

European Union

- = a family of democratic European countries, committed to working together for peace and prosperity
- member states have set up common institutions hence decisions on specific matters can be made democratically at European level
- 3 main principles:
 - Free movement of:
 - *People*
 - *Capital*
 - *Services*

Main aims of the EU

- to *strengthen political influence* of European countries in international affairs
 - e.g. participation in solutions of problems in conflict regions (Kosovo, Iraq, etc.)
- to *decrease regional inequalities* (disparities) among European regions
 - e.g. Eastern Slovakia vs. Munich (core-periphery)
- to *make migration of people easier*
 - e.g. if You want to travel abroad or to find a job abroad
- to *increase international security*
 - i.e. more countries joined together are stronger
- to *encourage international trade*
 - i.e. specialization of European regions to certain goods, e.g. wheat, high-tech, etc.
- to *support employment and research*
 - e.g. financial incentives given to problem regions and thus decreasing unemployment rate

History

Eu's enlargement history

- **1952:** Belgium, France, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy
- **1973:** Denmark, Ireland, UK

- **1981:** Greece
- **1986:** Portugal, Spain
- **1995:** Finland, Austria, Sweden
- **May the 1st, 2004:** the last enlargement of the EU
→ 10 new countries became member states of the EU
- *Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia*
 - **Remember these countries!**

EU - advantages

- Political influence in international affairs
- Funds – obtaining
 - many European regions are supported by
 - *Structural funds* of the EU
 - *Cohesion fund* (investments into infrastructure)
- Free labour market
 - European citizens can freely migrate for work
- Security
 - higher security of citizens within the EU vs. police regime, dictatorship, etc.
- Common currency – EURO
 - acceptance of EURO = fewer losses from exchanging 1 currency to another

EU - disadvantages

- Funds – contribution
 - in the future, new member states will contribute to European budget more they get from the EU nowadays
- Regional disparities
 - many marginal, peripheral regions suffer from high unemployment rate, limited job opportunities, etc.
 - cultural and mental differences => problems with decisions and consensus
- Competition
 - opening of new markets = higher levels of competition among the member countries
=> threat for domestic producers or is it impulse?
- Common currency – EURO
 - acceptance of EURO = *higher prices*, e.g. in Germany prices have increased by 30%
- Brain drain - emigration of highly qualified people

More information ...you can find at
europa.eu.int