**The European Union**

Founding countries

Hello, My Name is Filip. I will be telling you about the European Union or to be exact, the founding countries of the EU.  
The European Union is a [political](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_union) and [economic union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_union) of [27 member states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_state_of_the_European_Union) that are located primarily in [Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe). The union has a total area of 4,233,255  km2 and an estimated total population of about 447 million.  
The EU was created by the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 and ratified by all members of the European Economic Community.  
There are six countries that founded the EU: Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy and Luxembourg.

Belgium is a Federal Nation consisting of three regions: Flanders, Wallonia and The Region of the Brussels. Each Region has its own official language, in Flanders they speak Dutch, in Wallonia they speak French, while in The Brussels they tend to speak both.

The capital of Belgium is Brussels, which is also the capital of the European Union.

Belgium is home to many European institutions, including the most important ones such as: the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission and the European Union Council.

Belgium’s neighbor is The Netherlands with its capital in Amsterdam, it is another country of Benelux. The Netherlands are also called “Holland” the name coming from the regions of North and South Holland, although its proper name is The Kingdom of The Netherlands.

Another country to form the EU is Luxembourg, or The Great Principality of Luxembourg. It is a small nation sharing borders with France, Germany and Belgium. The languages in Luxembourg are: French, German and Luxembourgish.

Luxembourg is a constitutional monarchy with a Grand Duke as Head of State. The government consists of an unicameral parliament which it chairs Prime Minister. Luxembourg is the seat of the European Court of Justice, one of the institutions of the European Union.

The next country is Germany, Germany has the highest population in the EU of around 80m. As a result, Germany also has the most seats in the European parliament (99 deputies). The German capital is Berlin and they are a Federal Republic. In Germany, the role of parliament is played by the Bundestag, in whose hands the legislative power is concentrated, and the Bundesrat, composed of representatives of individual federal states. The official language is German, which is also the most popular language in the entire European Union.

All listed above countries joined the Schengen area in 1985.

France shares a border with Germany and is the next founding country of the EU. It is a republic with a president ruling the country along with a parliament. France joined the Schengen area in 1995. The official seat of the European Parliament is also located in Strasbourg, France.

The next founding country is Italy, it is a bit farther from all the other listed countries and does not share any borders with any founding nations. Italy is a Republic ruled by a parliament. Italy joined the Schengen area in 1990.

Even though, the European Union was formally established in 1993, the founding fathers should be sought much earlier. One of them can be called Konrad Adenauer, the first German chancellor after World War II, and co-founder of the idea of ​​a united Europe.

Thank you for listening, good bye.