
APPENDIX 10: THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of member states located primarily in Europe. It was established in 1993 by the Maastricht Treaty, which replaced the European Communities (EC) and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The EU's primary goal is to promote economic and political integration among its members. It has a complex system of institutions, including the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union. The EU also has a common currency, the Euro, and a common external trade policy.

The EU is a major global power, with a combined population of over 700 million people and a gross domestic product (GDP) of over \$15 trillion. It is a leading provider of development aid and a major player in international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The EU has also been instrumental in promoting peace and stability in Europe, particularly in the Balkans and the Middle East.

The EU's relationship with the United States has been a central theme in international relations. The two entities have a long history of cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade and security. However, there have been periods of tension, particularly in the early 2000s, when the EU and the US diverged on issues such as the Iraq War and the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay. In recent years, the EU has become more assertive in its foreign policy, and the relationship with the US has become more complex.