



# THE EUROPEAN UNION

## Facts and figures



Council of the  
European Union







# THE EUROPEAN UNION

Facts and figures

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\* Listed in the alphabetical order of the names of the  
Member States, as written in their respective languages.



# Values of the European Union

The European Union's values are based on certain fundamental principles laid out in the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.



## HUMAN DIGNITY

Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected. It is not only a fundamental right in itself but also constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights.

## FREEDOM



Freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the EU. Individual freedoms such as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected.

## EQUALITY



Equality is about equal rights for all citizens before the law. The principle of equality between women and men underpins all EU policies and is the basis for European integration.



## DEMOCRACY

The functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy, including the right to stand as a candidate and vote in elections.



## RULE OF LAW

The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything the EU does is founded on treaties, which are voluntarily and democratically agreed by the EU Member States.



## HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. These cover the right to be free from any discrimination, the right to the protection of personal data and the right to access to justice.

# YEARS OF ACCESSION

**1957**

Founding  
Member States

**1973**

**1981**

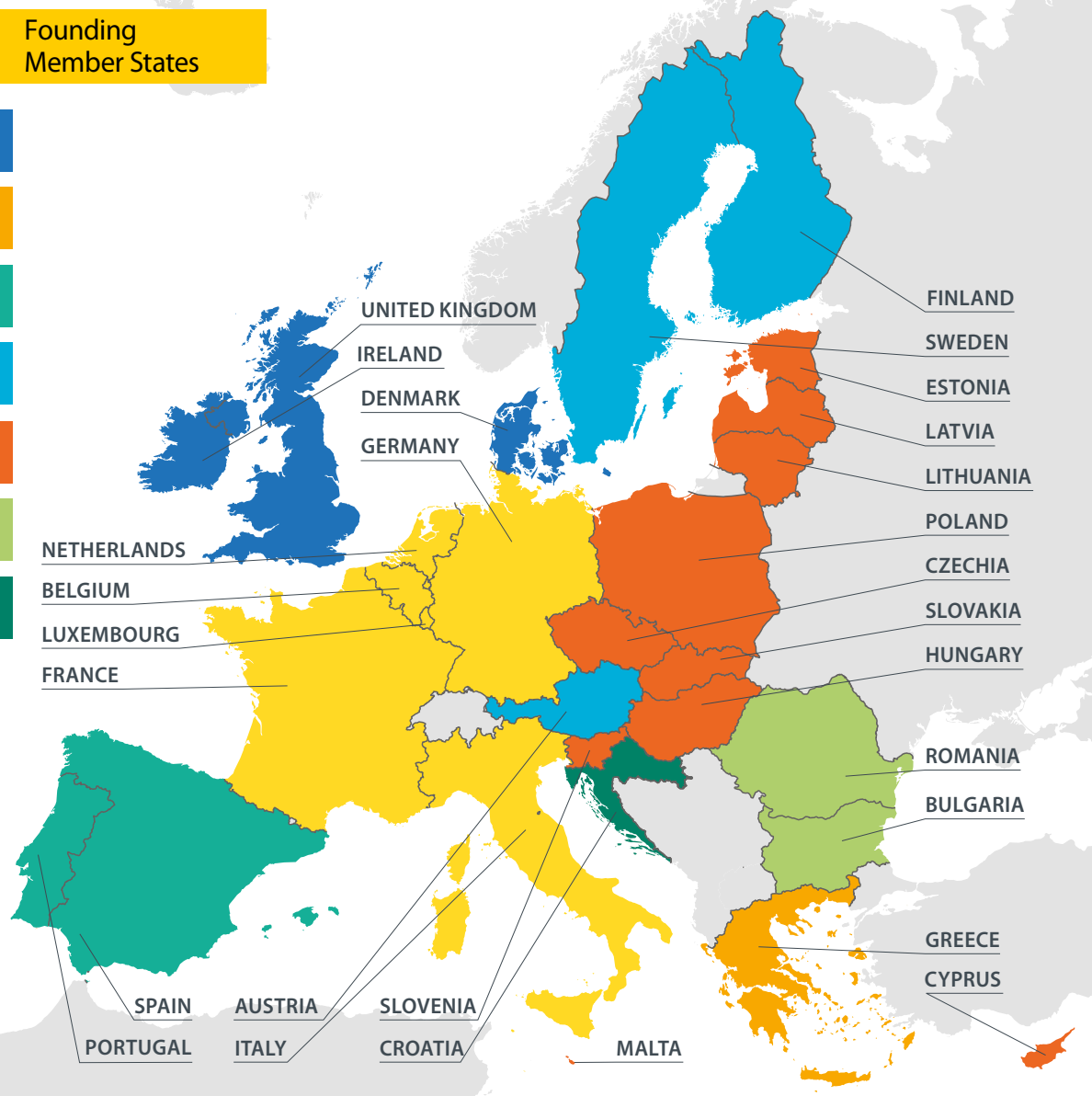
**1986**

**1995**

**2004**

**2007**

**2013**



# BREXIT

2020

In the 2016 referendum the people of the United Kingdom voted in favour of leaving the European Union. The UK has left the EU on 31 January 2020.

UNITED KINGDOM

A map of Europe and surrounding regions, including parts of North Africa and the Middle East. The landmasses are colored in a light grey. The United Kingdom, including Great Britain and Ireland, is highlighted in a darker grey. A thin black line points from the text 'UNITED KINGDOM' to the island of Great Britain. The rest of Europe, including Scandinavia, Central Europe, and the Mediterranean region, is shown in the light grey color.

## How the EU works

The European Union has its origins in the 1950s, when six countries, devastated by World War II, committed to **working together** to build their joint future in a radically new way. The treaties, which are the binding agreements between the Member States, set down the goals, the scope and the method of the cooperation. The method meant creating new European bodies (or 'institutions'). Each body has a special task and membership. To solve problems, these bodies must all work closely together using their different powers. Discussing issues around a table to find the best possible compromise for all has helped **keep peace** in Europe for more than 70 years.



## WHY DOES THE EU NEED DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS?

Because different institutions represent different views.

In order to have **citizens'** views, there is the European Parliament, which is directly elected by citizens of all EU Member States every 5 years.

In order to have **'European'** viewpoints, rather than national ones, there is the European Commission.

In order to have the views of the **national governments**, there are two bodies: the European Council and the Council of the European Union.

The discussions within and between these four main bodies determine the shape of European projects.



## WHY DOES THE EU NEED TWO COUNCILS?

Firstly, the EU needs to identify and agree on the **big questions** that need European solutions rather than national ones.

This is the job of the presidents and prime ministers, who meet in 'summits' and together are called the **European Council**.

Secondly, to achieve these European solutions, the EU must agree on **laws and policies**.

This is the job of the **Council of the European Union**, where national governments discuss and negotiate these laws and policies.

### EUROPEAN COUNCIL

HEADS OF STATE  
OR GOVERNMENT



set the EU's  
political agenda

### HOUSE OF THE MEMBER STATES



### COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

MINISTERS OF  
NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS



negotiate and vote  
on legislation

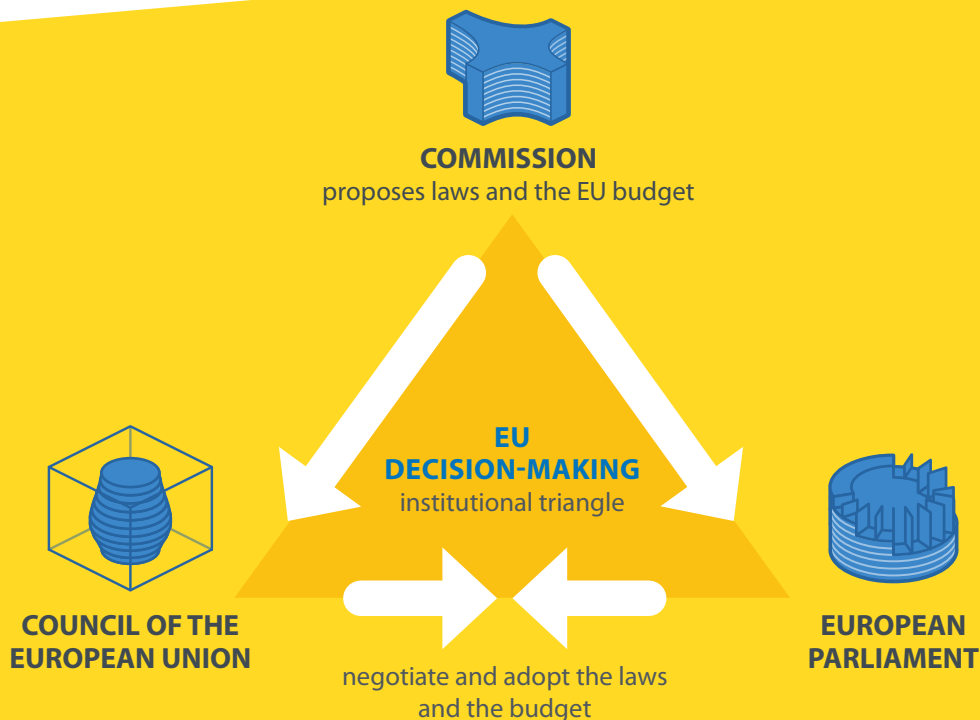
## HOW DOES THE EU WORK?

By working together.

Almost all EU laws are the result of a negotiation between the three institutions: the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.

The starting point for any legislative activity is a Commission proposal. The proposal is negotiated

and agreed on by the ministers who represent the elected national governments — the Council — and the members of the Parliament. A definitively agreed law is a balanced solution between the three institutions and their different viewpoints. Each approved EU law or policy is a step towards the big goals agreed by the leaders in the European Council.





**Who are the key  
EU players?**

## THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL



The **European Council** defines the EU's direction and priorities — it is the **European Union's strategic body**.

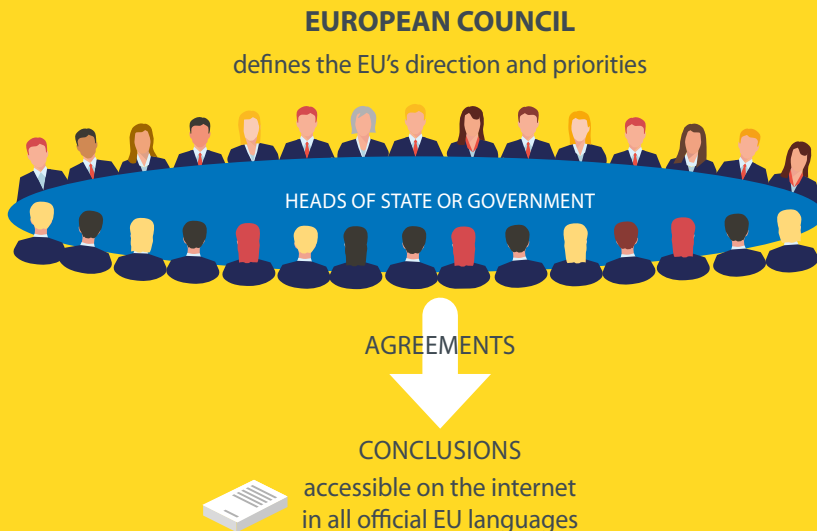
Every 2-3 months the European Council President invites the leaders (prime ministers or presidents) of the EU Member States plus the President of the European Commission to meetings called 'summits'.

The president's role is to decide on the big questions to be tackled at each meeting and bring everyone to an agreement. Almost every agreement in the European Council must be unanimous.

The agreements reached during the meetings are stated in European Council conclusions. Right after the meetings the conclusions are directly accessible on the internet in all official EU languages.

The headquarters of the European Council are in Brussels.

[consilium.europa.eu](https://consilium.europa.eu)



## THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



The **Council of the European Union** (or the **Council**) is a place where ministers from the elected national governments of the Member States work together. Council meetings are also attended by the Commission.

### THE COUNCIL'S MAIN TASKS

- 1. Lawmaking.** Together with the European Parliament and the Commission it is one of the three players in the EU's lawmaking process.
- 2. Adoption of the budget.** Together with the European Parliament.
- 3. External relations.** The Council defines and implements the EU's foreign and security policy. For instance, the Council concludes international agreements with non-EU countries or international organisations.

Council meetings are organised according to subject, so that the right ministers can come together. This means there are Council meetings on finance, the environment, energy, justice and so on, bringing together ministers with these responsibilities.

National ministers with the same responsibilities come together



ECONOMIC AND  
FINANCIAL  
AFFAIRS



GENERAL  
AFFAIRS



AGRICULTURE  
AND FISHERIES

The Council **debates in public** when examining and voting on proposed laws. **You can follow these debates live on the Council website.**

In most of its lawmaking work the Council decides by **majority voting**. There are only a few cases where decisions must be unanimous. The voting system is based on a majority of Member States and a majority of the EU's population. In theory the Council can adopt laws once it is clear that the required majorities have been reached. In reality the Council often continues to discuss and improve the draft laws until the biggest possible majority (or even unanimity) is reached.

The Council is chaired by the government of a Member State. This is called the **Presidency of the Council**. It changes every 6 months. Every Member State takes its turn.

On the following pages about the Member States you can see when your country last chaired or will next chair the Council.

The headquarters of the Council are in Brussels, and **you are welcome to visit our Visitors' Centre!**  
[consilium.europa.eu](https://consilium.europa.eu)



FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS



COMPETITIVENESS



EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL  
POLICY, HEALTH AND  
CONSUMER AFFAIRS



TRANSPORT,  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
AND ENERGY



JUSTICE  
AND HOME  
AFFAIRS



EDUCATION, YOUTH,  
CULTURE AND SPORTS



ENVIRONMENT

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



The **European Parliament** represents the interests of EU citizens. It is composed of 705 members (so-called MEPs) who are directly elected by EU citizens every 5 years.

### THE PARLIAMENT'S MAIN TASKS

- 1. Laws.** It adopts legislation jointly with the Council.
- 2. Budget.** Together with the Council it adopts a multiannual financial framework (the EU's

long-term budget) and approves the EU's annual budget.

**3. Control.** It monitors the proper use of EU funds and supervises other EU institutions, in particular the Commission. The Parliament elects the President of the Commission and has the right to approve and dismiss the Commission.

All the sittings of the Parliament, and all committee meetings, are held in public, and can be followed live.

The Parliament's headquarters are in Strasbourg, but it also works in Brussels and Luxembourg.

[europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu)





## THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



The **European Commission** manages the day-to-day running of the EU. You might have already heard that the Commission has the right of **initiative**. What does this mean? It means that the Commission is responsible for proposing EU legislation. No EU institution except the Commission can table laws. The Commission

also **proposes the EU budget**. The European Parliament and the Council discuss and decide together on laws and the budget.

The Commission is made up of 27 commissioners, one from each Member State. The commissioners work in the general interest of the European Union and not the specific interests of their own countries.

The headquarters of the Commission are in Brussels.

[ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)



**PROPOSES  
NEW LAWS**



**MANAGES EU POLICIES AND  
ALLOCATES EU FUNDING**



**GUARDIAN OF  
THE EU TREATIES**



**REPRESENTS  
THE EU ON THE  
INTERNATIONAL STAGE**

## **Other EU bodies**

There are also other important institutions and bodies that make sure the EU works, for example bodies to check that EU laws are being followed and that the EU budget is being used correctly. There are also bodies to make sure different voices are heard at the European level, and that the EU's voice is heard internationally.



## THE CONTROLLERS

**THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**, which has judges from all Member States, interprets EU law and ensures that laws are followed in the same way everywhere in the European Union. The Court of Justice also handles cases brought by states, companies or individuals if they are directly affected by acts adopted by the EU institutions. The headquarters of the Court of Justice are in Luxembourg.  
[curia.europa.eu](http://curia.europa.eu)

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**THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS** checks that the budget of the European Union has been used correctly, and that EU funds have been raised and spent legally and in accordance with sound financial management. The Court consists of one member from each Member State, and its headquarters are in Luxembourg.  
[eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu)

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**THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN** investigates complaints about maladministration in the institutions and bodies of the European Union. If you are a citizen of an EU Member State or reside in a Member State you can make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Businesses and associations may also complain to the Ombudsman. The headquarters of the Ombudsman are in Strasbourg.  
[ombudsman.europa.eu](http://ombudsman.europa.eu)

**THE EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR** checks that the EU institutions and bodies respect the right to privacy when they process personal data and develop new policies and legislation. The headquarters of the Supervisor are in Brussels.  
[edps.europa.eu](http://edps.europa.eu)

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**THE EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF)** investigates fraud in connection with the European Union budget, corruption and serious misconduct within the EU institutions. The office's headquarters are in Brussels.  
[ec.europa.eu/anti\\_fraud](http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud)



## THE BANKS

**THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK** is the central bank of the 19 Member States that have adopted the euro. Its main task is to maintain price stability in the euro area and so to safeguard the value of the euro. The Bank's headquarters are in Frankfurt am Main.

[ecb.europa.eu](https://www.ecb.europa.eu)

**THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK** is the lending arm of the European Union. It specialises in promoting growth and jobs, innovation and skills, small and medium-sized businesses, climate action and strategic infrastructure across the EU. The Bank's headquarters are in Luxembourg.

[eib.org](https://www.eib.org)



## CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE REGIONS

**THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE** enables civil-society organisations from the Member States to express their views at the European level. The Committee has 326 members from economic and social interest groups in the Member States. The Committee's headquarters are in Brussels.

[eesc.europa.eu](https://www.eesc.europa.eu)

**THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS** is the voice of the regions and cities in the EU. It allows them to express their views at the European level. The Committee's 329 members are regionally and locally elected representatives from all Member States. The headquarters of the Committee are in Brussels.

[cor.europa.eu](https://www.cor.europa.eu)



## THE EU IN THE WORLD

**THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE** (EEAS) is the European Union's diplomatic service. Its role is to make sure that the EU's voice is heard in the world. The EU's action on the international scene seeks to promote human rights, development, humanitarian aid, trade and the work

of multilateral organisations. The headquarters of the EEAS are in Brussels, but it also works worldwide through its 140 delegations outside the European Union.

[eeas.europa.eu](https://www.eeas.europa.eu)

A yellow hexagonal shape with a black border, centered on a white background. Inside the hexagon, the text "The European Union and its Member States" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

## **The European Union and its Member States**

# THE EUROPEAN UNION



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Bulgarian  
Croatian  
Czech  
Danish  
Dutch

English  
Estonian  
Finnish  
French  
German

Greek  
Hungarian  
Irish  
Italian  
Latvian

Lithuanian  
Maltese  
Polish  
Portuguese  
Romanian

Slovak  
Slovenian  
Spanish  
Swedish



**POPULATION**  
446,8 million



**AREA**  
4 225 127 km<sup>2</sup>

## OPEN DAY

In May every year the EU institutions open their doors to the public.

## ADMINISTRATIVE CITIES OF THE EU

Brussels, Luxembourg, Strasbourg

## EUROPE DAY

**9**  
**May**

Anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, which launched the EU project (1950)



EU internet suffix **.eu**



Emergency telephone number **112**



**European Union portal:**  
[europa.eu](http://europa.eu)

**Studying in the EU:**  
[erasmusprogramme.com](http://erasmusprogramme.com)

**Working in the EU:**  
[ec.europa.eu/eures](http://ec.europa.eu/eures)

**Working for the EU:**  
[epso.europa.eu](http://epso.europa.eu)

## DID YOU KNOW?

The EU received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012.

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The 12 gold stars on a blue background stand for the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe. The flag became the official symbol of the EU in 1985.



# BELGIUM

Kingdom of Belgium

CAPITAL: BRUSSELS



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

German (Germanic)  
French (Romance)  
Dutch (Germanic)



## POPULATION

11.5 million (2019)



## AREA

30 666 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**21**  
July

Leopold I became  
the first King  
of the Belgians (1831)



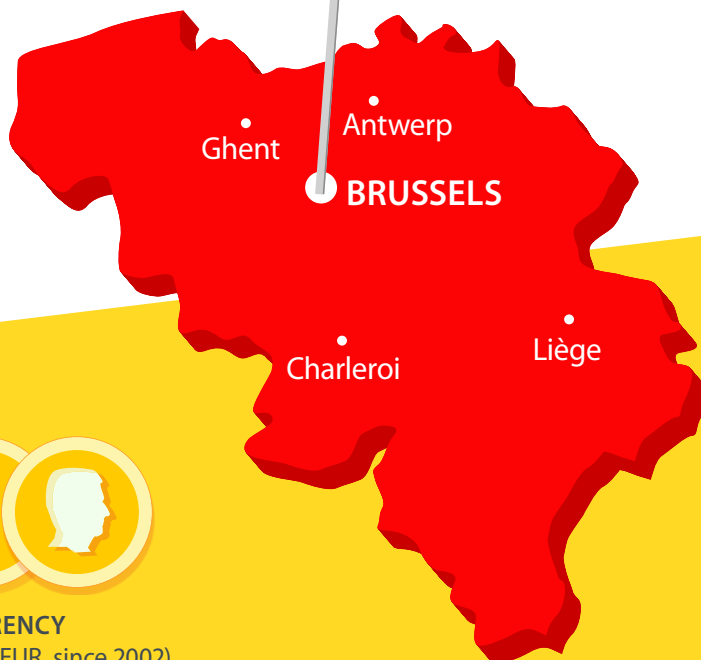
## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)  
King Philippe appears on the  
national side of the euro coin.



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The colours are those of the ancient  
Duchy of Brabant's coat of arms:  
a yellow lion with red claws and  
tongue on a black background.







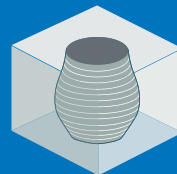
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Federal Parliament of Belgium consists of two chambers: the Chamber of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenkamer/Chambre des représentants/Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers*, 150 members) and the Senate (*Senat/Sénat/Senaat*, 60 senators). Parliamentary elections are held every 5 years. The King is the head of state, but has no political powers. The Prime Minister is appointed by the King, but needs a vote of confidence from the parliament. In Belgium the federal entities (the regions and the communities) have a high level of autonomy.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2024



Country's internet suffix **.be**



International dialling code **+32**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Belgium

**10 712**



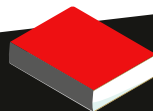
Belgian students studying abroad

**9 284**



## DID YOU KNOW?

The saxophone was invented by the Belgian inventor Adolphe Sax.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *en stoemelings*

Doing something under the table in secret, sneakily.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
belgium.be

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
europeanunion.diplomatie.belgium.be

# BULGARIA

Republic of Bulgaria

CAPITAL: SOFIA



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Bulgarian (Slavic)



## POPULATION

7 million (2019)



## AREA

110 996 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**3**  
**March**

Independence from  
the Ottoman Empire  
(1878)



## CURRENCY

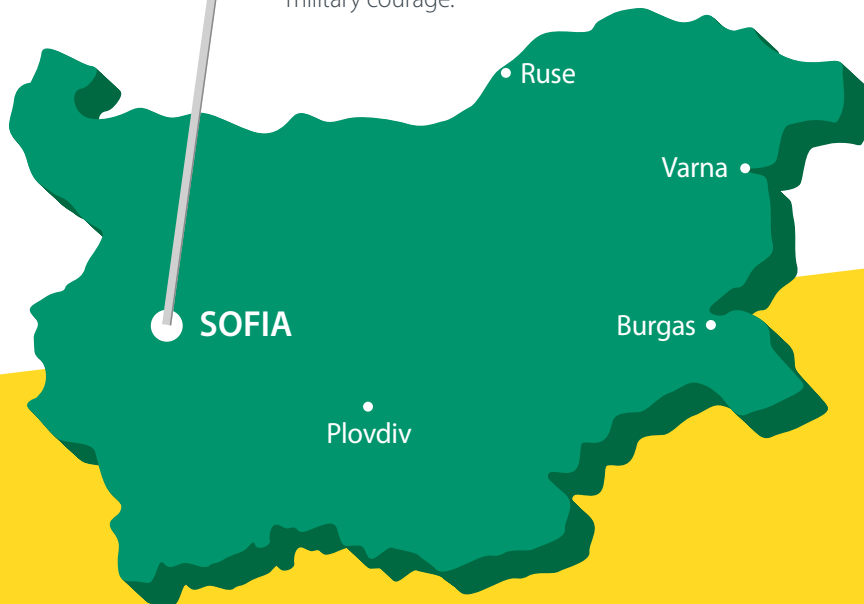
Lev (BGN)

St Ivan of Rila, the first Bulgarian  
hermit, appears on the lev coin.



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

White is for peace, love and  
freedom, green represents  
agricultural wealth and red is for  
the independence struggle and  
military courage.





## POLITICAL SYSTEM

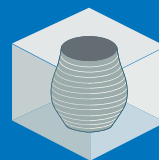
The Bulgarian parliament, called the National Assembly (*Narodno sabranie*), has 240 members elected for 4 years. The head of state is the President of the Republic, directly elected by the people for a term of 5 years. The main executive power lies with the government, led by the Prime Minister.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2018

next one not yet decided



Country's internet suffix **.bg**



International dialling code **+359**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Bulgaria

**1 545**



Bulgarian students studying abroad

**2 465**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Bulgaria is the biggest producer of rose oil in the world.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

**айляк [aylyak]**

To be relaxed, unfazed by stress and free to enjoy life.

## + INFO

### Country information:

[bulgariatravel.org](http://bulgariatravel.org)

### Permanent Representation

**to the European Union:**

[mfa.bg/en/embassies/belgiumpp](http://mfa.bg/en/embassies/belgiumpp)

# CZECHIA

Czech Republic

CAPITAL: PRAGUE



**OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGE**  
Czech (Slavic)

**POPULATION**  
10.6 million (2019)



**AREA**  
78 871 km<sup>2</sup>

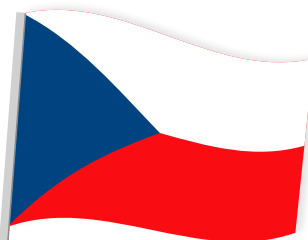
**NATIONAL DAY**

**28  
October**

Founding of the  
independent  
Czechoslovak state  
(1918)

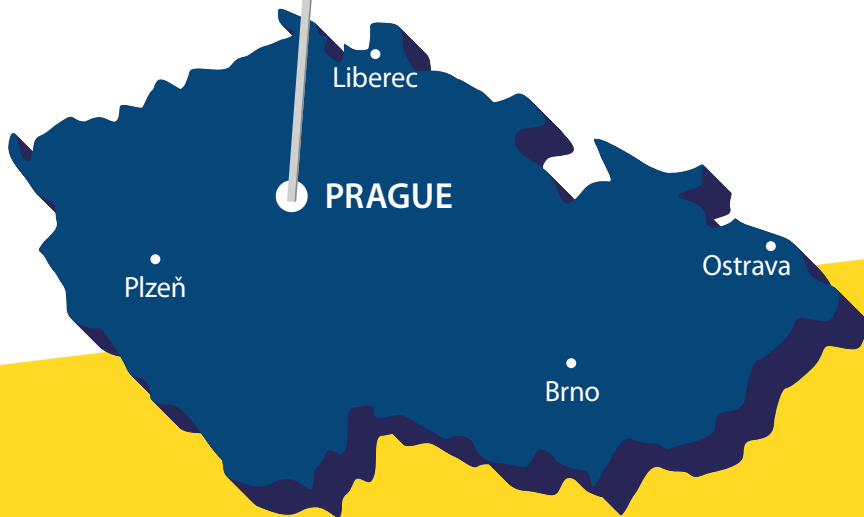


**CURRENCY**  
Koruna (CZK)  
The Czech lion appears  
on the koruna coin.



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Red and white represent Bohemia,  
and the blue triangle represents  
Moravia.





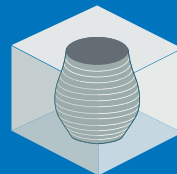
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The parliament is composed of the Chamber of Deputies (*Poslanecká sněmovna*), which has 200 members elected for 4 years, and the Senate (*Senát*), which has 81 senators elected for a period of 6 years. The President of the Republic is the head of state and is elected directly for a term of 5 years. He or she appoints the Prime Minister and the other ministers of the government.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2022



Country's internet suffix **.cz**



International dialling code **+420**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Czechia

**10 534**



Czech students studying abroad

**7 891**



## DID YOU KNOW?

The word robot (based on *robota*, meaning labour) was used for the first time by the Czech writer Karel Čapek in his play *Rossum's Universal Robots*, published in 1920.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD **chatař**

A person living the city life during the week and 'escaping' to a summer house or a cottage in the countryside at weekends.

## + INFO

**Country information:**

[czechtourism.com](http://czechtourism.com)

**Permanent Representation**

**to the European Union:**

[mzv.cz/representation\\_brussels](http://mzv.cz/representation_brussels)

# DENMARK

Kingdom of Denmark

CAPITAL: COPENHAGEN

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The off-centred white cross is a Nordic Christian symbol. The *Dannebrog* is the oldest state flag in use in the world and is a model for other Nordic flags.



### OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Danish (Germanic)



### POPULATION

5.8 million (2019)



### AREA

42 925 km<sup>2</sup>

### NATIONAL DAY

**5**  
**June**

Signing of the  
Danish Constitution  
(1849)



### CURRENCY

Krone (DKK)

Queen Margrethe II appears  
on the krone coin.





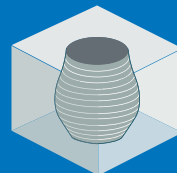
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

Denmark's parliament is called the People's Assembly (*Folketinget*) and is composed of 179 members elected for 4 years. The Queen is the head of state but has only a representative role. However, she appoints the Prime Minister, who has to be approved by the parliament. The two autonomous regions, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, are part of Denmark but not of the European Union.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2025



Country's internet suffix **.dk**



International dialling code **+45**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Denmark

**5 731**



Danish students studying abroad

**4 659**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Some very well-known fairy tales, for example *The Emperor's New Clothes*, were written by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen.

## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *hygge*

A feeling of cosiness, something that makes you feel content and comfortable. The fireplace and candles are used to create *hygge*.



## + INFO

**Country information:**  
denmark.dk

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:** eu.um.dk

# GERMANY

Federal Republic of Germany

CAPITAL: BERLIN



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

German (Germanic)



## POPULATION

83 million (2019)



## AREA

357 569 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**3**  
**October**

German Unity Day  
(1990)



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

An eagle, the symbol of German sovereignty, appears on the national side of the euro coin.

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The colours are inspired by the black uniforms with gold and red accessories worn by the Lützowian Free Corps, an organisation active in creating a unified Germany in the 19th century.







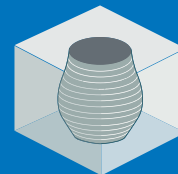
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The parliament is made up of the Federal Assembly (*Bundestag*: 709 members elected for 4 years in general elections) and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*: 69 members appointed by the governments of the federal states, or *Länder*). The Federal President, elected for 5 years, is the head of state, but the role is essentially representative. However, he or she appoints the Federal Chancellor, who leads the federal government. Power is shared between the federal government and the *Länder*.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2020



Country's internet suffix **.de**



International dialling code **+49**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Germany

**34 497**



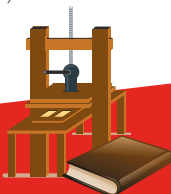
German students studying abroad

**40 959**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Johannes Gutenberg invented the movable-type printing press in the 1450s. This meant that books could be mass produced and became widely available.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD **Sehnsucht**

A deep yearning for something which may not be attainable.

## + INFO

### Country information:

[deutschland.de](https://deutschland.de)

### Permanent Representation

to the European Union:  
[bruessel-eu.diplo.de](https://bruessel-eu.diplo.de)

# ESTONIA

Republic of Estonia

CAPITAL: TALLINN



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Estonian (Finno-Ugric)



## POPULATION

1.3 million (2019)



## AREA

45 336 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**24**  
**February**

Declaration of  
independence  
from Russia (1918)



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Blue is for the skies and water,  
black for the soil and thick forests  
and white for the winter snow.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2011)

A map of Estonia appears on the  
national side of the euro coin.



## POLITICAL SYSTEM

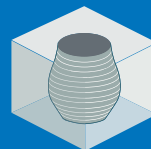
The Estonian parliament (*Riigikogu*) is composed of 101 members elected for 4 years in general elections. The head of state is the President of the Republic, elected by the parliament for 4 years. The President has primarily representative functions, but he or she nominates the Prime Minister, who is then appointed by the parliament. The power rests with the Prime Minister and the government.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2017

next one not yet decided



Country's internet suffix **.ee**



International dialling code **+372**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Estonia

**1 871**



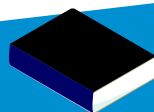
Estonian students studying abroad

**1 135**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Estonia was the first country in the world to use an internet voting system in the local elections in 2005, and later on in national and European elections.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *viitsima*

A mild feeling of laziness or not being in the mood to do something.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[estonia.ee](http://estonia.ee)

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:** [eu.mfa.ee](http://eu.mfa.ee)

# IRELAND

Ireland

CAPITAL: DUBLIN



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

English (Germanic)  
Irish (Celtic)

## POPULATION

4.9 million (2019)



## AREA

69 947 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**17**  
**March**

The death of  
Saint Patrick, the  
patron of Ireland



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Green stands for the Roman Catholic nationalists, orange for the Protestant Unionist community and white for the peace between them.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

The Celtic harp, symbol of Ireland, appears on the national side of the euro coin.



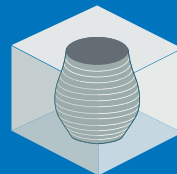
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

Ireland is a republic and its parliament (*Oireachtas*) is composed of the Chamber of Deputies (*Dáil Éireann*: 166 members) and the Senate (*Seanad Éireann*: 60 senators). Parliamentary elections are held every 5 years. The Prime Minister, the *Taoiseach*, is appointed by the President of the Republic after being proposed by the *Dáil Éireann*. The President, elected directly for 7 years, is the head of state but with only a representative role.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2026



Country's internet suffix **.ie**



International dialling code **+353**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Ireland

**8 017**

Irish students studying abroad

**3 472**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Ireland is the most successful country ever in the Eurovision song contest, with a record total of seven wins.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

**plámás**  
Flattery, soft talk.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[ireland.ie](http://ireland.ie)

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
[dfa.ie/prep/brussels](http://dfa.ie/prep/brussels)

# GREECE

Hellenic Republic

CAPITAL: ATHENS



**OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGE**  
Greek (Hellenic)

**POPULATION**  
10.7 million (2019)



**AREA**  
131 694 km<sup>2</sup>

**NATIONAL DAY**

**25  
March**

Independence from  
the Ottoman Empire  
(1821)



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The colours of the flag are believed to come from the blue of the sky and the white of the waves. The white cross symbolises Greek Orthodoxy.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

An owl, copied from an ancient Athenian coin (5th century BC), appears on the national side of the euro coin.



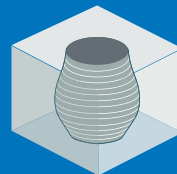
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Greek parliament (*Vouli ton Ellinon*, or Council of the Greeks) has 300 members elected for 4 years in general elections. The President of the Republic, elected by the parliament for 5 years, is the head of state, but has only a representative role. However, he or she appoints the Prime Minister and the government.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2027



Country's internet suffix **.gr**



International dialling code **+30**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Greece

**4 688**



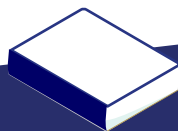
Greek students studying abroad

**5 259**



## DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'tragedy' is of Greek origin and means 'goat song', because early Greek tragedies honoured Dionysus, the god of wine, and the players wore goat skins.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

**μεράκι [meráki]**

To do something with love and devotion, and in a caring way.

## + INFO

### Country information:

[visitgreece.gr](http://visitgreece.gr)

### Permanent Representation

**to the European Union:** [mfa.gr/brussels/en/permanent-representation-eu](http://mfa.gr/brussels/en/permanent-representation-eu)

# SPAIN

Kingdom of Spain

CAPITAL: MADRID



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The coat of arms represents the six kingdoms that made up Spain in the past. The colours were originally chosen to differentiate Spanish ships from other nations' ships.



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Spanish (Romance)

## POPULATION

46.9 million (2019)



## AREA

505 983 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**12**  
**October**

Hispanic day – the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus (1492)



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)  
King Felipe VI appears on the national side of the euro coin.





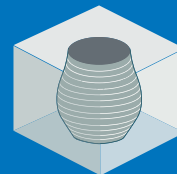
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Spanish parliament (*Cortes Generales*) is composed of the Congress (*Congreso de los Diputados*: 350 members) and the Senate (*Senado*: 266 senators) elected for 4 years. The King is the head of state, but has only a representative role. Power is shared between the central authorities and the autonomous regions. Spanish territory includes the Canary Islands and Balearic Islands, along with the two enclaves in northern Africa: Ceuta and Melilla.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2023



Country's internet suffix **.es**



International dialling code **+34**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Spain

**48 595**



Spanish students studying abroad

**40 079**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Spain is a world leader when it comes to organ donation and transplants.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD **sobremesa**

The time you spend at the table after eating, usually chatting with family and friends.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[spain.info](http://spain.info)

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
[es-ue.org](http://es-ue.org)

# FRANCE

French Republic

CAPITAL: PARIS

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

French (Romance)

## POPULATION

67 million (2019)

## AREA

638 475 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

14  
July

The storming  
of the Bastille  
(1789)

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The flag has its origins in the aftermath of the French Revolution; white was the royal colour, and blue and red were the traditional colours of the City of Paris.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

A tree symbolising life, continuity and growth appears on the national side of the euro coin.





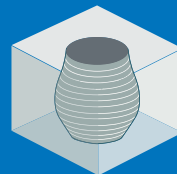
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The French parliament is composed of the National Assembly (*Assemblée nationale*, 577 members elected in general elections for 5 years) and the Senate (*Sénat*, 348 senators elected by an electoral college for 6 years). The President of the Republic, elected directly for 5 years, is the head of state. He or she has considerable political powers and appoints the Prime Minister from the parliamentary majority. France also has overseas departments and territories.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2022



Country's internet suffix **.fr**



International dialling code **+33**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in France

**28 722**



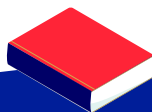
French students studying abroad

**43 905**



## DID YOU KNOW?

France is the country with most Nobel Prizes for literature in the world.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *dépayser*

Have a change of scenery, break from one's usual routine and habits.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[france.fr](http://france.fr)

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
[ue.delegfrance.org](http://ue.delegfrance.org)

# CROATIA

Republic of Croatia

CAPITAL: ZAGREB

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Croatian (Slavic)

## POPULATION

4.1 million (2019)

## AREA

56 594 km<sup>2</sup>

HR

## NATIONAL DAY

**30**  
May

Independence  
from the former  
Yugoslavia (1991)



## CURRENCY

Kuna (HRK)

A brown bear, the largest animal living in Croatia, appears on the kuna coin.

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The red, white and blue are pan-Slavic colours. The checkerboard of red and white is the historical shield of Croatia.





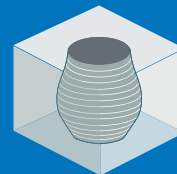
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Croatian parliament (*Sabor*) has 151 members elected for 4 years. The President of the Republic is elected directly for 5 years and has mainly a representative role. He or she appoints the Prime Minister, who must have the confidence of the majority of the members of parliament.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2020



Country's internet suffix **.hr**



International dialling code **+385**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Croatia

**2 097**



Croatian students studying abroad

**1 778**



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Dalmatian dog breed can be traced back to Croatia and the Dalmatia region.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *prīženiti se*

When a man marries into his wife's family (and not vice-versa).

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
croatia.hr

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
eu.mfa.hr

# ITALY

Italian Republic

CAPITAL: ROME



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Italian (Romance)

## POPULATION

60.4 million (2019)



## AREA

302 073 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

2  
June

The proclamation  
of the Italian  
Republic (1946)



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

The *Vitruvian Man*, a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci of the proportions of the human body, appears on the national side of the euro coin.



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Green stands for the Italian hills and pastures, white for the snow-capped Alps and red for the bloodshed in wars.



## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Italian parliament is composed of the Chamber of Deputies (*Camera dei Deputati*: 630 members) and the Senate (*Senato della Repubblica*: 315 senators). Parliamentary elections are held every 5 years. The head of state is the President of the Republic, elected by the parliament for a period of 7 years, but the role is essentially representative. However, the President appoints the Prime Minister, who needs the confidence of both chambers of parliament.

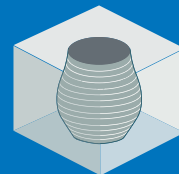


Voting age  
**18**  
not compulsory

(25 for elections  
to the Senate)

## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2028



Country's internet suffix **.it**



International dialling code **+39**



**ERASMUS  
STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students  
studying in Italy

**26 294**



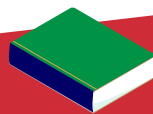
Italian students  
studying abroad

**35 666**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Italy is the country with the most UNESCO heritage sites in the world.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD **abbocco**

The heavy drowsiness you feel after a rich meal.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[italia.it](http://italia.it)

**Permanent Representation  
to the European Union:**  
[italiaue.esteri.it/rapp\\_ue](http://italiaue.esteri.it/rapp_ue)

# CYPRUS

Republic of Cyprus

CAPITAL: NICOSIA



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Greek (Hellenic)  
Turkish (Turkic)



## POPULATION

0.9 million (2019)



## AREA

9 253 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**1**  
**October**

The proclamation  
of the Republic  
of Cyprus (1960)



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The green olive branches on a white background represent the hope for peace. The map on the flag is a copper-orange colour, symbolising the large deposits of copper on the island. Cyprus was the first nation to include its map on the flag.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2008)

A cruciform idol from 3000 BC  
appears on the national side of the  
euro coin.





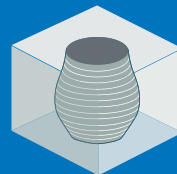
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Cypriot parliament is called the House of Representatives (*Vouli ton Antiprosópon*) and has 80 members, 56 of whom are elected directly for 5 years, with the remaining 24 seats reserved for the Turkish community, although these have been vacant since 1964. There are also three representatives of religious minorities (from the Maronite, Roman Catholic and Armenian churches), who have observer status. The President of the Republic is elected directly for 5 years and is both head of state and head of government.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2026



Country's internet suffix **.cy**



International dialling code **+357**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students  
studying in Cyprus

**1 077**

Cypriot students  
studying abroad

**635**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Cyprus is home to the most Blue Flag beaches by country size in the world. It boasts 57 clean beaches.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

**κκελετζής [kkeletzis]**

This means stubborn in Cypriot Greek, but the word is not used in Greece.

## + INFO

**Country information:**

[visitcyprus.com](http://visitcyprus.com)

**Permanent Representation**

**to the European Union:**

[mfa.gov.cy/permrepeu](http://mfa.gov.cy/permrepeu)

# LATVIA

Republic of Latvia

CAPITAL: RIGA

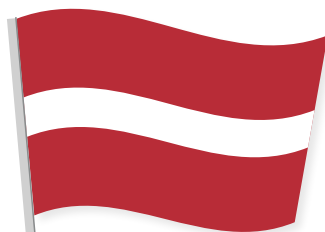


**OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGE**  
Latvian (Baltic)

**POPULATION**  
1.9 million (2019)



**AREA**  
64 586 km<sup>2</sup>



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Carmines red represents the willingness to fight for freedom and liberty. The white stripe represents peace and independence.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2014)

A Latvian folk maiden appears on the national side of the euro coin.



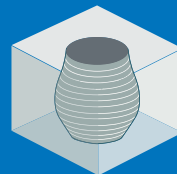
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Latvian parliament (*Saeima*) has 100 members elected in general elections for 4 years. The President of the Republic, elected by the parliament for 4 years, appoints the Prime Minister, who forms the government. Before taking up work, a new government needs a vote of confidence by the *Saeima*.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2028



Country's internet suffix **.lv**



International dialling code **+371**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Latvia

**1 946**



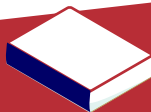
Latvian students studying abroad

**2 156**



## DID YOU KNOW?

A unique song and dance festival, which was first held in 1873, has become part of the UNESCO intangible heritage list. Around 40 000 performers participate in the event.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

**ciemakukulis**

A small gift, usually edible, that visitors bring to their host.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[latvia.eu](http://latvia.eu)

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
[mfa.gov.lv/en/brussels](http://mfa.gov.lv/en/brussels)

# LITHUANIA

Republic of Lithuania

CAPITAL: VILNIUS

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Lithuanian (Baltic)

## POPULATION

2.8 million (2019)

## AREA

65 284 km<sup>2</sup>

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Yellow stands for the golden wheat fields, green for the forests and red for the bravery and blood of those defending Lithuania.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, from 2015)

The coat of arms, Vytis, of the Republic of Lithuania appears on the national side of the euro coin.



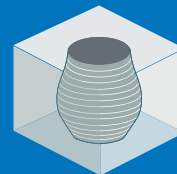
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Lithuanian parliament (*Seimas*) has 141 members elected for 4 years. The President of the Republic, elected directly for 5 years, appoints the Prime Minister after approval by the *Seimas*.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2027



Country's internet suffix **.lt**



International dialling code **+370**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Lithuania

**3 161**



Lithuanian students studying abroad

**4 452**



हिपकृतो

## DID YOU KNOW?

Lithuanian is the oldest surviving Indo-European language, and the closest to Sanskrit.



**UNTRANSLATABLE WORD**  
*nepakartojama*

A moment that is beyond perfect.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
lietuva.lt

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
eurep.mfa.lt

# LUXEMBOURG

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

CAPITAL: LUXEMBOURG



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

French (Romance)  
German (Germanic)  
Luxembourgish (Germanic)



## POPULATION

0.6 million (2019)



## AREA

2 595 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

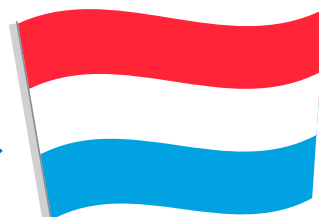
**23**  
**June**

Official birthday  
of the Grand Duke



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)  
Grand Duke Henri appears on the  
national side of all euro coins.



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The red, white and blue colours are  
derived from the coat of arms of the  
House of Luxembourg.





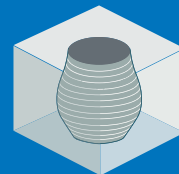
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

Luxembourg's parliament is called the Chamber of Deputies (*Chambre des Députés/Châmber vun Députéirten/Abgeordneten-kammer*) and has 60 members elected for 5 years. The Grand Duke is the head of state, but has only a representative role. He appoints the Prime Minister, who chooses the other ministers. The government needs the confidence from the majority of the members of parliament.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2029



Country's internet suffix **.lu**



International dialling code **+352**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Luxembourg

**1 077**



Luxembourgish students studying abroad

**538**



## DID YOU KNOW THIS?

Luxembourg is the only remaining grand duchy in the world.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *verkönnen*

To gradually experience the effects of old age in body and mind.

## + INFO

### Country information:

[luxembourg.public.lu](http://luxembourg.public.lu)

### Permanent Representation

to the European Union:  
[bruxelles-rpue.mae.lu](http://bruxelles-rpue.mae.lu)

# HUNGARY

Hungary

CAPITAL: BUDAPEST



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Hungarian (Finno-Ugric)



## POPULATION

9.8 million (2019)



## AREA

93 012 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**20**  
**August**

Canonisation  
of Hungary's first  
King, St Stephen  
(1083)



## CURRENCY

Forint (HUF)

The coat of arms of Hungary  
appears on the forint coin.



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The white symbolises Hungary's rivers,  
the green its mountains and the red  
the bloodshed in battles.







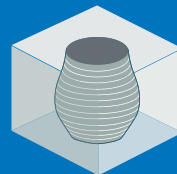
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

Hungary is a republic and its parliament, the National Assembly (*Országgyűlés*), has 199 members elected for 4 years in general elections. The President of the Republic is the head of state, elected by the parliament every 5 years. The President proposes the Prime Minister to parliament, which must give its consent.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2024



Country's internet suffix **.hu**



International dialling code **+36**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Hungary

**6 242**



Hungarian students studying abroad

**4 341**



## DID YOU KNOW THIS?

The capital city, Budapest, has more thermal springs than any other capital in the world.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

**hiányérzet**

The feeling that something is missing but you don't know exactly what.

## + INFO

**Country information:**

wowhungary.com

**Permanent Representation**

**to the European Union:**

eu-brusszel.mfa.gov.hu

# MALTA

Republic of Malta

CAPITAL: VALLETTA



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

English (Germanic)  
Maltese (Semitic,  
written in Latin alphabet)

## POPULATION

0.5 million (2019)



## AREA

316 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**21**  
**September**

Independence  
from the United  
Kingdom (1964)



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2008)

The Maltese cross, the emblem  
used by the Sovereign Order of  
Malta, appears on the national  
side of the euro coin.

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The colours are from coats of arms  
from the Middle Ages. The George  
Cross shown in the white stripe was  
awarded to the Maltese by King  
George VI for their bravery during  
World War II.





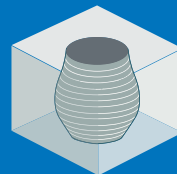
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

Malta's parliament is called the House of Representatives (*Kamra tar-Rappreżentanti*) and has 67 members elected for 5 years. The President of the Republic is elected by the parliament for 5 years and has an essentially representative role. The Prime Minister and the other ministers are appointed by the President.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

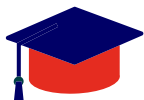
July-December 2030



Country's internet suffix **.mt**



International dialling code **+356**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students  
studying in Malta

**2 431**



Maltese students  
studying abroad

**413**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Malta is the smallest country in the EU and has the highest population density in the EU.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

***Hallata Ballata***

Complete chaos,  
everything thrown  
together without order.

## + INFO

**Country information:**

[visitmalta.com](http://visitmalta.com)

**Permanent Representation**

**to the European Union:**

[foreignaffairs.gov.mt](http://foreignaffairs.gov.mt)

# THE NETHERLANDS

Kingdom of the Netherlands

CAPITAL: AMSTERDAM



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Dutch (Germanic)

## POPULATION

17.3 million (2019)



## AREA

37 378 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**27**  
April

The birth of the  
current King  
Willem-Alexander

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The original flag was orange, white and blue, which were the colours of Prince William of Orange. As the orange colour would turn red due to sun exposure, it was replaced in the 17th century with red.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

King Willem-Alexander appears on the national side of the euro coin.



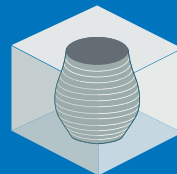
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Dutch parliament (*Staten Generaal*) has two chambers: the First Chamber (*Eerste Kamer*, with 75 members) and the Second Chamber (*Tweede Kamer*, with 150 members), elected for 4 years. The King is the head of state and has only a representative role, but appoints the Prime Minister. The Royal Court, the government, parliament and the Supreme Court are all located in The Hague. The Netherlands also has island territories in the Caribbean.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2029



Country's internet suffix **.nl**



International dialling code **+31**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in the Netherlands

**14 145**



Dutch students studying abroad

**13 831**



## DID YOU KNOW?

In the Netherlands there are more bicycles (22.5 million) than people (17.2 million), and three times as many bicycles as there are cars.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD **gezellig**

This means cosy, lively, intimate or fun. The word can describe places, people, experiences and even the weather.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[holland.com](http://holland.com)

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
[eu.nlmission.org](http://eu.nlmission.org)

# AUSTRIA

Republic of Austria

CAPITAL: VIENNA



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

German (Germanic)

## POPULATION

8.9 million (2019)



## AREA

83 878 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**26**  
**October**

Adoption of Austria's  
Law of Neutrality  
(1955)

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Legend has it that the flag was designed to represent Leopold V's (Duke of Austria) coat after a fierce battle. His white coat was soaked with blood, and when he removed his belt the cloth underneath was still white.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

The composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who was born in Austria, appears on the national side of the euro coin.





## POLITICAL SYSTEM

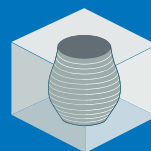
The Austrian parliament (*Bundesversammlung*) is composed of the National Council (*Nationalrat*: 183 members elected for 5 years in general elections) and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*: 61 members appointed by the provinces). The President of the Republic is elected directly for 6 years and has mainly a representative role. The Federal Chancellor, who leads the government, is appointed by the President. Austria is a federal state composed of nine provinces, or *Bundesländer*.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2018

next one not yet decided



Country's internet suffix **.at**



International dialling code **+43**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Austria

**7 934**

Austrian students studying abroad

**7 487**



## DID YOU KNOW THIS?

The oldest zoo in the world is in Vienna. It was founded in 1752.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *Schmah*

This can be a joke, a trick or a lie, but also regional or personal charm, sense of humour and wit.

## + INFO

### Country information:

[austria.info](http://austria.info)

### Permanent Representation to the European Union:

[bmeia.gv.at/oev-bruessel](http://bmeia.gv.at/oev-bruessel)

# POLAND

Republic of Poland

CAPITAL: WARSAW



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Polish (Slavic)

## POPULATION

38 million (2019)



## AREA

312 679 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAYS

**11**  
**November**

Restoration  
of independence  
(1918)



## CURRENCY

Złoty (PLN)

The eagle from Poland's coat of arms appears on the złoty coin.

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The colours are inspired by the first recorded use of the coat of arms of Poland: a white eagle on a red shield.







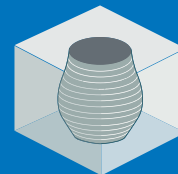
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Polish parliament is composed of the *Sejm* (460 members) and the *Senat* (100 members). The members of both chambers are elected for 4 years in general elections. The President of the Republic, elected directly for 5 years, appoints the Prime Minister, whose government needs a vote of confidence from the *Sejm*.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2025



Country's internet suffix **.pl**



International dialling code **+48**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Poland

**16 908**



Polish students studying abroad

**15 453**



## DID YOU KNOW THIS?

Prince Krakus is said to have slain the Dragon of Wawel Hill, and given his name to the city of Kraków.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

**załatwić**

To deal with something using a kind of trick or your personal connections or charm.

## + INFO

**Country information:**

[polska.pl](http://polska.pl)

**Permanent Representation**

**to the European Union:**

[brukselaue.msz.gov.pl](http://brukselaue.msz.gov.pl)

# PORTUGAL

Portuguese Republic

CAPITAL: LISBON



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Portuguese (Romance)

## POPULATION

10.3 million (2019)



## AREA

92 227 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**10**  
**June**

The death of the poet Luis de Camões (1580)

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

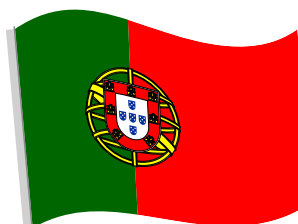
Green symbolises hope for the future, and red is the blood of the nation. In the coat of arms the five small blue shields represent the five Moorish kings who were defeated by the first King of Portugal.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

The royal seal from 1144 appears on the national side of the euro coin.





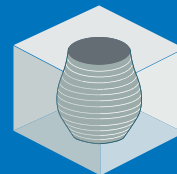
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Portuguese parliament (*Assembleia da República*) is composed of 230 members elected for 4 years. The President of the Republic is elected directly for 5 years. He or she is the head of state and appoints the Prime Minister. Portugal includes two autonomous island regions in the Atlantic Ocean: Madeira and the Azores.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

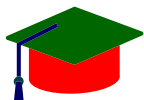
January-June 2021



Country's internet suffix **.pt**



International dialling code **+351**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students  
studying in Portugal

**14 306**



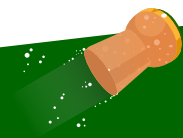
Portuguese students  
studying abroad

**9 132**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Portugal is the largest cork producer in the world



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *saudade*

Nostalgia for someone or something that is no longer near or with you.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[portugalglobal.pt](http://portugalglobal.pt)

**Permanent Representation  
to the European Union:**  
[ue.missaoportugal.mne.pt](http://ue.missaoportugal.mne.pt)

# ROMANIA

Romania

CAPITAL: BUCHAREST



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

Blue stands for the sky and liberty, yellow for fields and justice and red for blood and fraternity.



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Romanian (Romance)

## POPULATION

19.4 million (2019)



## AREA

238 398 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**1**  
**December**

Union of Transylvania  
with the former  
Kingdom of Romania  
(1918)



## CURRENCY

Leu (RON)

The coat of arms of Romania appears on the bani coin (fraction of leu).





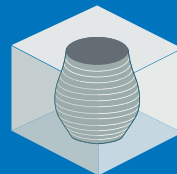
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

Romania is a republic and the parliament (*Parlamentul României*) is composed of the Chamber of Deputies (*Camera Deputaților*: 329 members) and the Senate (*Senat*: 136 senators), elected for 4 years. The President of the Republic, elected directly for 5 years, is the head of state and has considerable powers. He or she nominates the Prime Minister from the parliamentary majority to form a government.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2019



Country's internet suffix **.ro**



International dialling code **+40**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students  
studying in Romania

**3 541**



Romanian students  
studying abroad

**7 202**



## DID YOU KNOW?

The name 'Romania' comes from the Latin word *Romanus*, which means citizen of the Roman Empire.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

***struțocâmilă***

Literally 'ostrich-camel', the word describes items that do not go together.

## + INFO

**Country information:**

[romaniatourism.com](http://romaniatourism.com)

**Permanent Representation**

**to the European Union:**

[ue.mae.ro](http://ue.mae.ro)

# SLOVENIA

Republic of Slovenia

CAPITAL: LJUBLJANA



**OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGE**  
Slovenian (Slavic)

**POPULATION**  
2.1 million (2019)



**AREA**  
20 273 km<sup>2</sup>

**NATIONAL DAY**

**25**  
**June**

Independence  
from the former  
Yugoslavia (1991)



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The coat of arms shows Mount Triglav, Slovenia's highest peak, wavy blue lines representing the Adriatic Sea and local rivers, and three golden stars taken from the coat of arms of the Counts of Celje.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2007)

Primož Trubar, author of the first book printed in Slovenian, appears on the national side of the euro coin.



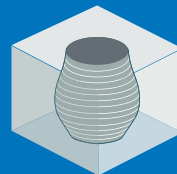
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Slovenian parliament is composed of the National Assembly (*Državni zbor*: 90 members elected for 4 years in general elections, two seats being reserved for the Hungarian and Italian minorities) and the National Council (*Državni svet*: 40 members elected by indirect vote for 5 years). The President of the Republic, directly elected for 5 years, proposes the Prime Minister to parliament, which must give its consent.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2021



Country's internet suffix **.si**



International dialling code **+386**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Slovenia

**2 684**



Slovenian students studying abroad

**1 958**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Slovenians are a genuine beekeeping nation: Slovenia is the only EU Member State to have protected its native bee, the Carniolan bee.



**UNTRANSLATABLE WORD**  
**vedriti**

To take shelter from the rain.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
slovenia.si

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
brussels.representation.si

# SLOVAKIA

Slovak Republic

CAPITAL: BRATISLAVA



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Slovak (Slavic)



## POPULATION

5.5 million (2019)



## AREA

49 035 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

1

September

Constitution Day  
(1992)



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The colours stand for Slavic unity and independence. On the coat of arms, the double silver cross is a Christian symbol for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the blue symbol represents the Matra, Tatra and Fatra mountains.



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2009)

A double cross on three hills, as featured in the national emblem of Slovakia, appears on the national side of the euro coin.





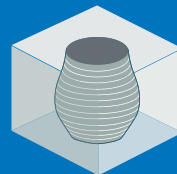
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

Slovakia's parliament is called the National Council of the Slovak Republic (*Národná rada Slovenskej republiky*) and has 150 members elected for 4 years. The President of the Republic, elected directly for 5 years, is the head of state, but has only a representative role. However, he or she appoints the Prime Minister. Executive power is essentially exercised by the Prime Minister and the government.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2030



Country's internet suffix **.sk**



International dialling code **+421**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students  
studying in Slovakia

**2 149**



Slovakian students  
studying abroad

**3 769**



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Košice Peace Marathon is the oldest marathon in Europe. It was organised for the first time in 1924.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD **obzernance**

When your fridge is empty and you forgot to buy food, this is what you have to eat.

## + INFO

### Country information:

[slovakia.travel](http://slovakia.travel)

### Permanent Representation

to the European Union:

[mzv.sk/web/szbrusel](http://mzv.sk/web/szbrusel)

# FINLAND

Republic of Finland

CAPITAL: HELSINKI



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Finnish (Finno-Ugric)  
Swedish (Germanic)



## POPULATION

5.5 million (2019)



## AREA

338 411 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

6

December

Independence  
from Russia (1917)



## CURRENCY

Euro (EUR, since 2002)

Two flying swans appear on the national side of the euro coin. The design is from a competition for a coin to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the independence of Finland.



## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

They represent white clouds and blue skies, summer lakes and snow drifts. The flag uses the same cross as other Nordic countries.



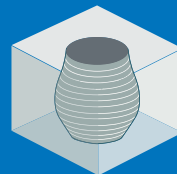
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Finnish parliament (*Eduskunta/Riksdagen*) has 200 members elected for 4 years. The President of the Republic, elected directly for 6 years, proposes and formally appoints the Prime Minister after consulting the parliament. Responsibility for foreign affairs is shared between the President and the government. The Åland Islands are an autonomous Swedish-speaking region within the Republic of Finland.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

July-December 2019



Country's internet suffix **.fi**



International dialling code **+358**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Finland

**8 698**

Finnish students studying abroad

**6 263**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Finland was the first country in Europe to give voting rights to women in 1906.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD

***sisu***

The sense of perseverance.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
[finland.fi](http://finland.fi)

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
[finlandabroad.fi/web/eu](http://finlandabroad.fi/web/eu)

# SWEDEN

Kingdom of Sweden

CAPITAL: STOCKHOLM



## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Swedish (Germanic)

## POPULATION

10.2 million (2019)



## AREA

447 424 km<sup>2</sup>

## NATIONAL DAY

**6**  
**June**

King Gustav Vasa's  
accession to the  
throne (1523)



## CURRENCY

Krona (SEK)  
King Carl XVI Gustaf  
appears on the krona coin.

## THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

The blue is symbolic of truth, vigilance, perseverance, loyalty and justice, while the yellow represents generosity. The flag has a Nordic cross, which represents Christianity.





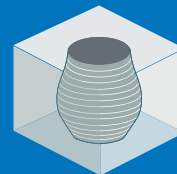
## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Swedish parliament (*Riksdagen*) has 349 members elected for 4 years. The King is the head of state, but has only a representative role. The Speaker of the Parliament proposes the Prime Minister, who needs a vote of confidence from the parliament. The Prime Minister then chooses the other ministers in the government.



## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

January-June 2023



Country's internet suffix **.se**



International dialling code **+46**



**ERASMUS STUDENTS**  
(2017)

Foreign students studying in Sweden

**10 521**



Swedish students studying abroad

**4 069**



## DID YOU KNOW?

The founder of the Nobel Prize, Alfred Nobel, was a Swedish scientist and entrepreneur.



## UNTRANSLATABLE WORD *fika*

Taking the moment slowly, having a break over coffee with pastries and savouring the moment.

## + INFO

**Country information:**  
sweden.se

**Permanent Representation to the European Union:**  
government.se/sweden-in-the-eu

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