who are on site who can provide guidance with respect to the TFEU and the TEU as well as informal rules and procedures.

Triggering Article 7 of the TEU is not appropriate for SUNYMEU because it requires European Parliament Consent

While, at times, some SUNYMEU participants have become frustrated when a single member state refuses to compromise on a particular point. However, Article 7 does not pertain to SUNYMEU because it is a simulation of a European Council summit. **The European Parliament is not represented, but is a required decision-maker for triggering Article 7.**

Explanation of Article 7

Article 7, if invoked, can lead to the suspension of EU membership rights, including voting rights in the Council of the EU and the European Council. Article 7 is designed to address serious violations of EU values, including democracy and fundamental rights. While Article 7 gained attention in recent years due to perceived intractability of Hungary and Poland, it has never been invoked.

Procedure for triggering Article 7:

Preventive measures (article 7(1))

Article 7(1) can be triggered if there is a clear risk of a serious breach of EU values. This starts off a dialogue between the EU institutions and the member state to address concerns before the matter is escalated.

The procedure begins with a **proposal made by one third of EU member states**, by the European Parliament or by the European Commission. **The Council then obtains the European Parliament's consent.** If four fifths of the Council's members vote in favour, the Council may then determine that there is a clear risk of a serious breach of the fundamental principles by a member state and make appropriate recommendations.

Sanctions (article 7(2))

If a member state is found to be in serious and persistent violation of EU values, article 7(2) allows for stronger action, including sanctions. This can involve suspending a member state's voting rights in the Council, which can significantly impact its influence within the

EU.

The sanctions stage is when the European Council becomes involved. The procedure starts with a proposal made by one third of EU member states or by the Commission. **The European Council then obtains the European Parliament's consent**. Provided the European Council's members agree unanimously, the European Council may then determine that a member state is seriously and persistently breaching the values of the EU. If that happens, the Council can decide to suspend some of the rights that derive from application of the treaties to the member state in question, including its voting rights. That decision is taken by a qualified majority.

Part IV: SUNYMEU 2027 PROGRAM & AWARDS
Preliminary Program

The 40th Annual
SUNY MODEL EUROPEAN UNION

Friday, April 2 – Sunday, April 4, 2027
Hosted by
Buffalo State University – SUNY
1300 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, New York

Friday April 2

Pre-Simulation Activity

10:15-11:30 a.m. Buffalo City Hall, Briefing in Common Council chamber
Facilitator: Mr. Gregory Rabb

Program Note:
The briefing starts at **10:15am sharp** in Council chambers. You may meet the group at City Hall or walk down from The Best Western on the Avenue (510 Delaware Avenue) with the group. Everyone needs to go through security, which will take time as we are expecting a large group. Mr. Rabb will be downstairs at 9:45 a.m. to take everyone upstairs to the Common Council Chamber after you all pass through the security check. For those of you staying/meeting at The Best Western on the Avenue, Mr. Rabb asks that you gather at 9 a.m. at The Best Western and walk down Delaware Avenue (head south). It should be about a 25-minute walk to City Hall. City Hall is located at the foot of Delaware Avenue in Niagara Square. You can't miss it. Wear comfortable shoes. Business casual (nice jeans are okay). There will be some additional walking after the briefing, including visiting the iconic Observation Deck.

2:00–4:00 p.m. **Conference Check-in**
Location TBA
Registration

3:00–3:30 p.m. **SUNYMEU Rules of Procedures**
Facilitated by the GS & Council Presidency
Location TBA

4:00–4:25 p.m. **Opening Ceremony**

Greeters

4:30–5:30p.m. **Keynote Speaker (in-person)**
Dr. Mert Kartal
St. Lawrence University

"TITLE," followed by Q & A

5:30-6:15 p.m. Buffet Dinner

6:15-6:30 p.m. **SUNYMEU 2027 Opens**

Program Note:
The Lithuanian Presidency announces the general rules of debate and presents the three agenda items along with voting rules (qmv or unanimity). The President of the European Parliament makes a speech laying out the EP's position on each of the agenda items. Member States that have submitted alternative proposals are invited to present their proposals.

6:30-7:00 p.m. **SUNYMEU Group Photo, Delegation Photos**

Saturday April 3

9:00-9:30 a.m. **Coffee Service, Grab & Go Breakfast Items**
AVC, 1st Floor

9:30-10:50 a.m. **Functional Meetings: Morning Session**
European Council – TBD
FAC – TBD
ECOFIN – TBD

11-11:55 a.m. **Plenary – Expert Witnesses**

TBD

Moderator: Raymond Rushboldt – SUNY Fredonia

Panelists:
John Abromeit, PhD – Buffalo State University
Laurie Buonanno, PhD – Buffalo State University
Carolyn Dudek, PhD – Hofstra University
Mert Kartal, PhD – St. Lawrence University

12:00-1:00 p.m. **LUNCH**

Program Note:
Campbell Student Union, Bengal Kitchen (Dining Hall). GS will be at the entrance to the dining hall with tickets.

1:15-3:15 p.m. **Functional Meetings: Afternoon Session 1**

European Council – TBD

FAC – TBD

ECOFIN– TBD

3:15-3:30 p.m. **Coffee Break**
AVC 1st Floor

3:30-4:30 p.m. **Plenary & Press Conference**
TBD

Program Note:
Progress Report from the Lithuanian Presidency, European Council President, European Commission President, and the High Representative (maximum 30 minutes). Followed by questions from the SUNYMEU Press Corps (30 minutes)

SUNYMEU adjourns for the evening

SUNDAY, April 4

9:00-9:30 a.m. **Coffee Service, Grab & Go Breakfast Items**

TBD

9:30-11:15 a.m. **Functional Meetings: Morning Session**
European Council – TBD
FAC – TBD
ECOFIN – TBD

11:25-11:45 a.m. **Plenary & Press Conference**
TBD

Program Note:
Progress Report from the Lithuanian Presidency, European Council President, European Commission President, and the High Representative

12:00-1:00 p.m. **LUNCH**

Campbell Student Union, Bengal Kitchen (Dining Hall). GS will be at the entrance to the dining hall with tickets.

12:00-1:00 p.m**.** **Electronic voting for awards**

1:15-3:15 p.m. **Functional Meetings: Afternoon Session 1**
European Council – TBD
FAC – TBD
ECOFIN– TBD

3:15-3:45 p.m. **Reception (refreshments)**
TBD

Program Note:
This will be a substantial break to allow time for delegation photographs and informal caucusing while the European Council finalizes conclusions. The idea is to relax a bit and recharge while enjoying good food and drink.

3:15-3:45 p.m. **European Council Finalizes Conclusions**
TBD
(open for observation, ongoing during the reception)

3:45-4:15 p.m. **Closing**
TBD

MCs – IEUSS board members Laurie Buonanno, Gregory Rabb, Raymond Rushboldt

1. **Vote**. The European Council conducts its formal Vote on Conclusions
Program Note: HOGs vote on the agenda items, each taken one at a time; unanimity voting for enlargement/CFSP/CSDP; qmv for advancing the single market. Facilitator: European Council President

2. **Awards & Recognitions.**
Facilitators: General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

3. **Certificates of Completion.** Each SUNYMEU participant receives a certificate of completion. Photo Op for each delegation.
Facilitators: Professors Buonanno, Rabb, Rushboldt

Box 9 contains a list of the SUNYMEU awards, although one or two may be added depending upon the decision of the Student Leadership Team. All SUNYMEU student participants are eligible to vote for these awards.

Awards

Box 9 SUNYMEU Awards

- Most effective Member State/European Commission delegation (outstanding, distinguished, superior)
- Best agenda items (outstanding, distinguished, superior)
- Most effective head of government
- Most effective foreign affairs minister
- Most effective finance minister

Part V: Rules and Procedures for SUNYMEU

The European Council Meeting – Conclusions

SUNYMEU produces "SUNYMEU European Council meeting – Conclusions (4 April 2027)." This is the final product of SUNYMEU and participants. It will be emailed to each participant and posted to the SUNYMEU 2027 website. Once the SUNYMEU 2027 website is closed, a pdf of the Conclusions will also be available on the SUNYMEU archive page on the IEUSS website.

The report should be prepared by the SUNYMEU Student Leadership Team.

All members of the European Council should be given opportunity to review and revise the draft of the Conclusions before it is submitted.

What should FAC and EconFin produce?

Each of these functional groups should submit a revised agenda item accompanied by a short memo (no more than one page) to the European Council via Google Drive.

The agenda items and the accompanying memo is not the drafter's work product, but the product of the entire committee. This means that all members should approve both the memo and the revised agenda item. (The Chair will need to call for a vote by all Member State representatives at the meeting, if necessary.)

What content should the memo contain?

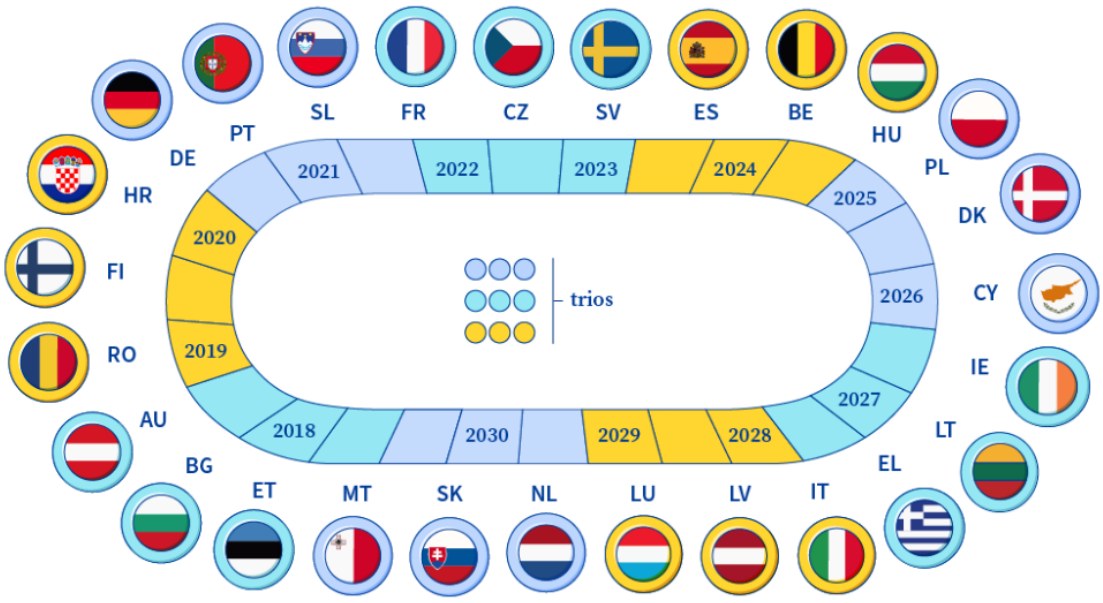
The memo should be no more than one-page long and should be written to have an impact on those who read it (the European Council). Briefly summarize voting procedures, background of the problem, "sticking points," and recommendations.

Seating Order

1. **European Council and the ECOFIN** seating order.

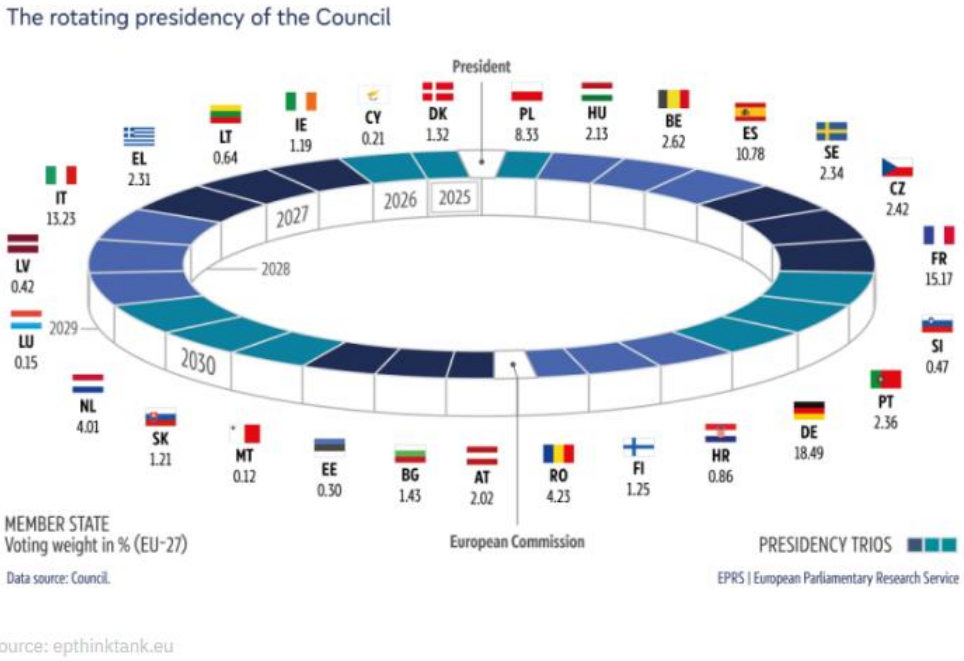
The Presidencies and the members of the institutions take the central position in circular formation or sit at the head of the room. National delegations are seated around the table in order of the rotation, with each moving one place clockwise at the start of every 6-month period. The Member States' representatives sit according to the official EU listing order[33], which is by Presidency rather than alphabetical order and rotate clockwise around the table.

Figure 8 Seating Order in Council



[33] See Council Presidency Seating Order

Figure 9 Seating order for Lithuanian Presidency



Source: epthinktank.eu

Seating explanation:
Lithuania will be seated where DK is located on this chart (to the right of the President). All member state seating moves in the clockwise direction. So, for example, Ireland will set to the left of the President, because Ireland is the immediate past president. The European Commission President sits opposite from the European Council President.

2. **Foreign Affairs Council and EcoFin Council** Seating Order.

The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) follows the same seating order rules as for the European Council but is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (rather than the foreign minister holding from the EU Member state holding the EU's presidency).

Conduct of Business

All participants should be familiar with Roberts' Rules of Order (parliamentary procedure). Participants should also review the proper forms for addressing chairs.

With **smaller meetings** (generally, meetings other than plenary sessions), the chair should try to use "Rules for Debate in Small Committees." Chairs should use their discretion whether to use Roberts' Rules or Order (parliamentary procedure) or rules for debate in small committees.

Parliamentary procedure (Roberts' Rules of Order) is inappropriate for smaller meetings and will only serve to slow down the business of the meeting unnecessarily. If the Chair can keep the meeting less formal, they should try to do so.

Rules for Debate in Small Committees

The rules for small committee meetings are different from the rules which apply to large meetings of assemblies or plenary bodies.

1. Members are not required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking, which they can do while seated.
2. There is no limit to the number of times a member can speak to a question, and motions to close or limit debate generally are not allowed. (Note: In practice, even these motions are in fact usually allowed.)
3. Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
4. The chair can speak during discussions, make motions, and usually votes on all questions.
5. Sometimes, when a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion having been introduced. Unless agreed by general consent, however, all proposed actions of a committee must be approved by vote under the same rules as an assembly.

Parliamentary Procedure (Roberts' Rules of Order)

These should be used for larger meetings that cannot be run more informally. Roberts's Rules are always used in SUNYMEU plenary meetings. How formal other meetings should be is a matter for the chair to decide based on progress achieved.

Parliamentary Procedure Summarized[34]

Five kinds of knowledge for an effective meeting participant

1. Knowledge of the subject matter at hand.
2. Knowledge of parliamentary rules of order.
3. Knowledge of rhetoric-the power to persuade.

[34] Participants may also wish to consult ***Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (http://www.robertsrules.com)***.

4. Knowledge of problem solving and decision making.
5. Knowledge of human social-emotional dynamics.

Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

1. Parliamentary procedure exists to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony.
2. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
3. The majority has the right to decide.
4. The minority has rights which must be protected.
5. A quorum must be present for the group to act. Full and free discussion of every motion considered is a basic right.
6. Only one question at a time can be considered at any given time.
7. Members have the right to always know what the immediately pending question is, and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
8. No member can speak until recognized by the chair.
9. No one can speak a second time on the same question if another wants to speak a first time.
10. The chair should be strictly impartial.

Handling a Motion

Three steps by which a motion is brought before the group:

Step 1: A member makes a motion.
Step 2: Another member seconds the motion.
Step 3: The chair states the question on the motion.

Three steps in the consideration of a motion:

Step 1: The members debate the motion (unless no member claims the floor for that purpose).
Step 2: The chair puts the question to a vote.
Step 3: The chair restates the question.

Thomas Jefferson's advice is still good: "No one is to disturb another in his speech by hissing, coughing, spitting, speaking or whispering to another, etc."

Table 10 Frequent Things You Want to Do

Objective	Appropriate Motion
Present an idea for consideration or action	Main motion or Resolution; Consider subject informally
Improve a pending motion	Amend; Division of the question
Regulate or cut-off debate	Limit or extend debate; Previous question (vote immediately)
Delay a decision	Refer to committee; Postpone definitely; Postpone indefinitely (kills motion)
Suppress a proposal	Object to consideration; Postpone indefinitely; Withdraw a motion
Meet an emergency	Question of privilege; Suspend rules; Lay on the table
Gain information on a pending motion	Parliamentary inquiry; Request for information; Question of privilege; Request to ask member a question
Question the decision of the chair	Point of order; Appeal from decision of the chair
Enforce rights and privileges	Division of assembly; Division of question; Parliamentary inquiry;
Point of order	Appeal from decision of chair
Consider a question again	Resume consideration; Reconsider; Rescind
Change an action already taken	Reconsider; Rescind; Amend motion previously adopted
Terminate a meeting	Adjourn; Recess

Chairing Meetings

Effective chairing is crucial for an enjoyable experience in SUNYMEU. All chairs should practice chairing meetings prior to SUNYMEU using both procedures for small meetings and parliamentary procedure.

Who Chairs & Facilitates Meetings?

- The President of the European Council chairs the European Council meeting.
    - The President of the European Council may ask the HOG of the Presidency team to co-chair, which may make keeping track of procedure and minutes easier.
- EcoFin is chaired by the country holding the Council presidency.
- The Foreign Affairs Council is chaired by the High Representative.
- The head of government, or his/her foreign minister, will chair individual country meetings.
- The President of the Commission chairs the European Commission meetings.
- The HOG of the member state holding the Presidency of the Council chairs plenary sessions.

Chair's Powers

All questions, motions, etc. must be recognized by the Chair. Chairs should take special

care to learn rules and guidelines, and they should always have the rules with them to be able to quote the rules if questions about procedure come up.

The Chair will decide on the closure of debate, but a participant must move for closure and be given a maximum of one minute to explain his/her rationale. If at least two other participants second the motion, it will immediately be put to a vote and requires the support of at least ¾ of the participants to be successful. The Chair will declare the debate closed if the vote is successful. The same rules apply for closure of debate.

Hints for Effective Chairing of Meetings

Achieving objectives

The purpose of meetings is to get decisions made collectively. It has been found that if a meeting is structured formally or semi-formally, this objective is achieved more easily and more effectively. The pivotal figure in a formal or semi-formal meeting is the Chair. They need to create the right circumstances in which decision-making is possible.

Making effective decisions

A chair can assist in making effective decisions by having regard to their three main ingredients:

a) use of all the skills available within the meeting; at least comparative consensus; and clarity of procedure

b) The Chair can achieve the first by enabling all participants to contribute. That is:

- everyone needs to be encouraged to take part
- no one should be discouraged by ill-mannered behaviour on the part of other participants, such as interruptions, rudeness etc

This means that the Chair must make sure that all participants understand that the person speaking "has the floor," and will be protected from interruption by the Chair. It also means that the Chair may need to encourage silent members by directly seeking their views, and ensuring that their contributions are presented as useful and relevant – e.g.: "that is a useful/valuable point…"

Full participation will lead to the majority "owning" the final decision, particularly if the Chair acknowledges each person's contribution in her/his summing up (see below), blunting the edges of dogmatic/offensive pronouncements by participants. This can be done by restating what has been said in less abrasive language.

c) The Chair is solely responsible for clarity of procedure.

Nothing makes participants more frustrated than uncertainty about what is being debated, or what is being voted upon.

Controlling a meeting

The best way to control a meeting is establish one's authority as Chair at the start. It also helps to get to know the participants as soon as possible – spot the shy ones, the over-talkative or the awkward ones, and deal with them accordingly. Shy people need to feel reassured and valued; over-talkative ones need to be prevented from dominating, whilst awkward ones need to be kept in order (see below).

The main rule is always that the Chair is right, even when they are wrong. It saves a lot of argument and confusion if meeting participants understand that from the first. A confident chair can make sure that they do, but it is not necessary to *be* really confident. An appearance of confidence tends to do the trick just as well and can be achieved simply by welcoming participants to the meeting (that makes it the chair's meeting to begin with).

Not all meetings are all that formal, and the Chair may need to decide how formally the situation should be managed at the start of a series of meetings. However, where a definite decision is to be made *and* is likely to be controversial, rules of debate may be applied:

The Chairing Process

Initiating debate

Before a discussion can begin, a motion should be proposed by one person, who may speak to the motion as the individual moves it.

In quite formal meetings (using parliamentary procedure), this motion should be seconded by another person, who may also speak to it.

Conducting the debate

Other people can follow with their contributions, when invited to do so by the Chair. Strictly speaking, they should speak once only and should *never* be interrupted whilst they are speaking. They may need a time limit set by the Chair. Debate should be as extensive as the Chair thinks is necessary, and the Chair should be prepared to say when s/he thinks that everything useful has been said.

Closing the debate

At this point, in really formal meetings, the original mover has the right to sum up, and this should close the debate…

… except that the Chair can sum up for the sake of clarity (but should not express a personal point of view).

Holding the vote

The vote should be put by the Chair, and normally a show of hands is sufficient (but the Chair should not count the votes personally – it is better to let someone else do that), unless a secret ballot is requested by the participants.

The Chair should then announce the results of the vote. At this point a *motion* becomes a *resolution.*

The Chair should thank all speakers and commend the decision (whatever it is).

After…
It may be that the decision made needs to be followed up with specific action (e.g., who is to implement the decision).

This too will be a matter for the Chair's initiative, and they should introduce this as the next step.

Complications, i.e., amendments
Sometimes the terms of a motion are not acceptable to one or more participant. In this case, an amendment to a resolution will be proposed.

Before it can be discussed, an amendment too ought to be seconded, strictly speaking.

At this point the Chair can rule whether it really is an amendment – i.e., a relatively minor change to the original motion – or whether it is a direct negative (i.e., would achieve the opposite of what the motion calls for).

If it is a direct negative, then the would-be amender can be informed that the amendment is not acceptable and advised simply to say her/his piece and then vote *against* the motion

A decision on an amendment must be taken before the vote on the original motion. Each amendment should therefore be discussed separately.

If it is carried, then it becomes the motion, and a final vote should be taken on that If

it is not carried, then the original motion is put to the vote

Occasionally participants put forward a *second* amendment before the first has been disposed of (i.e., voted on)

In such cases, the Chair should instruct the proposer of the second amendment that it will not be considered until after the result of the vote on the first amendment

The Chair can say: "I shall take that as notice of a further amendment." and the Council Secretariat should write down who put forward the second amendment.

After the vote on the first amendment has been taken, the Chair can invite the proposer of the second amendment to state their case and debate, followed by a vote, can proceed.
It does not often happen that anyone puts forward a *third* amendment, but if they do, then the procedure as for the second amendment is repeated.

Movers of amendments do *not* have the right to sum up before the vote is taken. They should only speak once, when proposing their amendment

Dealing with Awkward participants
Very often participants at a meeting do not understand meeting procedures because of lack

of experience. This can be an advantage to the Chair because they can be blinded with science. It can also be a disadvantage, because, not knowing the rules, participants do not know how to behave. If this is the case, then a short reminder of the rules at the start of the meeting (or at the start of trouble, whichever is earlier) can resolve the matter. There are, however, two other sorts of awkward participants:

- those who want to talk too much
- those who want to disrupt proceedings

People who want to talk too much (or too often – usually the same people) can be controlled by a stricter adherence to the rules of debate (see above).

People who want to be difficult cannot be controlled, but they can be persuaded that they should control themselves. This may be achieved by icy calm and courtesy, sometimes humour, on the part of the Chair. It may *not* be achieved by an exhibition of temper or panic by the Chair. Icy calm and courtesy nearly always work when warmth and friendliness do not, but it is probably better to try the warm and friendly approach to begin with.

Box 10 Checklist for Meeting Chairs

Checklist for Meeting Chairs

1. Be brief.
2. Exercise leadership.
3. Speak with authority.
4. Stand above petty differences.
5. Maintain an orderly meeting.
6. To control others, control yourself.
7. Keep the assembly informed.
8. Be modest.
9. Be patient.
10. Show interest.
11. Retain objectivity.
12. Seek to understand people.
13. Be alert.
14. Analyse.
15. Synthesize.
16. Be ready to phrase and rephrase remarks.
17. Be judicious in your power as Chair.

PART V: GUIDED REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNYMEU EXPERIENCE

As with all experiential activities, the IEUSS recommends students (and if they have faculty advisers) participate in an in-person (if possible) or virtual reflection of the SUNY Model European Union experience.

Suggested prompts:

- Did you enjoy SUNYMEU?

- Did you feel prepared for SUNYMEU?

-Would you have preferred not to have participated in an intercollegiate simulation?

-Did you find the experience stressful (in a good or bad way?)

-Would you participate in another simulation (Mock Trial, Moot Court, Model UN, Model Congress, Model NYS Senate?)

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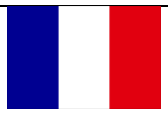
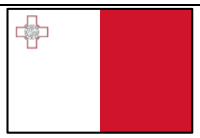
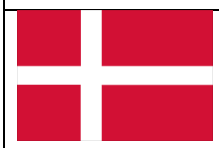
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APPENDIX

Figure 10 Flags of the EU & the EU Member States

 Austria	 Estonia	 Italy	 Portugal
 Belgium	 Finland	 Latvia	 Romania
 Bulgaria	 France	 Lithuania	 Slovakia
 Croatia	 Germany	 Luxembourg	 Slovenia
 Cyprus	 Greece	 Malta	 Spain
 Czechia	 Hungary	 Netherlands	 Sweden
 Denmark	 Ireland	 Poland	 European Union