

# European Union Governance

**Grades:** 6 through 12

**Time:** Step 1 [Precursors A & B] 1 hour each; Steps 2 & 3— 1 to 1 ½ hours each.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will understand the structure and function of the primary governing institutions of the European Union; and,
2. Students will understand how legislation is initiated and passed by the European Union.

**Materials Needed:**

1. *The European Union: A Guide for Americans*—class set of hardcopies or computers with internet access to locate on-line at: <http://www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/euguide2007.pdf>  
Other websites that are appropriate for this task:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/internat/eu/lowdown/eu\\_info\\_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/internat/eu/lowdown/eu_info_1.shtml)  
[www.unc.edu/depts/europe/confernces/eu/Pages/eu3.htm](http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/confernces/eu/Pages/eu3.htm)  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/04/eu\\_institutions/html](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/04/eu_institutions/html)
2. Overhead or LCD projection screen for slides
3. Attached worksheets

**Procedures:**

**Step 1: Precursors to Lesson**

It is presumed instructor has provided and dissected via class discussion a working definition of the European Union. One that I prefer is:

The European Union is an alliance of member European countries that have joined together to work on common economic, political and social goals, while retaining their sovereignty as independent countries in all other ways.

Precursor A. It is also recommended students be familiarized with the steps taken to form the European Union, to wit, the multiple treaties that laid the foundation for the Maastricht Treaty. Pages 2 and 3 of *The European Union: A Guide for Americans* details this process and lends itself to timeline or comprehension based questions. This process can be compared to the founding documents of the USA wherein there were basic agreements that we supplemented as events changed that eventually led to the Constitution. The resources detailed above may also be used for these purposes and can serve as one differentiation tool based on reading level proficiency.

Precursor B. Students should be familiar with the member countries. This is easily taught by using blank Europe political maps which students may label to identify member countries. The website *The European Union: A Guide for Americans*—class set of hardcopies or computers with internet access to locate on-line at: <http://www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/euguide2007.pdf>

Blank outline maps are available at [www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)

### **Step 2: Lesson Procedures—Part A**

1. Students will use websites or hardcopies of publications to research aspects of: European Parliament; Council of the European Union; European Commission; Court of Justice; and Court of Auditors.
2. Armed with these tools the students will complete attached worksheet A.
3. Teacher reviews assignment and discusses when completed.

### **Step 3: Lesson Procedures—Part B**

1. Review legislative process for US government.
2. Discuss the fact the EU has legislative processes, too. Both involve compromise and negotiation of several governmental bodies, with many similarities and a few differences. Students will complete diagram decision-making process within the EU. Students are given shell diagram to complete during class. Depending on class ability these can be completed via: notes and discussion; providing inserts and research resources to allow student to complete; or by providing inserts for students to glue in place as discussion occurs.
3. Students complete a Venn Diagram comparing US and EU process using this class work and prior portfolio notes.

**Assessments:**

- ❖ Informally all work is review in class together during discussion with students providing feedback/answers.
- ❖ All work for unit is incorporated into a complete unit graded via a rubric with specific weights given to each assignment for completion and accuracy.
- ❖ Both lessons will be formally assesses as part of a EU unit test
- ❖ US vs. EU Legislative Process Venn Diagram will be graded on accuracy—it is modified by setting number of elements to be included in diagram and/or partially filling in diagram elements.

**NCSCOS:** 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies Goal 9—Objectives 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, and 9.04; Goal 10; Objectives 10.01, 10.02, 10.03 and 10.04.

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### **Governing Institutions of the European Union: Structures and Functions**

Directions: Students will conduct research using the materials provided to learn about five main institutions of the EU. Using the information learned: cut out the fact tabs and match each to its category on the worksheet. Once checked, glue tabs in place.

<b>Governing Institution</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Function</b>
<b>European Parliament</b>		
<b>Council of the European Union</b>		
<b>European Commission</b>		
<b>Court of Auditors</b>		
<b>Court of Justice</b>		

Makes sure money is spent properly	Negotiates treaties with other countries	Serve 6 year renewable term
Approximately 785 members from every EU country	Implements programs and policies passed by Parliament and Council	Makes sure budget managed well
Main decision-making group	Made up of 27 commissioners—president and 26 members	Sit in political party, not country sections
Assures laws are written & used properly	Adopts new laws with Parliament	Adopts new laws with Council
Makes sure laws and regulations are used	Decides budget with EU Parliament	Decides budget with EU Council
Asks questions of Commission and Council	Settles disagreements between EU and other persons and groups	Proposes new laws to Parliament and Council
Runs day-to-day duties	Ministers for every country meet regularly to discuss problems and solutions	Coordinates economic policies of member states
Elected every 5 years by EU citizens	May be dismissed by Parliament	Decisions made by vote—bigger the country's population the more votes they get
Coordinate police and court efforts on criminal matters	Selected by member country governments & approved by EU Parliament	Develop Common Foreign and Security Policy based on guidance from Council
Goal is to act in best interest of EU	Makes sure EU acting democratically	27 judges—one from each member country
Judges appointed by Council	Appointed for 5 years	Serve 6 year renewable term

## European Union Legislation Flowchart Inserts

Directions: Each item fits into the flowchart. Using research or class notes place the item in the correct part of the flowchart.

Parliament considers proposed law and Council's feedback and has 3 options...

Approves proposed Law

Proposed law dies

Rejects proposed Law

New Law Adopted by EU

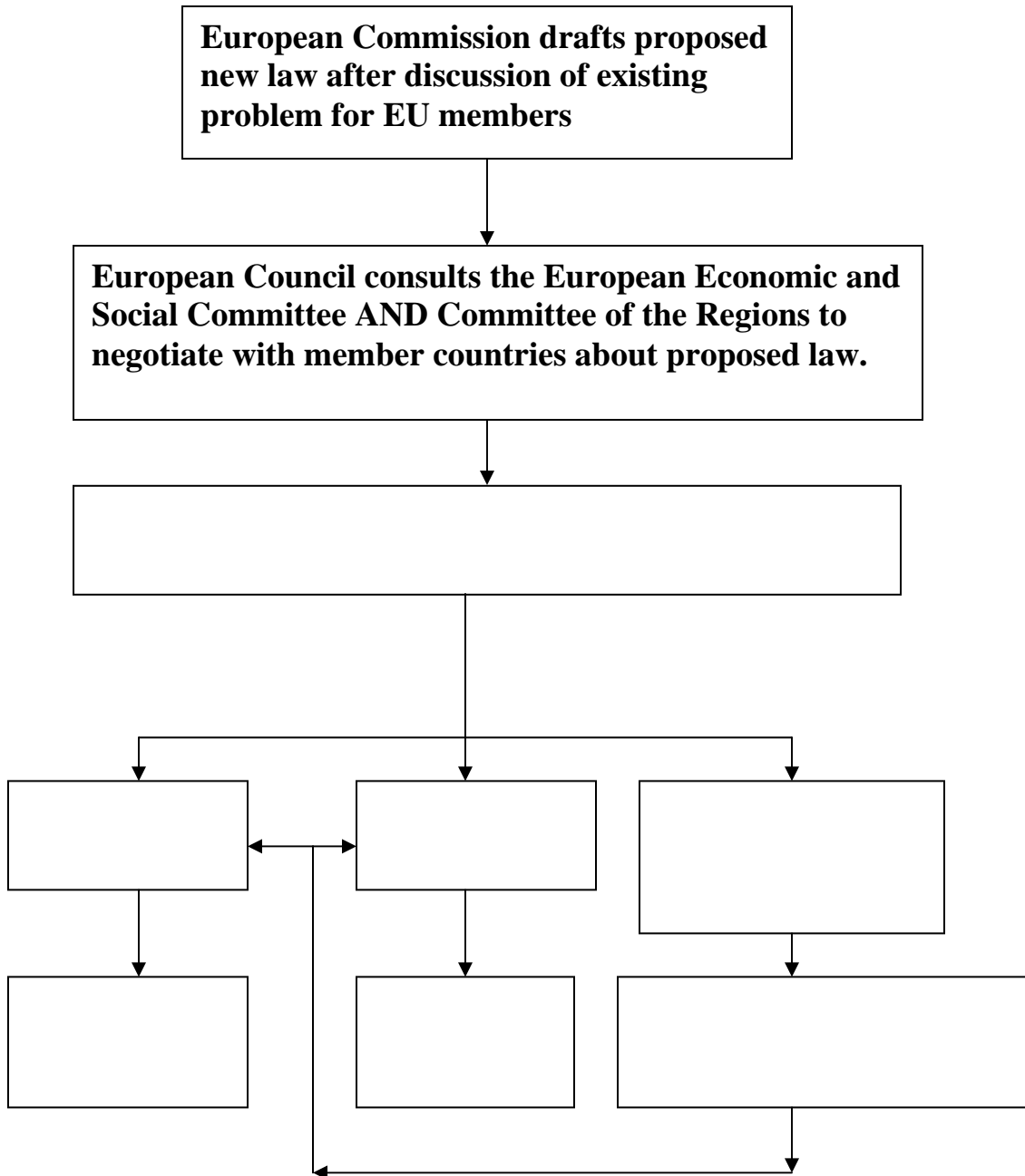
European Council consults the European Economic and Social Committee AND Committee of the Regions to negotiate with member countries about proposed law.

Asks for changes or amendments to proposed law

European Commission drafts proposed new law after discussion of existing problem for EU members

Conciliation Committee formed to make changes and rewrite proposed law

## The European Union: How Legislation Is Passed



## The European Union: How Legislation Is Passed

