

Member States

Founders in 1957	Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, West Germany
Joined in 1973	Eire, Denmark (and Greenland), United Kingdom
Joined in 1981	Greece
Left in 1985	Greenland
Joined in 1986	Portugal, Spain
Joined in 1990	Germany Democratic Republic (as part of united Germany)
Joined in 1995	Austria, Finland, Sweden
Joined in 2004	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
Joined in 2007	Bulgaria, Romania
Joined in 2013	Croatia

Did You Know?

- The European Parliament sits in Strasbourg 12 times a year and in Brussels the remainder of the time.
- The Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights are often mistaken for EU institutions. They are not, but Britain is a member of both.
- Nineteen member states share the Euro as a single currency - the other nine, including the United Kingdom, are not members of the Eurozone.
- The EU's accounts have not been given a clean bill of health by the Court of Auditors for 20 years. In 2013 David Cameron achieved the first ever freeze in the EU's annual budget.
- In 2005, a new "EU constitution" was proposed but was rejected by the French and the Dutch people who voted when referendums were held in both countries. The UK Labour Government at the time denied the need for a referendum on the new Constitutional Treaty.
- A repackaged version of the Constitutional Treaty was re-drafted as the Reform Treaty or the Lisbon Treaty. Ireland was the only Member State to offer its people a referendum.



"A growing number of people believe that Europe cannot go on as it is. They do not believe that the choice is between 'more Europe' and 'no Europe'. They want a better Europe: a Europe that allows our nation states to cooperate freely, not a one size fits all superstate; a Europe which embraces the future – not one that

lives in the past; a Europe to meet the challenges of the 2050s, not the problems of the 1950s."

Syed Kamall is the leader of the European Conservatives and Reformists, the 3rd largest of 8 political groups in the European Parliament. He represents London and sits on the Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs and International Trade committees.

The guide arose following the findings of a national survey, which reported that 9 out of 10 British citizens wanted more information about how the EU is run.

Syed's work is guided by his belief that the EU should interfere less in our lives, and that power should be exercised at the lowest level possible.

Ways to contact Syed:

Feel free to contact Syed about any European or London issues using the details below:

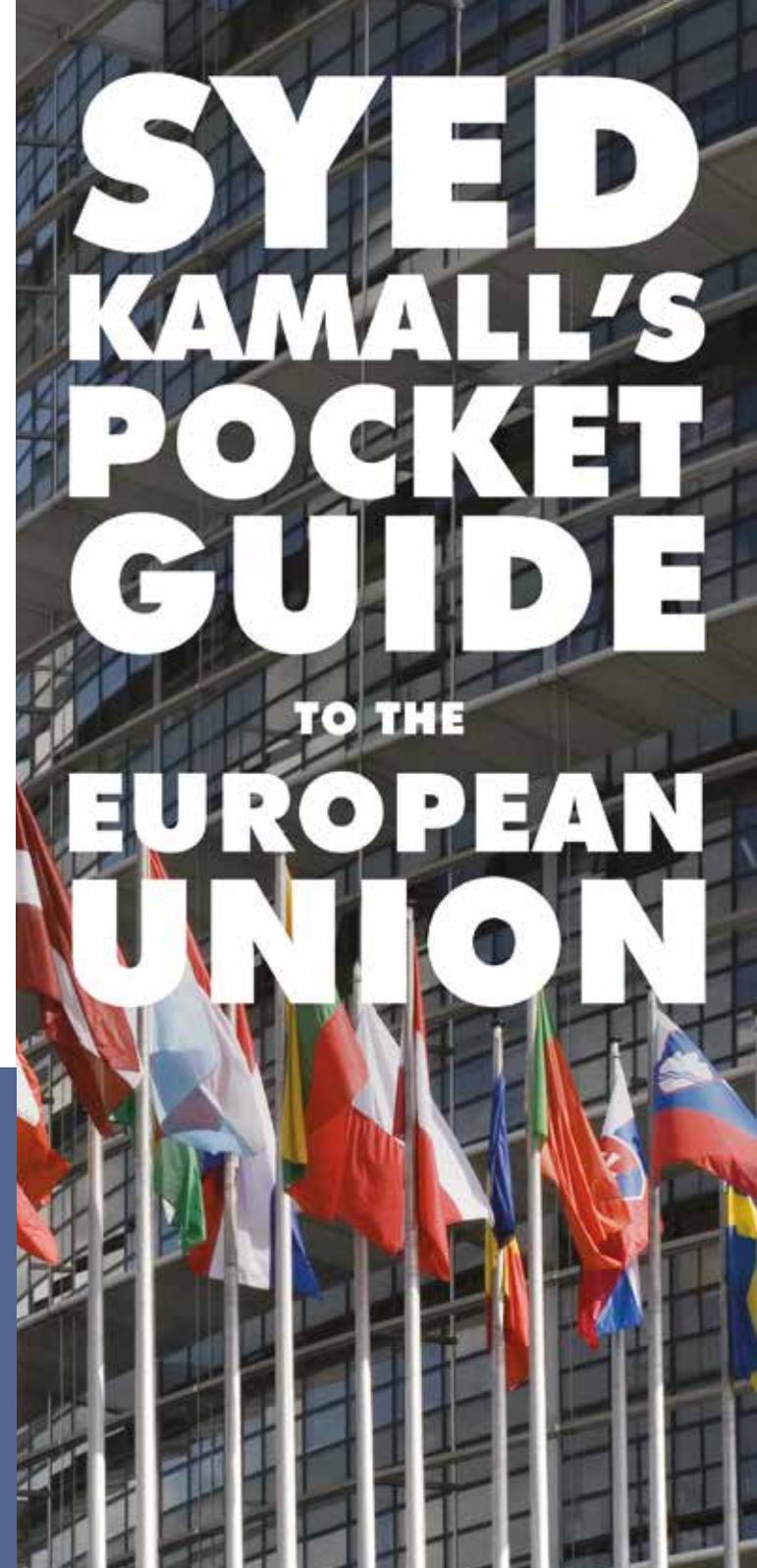
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SYED KAMALL'S POCKET GUIDE TO THE EUROPEAN UNION



The European project

Over the past 50 years, the European Union (EU) has grown from 6 to 28 countries — representing over 500 million people. The EU has the power to create laws in areas such as agriculture, the environment and economics. Many European politicians support “the European project”, which is the attempt to create a European super-state. Others, including London MEP Syed Kamall, do not support this goal, preferring instead an open Europe of independent nation states.

The European Commission

The Commission is made up of one Commissioner from each of the 28 member states. The United Kingdom’s Commissioner is Jonathan Hill, previously Leader of the House of Lords, who has secured the Financial Services portfolio.

The Commission is supported by a civil service, and can initiate EU legislation.

The European Council

The European Council is the institution that represents the national governments of the EU. It brings together Ministers, Ambassadors and officials to agree deals on new laws. Countries have a weighted number of votes on most issues. Over the last few years Britain has given up its veto in many areas of policy under new Treaties agreed at Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon.

The European Court of Justice

The Court rules on disputes over the treaties or EU law. The Court can hear cases brought by the Commission, EU countries or even individual citizens who feel aggrieved. It can impose heavy fines and its decisions are binding on national governments.

The European Parliament



The Parliament is the only directly elected body in the European Union. There are currently 751 MEPs, of which 73 are British. The Parliament meets in both Brussels and Strasbourg and it has the power to make or amend laws that are agreed with the Council of Ministers. There are 20 standing committees in the European Parliament (economic affairs, international trade, environment etc) which prepare the work for plenary sessions, mainly drawing up reports on legislative proposals from the Commission, but also own-initiative reports.

Did You Know?

The EU has a number of other institutions and interinstitutional bodies that play specialised roles such as:

- The **European Central Bank (ECB)** is based in Frankfurt, Germany and is responsible for the EU’s economic and monetary policy. It was created to keep inflation under control and maintain the stability of the financial system, by supervising financial markets and institutions in Europe, and especially the Eurozone.
- The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** was created to support EU investment projects and small businesses through the European Investment Fund. The EIB is owned by the 28 EU countries and it borrows money on the capital markets, rather than drawing on the EU budget. About 90% of its loans go to projects within the EU, but the EIB is also funding development and cooperation policies outside the EU.
- The **European External Action Service (EEAS)** assists the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in managing the EU’s diplomatic relations with countries outside the EU. The EEAS was created in 2011 and is the youngest EU body.
- The **Committee of the Regions (CoR)** represents regional and local authorities. Its role is to make sure local and regional issues and interests are put forward to the EU-policy makers. The CoR must be consulted by the Commission, the Parliament and the Council before taking decisions on issues regarding local and regional government such as public health, employment, education, the environment etc.

How does the EU make law?

