

The EU and You

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Welcome to our Info-point on the European Union. This is the product of two things. First of all, necessity – our physical EU Info-point in our physical school is out of bounds, locked down as we all are, under these extraordinary circumstances that have seen so many things evaporate that we took for granted and expected. Secondly, the natural human drive to solve problems, and find a way to express ourselves even in isolation. The COVID-19 crisis has forced us to box clever. Now we have an EU Info-point which can be accessed from anywhere, by anyone, any time. Sometimes, blessings arrive in unexpected parcels.

This Info-point is the fruit of the European Parliament Ambassador Schools Programme, a remarkable initiative by the European Parliament to encourage schools and the young people of Europe to learn about the continent of which they are citizens, to spread that knowledge, to connect young people to the amazing wealth of opportunities that EU citizenship grants them.

Within these pages we offer you some of the fruits of our studies this year- information on the EU, what it does, what it does particularly for young people, its history and origins, key moments in its evolution, articles on European music, fellow member states, opportunities to study abroad.....

We invite you in, through this portal, to share in our learning, to grow, to connect with your fellow Europeans. We invite you to explore the possibilities that belonging to the EU offers.



Picture: belinda-fewings/unsplash

And most importantly to embrace and promote the fundamental values the EU embodies - respect for human dignity and human rights; freedom; democracy; equality and the rule of law. Values that none of us can take for granted any more, values that need to be sown and grown in each successive generation to have a chance of being anything more than hollow sound bites.....

We, the staff & students of Transition Year 2020 European Studies class, would like to thank...

- our school and our Principal, Mr McLearn, for affording us the opportunity to work on this, and for granting us space to show our learning and our interests...
- Lauren, Margaret and Sinead at the EPAS Regional Office in Dublin for all their help and support...
- Europa and the European Parliament Ambassador Schools Scheme that supports our work in studying the EU, that encourages and enables students from all over the EU to visit Brussels or Strasbourg, and to connect with each other. Enjoy!

2 Ireland and EU law

Leanne Hickey



So what is the power of E.U Law?

E.U law is superior to national law. This means that Ireland and other members of the European Union cannot pass national laws that contradict EU laws. It also means that an E.U law can over-rule an Irish law, even if that Irish law was enacted before the EU law came into effect. As well as being superior to national law, some EU law has direct effect on its citizens. This means that you can rely on EU law in court even in situations where there's no national law in place.

But what about our Constitution?

The Constitution of Ireland

recognises that EU law is superior to all national law. The EU is the only body that can pass laws regarding:

- Customs union
- Competition rules in the single market
- Monetary policy in the Eurozone
- International trade agreements
- Marine plants and animals

Sounds like membership of the EU has had a profound effect on Irish law?

Yes. Examples of where EU regulations and directives have affected *and improved* the rights of Irish citizens:

a) Workers' Rights

- Under EU law, workers *must* receive a written statement of their terms of employment (Terms of Employment Act 1994)
- Workers are entitled to at least 4 week's paid holidays per year- (Organisation of Working Time Act 1997)

b) Environment

Many of Ireland's environmental laws have come from the EU, including the rights of access to information on environmental matters and public participation in environmental decisions under the Aarhus Convention. Ireland also has targets to reduce emissions, set as part of its membership of the EU & through the Kyoto Protocol. The European Court of Justice has made important rulings regarding Ireland's management of its environment.

Consumer Laws

Consumers are protected under EU law when purchasing goods and services from other EU countries in the following ways:

- If you purchase goods or services from another EU member state and they were advertised in Ireland, you are protected under consumer law of Ireland
- If you purchased goods or services from a representative of the business in Ireland, national consumer law of Ireland protects you.
- If you buy goods or services while you were visiting another EU member state the laws of the country in which you bought the items apply.

Wow, who knew? Thanks so much Leanne, for spelling it out so clearly for us!

You're very welcome..



3a Study in the EU

Fiona Lohan



Picture: sangga-rima-roman-selia /unsplash



Grote Markt, Brussels, daniels-joffe /unsplash

Over 1.4 million students from around the world came to Europe in 2012 for their higher education and the numbers are growing every year. There are hundreds of world-class universities, research centres and higher education institutions in Europe. There are 8 main reasons why Europe is a great choice when thinking about third level education:

1. Many employers worldwide actively seek or value an international study experience when employing. you will gain the skills, knowledge and experience that employer's value while studying in Europe where there is strong international businesses and creative research sectors.
2. Europe has world-leading universities, top facilities and inspirational teaching which makes it easier to obtain a passion for learning. European universities put emphasis on creative thinking, innovation and support.
3. There are 24 official languages in the European Union, but most countries across Europe offer study programs in English too. Programs are taught in other leading global business languages such as Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and more.
4. 7 of the 10 worlds happiest countries are in Europe.
5. Europe also offers opportunities to travel and discover new places and cultures.
6. European countries invest in their higher education systems to help make education affordable for students, while keeping high quality standards. Across Europe, tuition fees and living costs compare very well to other study destinations. There are lots of scholarships and financial support options available too.
7. Europe offers so much choice including world-class universities, higher education institutions and research institutes, offering 100,000s of Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and PhD/Doctoral programs, plus short-term study opportunities.

8. There were 1.58 million full time equivalent researchers in the EU-27 in 2009. Over the following decade, the European Union looked to attract an additional 1 million researchers.

Scholarships:

There are 100,000s of scholarships and financial support schemes available across Europe for international students who wish to study here. Some schemes cover part of the tuition fees, some cover the tuition fees plus support living costs too.

Costs:

Studying in Europe can be very cost-effective. European countries invest in their higher education systems to help make education affordable for students, while keeping high quality standards. Each country in Europe has its own fee policy but tuition fees in Europe are lower than in other leading study destinations in general. Living costs (e.g. accommodation, food and drink, transport etc.) vary across Europe.



Picture: danny/unsplash

Working alongside your studies:

Many students work part-time while they study or during their university holidays to help support themselves financially.

Do you need a visa to work during your study in Europe?

Most countries allow students on a visa to work part-time, but some countries place restrictions on the number of hours visa-holders can work.



Picture: priscilla-du-prez/unsplash

3b Attention all LC Students!



Mr. P.

8 Good Reasons Why YOU should consider STUDYING IN THE EU!

(adapted from the EUNiCAS website)

Increasing numbers of Irish school-leavers are opting to apply to degree programmes in Europe. Numbers have double since 2009. Why are they doing this, and why should YOU consider it too?

1) Programmes are taught in English

Students can study degree programmes in a full range of subjects, through the English language. The lectures are in English, books are in English, projects are in English and all of your classmates, wherever they come from, are fluent in English. In addition, the wider community, in many of your target countries, is fluent in English, particularly in most countries in Northern Europe. In any event, the language of employment - in Science, IT, Engineering and Business - is increasingly English, so many local students are now studying through English, to boost their own employment prospects.

2) Places are readily available

Universities are actively seeking UK and Irish students. Places are available on degree programmes, in a wide range of disciplines, including Health Sciences, Arts & Humanities, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Engineering & IT and Business.

3) Realistic entry requirements

In most EU countries, you have a Right to an Education, if you meet minimum entry requirements. These requirements are invariably lower, often significantly, than those being set by Irish and UK universities. This is not a reflection of quality, though note that nine Dutch universities are higher-ranked than Trinity College, Dublin. It is simply an indicator that, in Ireland and the UK, our third-level education system is under



Picture: david-bruyndonckx /unsplash



Picture: mateus-campos-felipe/unsplash

pressure, as more and more students chase a small number of places in our universities. In this context, points/grades are merely demand indicators – meaning that they are the way a university narrows down the number of candidates competing for limited places on courses.

4) Free or Low Fees

The cost of attending many universities is often much lower than registering for an equivalent programme in Ireland or the UK. There are no fees for Irish students studying in the four Scandinavian countries, or Germany. In the Netherlands, fees are just over €2000 pa. Fees are also low in Italy. In addition, where there are fees, some countries offer Tuition Fee Loans, which cover these fees, with generous repayment terms. Other countries, subject to conditions, offer loans or grants to contribute to living expenses. Irish students who are qualified for Maintenance Grants can take them with them, to public programmes in Continental Europe.

5) Quality

Of course, this is what it is all about. Even with all the other advantages, you need to be sure that, by studying abroad, you will be receiving an education that is of good quality. Reassuringly, these programmes are offered by some of Europe's leading Research Universities as well as some excellent Universities of Applied Sciences and University Colleges, which are career-oriented institutions

6) The experience

Going to university, whether at home or abroad, isn't just about studying. By studying in another country, you will have a fantastic opportunity to experience a different culture and lifestyle, and acquire levels of self-confidence and self-knowledge which you'd be hard-pressed to get at home. If you are independent-minded, with a sense of adventure and a bit of initiative, studying abroad is a life-changing experience.



Picture: martin-krchnacek /unsplash

7) Erasmus+

On top of these considerations, take a look at Erasmus+ - it is the EU's flagship education and training programme and funds students, staff, youth and voluntary workers from all walks of life to explore opportunities abroad, such as periods of study/experience in EU colleges and universities from a few weeks to a few semesters. The programme has just been renewed by the European Parliament for another seven years.

(Check out more information on Erasmus+ here:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)

8) Create a Unique Selling Point

Studying for your undergraduate programme abroad will ensure your CV is unique. In a global employment market, employers are increasingly looking for key personnel with international perspectives, experience and networks.

(Check out more about the wealth of options for study in the EU at the EUNiCAS home page:

<https://www.eunicas.ie/index.php/studying-abroad/studying-abroad.html>)

...and, of course, don't forget to consult your school Guidance and Careers' Counsellors, Ms. Lyons and Mr. Dunphy, who have a wealth of information and can help you weigh up your options.

4 Italy and the EU

Shiofra Ward O'Meara



When we usually think of Italy, we associate it with good food, nice weather and lots of pizza! But did you know Italy is a country rich in history? Here's some facts about Italy and its relationship with the EU.

- Italy has been an active member of the EU since they joined on January 1st 1958. They were one of the founding members of the EU (then known as the EEC) along with France, Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and West Germany.
- With a population of 60,795,612 people Italy comprises 12% of the EU's population.
- Italy borders 3 other EU states: France, Austria and Slovenia.
- Italy became a member of the Eurozone on January 1st 1999, like Ireland. This means they adopted the Euro as their currency (though coins and notes were not introduced until 2002). Before this they used the Lira as their currency.
- Italy has 76 seats in the European Parliament, which is the 3rd highest number of seats a single country has (after France and Germany). Italy gained 3 seats in the 2019 elections after Britain left the EU bringing their total up from 73 to 76.



Piazza San Marco, Venice, laura-chouette/unsplash



Italian Riviera, andrew-spencer /unsplash

- Italy has held the revolving presidency of the Council of the EU 12 times between 1959 and 2014. The presidency's function is to chair meetings of the Council, determine its agendas, set a work program and facilitate dialogue both at Council meetings and with other EU institutions. The presidency changes every 6 months. It is currently held by Croatia (May 2020).
- Intra-EU trade accounts for 56% of Italy's exports (Germany 13%, France 10% and Spain 5%) Meaning 56% of Italy's goods are exported within the EU. In terms of imports, 59% come from EU Member States (Germany 17%, France 9% and The Netherlands and Spain 5%).
- Italy has also been a member of the Schengen Area since October 26th 1997. The Schengen Area is one of the greatest achievements of the EU. It is an area without internal borders, where citizens, many non-EU nationals, business people and tourists can freely travel without being subjected to border checks. It has 26 members some of which are not in the EU.



Venice, tom-podmore /unsplash

Italians are not in favour of following in Britain's footsteps. 62% of people surveyed in an Italian census report, think leaving the EU would be a bad idea. So, an 'Italexit' referendum is not on the cards! This is only 10 out of 100s of things to be learned about Italy. It's clearly more than just pizza and pasta!



5 Travel in the EU

Clodagh Hickey



Benefits Associated with Travel within the European Union for Irish Citizens

There are many advantages to the citizens of Ireland, in relation to travelling within the European Union. The following information discusses several of these benefits:

1) No Requirement for Visas:

Irish Citizens have the opportunity of travelling to any EU Member State and staying for any duration they like without the requirement of visas. All you need is a valid passport or ID card to travel between other EU member countries. The right to travel to another Member State can only be restricted for public policy, public security or public health reasons. However, where a national of a Member State is refused entry to another Member State, the reasons for refusing entry must be disclosed to the person. If an Irish citizen's right to travel is restricted, and you require advice, you should contact the Irish embassy or consulate in that country for assistance.



Map of Rome, oxana-v /unsplash



VW Camper, Brussels at night, philippe-bertrand /unsplash

2) Euro Currency:

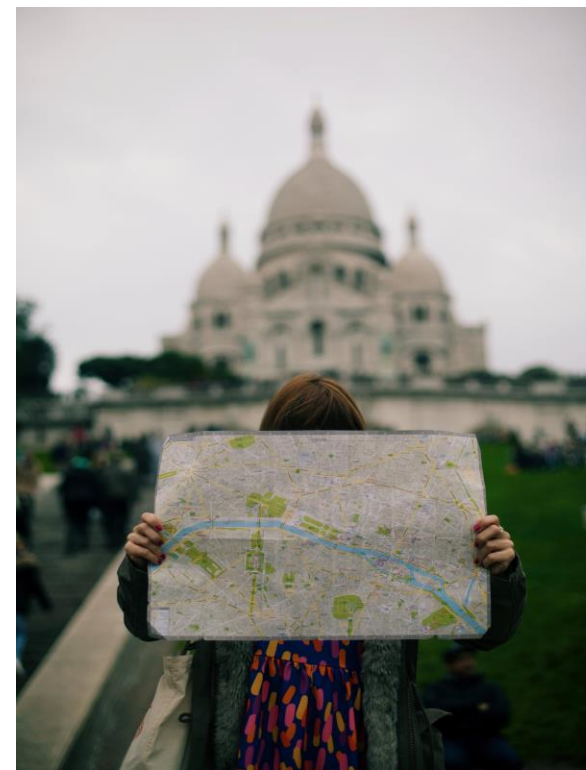
Citizens don't need to deal with exchange rates and changing money when visiting countries using the euro. The good thing about travelling to countries which use the euro, is that it avoids the worry of trying to change your money, due to the fact that these countries use the euro currency also. The euro is the sole currency of 18 other EU member states, which are: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

3) European Health Insurance Card (EHIC):

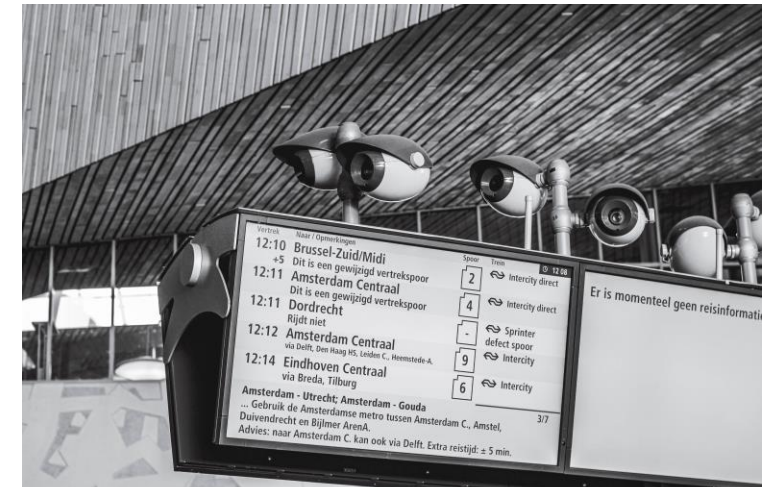
The European Health Insurance Card provides basic healthcare access to all citizens while travelling in the EU. This particular card entitles you to the same healthcare as locals through the public health systems in the European Union, if you become ill or injured while on a temporary stay.

4) Mobile Phone Roaming Charges Abolished:

Mobile Phone Roaming Charges were abolished on June 15th, 2017 across the EU. Mobile Phone Providers now have to issue a 'Roam like at Home' contract by default to customers. All calls and texts made in EU countries are deducted from plans customers have with providers in Ireland. Consumers with 'Unlimited data' plans must be provided with a large volume of data for roaming and advised when they are approaching their limit.



Montmartre, Paris, david-tapia /unsplash



Rotterdam Station, micheile-henderson/unsplash

5) European Pet Passport:

As an EU national, you have the privilege of being allowed to freely travel with your cat, dog or ferret, once it has a European Pet Passport. This passport is available from any authorised veterinarian.

6) European Aviation Safety:

In 2003, the European Aviation Safety Agency was established by the European Union. As a result, this has made flying safer, and greater co-operation between Member States on air traffic management means its more efficient also. EU regulations have also strengthened passenger rights for those travelling by plane, train, ship or long-distance coach.

7) Affordable Travel:

Travelling across the world has become much more affordable due to deregulation of the airline industry across EU Member States and Single European Sky legislation that has curtailed uncompetitive practices. EU regulations mean airline passengers can be compensated by up to €600 for delayed, cancelled or overbooked flights.



As of May 2020, the 27 European countries that comprise the EU are:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain

6 | The EU Flag

John Mitchell



HISTORY OF THE EU FLAG

The commemorative European flag symbolises both the European Union and, more broadly, the identity and unity of Europe.

It features a circle of 12 gold stars on a blue background.

These stars stand for the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe.

The number of stars has nothing to do with the number of member countries, though the circle is a symbol of unity.

Origins of the European flag

The history of the flag goes back to 1955. The Council of Europe - which defends human rights and promotes European culture – chose the present design for its own use. In the years that followed, it encouraged the emerging European institutions to adopt the same flag.

In 1983, the European Parliament decided

that the Community's flag should be that used by the Council of Europe. In 1985, it was adopted by all EU leaders as the official emblem of the European Communities, later to become the European Union. In addition, all European institutions now have their own emblems.

Commemorative euro coin: 30 years of the EU flag

To mark the 30th anniversary of the decision by EU leaders to adopt the flag as an EU emblem, the 19 euro area countries are issuing a special commemorative coin. Following an online competition held in 2015 by the European Commission, citizens and residents of the euro area selected the design created by Georgios Stamatopoulos, an engraver at the Bank of Greece. It comprises 12 stars that morph into human figures embracing the birth of a new Europe.



EU flag- markus-spiske/unsplash

7 1961 – JFK, the Berlin Wall, and their impact on Europe



Stephen Donnelan



The division of West and East Berlin began in earnest on 13th August 1961. Shortly after midnight Russia-controlled East German soldiers erected a barrier of barbed wire and bricks.

This partition aimed to halt the tide of citizens crossing over from East to West Berlin. In order to put a halt to this flight, soon after, the barbed wire was replaced by 6-foot concrete walls. 1,000 skilled workers were defecting from the Soviet-controlled East to the democratic West each day. Construction of one of history's most notorious structures, the Berlin Wall, had begun – the completed blockade would be equipped with imposing watch towers, machine gun posts and searchlights. It became an almost-insurmountable obstacle to residents of the East hoping to escape communist rule and harsh living conditions; though many still tried to scale it, at least 138 perished in the attempt.

It separated families overnight, families who'd not be reunited for twenty-eight years.

The Berlin Wall was to become the most chilling and iconic symbol of the Cold War and what Churchill had dubbed the "Iron Curtain" - the line that separated the Communist East from the Democratic West.

Only months after the push to construct the first Wall, in 1962 work began to erect a buffer wall 100 metres to the east of the original wall. This created a no-man's land between the two sides. 260 would-be defectors were to die in this kill-zone.

The Berlin Wall was constructed by the Soviet-backed East Germans as a response to growing tension between East and West over Berlin and many other issues. It only served to heighten the tension even further. It was under these circumstances that US president John F. Kennedy felt compelled to resume nuclear weapons' testing in readiness for escalation. October 1962 saw the world come the closest it ever has to nuclear war over with the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was in this context that President Kennedy made a point to travel to Berlin in the summer of 1963, to deliver a tactical address to the free world from within sight of the symbol of its biggest threat – the Berlin Wall. It was to become a defining moment not only of JFK's presidency, but of the era, and is one of his most-memorable speeches.



The aim of the speech was to draw the world's attention to the most visible place the Cold War was being waged. In the speech he told the gathered mass of 400,000 West Germans that, standing against the threat of communist aggression, "every citizen of the free world is a Berliner" and, perhaps his most famous line of all his great speeches "Ich bin ein Berliner." With those four words, Kennedy attempted to show solidarity with the people of Berlin, West and East.

He succeeded. In what was to become Kennedy's most eloquent condemnation of Communism he used the vivid example of Berlin's plight to silence naysayers: *"There are many people in the world who really don't understand, or say they don't, what is the great issue between the free world and the communist world. Let them come to Berlin... There are some who say that communism is the wave of the future. Let them come to Berlin ... And there are even a few who say that it's true that communism is an evil system, but it permits us to make economic progress. Lasst sie nach Berlin kommen—let them come to Berlin!"* Kennedy's speech was to rally Western heart but harden Eastern ones. Berlin remained divided for the next 28 years, a physical manifestation of the bitter divide between East and West.

Learn more about this landmark moment in European history here:



8 1989 - The Fall of the Soviet Union: its impact on Germany & Europe

Katie Anna Porter



The rise of the Soviet Union, born under the hammer-blows of revolution in 1917, to world superpower under Stalin's reign of brutal modernization, had been the most meteoric rise of any nation since the birth of the United States.



Russian medals, Marjan Blan/unsplash

In the great carve-up that succeeded WW2, the Soviet Union secured massive power throughout Eastern Europe and – moreover - half of Germany lay behind the Iron Curtain. Eastern Germany (the DDR) lay under Communist rule, its government a puppet under Moscow's control. The West, the GDR (German Democratic Republic) had its own democratically elected

government. In order to halt migration between the two sides of Germany, the Berlin Wall was built. The official purpose of the Berlin Wall was to keep Western “fascists” from entering East Germany but it primarily served the objective of stemming mass defections from East to West.

The world was taken by surprise when, during the night of November 9, 1989, crowds of Germans began dismantling the Berlin Wall—a barrier that for almost 30 years had symbolized the Cold War division of Europe. By October 1990, Germany was reunified, triggering the swift collapse of the other Eastern Bloc regimes. Thirteen months later, on December 25, 1991, the USSR dissolved, the collapse had been coming for years.



Children in Berlin play by the Wall, ullstein bild/getty

When the Soviet Union collapsed it had a huge impact on Germany. When the USSR was on the way out the Berlin Wall was demolished. One of the main changes caused by this was that the West and the East of Germany were once again reunited and ruled by democracy. The Berlin wall had also separated families from each other for years, they were finally able to be together again when it was knocked in 1989.

Germany experienced crime and cultural changes as well as social upheavals. The USSR's (Unionist Socialist Soviet Republics) downfall had a domino effect on the countries of Eastern Bloc, and government systems changed from communist to democratic. Through

1987 and 1988, citizens had mounted a wave of protests through Eastern Bloc countries against their pro-Soviet governments. Pro-democracy movements sprang up, like Lech Walesa's Solidarnosc in Poland, which forced the Communist government to agree to free elections months before the Berlin Wall fell. Hungary too saw a rising tide of anti-Soviet feeling. Fifty-plus years of oppression saw regime after regime fall in swift succession – first Poland, then East Germany, then Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The fall of the Wall mirrored the collapse of the Great Bear of Soviet Russia. Europe would never be the same again. In fact, modern Europe could breathe out, and welcome a new wave of nations into the democratic fold.



East side, Berlin Wall, now part of an art gallery, kon-karampelas /unsplash. Caption reads: “My God, help me to survive this deadly love affair” – a reference to how East German politicians were ‘in bed with’ the Russians, symbolized by Brezhnev



Pictures: jan-strecha/yohann-libot/dominik-vanyi/william-white/unsplash

9 | A Musical Polaroid for Europe Day 2020

Kyle
McCole
Madden



Music, for many people, including myself, is an escape from the world around, a way to zone out. You may say the music you listen to (or, if you're an artist, produce) reflects your personality or interests. With this in mind, and in honour of Europe Day 2020, I decided to

few; there's plenty in there - find the music you like the best. And if you don't like a song - listen anyway. Somewhere in the EU they love that stuff! Or just skip onto the next one. So why not stick on the playlist and give it a listen while you around the house. I mean it's

put together a playlist of music from all the 27 different countries currently in the European Union to give a small insight into what other countries are listening to and producing. A musical Polaroid, á la Eurovision. The playlist embraces many genres, from electro-dance to pop to even jazz just to name a

not like you can go anywhere anyways! And it might just put a smile on your face, and the rhythm back in your feet, and the lilt back in your voice. Click on the link below, kick back, and enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXVz929FaoB_6hFp8p0HAcfHd708YT_Sl



About Eurovision

The Eurovision Song Contest is an annual international song competition, held every year since 1956 by the Eurovision broadcasting organization, with participants representing primarily European countries. Each participating broadcaster that represents their country chooses their performer (maximum 6 people) and song (maximum 3 minutes, not released before) through a national televised selection, or through an internal selection. Each country is free to decide if they send their number-1 star or the best new talent they could find. They have to do so before mid-March, the official deadline to send in entries.

The Eurovision is a great way for the countries of Europe to share their cultures through music. There are many different genres of music played in the Eurovision and it helps countries express their musical styles.



Pictures: noiseporn/unsplash

10 | European Music – a survey



Sienna Fahey



Europe’s musical history is rich and varied, from classical, to 80s synths, to Swedish pop domination. Every genre of music has found a home within Europe. The majority of European citizens (55.1%) listen to rock and pop music. This tendency is mostly found in Denmark (69.9%), France (69.1%) and Belgium (64.8%).

What is the *European Music Council*?

The European Music Council, a regional group of the International Music Council (IMC), is the umbrella organization for musical life in Europe. It is a platform for National Music Councils and organizations involved in various fields of music from many European countries.

Its Mission

It acknowledges the significant role that music and culture play in the political and societal development of a peaceful and integrative Europe. Therefore, it advocates on local, national and European levels for an appropriate framework, respecting equal rights and opportunities for music, music professionals and access to music. The European Music Council serves its members by advocating for the societal and political significance of musical diversity in Europe and, hence, plays a key role in supporting the European communities that want to celebrate their music. It provides exceptional value to its membership by building knowledge; creating networking opportunities; supporting and enhancing the visibility of projects that help sustain people's participation in music and cultural life. Being the regional group for Europe on the International Music Council, the EMC thus collaborates on an international level.



Pic: johanna-vogt/unsplash

EUROPEAN FOLK MUSIC:

European Folk Music is a meta-genre covering all kind of numerous musical traditions found in Europe. This large and rich variety of Traditional Folk Music genres consist of old regional traditions, generally played with particular traditional instruments, or consist of particular local vocal songs. Some local Traditional Folk Music genres are shared between several countries like Alpine Folk Music, Basque Folk Music, Catalan Folk Music, Romani Folk Music, Nordic Folk Music or Romanian Folk Music. Some musical structures, songs and instrumental particularities were shared

between people all around Europe, for example the accordion from Austria and Poland to Portugal, the hurdy-gurdy in France and Hungary, the violin, many kind of flutes and harps, the lutes and guitars, the bagpipes, and all common instruments found in Western Classical Music and many European Popular/Folk Music genres. These large influences in Europe over many centuries are due to strong forces of civil, educational and cultural evolution in the whole of Europe; the rise and fall of civilisations and empires, and tides of invasions.

11 | Benelux Treaty 1944

Peter Burke and Michael Kelly



Benelux, (in full - Benelux Economic Union, French Union Economies Benelux, or Dutch

Benelux Economische Unie) is the name given to the economic union of **Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg**. It had the objective of bringing about total economic interaction by:

- ensuring free circulation of persons, goods, capital, and services
- by following a coordinated policy in economic, financial, and social fields
- pursuing a common policy regarding foreign trade.

The Road to Benelux.

In 1921 Luxembourg, a former member of the Zollverein, signed the Convention of Brussels with Belgium, creating the Belgium–Luxembourg Economic Union.

Belgium and Luxembourg had bilaterally formed an economic union in 1921;



plans for a customs union of the three countries were made in the London Customs Convention in September 1944 and became operative in 1948.

By 1956 nearly all the internal trade of the union was tariff-free. On February 3, 1958, the Treaty of the Benelux Economic Union was signed; it became operative in 1960. Benelux became the first completely free international labour market; the movement of capital and services was also made free. Postal and transport rates were standardized, and welfare policies were coordinated. In 1970 border controls were abolished.

The day-to-day operations of Benelux are conducted by the Secretariat-General; the executive authority of the organization rests with the Committee of Ministers, which meets quarterly.



schumann roundabout, brussels - patrick-c-freyer/unsplash



Atomium, Brussels, sam-gogolak/unsplash

Benelux was once regarded as a promising experiment by which neighbouring countries would form customs unions that might then merge into wider economic unions. Following the ratification of the treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952, however, interest in such developments shifted to plans for the European Economic Community (EEC; later succeeded by the European Union), of which Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg are original members. For practical issues of economic integration, Benelux served as a useful example for the EEC. .

12 | Brexit – looking ahead in Nov 2019

Michéall Power

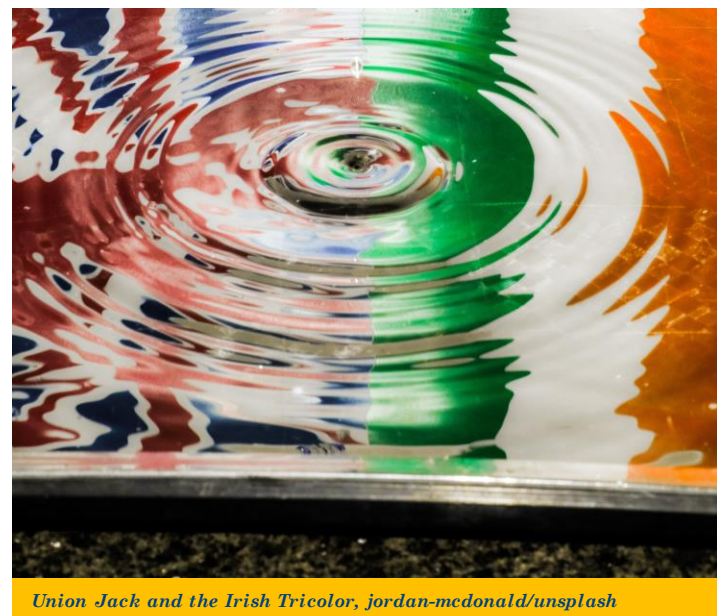


What effect will Brexit have on Ireland?

The changes from Brexit have been debated and negotiated since 2016 but a final deal is expected in January 2020. There will be consequences coming but they remain to be put into place. For one, the Republic of Ireland will suddenly have to face the fact that the border to Northern Ireland will also be an outer border of the EU, requiring much more control, security, and paperwork than currently. This has been a major part of the negotiation process because the border is long, winding, and currently laxly controlled in many areas!

ECONOMY:

Sterling is falling rapidly against the euro and fell 8% in the hours after the result became clear. It is safe to assume sterling will remain very weak for a considerable period. That will



Union Jack and the Irish Tricolor, jordan-mcdonald/unsplash

make Irish exports to the UK more expensive and our imports from Britain cheaper. This will hit some industries more than others. However, farming and agri-food exports are particularly exposed. The UK is vital for our agricultural produce because 52% of Irish beef goes to the UK, 60% of cheese exports and 84% of poultry. It is expected to have an immediate negative consequence for the British economy. That will have a spill-over effect on Ireland. Exactly how big that effect is going to be is hard to tell. The latest analysis of the Government suggests it could knock between €1.1 billion to €2.7 billion off Ireland Gross Domestic Product.

BORDER:

There will be uncertainty over the status of the border with Northern Ireland. Will there be customs and passport controls? We don't know yet. But the reintroduction of the border could turn the clock back on the progress following the Peace Process. There will be two years of negotiations between the EU and the UK regarding its future relationship with Brussels. While negotiations on an exit continue there won't be tariffs but after the UK leaves a levy on the import and export of goods to the UK could be introduced. In many ways this is a very significant danger for Ireland.



Downing Street, London, frederick-tubiermont/unsplash



Union Jack and the EU flag, rocco-dipoppa/unsplash

TRADE:

The biggest question of all is whether the UK will remain part of the Single Market which is the EU's free trade area. Minister for Finance Michael Noonan has already said that he would prefer if the UK was to remain in the free trade bloc.

Estimates indicate that could damage Irish – UK trade by about 20%. With no clarity on whether there will be tariffs, signing a contract with a British customer will be difficult. The imposition of border controls would act as an extra cost on businesses and could delay the transport of goods to and from the UK. That will cost Irish companies money.

13 | The EU, Science, Environment and Climate Change

Fiona Lohan



Gargoyle and the Paris skyline from Notre-Dame, pedro-lastra/unsplash

According to the European Commission's Science and knowledge service, "Science and technology are pivotal to good policy making. The breadth of issues our scientists cover in their research activities is extensive: from facing environmental challenges through to improving public health, to mitigating natural disasters and ensuring nuclear safety and security, and includes wide-reaching, crosscutting activities."

The European Commission have organised the JRC (Joint Research Centre) activities into the science areas:

1. Agriculture and food security
2. Economic and Monetary Union
3. Energy and transport
4. Environment and climate change
5. Health and consumer protection
6. Information Society
7. Innovation and growth
8. Nuclear safety and security
9. Safety and Security

10. Standards

The EU and the environment/climate change crisis:

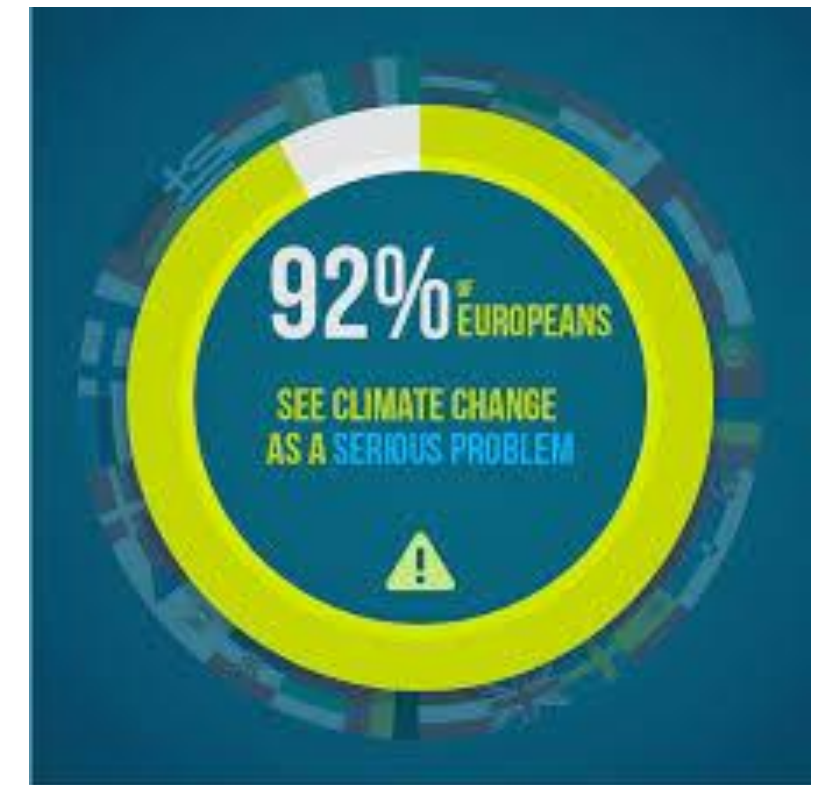
"Protection of the environment for future generations and efforts to limit the impacts of climate change are of the utmost importance in European and world policy", according to www.europa.eu. Climate change is one of the most severe problems we are facing right now. It has been agreed that global warming should be kept below 2°C compared to the temperature in pre-industrial times in order to reduce the impact of climate change. Meeting the environmental and resource-efficiency challenges will bring benefits in terms of human health, well-being, growth and the creation of jobs.

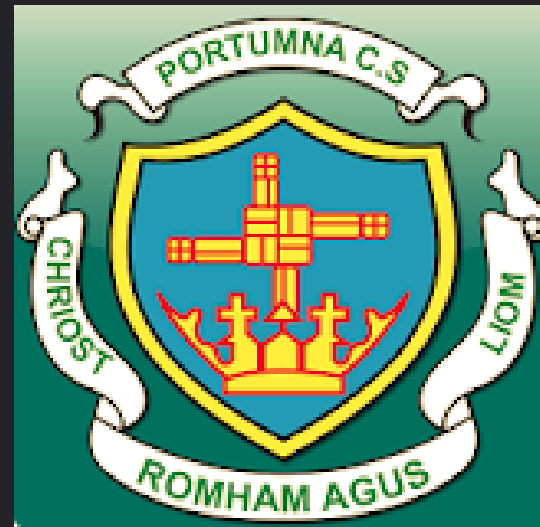


Horizon 2020:

Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation program ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020).

Horizon 2020 will help to make science more attractive to young people, and increase society's demand for innovation. Science education teaching and learning is important in order to raise young people's awareness of the different aspects surrounding science today and to address the challenges faced by young people when pursuing careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.





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European Parliament Ambassador School.

This online EU info-point has been made in Ireland by PCS
TY EU STUDIES students of 2020.

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The *European Parliament Ambassador School Programme* is a network of schools across the EU raising awareness of European parliamentary democracy and European citizenship values. The programme is suitable for Transition Year students. Over 70 schools in Ireland are taking part this year.

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