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## What the EU does

The EU tries to make life better in all sorts of ways. Here are some of them.

### The environment



*Pollution crosses borders, so EU countries work together to protect the environment*

The environment belongs to everyone, so countries have to work together to protect it. The EU has rules about stopping pollution and about protecting (for example) wild birds. These rules apply in all EU countries and their governments have to make sure those rules are obeyed.

### Jobs

It's important for people to have jobs that they enjoy and are good at. Some of the money they earn goes to pay for hospitals and schools, and to look after old people. That's why the EU is doing all it can to create new and better jobs for everyone who can work. It helps people to set up new businesses, and provides money to train people to do new kinds of work.



*Training people to do new job is very important*



## Freedom!



People living in the EU are free to live, work or study in whichever EU country they choose, and the EU is doing all it can to make it simple to move home from one country to another. When you cross the borders between most EU countries, you no longer need a passport.

The EU encourages students and young people to spend some time studying or training in another European country.

## The Euro

In years gone by, each country in Europe had its own kind of money, or 'currency'. Now there is one single currency, the euro, which all EU countries can share if they wish. Having one currency makes it easier to do business and to travel and shop all over the EU without having to change from one currency to another.

It took nine years of hard work and careful planning to introduce the euro. The notes and coins came into use on 1 January 2002. Today, more than two-thirds of the EU's citizens are using the euro instead of the old currencies. If you compare euro coins you will see that on one side there is a design representing the country it was made in. The other side is the same for all the countries.





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## What the EU does

### Helping regions in difficulty

Life is not easy for everyone everywhere in Europe. In some places there are not enough jobs for people, because mines or factories have closed down. In some areas, farming is hard because of the climate, or trade is difficult because there are not enough roads and railways.

The EU tackles these problems by collecting money from all its member countries and using it to help regions that are in difficulty. For example, it helps pay for new roads and rail links, and it helps businesses to provide new jobs for people.



*The EU helps pay for new roads*



## Helping poor countries

In many countries around the world, people are dying or living difficult lives because of war, disease and natural disasters such as droughts or floods. Often these countries do not have enough money to build the schools and hospitals, roads and houses that their people need.



The EU gives money to these countries, and sends teachers, doctors, engineers and other experts to work there. It also buys many things that those countries produce without charging customs duties. That way, the poor countries can earn more money.

## Peace

The European Union has brought many European countries together in friendship. Of course they don't always agree on everything, but instead of fighting their leaders sit round a table to sort out their disagreements.

So the dream of Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman has come true: the EU has brought peace among its members. It is also working for lasting peace among its neighbours and in the wider world. For example, EU soldiers and police officers are helping keep the peace in the former Yugoslavia, where there was bitter fighting not many years ago.

These are just some of the things the EU does: there are many more. In fact, being in the European Union makes a difference to just about every aspect of our lives. What things should the EU be doing, or not doing? That's for the people in the EU to decide. How can we have our say? Find out in the next chapter.




Europe has its own flag and its own anthem – the ‘Hymn to Joy’ from Beethoven’s 9th symphony. The original words are in German, but when used as the European anthem it has no words – only the tune.



You can hear it on the internet:

[http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/anthem/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/anthem/index_en.htm)

**Test yourself  
now!** 

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