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A family of peoples

We Europeans belong to many different countries, with different languages, traditions, customs and beliefs. Yet we belong together, like a big family, for all sorts of reasons. Here are some of them.



- We have shared this continent for thousands of years.
- Our languages are often related to one another.
- Many people in every country are descended from people from other countries.
- Our traditions, customs and festivals often have the same origins.
- We share and enjoy the beautiful music and art, and the many plays and stories, that people from all over Europe have given us, down the centuries.
- Almost everyone in Europe believes in things like fair play, neighbourliness, freedom to have your own opinions, respect for each other and caring for people in need.

So we enjoy what's different and special about our own country and region, but we also enjoy what we have in common as Europeans.

War and peace

Sadly, there have been many quarrels in the European family. Often they were about who should rule a country, or which country owned which piece of land. Sometimes a ruler wanted to gain more power by conquering his neighbours, or to prove that his people were stronger and better than other peoples.



One way or another, for hundreds of years, there were terrible wars in Europe. In the 20th century, two big wars started on this continent but spread and involved countries all around the world. That is why they are called World Wars. They killed millions of people and left Europe poor and in ruins.

Could anything be done to stop these things happening again? Would Europeans ever learn to sit down together and discuss things instead of fighting? The answer is yes. That's the story of our next chapter: the story of the European Union.