

**Checks and balances** ---The constitution provides for three equal and separate branches of government--legislation, administration and jurisdiction, but each is to some extent dependent on the other two and there is a partial interweaving of their functions. **Legislative** branch, the Congress, consists of House of Representatives and senate, which can veto each other's bills. **Executive** branch, the President, can veto congressional legislation and can be impeached by the Congress, and nominates judges. **Judicial** branch, the courts, is entitled to declare laws and presidential acts unconstitutional.

**Republicans**--conservative, the vested interests, appeal to regain traditional values, strengthen the legal system; oppose abortion and homosexuality, seldom pay attention to the poor and the minority groups.

**Democrats**--progressives, fight for civil rights, oppose racism, tolerant towards social issues like abortion, gay, drug-taking...

**EU**--- It is an economic and political union and single market with 7 institutions: **European Commission**, Council of the European Union, the European Council, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank, the Court of Auditors, and the European Parliament. European Parliament is elected every 5 years by EU citizens. The capital is Brussels. The sovereign member states are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

**EEA**--- It consists of EU member nations and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, which was established in 1994 following an agreement between the member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Community (which became EU). It allows Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to participate in the EU's Internal Market without being members of the EU. EEA adopts almost all EU legislation related to the single market, except laws on agriculture and fisheries.

**Schengen Area**--- It abolished passport controls, and ensured the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital, enact legislation in justice and home affairs, and maintain common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries and regional development.

**hard currency** globally traded currency expected to serve as a reliable and stable store of value. 国际信用较好、币值稳定、汇价呈坚挺状态的货币。

Factors contributing to a currency's hard status: long-term stability of purchasing power, the associated country's political and fiscal condition, policy posture of the issuing central bank.

**soft currency** a currency expected to fluctuate erratically(不规律地) or depreciate(贬值) against other currencies. Softness--result of political or fiscal instability within the associated country

**debit card** 借记卡, make an electronic withdrawal from funds on deposit in a bank, as in purchasing goods or obtaining cash advances.

**Eurozone** 欧元区: officially euro area economic and monetary union (EMU) of 17 EU members adopted the euro (€), sole legal tender.

**Current eurozone:** Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain. Other EU states (except for Denmark and de facto Sweden) are obliged to join once they meet the criteria to do so.

9 countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden) EU members, do not use euro

**IMF:** International Monetary Fund. 189 countries

It works to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, reduce poverty around the world.

It lends to countries in difficulty, provides technical assistance and training to help countries improve economic management.

**Global warming**---It refers to the rise in average temperature of atmosphere and oceans since the late 19th century. Since the early 20th century, the mean surface temperature is increased by about 0.8 °C. It results from the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases produced by human activities, such as burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.

**ecosystem** :An ecosystem is a community of living organisms (plants, animals and microbes) in conjunction with the nonliving components of their environment (things like air, water and mineral soil), interacting as a system

**The greenhouse effect** is the process by which absorption and emission of infrared radiation by gases in the atmosphere warm a planet's lower atmosphere and surface