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# Brochure

# EU without borders



# Universitatea de Stat din Moldova



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of the European Union

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European Union Integration: Realities  
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(<https://eufory.usm.md/>)***

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## Introduction

The European Union stands as a testament to the power of cooperation and integration. One of its defining characteristics is the removal of internal borders, allowing for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people across member states. This borderless interaction has proven to be of immense importance not only for the EU itself but also for its partners.

This brochure aims to explore the practical implications and theoretical foundations of a European Union without borders, as well as the concept of seamless interaction between the EU, its member states, and its partners. The purpose of this guide is also to shed light on the multifaceted advantages of the EU's borderless concept and the diverse directions it encompasses:

- 1. Economic Benefits:** The absence of border controls within the EU has created a single market of over 450 million consumers. This vast internal market offers a unique opportunity for businesses to expand their operations across borders without facing customs barriers or trade restrictions. The seamless flow of goods and services fosters economic growth, encourages innovation, and enhances competitiveness. Moreover, the elimination of currency exchange costs and the adoption of the euro in many member states have further facilitated trade and investment within the EU.
- 2. Mobility and People-to-People Contacts:** The freedom of movement granted to EU citizens within the Schengen Area has revolutionized the concept of travel and employment opportunities. People can easily live, study, work, and retire in different member states, enriching their cultural experiences and broadening their horizons. This freedom of mobility has not only enhanced individual lives but has also contributed to the growth of economies by enabling the exchange of skills, knowledge, and labor across borders. It has also fostered multiculturalism, social cohesion, and understanding among diverse European populations.
- 3. Political and Diplomatic Advantages:** The absence of internal borders within the EU has fostered closer political and diplomatic ties between member states. Regular interaction and collaboration among governments, policymakers, and institutions have facilitated joint decision-making processes and the implementation of common policies. The EU's ability to speak with one voice on the international stage has strengthened its position as a global actor, enabling it to address global challenges, negotiate trade agreements, and promote peace and stability in its neighborhood.
- 4. Global Collaboration and Soft Power:** The EU's borderless cooperation serves as a model of regional integration and intergovernmental cooperation for the rest of the world. The EU's success in maintaining peace, stability, and prosperity within its borders has inspired other regions to pursue similar integration initiatives. By promoting shared values, human rights, and democratic principles, the EU has become a significant force for global collaboration and a soft power influence on the international stage. The EU's ability to cooperate effectively with its partners strengthens its role as a global leader in addressing common challenges such as climate change, poverty, and global health issues.

The European Union's borderless cooperation has become a cornerstone of its success and influence. The seamless interaction among member states and its partners has led to economic growth, enhanced mobility, increased security, and strengthened political ties. By showcasing the benefits of a united and interconnected region, the EU

serves as a role model for regional integration efforts worldwide. In an increasingly interconnected world, the importance of borderless cooperation cannot be overstated, and the EU continues to thrive as a result of this fundamental principle.

The practical value of this guide lies in its ability to provide individuals, businesses, and policymakers with a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with a borderless Europe. By delving into various aspects such as trade, tourism, migration, and security, this guide equips readers with the knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of a united Europe.

Moreover, the guide also explores the theoretical foundations that underpin the concept of a European Union without borders. It examines the principles of supranationalism, subsidiarity, and solidarity, which form the bedrock of the EU's decision-making process. Understanding these principles is essential for comprehending the dynamics of the EU and its evolving relationship with its member states and external partners.

Furthermore, this guide delves into the concept of borderless interaction between the EU and its partners. It explores the EU's engagement with neighboring countries, regional organizations, and international partners, highlighting the mutual benefits derived from enhanced cooperation and integration. By examining successful examples and case studies, readers gain insights into the potential for collaboration and the positive outcomes that can arise from transcending traditional borders.

As you embark on this journey through the world of a European Union without borders, we encourage you to explore the practical and theoretical dimensions with an open mind. Whether you are an academic, a business professional, a student, or a curious citizen, this guide will equip you with the necessary tools to comprehend and navigate the intricacies of a borderless Europe.

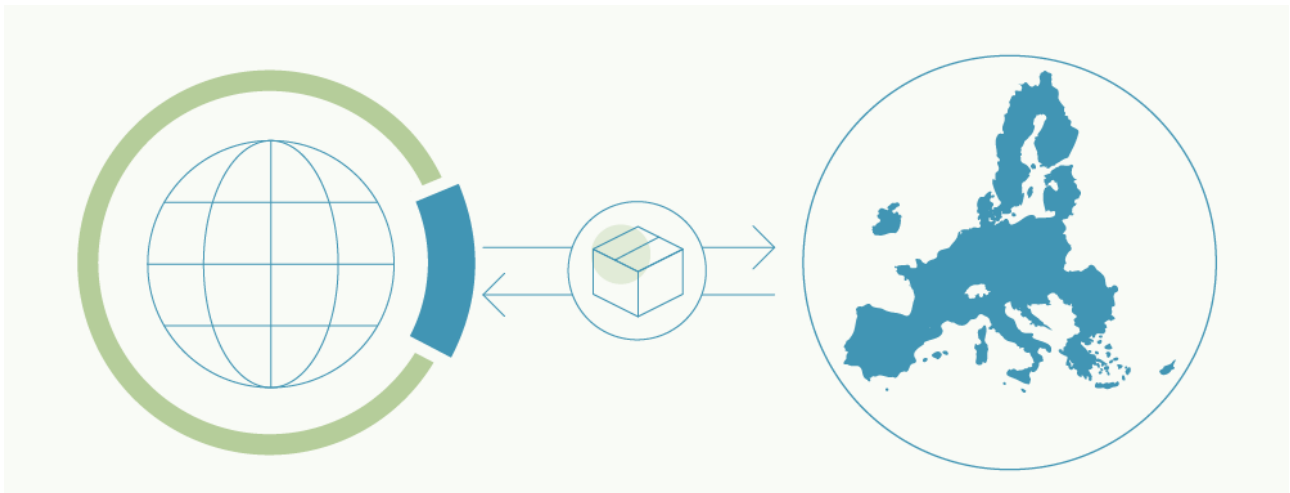
Let us dive in and discover the transformative potential of a European Union without borders and the limitless possibilities that lie ahead.

# 1. Economic Benefits

The economic benefits of the European Union's interaction with its borderless partners are significant. By eliminating trade barriers and promoting free movement of goods, services, capital, and people, the EU and its partners create a conducive environment for economic growth and development. Here are some of the key economic advantages:

## 1.1. Increased trade opportunities

Cooperation without borders within the EU and its partners allows for the expansion of trade opportunities. Removal of tariffs, quotas, and other trade barriers enables businesses to access larger markets, increase their customer base, and enhance competitiveness. This leads to higher levels of international trade, which boosts economic growth and generates employment opportunities.



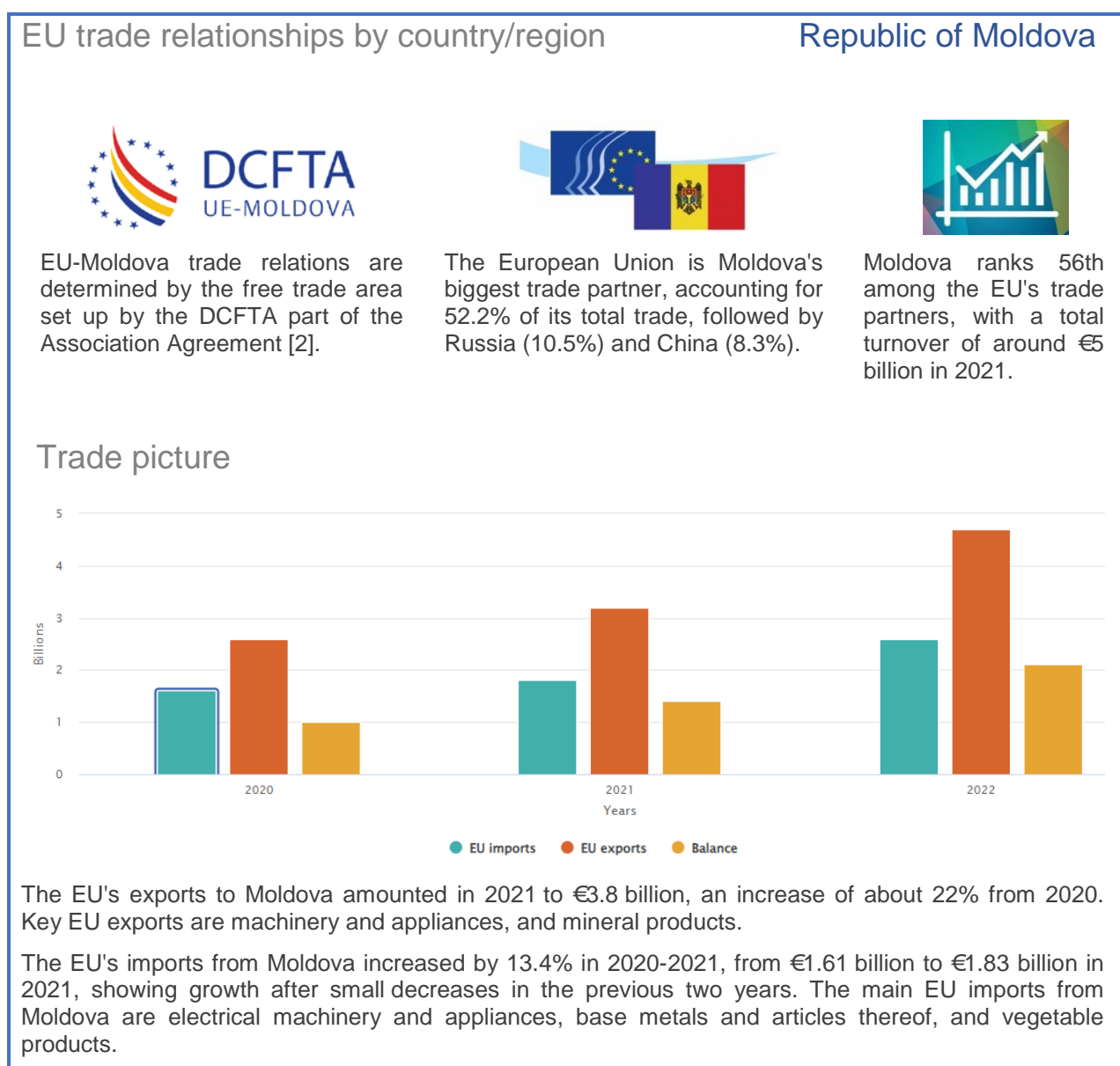
The European Union (EU) has been actively pursuing the expansion and enhancement of trade opportunities with its partner countries. There are several ways in which the EU seeks to increase trade opportunities [1]:

- 1. Trade Agreements:** The EU negotiates and enters into comprehensive trade agreements with partner countries or regional blocs. These agreements aim to reduce trade barriers, such as tariffs and quotas, and facilitate the movement of goods, services, and investments between the EU and its partners. Notable examples include *the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)* and *the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement*.
- 2. Economic Partnership Agreements:** The EU has also been negotiating *Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)* with African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. These agreements promote regional integration, support sustainable development, and enhance trade relations between the EU and these partner countries.
- 3. Market Access and Regulatory Cooperation:** The EU engages in dialogues and negotiations with partner countries to enhance market access and regulatory cooperation. This involves aligning technical standards, regulations, and certifications, which can help reduce trade barriers and facilitate the exchange of goods and services.
- 4. Trade Facilitation:** The EU supports initiatives to simplify and streamline customs procedures, enhance trade facilitation measures, and improve infrastructure to

promote efficient trade flows. This includes investments in ports, transportation networks, and digital trade platforms.

5. **Trade Promotion and Assistance:** The EU provides various forms of trade promotion and assistance to its partner countries, including capacity-building programs, technical assistance, and financial support. These initiatives aim to enhance the competitiveness of partner countries' industries, promote export diversification, and strengthen their participation in global value chains.
6. **Regional Integration:** The EU actively supports regional integration efforts among its partner countries, such as the establishment of regional economic communities or free trade areas. This can lead to economies of scale, increased market access, and deeper regional cooperation, fostering trade opportunities within and beyond the region.

By pursuing these strategies, the EU aims to create a conducive environment for trade and investment, expand market access for its partner countries, and foster economic growth and development.





## 1.2. Market integration

The EU and its partners benefit from the integration of their markets, creating a single market with a population of over 450 million people. This larger consumer base offers companies' economies of scale, allowing them to achieve cost efficiencies in production, distribution, and marketing. It encourages specialization, investment, and innovation, leading to increased productivity and overall economic efficiency.



**“Market integration** refers to *the process of removing barriers and facilitating the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people within a regional market”*.

European Council. Timeline: Moving to a deeper single market. 2023

The European Union (EU) has been a prime example of successful market integration, with its Single Market representing one of the most advanced and comprehensive economic areas in the world. The benefits of market integration for the EU and its partners are numerous and can be summarized as follows:

- 1. Increased trade:** Market integration promotes the removal of tariffs and non-tariff barriers, thereby facilitating the free movement of goods and services. This leads to increased trade volumes and expands market opportunities for businesses in the EU and its partners. By eliminating trade barriers, market integration fosters economic growth and enhances efficiency.
- 2. Enhanced competitiveness:** The EU's Single Market provides a level playing field for businesses by enforcing common regulations and standards. This encourages healthy competition and innovation, driving businesses to improve their efficiency and quality. The resulting economies of scale and specialization make EU and partner businesses more competitive on a global scale.
- 3. Attraction of investment:** Market integration creates a larger and more integrated market, which is attractive to domestic and foreign investors. The removal of trade barriers, harmonized regulations, and increased market opportunities encourage investments from both within and outside the EU. This stimulates economic growth, creates jobs, and promotes technological advancement.

[DG TRADE](#)

[Access2Markets](#)

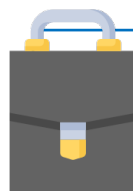
- [The EU Market](#)
- [Non-EU markets](#)

There are two main types of foreign investment in the EU:



### •foreign direct investment

- where an investor sets up or buys a company (or a controlling share in a company) in another country, and;



### •portfolio investment

- where an investor buys shares in, or debt of, a foreign company without controlling that company.



The EU is the world's main provider and the top global destination of foreign investment. Foreign direct investment stocks held in the rest of the world by investors resident in the EU amounted to €8,990 billion at the end of 2020. Meanwhile, foreign direct investment stocks held by third country investors in the EU amounted to €7,138 billion at the end of 2020.

By contributing to economic growth, job creation and integration in global value chains, foreign investment tends to benefit host countries as well as home countries. Through domestic policies and international agreements, most countries seek to improve conditions to attract investors.

*Objectives of EU investment policy.* Since 2009 the EU handles foreign direct investment policies on behalf of EU members, as part of the EU common commercial policy. EU investment policy aims to:

- secure a level playing field so that EU investors abroad are not discriminated or mistreated;
- make it easier to invest by creating a predictable and transparent business environment;
- encourage investment that supports sustainable development, respect for human rights and high labour and environmental standards - this includes promoting corporate social responsibility and responsible business practices;
- attract international investment into the EU, while protecting the EU's essential interests;
- preserve the right of home and host countries to regulate their economies in the public interest.

*Investment facilitation.* Through investment facilitation, the EU seeks to encourage the setting up of a more transparent, efficient and predictable business climate for investors. This includes, for instance, making information on investment rules public and easily available, or reducing delays in obtaining government permits and approvals.

In the WTO, the EU is contributing to the discussions on investment facilitation.

EU Proposal for WTO disciplines and commitments relating to investment facilitation for development

[INF/IFD/RD/46](#)

Investment facilitation contributes to unlocking investment opportunities notably for small and medium enterprises. This should also benefit developing countries by making it easier for domestic and foreign investors to invest, conduct their day-to-day business, and expand their existing investments.

In its recent Trade Policy Review, the European Commission announced its intention to pursue sustainable investment agreements with Africa and the Southern Neighborhood, focusing on investment facilitation.

4. *Increased consumer choice and lower prices:* Market integration expands the range of products and services available to consumers within the EU and its partner countries. Increased competition leads to greater choices, higher quality, and lower prices. Consumers benefit from access to a wider variety of goods and services, which can improve their standard of living.

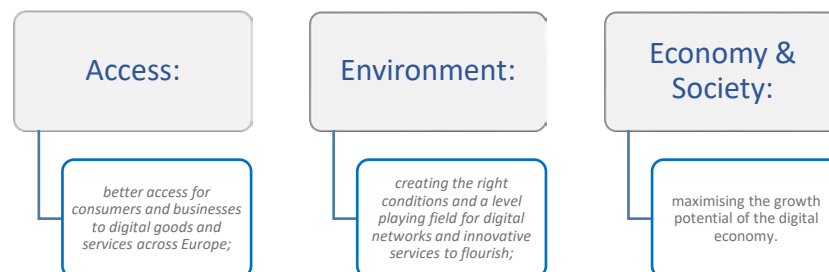
The European Union (EU) implements and supports increased consumer choice and lower prices through various mechanisms and policies. Here are some key ways in which the EU promotes these goals:

- **Competition policy:** The EU has a robust competition policy aimed at ensuring fair competition within the internal market. The European Commission, the executive body of the EU, enforces rules against anti-competitive practices such as cartels, abuse of dominant market positions, and restrictive agreements. By cracking down on such practices, the EU creates an environment that fosters competition, encourages innovation, and ultimately leads to lower prices and greater consumer choice.
- **Single Market:** The EU has established a Single Market, which allows for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people within the EU member states. This integration eliminates barriers to trade and enables businesses to operate more efficiently across borders. As a result, consumers benefit from a broader range of products and services, increased competition, and lower prices. [3]  
**Digital Single Market:** At a time when the internet and digital technologies are transforming our world, a Europe fit for the digital age is one of the European Commission's 6 political priorities, aiming to empower people with a new generation of technologies.  
 The EU is actively working towards creating a Digital Single Market, which aims to remove barriers to digital trade and improve access to digital goods and services across member states. This initiative promotes competition and innovation in the digital sector, offering consumers a wider array of digital products and services at competitive prices. [4]

#### Legal basis

- [Articles 101 to 109 TFEU and Protocol No 27 on the internal market and competition;](#)
- [The Merger Regulation \(Council Regulation \(EC\) No 139/2004\);](#)
- [Articles 37, 106 and 345 TFEU for public undertakings and.](#)

The EU's Digital Single Market Strategy is built on three pillars:



Making the European Union's single market fit for the digital age requires tearing down unnecessary regulatory barriers and moving from individual national markets to one single EU-wide rulebook. These steps could contribute €415 billion per year to economic growth, boosting jobs, competition, investment and innovation in the EU. [5]

- **Market surveillance:** The EU carries out market surveillance activities to ensure that products circulating in the internal market comply with safety, health, and environmental requirements. By enforcing strict product standards, the EU protects consumers from substandard or unsafe products while promoting fair competition among businesses.
- **Harmonization of standards:** The EU works towards harmonizing product standards and regulations across member states. By establishing common standards, the EU facilitates the cross-border trade of goods and services. This reduces the costs for businesses to comply with different regulations in various countries, leading to economies of scale, increased competition, and ultimately lower prices for consumers.

- **Consumer protection regulations:** The EU has implemented various consumer protection regulations to safeguard the rights and interests of consumers. These regulations cover areas such as product safety, labeling, advertising, unfair commercial practices, and online commerce. By establishing clear rules and standards, the EU ensures that consumers can make informed choices and have access to safe and reliable products at competitive prices. [6]
- **Consumer education and empowerment:** The EU also invests in consumer education and empowerment initiatives. Through information campaigns, websites, and consumer protection organizations, the EU provides consumers with resources and knowledge to make informed choices. By empowering consumers, the EU encourages competition among businesses and enables consumers to seek out the best products and prices. [7]

#### EU Consumer Protection Legislation

- [Consumer protection law;](#)
- [Consumer rights and complaints;](#)
- [Online Shopping Rights;](#)
- [Ensuring digital fairness in EU consumer law: taking stock of existing rules.](#)

These measures collectively contribute to increased consumer choice and lower prices by promoting competition, removing barriers to trade, harmonizing standards, protecting consumer rights, and empowering consumers within the EU's internal market.

5. **Cooperation and regional stability:** Market integration fosters cooperation and collaboration among EU member states and partner countries. By creating an interdependent economic system, countries have a vested interest in maintaining stability and resolving conflicts through peaceful means. This contributes to regional stability and helps prevent trade-related tensions and conflicts.
6. **Knowledge sharing and innovation:** Market integration facilitates the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and best practices among countries. It encourages collaboration in research and development, promotes innovation, and enables the sharing of technological advancements.

Knowledge sharing and innovation play crucial roles in the European Union (EU) and its partnerships. The EU is committed to promoting collaboration and cooperation among its member states and partner countries to foster economic growth, social development, and technological advancements. Here's an explanation of knowledge sharing and innovation within the EU and its partnerships:

#### a) **Knowledge Sharing:**

Knowledge sharing refers to the exchange of information, expertise, and best practices among individuals, organizations, and countries. In the EU context, knowledge sharing is a fundamental aspect of the **European Research Area (ERA)** initiative, which aims to create a unified and open research area across Europe.

#### European Commission -

- [The European Research Area](#)

#### European Council –

- [European Research Area](#)

- **Research and Development (R&D) Funding:** The EU provides significant funding for research and development projects through programs like Horizon Europe. This funding supports collaborative research efforts, encourages knowledge sharing, and facilitates the transfer of knowledge and technology between partners.

- **Networking and Collaboration:** The EU promotes networking and collaboration among researchers, scientists, and innovators through various platforms, such as research networks, joint projects, and knowledge-sharing events. These initiatives enable the exchange of ideas, research findings, and expertise, fostering innovation and progress.
- **Open Access and Open Data:** The EU encourages open access to research publications, data, and educational resources. Open access facilitates the dissemination of knowledge, promotes collaboration, and accelerates scientific breakthroughs.
- **Education and Skills Development:** The EU focuses on promoting education and skills development to enhance knowledge sharing. Programs like Erasmus+ facilitate student and staff exchanges, encouraging cultural diversity, interdisciplinary learning, and the transfer of knowledge across borders.

#### European research collaboration

- [Erasmus+](#)
- [PhD Hub](#)
- [The European University Foundation](#)
- [Research Networks](#)
- [European Educational Research Association](#)

#### b) **Innovation:**

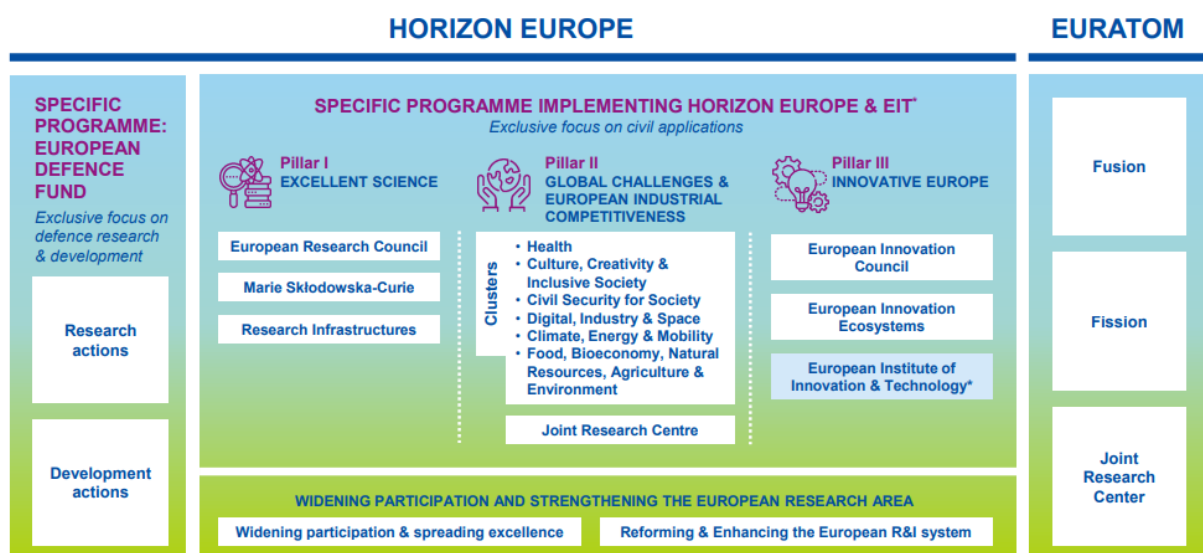
Innovation is a vital driver of economic growth and competitiveness. The EU places great importance on fostering innovation across its member states and partner countries.

Several initiatives and strategies are in place to encourage innovation:

- **Research and Innovation Programs:** The EU supports research and innovation programs that foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and technological advancements. Horizon Europe, for example, provides funding for research and innovation projects, promoting breakthrough discoveries, and supporting innovative solutions to societal challenges:

#### Program's sources and legal basis

- [Research and innovation](#)
- [Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs](#)



- **Innovation Ecosystems:** The EU emphasizes the development of vibrant innovation ecosystems that bring together academia, industry, startups, and research institutions. These ecosystems encourage cross-sector collaboration, knowledge sharing, and entrepreneurship, leading to the creation and adoption of innovative solutions.

- *Intellectual Property Protection*: The EU promotes the protection of intellectual property rights to incentivize innovation. Strong intellectual property regulations and enforcement mechanisms provide innovators with the confidence and incentives to invest in research and development.
- *Digital Transformation*: The EU recognizes the importance of digital transformation in driving innovation. Initiatives like the Digital Single Market Strategy aim to create a digital-friendly environment, promoting digital skills, connectivity, and entrepreneurship.
- *Cross-Border Collaboration*: The EU fosters cross-border collaboration in innovation, encouraging partnerships between member states and partner countries. Collaborative projects and networks enable the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and resources, leading to joint innovation initiatives.

#### Intellectual Property in the EU

- [European Commission - Intellectual property](#);
- [EUBAM – IPR](#);
- [Protecting EU creations, inventions and designs](#).

The European Union and its partners prioritize knowledge sharing and innovation to foster economic growth, social development, and technological advancements. Through various programs, initiatives, and collaborative efforts, the EU promotes the exchange of knowledge, research findings, and best practices, while supporting innovation through funding, networking, and the development of vibrant innovation ecosystems.

7. **Political cooperation and influence**: Market integration often goes hand in hand with political cooperation among participating countries. The EU, as a prime example, has developed institutions and mechanisms for decision-making and cooperation on various issues beyond economic matters. This enhances political stability, fosters dialogue, and strengthens collective influence on the global stage. Political cooperation is essential for harmonizing regulations and standards across member states. This involves aligning laws related to trade, competition, consumer protection, and other economic activities. Harmonization reduces barriers to trade, promotes fair competition, and facilitates the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor within the EU.
8. **Regulatory harmonization and efficiency gains**: Market integration encourages the harmonization of regulations and standards across participating countries. This reduces duplication, simplifies administrative procedures, and enhances efficiency. Common regulations create a level playing field, promote fair competition, and facilitate cross-border transactions, reducing costs for businesses and consumers alike.

#### The EU cross-border Cooperation

- [European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations](#);
- [European Cross-border Cooperation](#);
- [Science Europe](#).

Overall, market integration provides significant benefits for the EU and its partners, including increased trade, enhanced competitiveness, greater consumer choice, attraction of investment, cooperation, and stability. It serves as a catalyst for economic growth, prosperity, and the overall development of participating countries.

### 1.3. Foreign direct investment

The borderless nature of EU partnerships attracts higher levels of foreign direct investment. Companies from EU member states and partner countries can invest more easily across borders, benefiting from harmonized regulations and legal frameworks. This



stimulates economic growth, enhances productivity, and creates job opportunities in both the EU and partner countries.

Foreign direct investment of the European Union refers to the flow of capital from EU member states to foreign countries for the purpose of establishing businesses, acquiring assets, or engaging in productive activities. The EU is a major global player in terms of FDI, both as a source of outbound investment and as a recipient of inbound investment:



*“Businesses or individuals invest in another country to either source components/raw materials, to locate their production in cost-efficient or skills-abundant locations, or to get closer to their customers.”*

European Commission. Investment. 2023

As a source of FDI, the EU member states collectively have significant financial resources and a wide range of multinational corporations that invest in various sectors around the world. These investments often aim to access new markets, secure natural resources, gain technological expertise, or benefit from cost advantages in different countries. The EU member states have historically been active in FDI, with countries like Germany, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom being notable sources of outbound investment.

On the other hand, the EU is also an attractive destination for foreign direct investment. The EU's single market, which allows for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor among its member states, provides a stable and harmonized business environment. This market integration, combined with the EU's large consumer base and skilled workforce, makes it an appealing location for foreign companies seeking to expand their operations. Industries such as manufacturing, finance, technology, and services have attracted significant FDI into the EU.

To promote and regulate FDI, the EU has developed a framework of policies and regulations. While each member state has the primary responsibility for attracting and regulating FDI within its territory, the EU plays a role in coordinating investment policies and ensuring compatibility with the single market rules. The EU's policy objectives include attracting high-quality investment, safeguarding national security interests, ensuring fair competition, and promoting sustainable development.

Furthermore, the EU has entered into bilateral and multilateral investment agreements with various countries and regions to facilitate and protect investment flows. These agreements provide legal certainty, promote transparency, and establish mechanisms for resolving investment disputes.

#### EU FDI regulation

- o [European Commission - Objectives of EU investment policy;](#)
- o [Eurostat - FDI;](#)
- o [Foreign direct investment reviews 2023: Europe.](#)

### 1.4. Enhanced competitiveness

Collaboration between the EU and its partners fosters competition, driving companies to improve their products, services, and efficiency. The exposure to a larger

market and increased competition pushes businesses to innovate, adopt best practices, and invest in research and development. This results in higher-quality products, increased productivity, and improved competitiveness at both regional and global levels.



*“... In future we will be guided by a series of key performance indicators, which can tell us whether Europe's economy is really becoming more productive and competitive. Because what gets measured gets done.”*

Ursula von der Leyen. President of the European Commission

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In the context of the EU without borders, enhanced competitiveness refers to the ability of businesses and industries within the member states to compete effectively in a borderless market. It involves creating an environment that fosters fair competition, innovation, and efficiency, enabling companies to thrive and grow. Here are some key aspects of enhanced competitiveness in the EU without borders [8]:

1. **Foreign investment and trade:** The EU aims to eliminate barriers to trade, such as tariffs, quotas, and non-tariff barriers, among its member states. This allows businesses to access a larger consumer base and compete on an equal footing with companies from other EU countries.

*Examples of support –*

- Designing *single window digital solutions* for traders interacting with authorities.
- Developing *internationalization strategies* for regions lagging behind in order to reap the benefits of globalization.
- Analyzing Member State's *regulatory environment, identifying barriers and drivers* of foreign direct investment and trade, and enhancing *administrative capability* to attract investment and boost trade.
- Developing an action plan for the introduction of *artificial intelligence* for investment and trade agencies.

2. **Better regulation, licensing and inspections:** Red tape and time-consuming procedures make doing business costly and uncertain. Better regulation is about designing and evaluating national policies and legislation transparently with evidence and developing policy by taking into consideration the views of citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. It aims to reduce bureaucracy for businesses, including through the simplification of their investment licensing legislation and the introduction of streamlined and risk-based inspection mechanisms.

*Examples of support –*

- Reviewing, simplifying and streamlining *legislation and regulatory mechanisms*.
- Supporting the establishment of a *regulatory environment for complex and innovative business models*.
- Providing *capacity building* to authorities.
- Preparing an *action plan* with a road map of measures.
- Proposing *institutional changes* and *new governance structures*.



3. **SMEs and other sectors.** Restarting economic activity across economic sectors is important for a sustainable recovery. Small and medium-sized enterprises play a central role in the European Union's economic fabric, providing two out of three jobs. In 2020, the European Commission adopted a dedicated SME strategy, which aims to reduce red tape and help SMEs to do business across the single market and beyond. Tailor-made policies in key economic sectors such as tourism will provide Member States with opportunities for job creation and regional development.

*Examples of support –*

- Developing *SMEs and regional growth strategies*.
  - Improving *management standards* in SMEs.
  - Designing *funding mechanisms and tools* for developing an *ecosystem for start-ups and the digitalization of SMEs*.
  - Preparing an *action plan* to support *creative industries*.
  - Promoting better *destination management in the area of tourism*.
4. **Competition and consumer policy.** In a more globalized and digitalized economy where a large number of transactions take place online or through pricing algorithms, *competition and consumer protection* authorities find it challenging to carry out their duties via traditional means. In response, the EU Member States are looking for tailored capacity-building programs on the most advanced techniques in market surveillance, investigation practices, ex post evaluation and impact assessment. They are also seeking to step up their efforts in effectively monitoring the granting of State aid and assessing its impact on productivity, competition and the economy.

*Examples of support –*

- Improving the system of *detecting competition infringements*.
  - Effectively using *IT tools in competition investigations*.
  - *Evaluating competition and consumer protection decisions* and providing recommendations.
  - Carrying out *impact assessment* of State aid schemes.
  - Enhancing functionalities of *State aid registries*.
5. **Digital economy, research and innovation.** Digital technologies have a profound impact on our way of living and doing business. EU Member States and their partners need to have the capacity to reap the benefits of our increasingly digitalized society and face the challenges it brings. They are looking to design policies and deploy innovative solutions to give businesses the confidence, competences and means to digitalize and grow. A systematic and forward-looking research and innovation strategy is crucial to a more productive and green economy.

*Examples of support –*

- Supporting the *innovation ecosystem* at national and regional level, including *smart specialization*.

#### European Growth Model

- [Towards a green, digital and resilient economy;](#)
- [Communication on the European Growth Model.](#)

- Designing tools for *technology transfer, commercialization of research and development* and *better integration in value chains*.
  - Supporting the *digital transformation of businesses* and developing digital tools and service platforms for businesses.
  - Advising on improving the *digital infrastructure*, including Very High-Capacity Network development
  - Proposing technical solutions and transferring skills to implement BIM in public infrastructure planning and procurement.
  - Designing an *industry strategy*, an *action plan* for its implementation and a *governance model* for its monitoring.
6. **Investment management, public–private partnerships and state-owned enterprises.** Investment in the European Union remains below pre-financial crisis levels. It was further weakened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Recovery and Resilience Facility offers large-scale financial support for investment and reforms. In order to be able to make a full use of it and boost productivity, public finances and growth, Member States are looking for ways to improve strategic planning and management of their public resources and assets. This includes strengthening the design and implementation of sound public investment projects and PPPs to ensure value for money as well as to enhance the governance of state-owned enterprises for increased efficiency, better functioning of markets and improved public services.

*Examples of support –*

- strengthening national authorities' capacity for the selection and management of public *investment projects*.
- Supporting the reform of national *concessions/PPP frameworks* and improving the PPP policy model.
- Improving authorities' capacity to *design and manage PPP projects*.
- Modernizing the *state-owned enterprises' corporate governance framework* in line with international good practices.

Overall, enhanced competitiveness in the EU without borders is driven by the removal of trade barriers, harmonization of regulations, access to a larger market, labor mobility, R&D collaboration, infrastructure development, and targeted support for businesses.

### 1.5. Access to resources and expertise

The EU and its partners benefit from the sharing of resources, knowledge, and expertise. Collaboration facilitates the exchange of technological advancements, research findings, and best practices in various sectors. It enables countries to tap into each other's strengths, fostering innovation, and supporting the development of industries and sectors that rely on specialized knowledge or resources. Here are some key advantages:

1. **Economic Growth and Development.** Sharing resources allows for the efficient allocation and utilization of scarce resources. The EU and its partners can pool together their resources, such as capital, labor, technology, and natural resources, to enhance economic growth and development. This collaboration promotes trade, investment, and economic integration, leading to increased productivity and prosperity for all participants.

2. **Increased Competitiveness.** Through resource sharing, the EU and its partners can enhance their competitive edge in the global marketplace. Collaborative efforts enable the creation of economies of scale, enabling businesses to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and expand their market reach. By combining complementary strengths and capabilities, countries can jointly tackle complex challenges, strengthen industries, and promote sustainable development.
3. **Strengthened Security and Stability.** Sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise can contribute to improved security and stability within the EU and its partner countries. Close cooperation in areas such as defense, intelligence sharing, counterterrorism, and law enforcement facilitates effective responses to common threats and challenges. By working together, countries can enhance their collective security, protect their citizens, and promote regional stability.
4. **Social and Cultural Exchange.** Resource sharing fosters social and cultural exchange between countries, promoting understanding, tolerance, and cooperation. Collaboration in education, arts, sports, and cultural activities allows for the exchange of ideas, values, and traditions. This intercultural dialogue contributes to mutual enrichment, strengthens diplomatic ties, and builds lasting relationships between nations.
5. **Addressing Global Challenges.** The sharing of resources and expertise enables the EU and its partners to tackle global challenges more effectively. Issues such as climate change, public health crises, poverty alleviation, and migration require collective action and cooperation. By joining forces, countries can pool resources, coordinate policies, and implement sustainable solutions to address these pressing global issues.

#### Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

- [Access to essential services;](#)
- [Open access resources.](#)

#### Useful links

- [Shaping global responses to global challenges;](#)
- [Addressing global challenges through R&I;](#)
- [Partnering with the world;](#)
- [Tackling global challenges together](#)

Overall, the sharing of resources, knowledge, and expertise between the EU and its partners creates a framework for mutual benefit, fostering economic growth, innovation, security, cultural exchange, and collaborative problem-solving. This cooperation contributes to the well-being and progress of all participating countries and their citizens.

## 1.6. Regional development

EU partnerships without borders contribute to regional development and cohesion. By reducing economic disparities between member states and partner countries, collaboration helps to create a more balanced and integrated economic landscape. The transfer of resources, investments, and expertise to less developed regions foster their economic growth, reduces regional inequalities, and promotes social stability.

These partnerships bring together various actors, such as member states, regions, local authorities, civil society organizations, and businesses, to address common challenges and work towards shared goals. By transcending national borders and fostering cooperation, these partnerships enhance the effectiveness of regional development efforts and promote a sense of unity and cohesion among participating regions.

One prominent example of such partnerships is the [European Territorial Cooperation](#) programs, also known as [Interreg](#):



*“European territorial cooperation is the goal of cohesion policy that aims to solve problems across borders and to jointly develop the potential of diverse territories.”*

European Parliament

These programs are funded by the European Regional Development Fund and aim to promote cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation among EU regions. Through Interreg, regions and local authorities collaborate on joint projects in areas such as innovation, economic development, environmental protection, and social inclusion [9]:



These projects often tackle common challenges that extend beyond national borders, such as infrastructure development, environmental conservation, and cultural exchange.

The EU cooperation programs with neighboring regions include *184 regions with 260 million people in 33 countries* and laid down along the EU external borders from the Northern Periphery to the Mediterranean region and from Atlantic to Black Sea Basin. These programs support economic and social development of the border areas through joint actions including in environment protections, public health services, safety and security measures, connectivity, support to SMEs and entrepreneurship.

The cross-border cooperation between EU Member States and Neighborhood region was first established under European Neighborhood policy and funded by the ENPI for the period 2007-2013 with the aim to promote good Neighborhood relations and gradual economic integration of participating countries. This was further reconfirmed under the European Neighborhood Instrument for the period 2014-2020.

In *2021-2027*, the cooperation will be governed by the EU Cohesion policy and the programmes will be fully part of Interreg. In order to highlight the external dimension of Cohesion policy and at the same time to emphasise how close EU and partner countries stand, the new programmes is called “[Interreg NEXT](#)”.

#### Program's sources and legal basis

- [Interreg Regulation](#);
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament](#);
- [Interreg Europe](#);
- [Programme documents](#)



*Interreg NEXT cooperation programs* for the period 2021-2027 have an allocation of *EUR 1.1 billion* from the ERDF, the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA).

The programme strategies are defined around the EU objectives for smarter, greener, more connected, more social Europe and Neighbourhood and addressing the regional needs regarding good cooperation governance and more secure borders.

*Special focus is given to:*

- *Green and digital transition* in its cooperation dimension is a binding requirement with efforts directed to the protection of globally-significant natural heritage in the area Barents Sea, Baltic Sea, Danube and Carpathian region, Black-Sea Basin and Mediterranean Sea Basin.
- *Digitalisation* as crosscutting enabler that transforms the society and economy.
- *Involvement of the civil society* and youth in *the implementation and decision making process*.

Additional national co-funding is ensured by the Member States, partner countries and third countries (Norway). The Interreg NEXT programs under shared management by the EU Member states with a counterpart authority in the partner country [10]:

Cross-border cooperation	Program Website
Poland-Ukraine Programme	<a href="http://www.pbu2020.eu/en">http://www.pbu2020.eu/en</a>
Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Programme	<a href="http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/">http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/</a>
Romania-Ukraine Programme	<a href="https://ro-ua.net/en/">https://ro-ua.net/en/</a>
Romania-Republic of Moldova Programme	<a href="https://ro-md.net/en/">https://ro-md.net/en/</a>
Italy-Tunisia Programme	<a href="http://www.italietunisie.eu/">http://www.italietunisie.eu/</a>
Transnational cooperation	Program Website
Black Sea Programme	<a href="http://blacksea-cbc.net/">http://blacksea-cbc.net/</a>
Mediterranean Sea Programme	<a href="https://www.enicbcmed.eu/">https://www.enicbcmed.eu/</a>

The strong commitment and ownership by participating countries, which makes the Interreg NEXT programs a unique cooperation mechanism, is maintained with partnership on equal footing, with jointly defined priorities, with local actions that involve at least one partner from each side of the border and with balanced program budget.

Another significant EU partnership without borders is the [European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation](#). EGTCs are legal entities that enable territorial cooperation across national borders. They bring together various stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, to jointly plan and implement projects that benefit multiple regions [11].



An EGTC can be created by partners based in at least two Member States (or one Member State and one or more non-EU countries) and belonging to one or more of the following categories:

- Member States or authorities at national level;
- regional authorities;
- local authorities;
- public undertakings or bodies governed by public law;
- undertakings entrusted with operations of services of general economic interest;
- national, regional or local authorities, or bodies or undertakings from third countries (subject to specific conditions);
- associations consisting of bodies belonging to one or more of these categories.

EGTCs have legal personality and are governed by a convention concluded unanimously by its members. EGTCs act on behalf of their members, who adopt their statutes by means of special conventions outlining the organization and activities of the EGTC. As a minimum requirement, an EGTC must have two organs: an assembly, which is made up of representatives of its members, and a director, who represents the EGTC and acts on its behalf.

Furthermore, the EU promotes partnerships without borders through initiatives such as macro-regional strategies. These strategies aim to address specific challenges faced by regions within larger geographical areas, such as the Baltic Sea region, the Danube region, or the Adriatic-Ionian region. By promoting cooperation and coordinated action among member states, regions, and other stakeholders, these strategies enhance regional development and cohesion by leveraging the collective strengths of the participating territories.

Partnerships without borders also extend beyond traditional regional boundaries to include collaboration between urban and rural areas. The EU supports initiatives that promote integrated territorial development, ensuring that both urban and rural areas contribute to and benefit from regional development efforts. These partnerships focus on issues such as sustainable agriculture, rural-urban linkages, connectivity, and the preservation of cultural heritage. By fostering collaboration between urban and rural regions, these initiatives contribute to balanced and inclusive regional development.

In summary, EU partnerships without borders, exemplified by programs such as Interreg, EGTCs, macro-regional strategies, and urban-rural collaborations, play a vital role in promoting regional development and cohesion. By encouraging cross-border cooperation and pooling resources, knowledge, and expertise, these partnerships address common challenges, reduce regional disparities, and foster a sense of unity and solidarity among participating regions.

#### Program's sources and Legal basis

- [Regulation \(EC\) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a EGTC;](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 1082/2006 on EGTC.](#)

## 2. Mobility and People-to-People Contacts

The European Union cooperation with its partners offers numerous advantages in terms of mobility and people-to-people contacts. These advantages stem from the EU's commitment to facilitating the movement of individuals and fostering cultural exchanges. Here are some key benefits:

### 2.1. Freedom of Movement

Freedom of movement is a fundamental principle within the EU and is primarily associated with the concept of the Schengen Area. The Schengen Area comprises 26 European countries, including 22 EU member states, that have abolished internal borders and implemented common rules for the movement of people across their territories. This principle enables individuals to travel and reside freely within the Schengen Area without the need for border controls.

In the context of EU partnerships with its partners, the concept of freedom of movement takes on a broader perspective. The EU has established various partnership agreements with neighboring countries and regions, aiming to foster cooperation and enhance political, economic, and social ties. These partnerships often include provisions for facilitating the movement of people and promoting mobility.

The EU's approach to freedom of movement with its partners varies depending on the nature and scope of the partnership. Here are a few examples:

1. **European Economic Area and European Free Trade Association:** The EEA agreement extends the EU's internal market principles to three EFTA member states (Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein). It guarantees the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital, and persons between these countries and the EU member states. 
2. **European Neighborhood Policy:** The ENP encompasses countries in the EU's immediate vicinity, such as those in Eastern Europe, the Southern Mediterranean, and the Western Balkans. While freedom of movement is not extended to these countries to the same extent as within the Schengen Area, the EU aims to facilitate visa liberalization, promote people-to-people exchanges, and support mobility schemes such as student exchanges and business travel.
3. **Mobility Partnerships:** The EU has established mobility partnerships with several countries, including Ukraine, Moldova, and Tunisia. These partnerships aim to enhance legal migration channels, combat irregular migration, and promote the circular migration of skilled workers. They often involve simplified visa procedures, cooperation in border management, and the exchange of best practices. 
4. **Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements:** The EU negotiates visa facilitation agreements with partner countries to streamline visa procedures, reduce costs, and promote people-to-people contacts. Simultaneously, readmission agreements establish the obligations of partner countries to take back their own nationals or third-country nationals who have transited through their territory irregularly.

It is important to note that while the EU promotes freedom of movement within its partnerships, these arrangements are distinct from the full rights and privileges enjoyed by EU citizens within the Schengen Area. The level of mobility and the specific rights granted



vary based on the type of partnership and the agreements reached between the EU and its partners.

## 2.2. Educational and Research Exchanges

The European Union places great emphasis on fostering academic and research collaborations with its partners. It recognizes the value of international cooperation in advancing knowledge, promoting innovation, and addressing global challenges. To facilitate such collaborations, the EU has implemented programs like [Erasmus+](#) and [Horizon Europe](#).

[Erasmus+](#) is an EU initiative that supports education, training, youth, and sport activities. It promotes mobility and cooperation among students, teachers, and researchers across Europe and beyond. Through Erasmus+, students can study abroad, gain practical experience through internships, and participate in exchange programs. This program encourages the exchange of ideas, cultural understanding, and the development of a European identity.



[Horizon Europe](#) is the EU's flagship research and innovation program, building on its predecessor, Horizon 2020. It aims to stimulate scientific excellence and address societal challenges by providing funding for collaborative research projects. Horizon Europe encourages interdisciplinary cooperation, bringing together researchers, universities, research institutions, and industry partners from different countries. It supports a wide range of research areas, including health, energy, digital technologies, climate change, and social sciences.



These programs offer numerous opportunities for academics and researchers to collaborate internationally. They enable the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and best practices among institutions, facilitating joint research projects, publications, and technology transfer. Collaborations through Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe strengthen the European research landscape, promote innovation, and enhance Europe's competitiveness on a global scale.

Furthermore, the EU also promotes research and academic cooperation through initiatives such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, which supports the mobility and career development of researchers, and the European Research Council, which provides funding for groundbreaking research projects across all scientific disciplines.



In summary, the EU actively encourages academic and research collaborations through programs like Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, recognizing the importance of international cooperation in advancing knowledge, fostering innovation, and addressing societal challenges. These initiatives provide opportunities for researchers, scientists, and students to collaborate across borders, enhancing Europe's research capabilities and strengthening its position in the global academic community.

## 2.3. Cultural Exchange and Understanding

EU cooperation with partner countries fosters cultural exchange and mutual understanding. People-to-people contacts through tourism, art, sports, and other cultural activities promote intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity. This interaction allows individuals to learn from one another, break down stereotypes, and build lasting connections based on shared values and experiences.

Here are some key aspects of the EU's cultural exchange and understanding with its partners:

1. **Creative Europe.** Creative Europe is an EU program that supports the cultural and creative sectors. It aims to strengthen the competitiveness and international cooperation of the cultural industries within Europe and beyond. Through funding, it encourages the mobility of artists, cultural professionals, and works of art across borders, facilitating cultural exchange and cooperation.
2. **European Capitals of Culture.** Each year, the EU designates one or more cities as European Capitals of Culture. These cities organize a series of cultural events, festivals, and projects that showcase their cultural heritage, promote artistic expression, and foster cross-cultural dialogue. The program serves as a platform for exchanging ideas, fostering intercultural dialogue, and boosting tourism and economic development.
3. **Dialogues on Cultural Diplomacy.** The EU engages in dialogues and cooperation on cultural diplomacy with its partners. This includes promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and cultural heritage preservation. Through cultural exchanges, joint projects, and cultural events, the EU seeks to strengthen ties, build trust, and enhance understanding between different countries and regions.
4. **Cultural Heritage Preservation.** The EU places great importance on preserving and promoting cultural heritage. It supports initiatives to protect, restore, and promote historical sites, monuments, and cultural traditions. By preserving cultural heritage, the EU aims to foster a sense of identity, pride, and understanding among its citizens and partners.
5. **International Cultural Cooperation.** The EU actively collaborates with international organizations, such as UNESCO, to promote cultural cooperation and dialogue at the global level. It supports joint initiatives, cultural policies, and programs that address common challenges, celebrate cultural diversity, and promote sustainable development through culture.

### Programs websites

- [European Capitals of Culture](#);
- [Creative Europe](#).

### Initiatives websites

- [The EU's external strategy for culture](#);
- [EU Policy for cultural heritage](#).

Overall, the EU's cultural exchange and understanding with its partners involve a range of programs, initiatives, and dialogues that aim to facilitate intercultural dialogue, promote cultural diversity, and strengthen relationships between peoples and nations. These efforts contribute to building a more inclusive, cohesive, and interconnected global community.

## 2.4. Strengthened Security and Stability

Collaborative efforts between the EU and its partners in areas such as law enforcement, counterterrorism, and border management enhance security and stability.

Through information sharing, joint operations, and capacity-building initiatives, the EU promotes a safer environment for people within its borders and partner countries. This cooperation contributes to the overall well-being and mobility of individuals by addressing common security challenges.

Through various initiatives, policies, and partnerships, the EU has endeavored to enhance security cooperation, promote stability, and foster resilience in the face of evolving security challenges.



*“The Common Security and Defense Policy enables the Union to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security.”*

The Diplomatic Service of the European Union

Some key aspects of the EU's efforts to strengthen security and stability:

- 1. Common Security and Defense Policy.** The EU's CSDP aims to develop a comprehensive approach to crisis management, conflict prevention, and peacekeeping. It includes civilian and military missions, such as training missions, advisory tasks, and crisis response operations. The CSDP enables EU member states to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in addressing security threats, both within Europe and globally.
- 2. Partnership and Cooperation Agreements.** The EU has established partnerships and cooperation agreements with various countries and regional organizations to foster security and stability. These agreements facilitate dialogue, collaboration, and joint action on common security challenges, such as counterterrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats. Examples include agreements with countries in the Eastern Partnership, the Western Balkans, and the Mediterranean region.
- 3. Enhanced External Action.** The EU engages in diplomacy, mediation, and conflict resolution efforts to promote stability and security in regions affected by conflicts or political instability. It supports peace processes, encourages dialogue between conflicting parties, and provides political and financial assistance for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.
- 4. Border and Migration Management.** Given the challenges posed by irregular migration and border security, the EU has prioritized the development of a comprehensive approach to border management. This includes strengthening external border controls, improving information sharing and cooperation between member states, and supporting countries facing migration pressures. The EU also seeks to address root causes of migration through development cooperation and diplomatic efforts [12].
- 5. Counterterrorism Cooperation.** The EU has enhanced cooperation among its member states and with international partners to counter terrorism and

#### Legal basis

- o [Common Security and Defense Policy](#);
- o [Common foreign and security policy](#).

#### Legal basis

- o [Article 3\(2\) of the Treaty on European Union \(TEU\)](#);
- o [Articles 67 and 77 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union \(TFEU\)](#).

radicalization. This includes information sharing, intelligence cooperation, capacity building, and the development of common legal frameworks to combat terrorism effectively. The EU has also taken measures to counter the financing of terrorism and to address online radicalization.

6. **Cybersecurity and Resilience.** Recognizing the importance of cybersecurity, the EU has developed strategies, policies, and legislation to strengthen resilience against cyber threats. This includes promoting information sharing, establishing incident response mechanisms, developing cybersecurity standards, and fostering public-private partnerships to enhance cybersecurity capabilities.
7. **Defense Cooperation.** The EU has taken steps to enhance defense cooperation among its member states through initiatives such as Permanent Structured Cooperation. PESCO aims to deepen defense integration, improve military capabilities, and encourage defense research and development collaboration. By pooling resources and coordinating defense efforts, the EU seeks to strengthen security and contribute to collective defense.

These are some of the ways in which the EU has worked to strengthen security and stability with its partners. The EU's approach emphasizes multilateral cooperation, dialogue, and comprehensive responses to security challenges, aiming to create a safer and more stable environment within its borders and beyond.

## 2.5. Social Integration and Cohesion

EU cooperation with partner countries emphasizes social integration and cohesion. Efforts are made to ensure the inclusion of individuals from diverse backgrounds, providing opportunities for them to participate fully in society. By promoting social cohesion, the EU aims to create an inclusive environment where people can thrive, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or cultural heritage.

Within the EU, social integration and cohesion are important goals that aim to reduce inequalities, promote social justice, and foster a sense of belonging among all citizens. In the period 2021-2027, the cohesion policy has five policy objectives for the ERDF, ESF+, the Cohesion Fund and the EMFF [13]:

A smarter Europe	•innovative and smart economic transformation;
A greener	•low-carbon Europe;
A more connected Europe	•mobility and regional ICT connectivity;
A more social Europe	•implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights;
A Europe closer to citizens	•sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas through local initiatives.

The EU has implemented various policies and initiatives to support these objectives, including:

1. **Social Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination.** The EU has established legislation to combat discrimination and promote equal treatment across various grounds, such as gender, race, disability, age, and sexual orientation. It also funds programs to promote social inclusion, combat poverty, and support vulnerable groups.
2. **Employment and Social Rights.** The EU has developed policies to ensure fair and decent working conditions, improve labor market access, and protect workers' rights. It also promotes social dialogue between employers, workers, and other stakeholders to foster cooperation and address social challenges.
3. **Education and Skills Development.** The EU recognizes education as a key driver of social integration and cohesion. It supports initiatives to improve access to quality education, lifelong learning opportunities, and skills development for all individuals, including marginalized groups.
4. **Regional Development and Cohesion Policy.** The EU's cohesion policy aims to reduce regional disparities and promote balanced development across member states. It provides financial support for infrastructure projects, job creation, and social inclusion measures in less-developed regions.

Regarding external partners, the EU seeks to extend its social integration and cohesion principles beyond its borders. It engages in cooperation and partnership with neighboring countries, international organizations, and other regions to promote social development and address common social challenges. The EU's external actions focus on various areas, including:

1. **Migration and Refugees.** The EU collaborates with partner countries to address migration and refugee challenges, ensuring the protection of human rights, promoting integration, and supporting social inclusion efforts.
2. **Development Cooperation.** The EU provides development assistance to partner countries, supporting projects and programs that contribute to poverty reduction, social progress, and sustainable development.
3. **Human Rights and Democracy.** The EU promotes human rights, democratic principles, and the rule of law in its external relations. It engages in dialogues and cooperation with partner countries to strengthen social and political systems that uphold these values.
4. **Trade and Economic Cooperation.** The EU seeks to enhance economic integration and social development through trade agreements and economic partnerships with its external partners. It aims to ensure that economic growth benefits all segments of society and supports social progress.

#### Programs' sources and regulations

- [Migration and asylum;](#)
- [Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons;](#)
- [Human Rights & Democracy;](#)
- [Promoting and protecting human rights;](#)
- [Eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development;](#)
- [Economic integration.](#)

Overall, the EU's approach to social integration and cohesion involves implementing comprehensive policies and initiatives within its member states while extending cooperation and support to its external partners. By promoting inclusive societies, protecting rights, and fostering cooperation, the EU aims to create a more socially integrated and cohesive European continent and contribute to global social development.



### 3. Political and Diplomatic Advantages

The European Union cooperation with its partners without borders offers several political and diplomatic advantages. These advantages stem from the EU's commitment to regional integration and cooperation, as well as its emphasis on shared values and principles.

#### 3.1. Enhanced Political Unity

Enhanced political unity in the collaboration between the European Union and its partners entails several nuances and specific examples. Some key aspects and concrete illustrations:

1. **Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).** The EU and its partners work together to achieve common goals in international affairs. This includes coordinating diplomatic efforts, joint statements, and shared positions on global issues. For instance, the EU and its partners may collaborate on peacekeeping missions, humanitarian interventions, or promoting democratic values in third countries.



*“The Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union aims to preserve peace and strengthen international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.”*

European Commission

*Example:* The EU and its partners collectively condemn human rights violations in a particular country, issue sanctions, and coordinate diplomatic actions to address the situation.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy Budget finances civilian missions, EU Special Representatives, stabilization actions as well as multilateral and bilateral non-proliferation and disarmament projects. A flexible management of the budget allows actions to rapidly respond to unforeseen geopolitical events and developments on the ground. More than ten EU Common Security and Defense Policy civilian missions in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, with over 2,000 persons involved, have been deployed over the last 10 years.

The European Commission uses the Common Foreign and Security Policy budget to respond in a rapid and flexible manner to external conflicts and crises, to build the capacity of partner countries and to protect the EU and its citizens. Under its Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Commission funds civilian stabilization missions, EU Special Representatives, the Kosovo Specialist Chamber, actions in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament, the European Security and Defense College. The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments prepares the budget for each operation, ensures the funding based on the Council legal act and monitors implementation.

#### Programs' sources and regulations

- [Funding & tender opportunities;](#)
- [Service for Foreign Policy Instruments;](#)
- [Missions and Operations;](#)
- [Common Foreign and Security Policy - Performance;](#)

The EU funds the following activities under its Common Foreign and Security Policy budget:

- *Civilian Common Security and Defense Policy missions that work towards regional and international security and stability.* The missions aim to improve security and strengthen the rule of law, supporting third countries in the fight against terrorism, people smuggling and organized crime, strengthening police and judicial authorities and monitoring compliance with international agreements.
- *European Union Special Representatives who promote the EU's policies and interests in troubled regions and countries and play an active role in efforts to consolidate peace and to promote stability and the rule of law.* They are independent natural persons, appointed by the Council and entrusted with a mandate in relation to a particular policy issue.
- *Non-Proliferation and Disarmament activities that contribute to the universalization and effective implementation of international treaties, conventions and agreements addressing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including their delivery mechanisms, and of conventional arms.* The latter target the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and aim to implement effective controls on international arms transfers, thereby contributing to peace, security and stability worldwide and to the safety of European citizens.

2. **Economic Cooperation.** The EU and its partners establish economic ties to facilitate trade, investment, and economic growth. This involves removing barriers to market access, promoting fair competition, and harmonizing regulations. Enhanced political unity ensures that both the EU and its partners benefit from economic integration.

*Example:* The EU and its partners negotiate a comprehensive free trade agreement that reduces tariffs, streamlines customs procedures, and facilitates the movement of goods and services between them.

3. **Joint Policy Development.** The EU and its partners engage in policy dialogues and share best practices to address common challenges such as climate change, migration, or counterterrorism. This cooperation allows for the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and innovative approaches to problem-solving.

*Example:* The EU and its partners collaborate on the development of a joint strategy to combat cybercrime, including information sharing, joint law enforcement operations, and the establishment of common cybersecurity standards.

4. **Legislative Alignment.** Enhanced political unity involves aligning laws, regulations, and standards to ensure compatibility and facilitate cooperation between the EU and its partners. This alignment can cover various areas such as consumer protection, environmental standards, or data privacy.

*Example:* The EU and its partners harmonize their data protection laws to enable seamless cross-border data transfers while ensuring the privacy and security of personal information.

5. **Joint Initiatives and Funding.** The EU and its partners collaborate on joint initiatives, research projects, and funding programs to address common priorities. This cooperation helps leverage resources, share costs, and pool expertise to achieve shared objectives.

*Example:* The EU and its partners jointly fund and participate in a research program aimed at developing renewable energy technologies, sharing research findings, and promoting sustainable energy solutions.



Overall, enhanced political unity in the collaboration between the EU and its borderless partners fosters deeper cooperation, mutual understanding, and joint decision-making on a wide range of political, economic, and social issues, ultimately strengthening their collective impact and influence in the international arena.

### 3.2. Strengthened Diplomatic Influence

With its partners, the EU can amplify its diplomatic influence worldwide. By coordinating policies and actions, the EU can present a united front on international issues and exert greater influence in negotiations and global decision-making forums. This collective diplomatic strength enhances the EU's ability to shape global policies and advocate for its interests, promoting stability, peace, and prosperity.



The EU's efforts to strengthen its diplomatic influence can be observed through several key initiatives:

1. **Partnership with African Union.** The EU has been working closely with the African Union to deepen cooperation and address shared challenges. Through initiatives such as the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the African Peace Facility, the EU has supported AU-led efforts in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and sustainable development. This partnership has strengthened diplomatic ties and facilitated dialogue on a wide range of issues.
2. **Transatlantic Relations with the United States.** The EU maintains a strong partnership with the United States, aiming to promote shared values and address global challenges together. The EU-US cooperation spans various areas, including security, trade, climate change, and digital technology. Through regular high-level dialogues, such as the EU-US Summit, the EU has bolstered its diplomatic influence and fostered closer ties with its American counterpart.

#### Partnership sources and regulations

- [Africa-EU partnership;](#)
- [EU-AU partnership for peace, security and governance;](#)
- [EU-AU partnership for migration and mobility;](#)
- [EU-AU commitment to multilateralism.](#)
- [Africa-Europe Tracker](#)



### EU-US political dialogue

The close cooperation and strategic relations between the European Union and its Member States and the United States are built on common history and a shared set of democratic values [14].

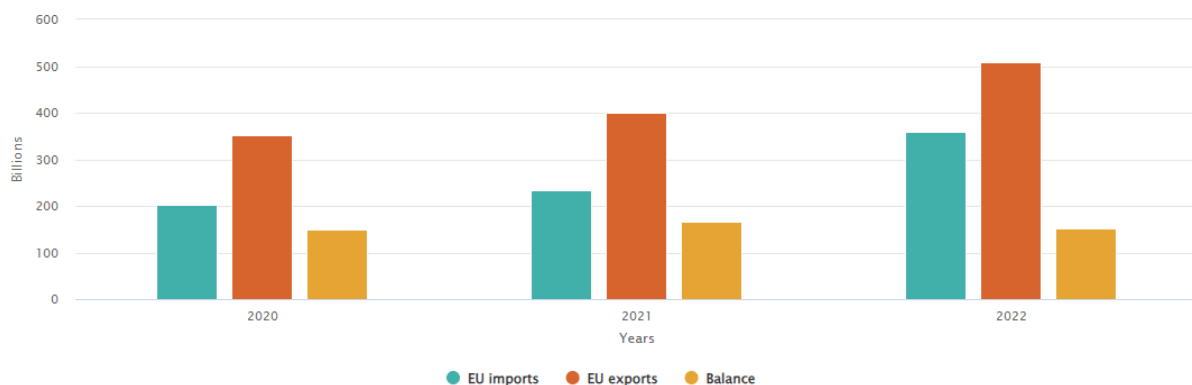
### EU-US economic relations

The EU is the largest economy in the world, representing 24% of global GDP and 17% of trade. The US is the second-largest economy, with 23% of global GDP and 11% of trade [15].

### EU-US Trade and Technology Council

Launched in 2021 the TTC serves as a forum for the EU and the US to coordinate approaches to key global trade, economic and technology issues [16].

### Trade picture



Bilateral trade and investment support millions of jobs in the EU and the US. Around 9.4 million people are directly employed. Indirectly, as many as 16 million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic are supported.

The EU-US trade and investment relationship remains strong despite the economic challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Transatlantic trade reached an all-time high of 1.2 trillion euro in 2021, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by more than 10%.

The United States remains the EU's number one trading partner in services. Bilateral trade in services reached a record in 2021 and accounted for more than 500 billion euro.

3. **Strategic Partnership with China.** The EU recognizes the importance of engaging with China on various economic, political, and global issues. While managing differences, the EU has sought to establish a strategic partnership with China, focusing on areas like trade, climate action, and multilateral cooperation.

Through dialogues like the EU-China Summit

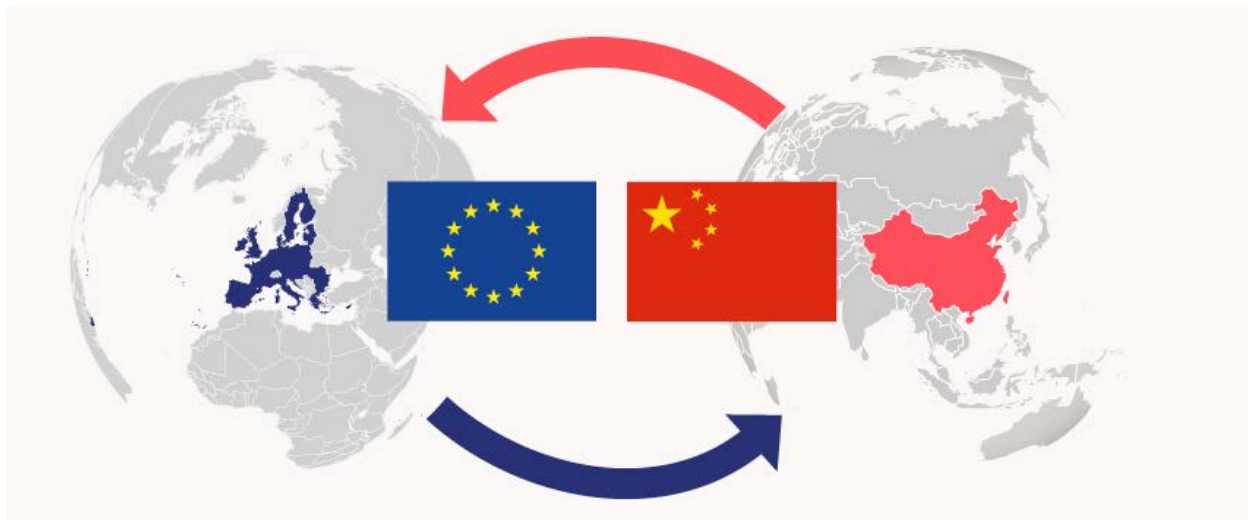
#### Partnership sources and regulations

- o [Connecting Europe and Asia - Building blocks for an EU Strategy;](#)
- o [International Partnerships. China](#)
- o [EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment;](#)
- o [EU trade relations with China.](#)

and the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, the EU aims to enhance its diplomatic influence with China and promote a rules-based global order.

## EU relationships by country/region

China



### Energy and resource efficiency

China, with 28% of global greenhouse gas emissions, is a crucial partner for the EU (8% of global greenhouse gas emissions) on implementing the Paris Agreement. [17]

### Cyber security

The EU expects China to engage more against malicious cyber activities and on the protection of intellectual property. The EU adopted its first cyber sanctions targeting Chinese individuals (two natural persons and 2 legal entities) on 30 July 2020. [18]

### Foreign policy

The EU and China should work more closely to tackle global and regional challenges, including in Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Korean Peninsula. [19]

## Trade picture



The EU exported to China **€223 billion** and imported **€472 billion** goods in 2021



EU and China were largest partners for trade in goods in 2021  
**€1.9 billion** a day



In 2020, the EU exported **€47 billion** of services to China, while China exported **€31 billion** to the EU

The relationship between the EU and China continues to be complex and multi-dimensional.

On one hand, China is the EU's second largest trading partner after the U.S and EU-China trade volume reached over \$1 trillion in 2021.

On the other hand, the EU has continuously criticized China over issues such as human rights concerns, alongside challenges such as China's lack of market access for EU companies, and challenges to the international rules-based system.

China's growing global assertiveness and strategic competition with the U.S. is also influencing the EU's stance towards Beijing. [20]

4. **Neighborhood Policy with Eastern Partnership countries.** The EU has developed the Eastern Partnership initiative to strengthen its relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. This policy aims to promote political association, economic integration, and sectoral cooperation. By supporting democratic reforms, facilitating trade agreements, and providing financial assistance, the EU has increased its diplomatic influence in these partner countries.

#### Partnership sources and regulations

- [Eastern Partnership;](#)
- [European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations \(DG NEAR\);](#)
- [Recovery, Resilience and Reform: post-2020 priorities for an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all.](#)

5. **Cooperation in the Western Balkans.** The EU has actively engaged with the Western Balkan countries, aspiring to integrate them into the European Union. Through the enlargement process, the EU has promoted political stability, economic development, and reconciliation in the region. By offering membership prospects and providing financial assistance, the EU has increased its diplomatic influence and encouraged reforms among the Western Balkan partners.

#### Cooperation sources and regulations

- [The EU and the Western Balkans towards a common future;](#)
- [EU Neighbourhood Initiative In The Western Balkans;](#)
- [Close cooperation, common goals, better results.](#)

These examples demonstrate the EU's efforts to strengthen its diplomatic influence globally through strategic partnerships, cooperation frameworks, and targeted initiatives. By engaging with various regions and addressing common challenges, the EU seeks to promote stability, prosperity, and shared values in its interactions with partners worldwide.

### 3.3. Increased Economic Power

The EU, collaborating with its partners, creates a vast integrated market, facilitating the free movement of goods, services, and capital. This economic power brings advantages in international trade negotiations, as the EU can negotiate as a single entity, leveraging its market size and regulatory standards. By forging economic partnerships and trade agreements, the EU can bolster its diplomatic relationships and strengthen its political clout.

1. **Enhanced Competitiveness.** By fostering collaboration, the EU and its partners can share knowledge, expertise, and resources. This synergy enhances competitiveness and innovation across various sectors. An example is the Airbus consortium, where several EU countries cooperate in developing advanced aircraft technologies, allowing them to compete globally with other major players in the aerospace industry.
2. **Attraction of Foreign Direct Investment.** A strong and integrated EU market appeals to foreign investors seeking stable and lucrative opportunities. By promoting cooperation and harmonizing regulations, the EU and its partners become more attractive for FDI, which contributes to job creation, technology transfer, and economic development. An example is the automotive industry, where international companies invest in EU countries to access the single market and leverage the skilled workforce.

3. **Enhanced Infrastructure and Connectivity.** Economic growth facilitates investments in infrastructure projects that improve transportation, communication, and logistics networks. The EU and its partners can collaborate to develop and upgrade transportation corridors, digital infrastructure, and energy networks. An example is the Trans-European Transport Networks initiative, which aims to create a seamless and efficient transportation network across the EU, facilitating trade and regional integration.
4. **Increased Trade and Market Access.** The EU's economic strength, combined with extensive collaboration, opens up vast trade opportunities. Member countries and their partners can access a larger consumer market, leading to increased exports and economic growth. For instance, the elimination of trade barriers through agreements like the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement has boosted trade between the EU and Canada.
5. **Shared Research and Development Efforts.** Cooperation within the EU and its partners allows for shared R&D initiatives, leading to breakthrough innovations and scientific advancements. Collaborative research programs, such as Horizon Europe, enable researchers from different countries to pool resources and expertise, addressing global challenges and driving economic growth through technological advancements.
6. **Political Stability and Security.** Economic integration fosters interdependence and shared interests among nations, leading to enhanced political stability and security. By working together, the EU and its partners can strengthen diplomatic ties, resolve conflicts through dialogue, and jointly address global issues such as climate change, terrorism, and cyber threats. This stability and security create a conducive environment for economic growth and prosperity.

#### Cooperation sources and regulations

- [EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement;](#)
- [EU trade relations with Canada;](#)
- [CETA chapter by chapter.](#)

Overall, the unlimited cooperation and growth of economic power within the EU and its partners provide numerous advantages, including increased trade, enhanced competitiveness, attraction of foreign investment, improved infrastructure, shared R&D efforts, and political stability. These benefits contribute to the overall prosperity and well-being of the participating countries and their citizens.

### 3.4. Promoting Democracy and Human Rights

The EU's commitment to democratic values and human rights is strengthened by cooperation with partners. By promoting these principles both internally and externally, the EU can work with its partners to foster democratic governance, protect human rights, and uphold the rule of law. This cooperation helps create a stable and inclusive international order, conducive to peace and prosperity. The promotion of democracy and human rights in EU politics, alongside unrestricted cooperation with its partners, brings several advantages:

1. **Protection of fundamental rights.** Democracy and human rights form the core values of the EU. By prioritizing these principles in its political interactions, the EU contributes to safeguarding and promoting the fundamental rights of individuals. This

#### Protecting fundamental rights within the EU regulation

- [Charter of Fundamental Rights;](#)
- [Citizens, fundamental rights, security, justice;](#)
- [Justice and Fundamental Rights.](#)



includes protecting freedom of speech, assembly, and expression, as well as ensuring equal rights, non-discrimination, and the rule of law. The EU is committed to upholding and promoting these rights within its borders and beyond. Let's explore how the EU ensures the protection of fundamental rights in its interactions with partners:

- a) **Privacy Protection:** the EU has implemented the General Data Protection Regulation, which ensures the protection of personal data for EU citizens. When collaborating with partners, the EU requires that they comply with GDPR standards, ensuring that individuals' data is handled securely and transparently.

*For instance, if a multinational tech company based in the United States wants to provide services to EU customers, it must adhere to GDPR requirements. This includes obtaining explicit consent for data processing, providing access to personal data upon request, and implementing robust security measures to protect the data from unauthorized access.*

- b) **Non-Discrimination:** the principle of non-discrimination is a fundamental right in the EU. In its interactions with partners, the EU insists on equal treatment and opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

*As an example, if an EU member state engages in a trade agreement with a non-EU country, the EU ensures that the agreement includes provisions to prevent discrimination against EU citizens based on their nationality. This ensures that EU citizens receive the same treatment and access to opportunities as the nationals of the partner country.*



- c) **Freedom of Expression:** the EU places great importance on the freedom of expression and media pluralism. When collaborating with partners, the EU emphasizes the need to protect these rights.

*For example, if a partner country proposes legislation that restricts freedom of speech or limits media independence, the EU may engage in diplomatic dialogue to advocate for the protection of these fundamental rights. It may raise concerns, provide recommendations, or even impose diplomatic pressure to ensure that freedom of expression is upheld.*

- d) **Refugee Protection:** the EU is committed to protecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. In its interactions with partners, the EU promotes the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of individuals to a country where they may face persecution or serious harm.

*Suppose a partner country, with which the EU has a cooperation agreement, is considering deporting refugees back to a conflict zone. In that case, the EU may use its influence to engage in dialogue, provide support for alternative solutions, or even impose sanctions if the partner country violates the principle of non-refoulement.*

These examples demonstrate how the EU upholds fundamental rights when interacting with partners in various contexts, ensuring that its values and principles are safeguarded beyond its borders.

2. **Peace and stability.** Democracies tend to have more peaceful relationships with each other. By fostering democracy and respect for human rights in its partnerships, the EU helps build a more stable and peaceful international order. Democratic governance encourages peaceful resolution of conflicts, reduces the risk of authoritarianism, and promotes dialogue and cooperation.

- a) **Conflict resolution:** the EU plays a crucial role in mediating conflicts and promoting peace in various regions. For instance, it has been actively involved in the negotiation and mediation efforts in the Western Balkans, particularly in the case of the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Through diplomatic channels and multilateral cooperation, the EU aims to establish lasting peace and stability in the region:

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**Key Facts:**

*The EU has financed more than 1,000 crisis response and conflict prevention projects carried out worldwide over the past 10 years. They helped to alleviate tensions, prevent conflict through mediation, broker and implement peace agreements, reintegrate persons involved in conflict into society, and ensure transitional justice and accountability.*

*The crisis response and conflict prevention actions are carried out around the world in conflict zones, in post-conflict environments and in emerging crisis settings in a fast and flexible manner.*

*The EU is working with 63 partner countries in the context of eight regional Centers of Excellence to address chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear related threats to safety and security.*

*Since 2013, the EU has funded more than 100 projects aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism.*

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- b) **Development assistance:** the EU is committed to supporting sustainable development and poverty reduction globally. It provides significant financial aid and technical assistance to partner countries, helping them build stable institutions, improve governance, and address social and economic challenges. This assistance promotes stability by addressing the root causes of conflicts and instability, such as poverty and inequality.

**EU Crisis Response System**

- o [EU Security, Defense and Crisis Response;](#)
- o [Crisis Management and Response;](#)
- o [European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management;](#)
- o [Missions and Operations.](#)

- c) **Crisis management and security cooperation:** the EU is actively involved in crisis management and security cooperation with its partners. For instance, the EU conducts civilian and military missions in conflict-affected areas, such as the EU Training Mission in Mali, aimed at enhancing local security capabilities and restoring stability. Additionally, the EU collaborates with partner countries to combat terrorism, prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and address cybersecurity challenges.

- d) **Multilateral cooperation:** the EU advocates for multilateralism as a fundamental principle of international relations. It actively participates in global organizations, such as the United Nations, and supports multilateral initiatives aimed at promoting peace, stability, and respect for human rights. Through these efforts, the EU seeks to foster a rules-based international order that upholds the principles of democracy, human rights, and international law.



These examples illustrate how the EU's interactions with its partners contribute to world peace and stability. By engaging in diplomacy, economic cooperation, development assistance, crisis management, and multilateral initiatives, the EU aims to build a more peaceful and stable world for its citizens and its partners.

3. **Shared values and norms.** Cooperation based on democratic principles and human rights strengthens the bonds between the EU and its partners. When partners align with these values, it enhances mutual trust and understanding, making collaboration more effective and sustainable. Common values also facilitate the development of shared norms and standards across various sectors, such as trade, security, and environmental protection.
4. **Soft power and influence.** The EU's commitment to democracy and human rights serves as a powerful tool for soft power diplomacy. By advocating for these principles, the EU can influence its partners positively and inspire democratic reforms. The EU's commitment to democratic values can also enhance its credibility and influence in international forums and negotiations.
5. **Cooperation on global challenges.** Many global challenges, such as climate change, terrorism, migration, and public health crises, require international collaboration. By emphasizing democracy and human rights in its partnerships, the EU can work with like-minded countries to address these challenges collectively. Shared democratic values provide a solid foundation for cooperation in finding sustainable and equitable solutions to complex global issues.

It's important to note that the EU's promotion of democracy and human rights should be based on dialogue, respect for sovereignty, and understanding of diverse cultural contexts. The EU's interactions should aim to support and encourage positive change rather than impose its values on others. By working collaboratively, the EU and its partners can build a more democratic, inclusive, and prosperous world.

### 3.5. Tackling Global Challenges

The EU without borders principle, working in collaboration with its partners, can tackle global challenges more effectively. Issues such as climate change, terrorism, migration, and pandemics require collective action and international cooperation. By sharing knowledge, resources, and expertise, the EU and its partners can address these challenges jointly, contributing to global stability and sustainable development. [21] The principle of addressing global issues in the EU through interaction with its partners in an era of borderless connectivity can be exemplified through various concrete examples:

1. **Climate Change:** the EU collaborates with its partners to tackle climate change by implementing the Paris Agreement. Through international cooperation, the EU engages in discussions and negotiations with countries such as the United States, China, and India to develop global strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting renewable energy, and adapting to the impacts of climate change. By sharing knowledge, technology, and best practices, the EU and its partners work together to mitigate the effects of climate change on a global scale.
2. **Security and Counter-terrorism:** In the face of transnational security threats, the EU works closely

EU political framework on  
Counter-terrorism

- o [Counter-terrorism and radicalization;](#)
- o [The counter-terrorism experts' network;](#)
- o [Regional Counter-Terrorism Approaches.](#)

with its partners to ensure the safety of its citizens. For instance, the EU cooperates with NATO and other countries to combat terrorism through intelligence sharing, joint military operations, and coordinated border controls. By fostering strong partnerships, the EU enhances its ability to address security challenges that transcend national borders, such as cybercrime, radicalization, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

3. **Trade and Economic Cooperation:** The EU engages in extensive trade and economic cooperation with its partners to promote growth, stability, and sustainable development. Through negotiations and agreements, such as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada or the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, the EU expands market access, harmonizes regulations, and ensures fair competition. By facilitating global trade, the EU strengthens economic interdependence, fosters innovation, and addresses global economic inequalities.
4. **Humanitarian Aid and Development:** the EU plays a vital role in providing humanitarian assistance and supporting development projects worldwide. Through partnerships with international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, as well as collaborations with individual countries, the EU contributes to poverty reduction, healthcare improvements, education, and infrastructure development in regions facing humanitarian crises or economic challenges. By combining resources and expertise, the EU and its partners maximize the impact of their efforts in addressing global poverty and inequality.

#### EU Humanitarian Aid and Development framework

- o [Aid, Development cooperation, Fundamental rights;](#)
- o [European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations;](#)
- o [UNICEF and the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid;](#)
- o [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.](#)

In all these examples, the EU recognizes that global problems require collective action and cooperation. By actively engaging with its partners, the EU leverages its political, economic, and diplomatic influence to find shared solutions to global challenges, contributing to a more stable, secure, and sustainable world.

In summary, the EU without borders principle in cooperation with its partners, brings about political and diplomatic advantages by promoting unity, increasing diplomatic influence, leveraging economic power, upholding democratic values, addressing global challenges, and contributing to regional stability. These advantages strengthen the EU's position in the international arena, enabling it to effectively pursue its interests and promote shared values.

## 4. Global Collaboration and Soft Power

The European Union possesses significant global collaboration and soft power advantages through its cooperation with its partners. These advantages stem from the EU's unique position as a supranational organization with a broad range of member states and its commitment to promoting peace, stability, and prosperity.

**Global Collaboration.** The EU aims to collaborate with other countries and international actors to address common challenges such as climate change, international security, trade, and human rights. Through its political influence, the EU seeks to shape global collaboration by proposing and promoting initiatives, influencing policy discussions, and facilitating multilateral negotiations. The EU's ability to leverage its political clout helps it to build alliances, forge partnerships, and promote its preferred approaches to global issues.

**Soft Power.** Soft power refers to the ability to influence others through attraction, persuasion, and the dissemination of ideas, rather than coercion or force. The EU utilizes its soft power resources, such as its economic strength, democratic values, cultural appeal, and normative frameworks, to exert political influence globally. By projecting its soft power, the EU seeks to shape international norms, values, and standards, and to foster cooperation and dialogue based on its principles. The EU's soft power assets help to enhance its credibility, legitimacy, and attractiveness, making it more influential in global affairs.

### EU Global Collaboration and Soft Power

- o [CORDIS. Realizing Europe's soft power in external cooperation and trade;](#)
- o [CES. The EU and soft power;](#)
- o [Europe's soft-power problem;](#)
- o [Realizing Europe's soft power in external cooperation and trade - RESPECT.](#)

### 4.1. Political Influence

Political influence for the European Union in the context of global collaboration and soft power refers to the ability of the EU to shape international affairs and policies through diplomatic, economic, and cultural means. The EU seeks to exert its influence on the world stage by promoting its values, interests, and policies, and by fostering cooperation with other countries and international organizations. Political influence is crucial for the EU as it enables the bloc to advance its agenda, protect its interests, and contribute to global governance. Political influence for the EU in the context of global collaboration and soft power involves several elements:

1. **Normative Power:** the EU promotes its norms and values, such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, and sustainable development, as a basis for global cooperation. It seeks to persuade other countries to adopt and implement these norms through diplomatic engagement, dialogues, and capacity-building initiatives.
2. **Economic Influence:** the EU's economic weight, as the world's largest single market, grants it significant political influence. The EU can use its economic leverage to shape global trade policies, negotiate trade agreements, and promote regulatory standards. Economic incentives, such as market access, investment opportunities, and financial aid, can also be employed to influence other countries' behavior and policies.
3. **Diplomatic Engagement:** the EU engages in diplomatic efforts to promote its interests and values on the global stage. It uses its diplomatic network, bilateral and

multilateral partnerships, and participation in international organizations to advocate for its positions, build coalitions, and influence decision-making processes.

4. **Cultural Diplomacy:** the EU leverages its rich cultural heritage, artistic expressions, and educational exchanges to promote mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, and people-to-people connections. Cultural diplomacy enhances the EU's soft power and contributes to its political influence by fostering positive perceptions and creating affinity with other countries and societies.

Overall, political influence for the EU in the context of global collaboration and soft power involves leveraging its economic, normative, diplomatic, and cultural resources to shape international relations, promote its values, and advance its interests in a cooperative and persuasive manner.

## 4.2. Economic Power

The EU is one of the largest economies in the world, with a single market and a common currency (the Euro) shared by 19 member states. This economic strength gives the EU significant soft power, as it can offer trade and investment opportunities to its partners. Through economic cooperation, the EU can foster stability, development, and growth, both within its member states and with external partners, enhancing its global influence:

1. **The EU's economic power in the renewable energy sector.** The EU has established strong partnerships with neighboring countries to promote renewable energy production. For instance, through its cooperation with North African countries, such as Morocco, the EU has facilitated the development of large-scale solar power plants in the region. This collaboration not only helps the EU diversify its energy sources but also fosters economic growth and job creation in partner countries. [22]
2. **Leveraging EU's market size for technological advancements.** The EU, as a vast market, holds significant economic influence and can leverage its size to drive technological advancements. For example, in collaboration with partner countries, the EU can create incentives for the development and adoption of emerging technologies. By providing access to its market, the EU encourages innovative companies to invest in research and development, leading to technological breakthroughs that benefit both the EU and its partners.
3. **EU's role in sustainable agriculture and food production.** The EU's economic power can be seen in its collaborations to promote sustainable agriculture practices. Through partnerships with countries in South America, the EU has been able to support the development of eco-friendly farming techniques. By sharing knowledge and expertise, the EU helps its partners improve agricultural productivity while minimizing environmental impact. This cooperation not only strengthens food security but also opens up new export opportunities for both the EU and its partners.
4. **Joint efforts in space exploration and satellite technology.** The EU's economic strength allows it to participate actively in space exploration initiatives. By collaborating with partners, the EU can pool resources and expertise to undertake ambitious space missions. For instance, through joint projects with countries like Canada and Japan, the EU has been able to launch satellites for scientific research, climate monitoring, and telecommunications. Such cooperation enhances Europe's technological capabilities and expands its presence in the global space industry.

5. **Cross-border infrastructure projects.** The EU's economic power is evident in its support for cross-border infrastructure projects that connect member states and partner countries. For instance, the EU has played a vital role in the development of major transportation networks, such as the Trans-European Transport Network. These projects facilitate trade, tourism, and economic integration, benefiting both the EU and its partner nations by boosting connectivity and fostering economic growth.

These examples illustrate how the economic power of the EU, combined with its collaborative approach, can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes for the EU and its partners in various sectors, including renewable energy, technology, agriculture, space exploration, and infrastructure development.

#### 4.3. Normative Power

The EU is often referred to as a normative power, as it actively promotes democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law. By cooperating with its partners, the EU can extend its influence in promoting these norms globally. The EU's emphasis on dialogue, diplomacy, and multilateralism allows it to act as a mediator and an advocate for peaceful resolutions to conflicts, thereby enhancing its soft power and its ability to shape international agendas.

The European Union exercises its normative power through a variety of legal instruments and directives that apply to its member states. Here are a few specific examples of the EU's normative force, along with their impact:

1. **General Data Protection Regulation.** The GDPR is an EU regulation that sets standards for the protection of personal data. It applies to all member states and has extraterritorial reach, affecting any organization that processes personal data of EU residents. [23] This regulation has a significant normative force as it establishes a unified framework for data protection, ensuring consistent rules across the EU and influencing data protection laws worldwide.



2. **Single Euro Payments Area.** SEPA is an initiative that aims to harmonize electronic euro payments within the EU. It sets common standards for credit transfers, direct debits, and card payments, eliminating differences between national payment systems. By imposing these standards, the EU has normative power in shaping the payment landscape and promoting integration within the single market. [24]



3. **Environmental directives.** The EU has issued numerous directives related to environmental protection. One example is the Birds Directive, which establishes measures for the conservation of wild bird species and their habitats. [25] Another example is the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive, which imposes rules for the collection, recycling, and proper disposal of electronic waste. These directives have normative force as they require member states to adopt and implement specific environmental standards, ensuring a consistent approach to environmental protection throughout the EU.



4. **Consumer protection regulations.** The EU has enacted various regulations to protect consumers in the internal market. For instance, the Consumer Rights Directive harmonizes rules on distance selling and off-premises contracts, ensuring a high level of consumer protection. Another example is the General Product Safety Directive, which sets safety requirements for products placed on the market. These regulations have normative power by establishing common standards that businesses operating within the EU must adhere to, safeguarding consumer interests.

These examples clearly reflect the normative force of the EU, where its laws and regulations shape and harmonize policies across member states, ensuring consistency and promoting integration within the European Union.

#### 4.4. Cultural and Educational Exchanges

The EU encourages cultural and educational exchanges between its member states and partner countries. Through programs such as Erasmus+, the EU facilitates student mobility, academic collaborations, and cultural interactions. These exchanges foster mutual understanding, promote diversity, and build long-lasting people-to-people connections, strengthening the EU's soft power and creating a positive perception of the EU among its partners.

Cultural and educational exchanges within the European Union provide valuable opportunities for individuals and institutions to share knowledge, experiences, and perspectives. These exchanges promote mutual understanding, cooperation, and cultural diversity among EU member states. Here are some concrete examples of cultural and educational exchanges within the EU:

1. **European Voluntary Service:** The European Voluntary Service provides young people with an opportunity to volunteer in various countries across Europe. Through EVS, individuals can contribute to community projects, cultural events, and social initiatives while immersing themselves in the local culture. For instance, a volunteer from Spain may choose to work in a youth center in Poland, actively engaging with Polish traditions and customs.
2. **European Capitals of Culture.** Each year, the EU designates one or more cities as the "European Capital of Culture." This title brings international attention to the chosen cities and encourages cultural exchange and collaboration. Cities organize a series of cultural events, exhibitions, performances, and festivals throughout the year, showcasing their local heritage and contemporary arts. For instance, in 2021, the European Capital of Culture was Timișoara in Romania, and the city hosted a range of cultural activities, including art exhibitions, theater performances, and music festivals.
3. **Jean Monnet Networks.** The Jean Monnet Networks are academic consortia that bring together scholars, researchers, and experts from different EU countries to collaborate on specific themes related to European integration. These networks foster interdisciplinary dialogue, research, and teaching on EU studies. As an example, the Jean Monnet Network on EU Economic and Legal Studies may organize conferences, workshops, and seminars where experts can exchange ideas and publish joint research on topics like EU economic policies or legal frameworks.





4. **Youth Exchanges.** Various youth organizations and NGOs across the EU organize exchanges that allow young people to engage in cultural, social, and educational activities with their peers from different countries. These exchanges can involve workshops, debates, community projects, and cultural exploration. For instance, a group of young participants from Spain and Sweden may come together for a week-long exchange program where they engage in team-building activities, learn about each other's cultures, and collaborate on a joint community service project.
5. **Virtual Exchange Programs.** With advancements in technology, virtual exchange programs have become increasingly popular. These programs use online platforms to connect students and educators from different EU countries, enabling them to engage in collaborative projects, language learning, and intercultural dialogue. For example, a virtual exchange program might pair students from Italy and Ireland for a semester-long project, where they communicate through video conferences, share research, and work together on a specific topic.



These are just a few examples of the cultural and educational exchanges that take place within the EU. Such initiatives play a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural understanding, fostering cooperation, and enriching the educational experiences of individuals within the European Union.

#### 4.5. Crisis Management and Development Aid

The EU plays a significant role in crisis management and development aid worldwide. It provides humanitarian assistance, promotes sustainable development, and contributes to peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected regions. [26] By collaborating with its partners, the EU can address global challenges together, demonstrating solidarity and cooperation, and enhancing its reputation as a responsible global actor.

Anti-crisis management and assistance for EU development through unlimited cooperation with partners can be illustrated through the following concrete examples:

1. **Financial support during economic crises.** In times of financial instability or economic downturns, the EU can engage in anti-crisis management by providing financial assistance to member states or partner countries. [27] For instance, during the global financial crisis in 2008, then in 2012, the EU established the European Financial Stability Facility and later the European Stability Mechanism to provide financial aid to countries facing economic difficulties. These mechanisms enabled the EU to collaborate with partner countries and stabilize their economies through financial support.
2. **Joint research and innovation projects.** To foster development and address common challenges, the EU can engage in unlimited cooperation with partner countries in research and innovation. For example, the Horizon Europe program, the EU's framework program for research and innovation, encourages collaboration with international partners. Through joint projects, the EU and its partners can pool resources, expertise, and knowledge to tackle issues such as climate change, health crises, or technological advancements, driving economic growth and development.
3. **Trade agreements and market access.** The EU can facilitate development and crisis management by entering into trade agreements and ensuring market access for its

partners. By eliminating trade barriers, reducing tariffs, and harmonizing regulations, the EU creates a favorable environment for economic cooperation and growth. For instance, the CETA and the EPA promote economic integration, investment, and job creation while supporting crisis resilience through enhanced trade relations.

4. **Support for infrastructure development.** The EU can assist partner countries in developing critical infrastructure through financial aid and technical cooperation. The European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development provide funding and expertise to support infrastructure projects in partner countries, such as transportation networks, energy systems, and digital infrastructure. This collaboration not only promotes economic development but also strengthens crisis resilience by enhancing infrastructure capabilities.
5. **Exchange of best practices and capacity-building.** The EU can engage in unlimited cooperation by sharing best practices and providing capacity-building support to partner countries. Through programs like the European Neighborhood Instrument and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, the EU assists neighboring countries and potential future members in areas such as governance, rule of law, public administration, and social development. By sharing expertise and knowledge, the EU contributes to crisis prevention and fosters sustainable development within its partner network.

These examples demonstrate how anti-crisis management and assistance in achieving EU development goals can be realized through close collaboration with partner countries. By leveraging financial resources, research and innovation, trade partnerships, infrastructure support, and capacity-building, the EU can address crises effectively and promote long-term development in a mutually beneficial manner.

Overall, the EU's global collaboration and soft power advantages lie in its ability to foster political influence, economic cooperation, normative power, cultural exchanges, and crisis management. By working together with its partners, the EU can effectively address global issues, promote common values, and shape international agendas, thereby enhancing its standing as a global player.

## Conclusion

The concept of a borderless European Union has proven to be a transformative force, bringing numerous advantages to both its member states and partners. The removal of internal barriers and the promotion of seamless interaction within the EU has opened up a wide range of opportunities and benefits in various directions.

First and foremost, the elimination of border controls has facilitated the free movement of people within the EU. This has not only strengthened cultural exchange and fostered a sense of European identity, but has also enabled individuals to pursue educational and professional opportunities across member states, contributing to the development of a highly skilled and mobile workforce. Moreover, the free movement of people has stimulated tourism, allowing citizens to explore the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of different EU countries, fostering a sense of unity and understanding among diverse populations.

In addition to the advantages for individuals, the borderless European Union has also brought significant economic benefits. The seamless movement of goods, services, and capital has created a large and integrated market, providing businesses with access to a broader customer base and enhancing competition. This has fueled economic growth, innovation, and investment, ultimately leading to higher living standards and improved infrastructure across the EU.

Furthermore, the concept of a borderless EU extends beyond its member states. The European Union has actively engaged in partnerships and collaborations with neighboring countries and regions, fostering stability, cooperation, and development. By extending the principles of free trade, mobility, and shared values, the EU has been able to expand its influence and promote peace and prosperity beyond its borders.

While the idea of a borderless European Union is not without challenges, such as the need for effective security measures and the management of external borders, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. The EU's commitment to the concept of unity in diversity has demonstrated its ability to navigate complex issues and find solutions that promote inclusivity and progress.

In conclusion, the borderless European Union has revolutionized the way member states and partners interact, unleashing a myriad of advantages. By fostering free movement, economic integration, and global partnerships, the EU has created a stronger, more prosperous, and interconnected Europe. As the Union continues to evolve and address new challenges, the vision of a borderless Europe remains a guiding principle, ensuring a brighter future for its citizens and an enduring legacy for generations to come.

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## List of abbreviations and definitions

EU	European Union
AU	African Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
SIS	Schengen Information System
WTO	World Trade Organization
ERA	European Research Area
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
BIM	Building Information Modelling
PPPs	Public–private partnerships
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
ENPI	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
NDICI	Development and International Cooperation Instrument
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Networks
TTC	The EU-US Trade and Technology Council
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
SEPA	Single Euro Payments Area
WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment
EVS	European Voluntary Service



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