

Context

The idea of the European Union was born from a conviction that the suffering of the two World Wars must never be repeated. If individual nations cooperated in various fields and pursued joint goals, conflicts would no longer break out. To this end, the European Union has been remarkably successful. Never before has Western Europe been spared the scourge of war for so many years.

The European Union (EU) is a union of twenty-five independent states. In February 1992, the Heads of State of the member states signed the Treaty on European Union in Maastricht with the treaty going into effect on November 1st, 1993. The stated goal was to enhance political, economic, and social cooperation within Europe. In addition to creating a political union, The Maastricht Treaty made provisions for an economic and monetary union. The Union has a common single market, with a customs union and a single currency, the Euro. It also has a common agricultural policy, a common trade policy, a common fisheries policy, and a common foreign policy.

The most important institutions of the EU are the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament. The European Parliament's origins go back to the 1850s and the founding treaties, and since 1970 its members have been directly elected by the people they represent. Elections are held every five years, and every EU citizen who is registered as a voter is entitled to vote.

Focus Questions



1. How is the European Union governed?
2. How has the concept of nationalism been altered by the formation of the European Union?
3. How has immigration impacted the policies of Germany and other European Union member states?