

origin and aims of the EU

the european union was established after WWII in an attempt to prevent future conflict between former enemies

it was originally known as the european economic community (EEC) and had just six members

each member must pay a fee and in return, they receive certain benefits, including the support and co-operation of fellow members

the european union has three aims: to establish european citizenship (protecting human rights & freedoms), to ensure freedom, security and justice for EU citizens, and to promote economic and social progress

the EU is based on the idea of shared sovereignty - each country is willing to give up control over some parts of its government in order to work with others to achieve common goals, standards and laws

european union institutions

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the european council: the european council meetings are summit meetings held regularly by EU heads of state - they take place at least twice a year and are used to set out priorities and a general strategy for the development of the EU

the european commission: commissioners are responsible for the day-to-day management of the EU - the job of a commissioner is similar to that of a government minister in Ireland

european union institutions (cont)

the main functions of the european commissions are: proposing new laws, enforcing EU law, managing the EU's budget & representing the EU internationally

european parliament: members of the european parliament (MEPs) are directly elected by EU citizens, and each member state has a set number of MEPs, based on its population

the main functions of the european parliament are: to represent EU citizens, to help introduce legislation & to approve the EU budget

council of the european union: council members are government ministers from EU member states - the main functions of the EU council are: goal setting and policy co-ordination, passing legislation, approving the EU budget and signing international agreements

court of auditors: their role is to monitor EU spending to ensure that taxpayers' money is not being wasted

EU courts of justice: each member state of the EU appoints a judge to the Court of Justice, which makes sure that EU laws are applied fairly and consistently in all member states

European Central Bank (ECB): they set the monetary policy of the EU, ensure that the euro is seen as a safe and secure currency, are responsible for issuing euro & are responsible for keeping the level of inflation in the euro area under control

