European Union (EU) -- Member states and candidates for accession
European integration: Initiated in Western Europe in aftermath of World War II; context marked by political and economic reconstruction, beginning of Cold War

Three Communities created in 1950s: European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and European Economic Community (EEC), with six member states

Two trajectories of development: (1) Accession of more member states ("widening"), and (2) transfer of further powers to European institutions, coupled with shift to supranational decision making ("deepening")
“Widening” integration

Original members: Germany, France, Italy, Benelux

1973: UK, Denmark, Ireland

1981: Greece

1986: Portugal, Spain

1990: East Germany

1995: Austria, Sweden, Finland

2004: CEECs, Cyprus, Malta

2007: Bulgaria, Romania
“Deepening” integration

- **1963/64**: Court of Justice strengthens Community law against member states
- **1985**: Single European Act abolishes member-state veto in many policy areas, strengthens European Parliament
- **1991**: Maastricht Treaty lays groundwork for Euro; European Union established in addition to Communities
- **1997/2000**: Amsterdam and Nice Treaties reform EU institutions prior to enlargement
- **2007**: Lisbon Treaty simplifies institutional structure, gives EU unified legal personality ➔ in force since 2009
# Core EU institutions -- An overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Governance role</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Council (Brussels)</td>
<td>Defines legislative and executive objectives</td>
<td>Intergovernmental, but supranational presidency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission (Brussels)</td>
<td>Mainly administrative, but also legislative and executive functions</td>
<td>Supranational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Ministers (Brussels)</td>
<td>Legislative, some executive functions</td>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament (Strasbourg, Brussels)</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>Supranational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Justice (Luxembourg)</td>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>Supranational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summits of heads of state or government from all member states, permanent president (H. Van Rompuy)

- Discusses pressing issues; defines policy objectives; decides on institutional reform and key personnel
- Decisions usually consensual
European Commission

- One Commissioner per member state, responsible for specific portfolio, headed by president (J.M. Barroso)
- Initiates EU legislation; manages EU programs and finances; monitors implementation of EU law; represents EU abroad
- Most decisions consensual
Council of Ministers

- One minister per member state; composition varies by policy field; presidency rotates between member states every six months
- Must pass all binding EU laws; monitors Commission; some executive powers in foreign/defence policy
- Decides unanimously or per qualified majority (QMV)
European Parliament

- 736 directly elected members, organized in transnational party groups, chaired by president (J. Buzek)
- Co-legislator with Council in most policy areas; scrutiny functions vis-à-vis Commission
- Usually decides by simple majority
Court of Justice

- 27 judges, appointed by member states, chaired by president (V. Skouris)
- Makes decisions on interpretation of EU law; cases often brought by national courts
- Most decisions made in chambers of 3 or 5 judges