Geopolitics “A Key Study in Geography”

**Politics:** The practice of decision-making by society as a whole, usually formalized at the government level.

Political topics concerned with Geography:
- trade
- military alliances
- foreign aid
- immigration
- emigration
- territorial control
- economic systems
- areas of land suitable to support society and distribution of wealth

Examples of how Politics and Geography are related:
- Geographical factors can cause political changes
  - e.g. When Switzerland restricts immigration because it, as a nation, already has a high enough population.
- Political factors can cause Geographical changes
  - e.g. An increase in oil prices has led to an expanded search for oil in the Arctic and North sea, thus causing Geographical changes.

**Geopolitics:** The study of the two-way relationship between political beliefs and actions on one side and any of the usual concerns of geography on the other.
European Union

Overview

The European Union (EU) is the result of a process of cooperation and integration which began in 1950 between six countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands).

After nearly sixty years, with six waves of accessions (1973: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom; 1981: Greece; 1986: Spain and Portugal; 1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden; 2004: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia; 2007: Bulgaria and Romania), the EU today has 27 Member States and is preparing for its seventh enlargement, further expanding into eastern and southern Europe (Croatia, Macedonia, and Turkey).

The European Union's mission is to organise relations between the Member States and between their peoples in a coherent manner and on the basis of solidarity. The main objectives are:

- to promote economic and social progress (the single market was established in 1993; the single currency was launched in 1999);
- to assert the identity of the European Union on the international scene (through European humanitarian aid to non-EU countries, common foreign and security policy, action in international crises; common positions within international organisations);
- to introduce European citizenship (which does not replace national citizenship but complements it and confers a number of civil and politic rights on European citizens);
- to develop an area of freedom, security and justice (linked to the operation of the internal market and more particularly the freedom of movement of persons);
- to maintain and build on established EU law (all the legislation adopted by the European institutions, together with the founding treaties).

The Institutions

There are five institutions involved in running the European Union: the European Parliament (elected by the peoples of the Member States), the Council (representing the governments of the Member States), the Commission (the executive and the body having the right to initiate legislation), the Court of Justice (ensuring compliance with the law), and the Court of Auditors (responsible for auditing the accounts). These institutions are supported by other bodies: the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (advisory bodies which help to ensure that the positions of the EU's various economic and social categories and regions respectively are taken into account), the European Ombudsman (dealing with complaints from citizens concerning maladministration at European level), the European Investment Bank (EU financial institution) and the European Central Bank (responsible for monetary policy in the euro-area).
**Member States**

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<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>Kingdom</td>
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<td>Czech Rep.</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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**Symbols**

Anthem - “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s 9th Symphony

Europe Day - May 9

Flag - Royal blue field with 12 gold stars in a circle representing perfection.

**Currency**

Only 15 of the 27 members of the European Union use the new common currency, the Euro. Electronic transactions in Euros began in 1999 with the conversion rates of the day becoming fixed. Real transactions (bills and coins) began in 2002. All national currencies of the participating states became worthless at the end of February 2002. The original participating members and their conversion values as of January 1, 1999 are listed below.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Belgium} & : 40.3399 \text{ francs} \\
\text{Germany} & : 1.95583 \text{ deutsche marks} \\
\text{Spain} & : 166.386 \text{ pesetas} \\
\text{France} & : 6.55957 \text{ francs} \\
\text{Ireland} & : 0.787564 \text{ punts} \\
\text{Italy} & : 1936.27 \text{ lire} \\
\text{Luxembourg} & : 40.3399 \text{ francs} \\
\text{Netherlands} & : 2.20371 \text{ guilders} \\
\text{Austria} & : 13.7603 \text{ schillings} \\
\text{Portugal} & : 200.482 \text{ escudos} \\
\text{Finland} & : 5.94573 \text{ markkas} \\
\text{Greece} & : 340.750 \text{ drachmas}
\end{align*}
\]

\[= \€1\]
## Canada and the European Union

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<th><strong>Canada</strong></th>
<th><strong>European Union</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government Leader</strong></td>
<td>Stephen Harper</td>
<td>(6 month rotation*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government Type</strong></td>
<td>Parliamentary Democracy</td>
<td>Supranational Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formation</strong></td>
<td>July 1, 1867</td>
<td>May 9, 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>33 million</td>
<td>496 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td>9,976,140 sq km</td>
<td>4,325,675 sq km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divisions</strong></td>
<td>10 provinces, 3 territories</td>
<td>27 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital City</strong></td>
<td>Ottawa, Ontario</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Religion</strong></td>
<td>46% Roman Catholic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Domestic Product</strong></td>
<td>$1.1 trillion US</td>
<td>$13.4 trillion US</td>
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- Current Head of Government of Country identified assumes additional duties of President of EU for term
  - 2007 Jan-Jun: Germany
  - 2007 Jul-Dec: Portugal
  - 2008 Jan-Jun: Slovenia
  - 2008 Jul-Dec: France
  - 2009 Jan-Jun: Czech Republic
  - 2009 Jul-Dec: Sweden
  - 2010 Jan-Jun: Spain
  - 2010 Jul-Dec: Belgium