[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-semi](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:EngvarB](/wiki/Template:EngvarB) [Template:Infobox Continent](/wiki/Template:Infobox_Continent)

**Europe** is a [continent](/wiki/Continent) that comprises the westernmost part of [Eurasia](/wiki/Eurasia). Europe is bordered by the [Arctic Ocean](/wiki/Arctic_Ocean) to the north, the [Atlantic Ocean](/wiki/Atlantic_Ocean) to the west, and the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea) to the south. To the east and southeast, Europe is generally considered as [separated from Asia](/wiki/Borders_of_the_continents#Europe_and_Asia) by the [watershed divides](/wiki/Drainage_divide) of the [Ural](/wiki/Ural_Mountains) and [Caucasus Mountains](/wiki/Caucasus_Mountains), the [Ural River](/wiki/Ural_River), the [Caspian](/wiki/Caspian_Sea) and [Black](/wiki/Black_Sea) Seas, and the waterways of the [Turkish Straits](/wiki/Turkish_Straits).[[1]](#cite_note-1) Yet the non-oceanic borders of Europe—a concept dating back to [classical antiquity](/wiki/Classical_antiquity)—are arbitrary; the primarily [physiographic](/wiki/Physical_geography) term "continent" as applied to Europe also incorporates [cultural and political](/wiki/Human_geography) elements whose discontinuities are not always reflected by the continent's current boundaries.

Europe is the world's [second-smallest](/wiki/List_of_continents) continent by surface area, covering about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) or 2% of the Earth's surface and about 6.8% of its land area. Of Europe's approximately 50 countries, [Russia](/wiki/Russia) is the largest and most populous, spanning 39% of the continent and comprising 15% of its population, while [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City) is the smallest both in terms area and population. Europe is the third-most populous continent after [Asia](/wiki/Asia) and [Africa](/wiki/Africa), with a [population](/wiki/Demographics_of_Europe) of 739–743 million or about 11% of the [world's population](/wiki/World_population).[[2]](#cite_note-2) Europe has a climate heavily affected by warm Atlantic currents that temper winters and summers on much of the continent, even at latitudes along which the climate in Asia and North America is severe. Further from the Atlantic, seasonal differences are mildly greater than close to the coast.

Europe, in particular [ancient Greece](/wiki/Ancient_Greece), is the birthplace of [Western civilization](/wiki/Western_civilization).[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) The fall of the [Western Roman Empire](/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire), during the [migration period](/wiki/Migration_period), marked the end of [ancient history](/wiki/Ancient_history) and the beginning of an era known as the "[Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages)". The [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance) [humanism](/wiki/Renaissance_Humanism), [exploration](/wiki/Renaissance_exploration), [art](/wiki/Renaissance_art), and [science](/wiki/Renaissance_science) led the "old continent", and eventually the rest of the world, to the [modern era](/wiki/Modern_era). From this period onwards, Europe played a predominant role in global affairs. Between the 16th and 20th centuries, European nations controlled at various times the Americas, most of Africa, Oceania, and the majority of Asia.

The [Industrial Revolution](/wiki/Industrial_Revolution), which began in the [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom_of_Great_Britain_and_Ireland) at the end of the 18th century, gave rise to radical economic, cultural, and social change in Western Europe, and eventually the wider world. Both [world wars](/wiki/World_war) were largely focused upon Europe, contributing to a decline in [Western European](/wiki/Western_Europe) dominance in world affairs by the mid-20th century as the [United States](/wiki/United_States) and [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) took prominence.[[6]](#cite_note-6) During the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War), Europe was divided along the [Iron Curtain](/wiki/Iron_Curtain) between [NATO](/wiki/NATO) in the west and the [Warsaw Pact](/wiki/Warsaw_Pact) in the east, until the [revolutions of 1989](/wiki/Revolutions_of_1989) and [fall of the Berlin Wall](/wiki/Fall_of_the_Berlin_Wall).

[European integration](/wiki/European_integration) led to the formation of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union), a political entity that lies between a [confederation](/wiki/Confederation) and a [federation](/wiki/Federation).[[7]](#cite_note-7) The EU originated in Western Europe but has been [expanding eastward](/wiki/Enlargement_of_the_European_Union) since the [fall of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union) in 1991. The currency of most countries of the European Union, the [Euro](/wiki/Euro), is the most commonly used among Europeans and the EU's [Schengen Area](/wiki/Schengen_Area) abolishes border and immigration controls among most of its member states.

## Contents

* 1 Definition[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]
* 2 Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]
* 3 History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]
  + 3.1 Prehistory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]
  + 3.2 Classical antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]
  + 3.3 Early Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]
  + 3.4 High and Late Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]
  + 3.5 Early modern period[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]
  + 3.6 18th and 19th centuries[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]
  + 3.7 20th century to the present[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]
* 4 Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]
  + 4.1 Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]
  + 4.2 Geology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]
  + 4.3 Flora[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]
  + 4.4 Fauna[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]
* 5 Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]
  + 5.1 Integration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]
* 6 Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]
* 7 History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]
* 8 Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]
  + 8.1 Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]
  + 8.2 Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]
* 9 Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]
* 10 See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]
* 11 Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]
* 12 References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]
* 13 Sources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]
* 14 External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

## Definition[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

Clickable map of Europe, showing one of the most commonly used [continental boundaries](/wiki/Boundaries_between_continents)[[8]](#cite_note-8)   
**Key:** **blue**: [states which straddle the border between Europe and Asia](/wiki/Transcontinental_country); **green**: states not geographically in Europe, but closely associated with the continent

[Template:Europe and seas labelled map](/wiki/Template:Europe_and_seas_labelled_map)

[thumb||Reconstruction of](/wiki/File:Herodotus_World_Map.jpg) [Herodotus'](/wiki/Herodotus) world map (450 BC)

The use of the term "Europe" has developed gradually throughout history.[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10) In antiquity, the Greek historian [Herodotus](/wiki/Herodotus) mentioned that the world had been divided by unknown persons into three parts, Europe, Asia, and Libya (Africa), with the [Nile](/wiki/Nile) and the [River Phasis](/wiki/Rioni_River) forming their boundaries—though he also states that some considered the [River Don](/wiki/Don_River_(Russia)), rather than the [Phasis](/wiki/Rioni_River), as the boundary between Europe and Asia.[[11]](#cite_note-11) Europe's eastern frontier was defined in the 1st century by geographer [Strabo](/wiki/Strabo) at the River Don.[[12]](#cite_note-12) The [*Book of Jubilees*](/wiki/Jubilees) described the continents as the lands given by [Noah](/wiki/Noah) to his three sons; Europe was defined as stretching from the [Pillars of Hercules](/wiki/Pillars_of_Hercules) at the [Strait of Gibraltar](/wiki/Strait_of_Gibraltar), separating it from [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa), to the Don, separating it from [Asia](/wiki/Asia).[[13]](#cite_note-13) [thumb|left|A medieval](/wiki/File:T_and_O_map_Guntherus_Ziner_1472.jpg) [T and O map](/wiki/T_and_O_map) from 1472 showing the three continents as domains of the sons of [Noah](/wiki/Noah) — Asia to Sem ([Shem](/wiki/Shem)), Europe to Iafeth ([Japheth](/wiki/Japheth)), and Africa to Cham ([Ham](/wiki/Ham,_son_of_Noah))

A cultural definition of Europe as the lands of [Latin Christendom](/wiki/Christendom) coalesced in the 8th century, signifying the new cultural condominium created through the confluence of Germanic traditions and Christian-Latin culture, defined partly in contrast with [Byzantium](/wiki/Byzantium) and [Islam](/wiki/Islam), and limited to northern [Iberia](/wiki/Iberia), the British Isles, France, Christianised western Germany, the Alpine regions and northern and central Italy.[[14]](#cite_note-14) The concept is one of the lasting legacies of the [Carolingian Renaissance](/wiki/Carolingian_Renaissance): "Europa" often figures in the letters of Charlemagne's court scholar, [Alcuin](/wiki/Alcuin).[[15]](#cite_note-15) This division—as much cultural as geographical—was used until the [Late Middle Ages](/wiki/Late_Middle_Ages), when it was challenged by the [Age of Discovery](/wiki/Age_of_Discovery).[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17)[Template:Why?](/wiki/Template:Why?) The problem of redefining Europe was finally resolved in 1730 when, instead of waterways, the Swedish geographer and cartographer [von Strahlenberg](/wiki/Philip_Johan_von_Strahlenberg) proposed the [Ural Mountains](/wiki/Ural_Mountains) as the most significant eastern boundary, a suggestion that found favour in [Russia](/wiki/Tsardom_of_Russia) and throughout Europe.[[18]](#cite_note-18) Europe is now generally defined by geographers as the western part of Eurasia, with its boundaries marked by large bodies of water to the north, west and south; Europe's limits to the far east are usually taken to be the Urals, the [Ural River](/wiki/Ural_River), and the [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea); to the southeast, including the [Caucasus Mountains](/wiki/Caucasus_Mountains), the [Black Sea](/wiki/Black_Sea) and the waterways connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea.[[19]](#cite_note-19) [thumb|Depiction of](/wiki/File:Europa_Prima_Pars_Terrae_in_Forma_Virginis.jpg) [*Europa regina*](/wiki/Europa_regina) ('Queen Europe') in 1582.

Islands are generally grouped with the nearest continental landmass, hence [Iceland](/wiki/Iceland) is generally considered to be part of Europe, while the nearby island of [Greenland](/wiki/Greenland) is usually assigned to [North America](/wiki/North_America). Nevertheless, there are some exceptions based on sociopolitical and cultural differences. [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus) is closest to [Anatolia (or Asia Minor)](/wiki/Anatolia), but is usually considered part of Europe both culturally and politically and currently is a member state of the EU. [Malta](/wiki/Malta) was considered an island of North Africa for centuries.[[20]](#cite_note-20) The geographic boundary drawn between Europe and Asia in 1730 follows no international boundaries. As a result, attempts to organise Europe along political or economic lines have resulted in uses of the name in a geopolitically limiting way[[21]](#cite_note-21) to refer only to the 28 member states of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union). Conversely, Europe has also been used in a very expansive way by the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe) which has 47 member countries,[[22]](#cite_note-22) some of which territorially over-reach the Ural and Bosphorus lines to include all of Russia and Turkey. In addition, people in the [British Isles](/wiki/British_Isles) may refer to ["continental" or "mainland" Europe](/wiki/Continental_Europe) as Europe.[[23]](#cite_note-23)

## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Europa_copy.jpg)[Europa](/wiki/Europa_(mythology)) and the [bull](/wiki/Bull_(mythology)) on a Greek vase. [Tarquinia Museum](/wiki/Tarquinia_National_Museum), c. 480 BC

In classical [Greek mythology](/wiki/Greek_mythology), [Europa](/wiki/Europa_(mythology)) was a [Phoenician](/wiki/Phoenicia) princess whom [Zeus](/wiki/Zeus) abducted after assuming the form of a dazzling white bull. He took her to the island of [Crete](/wiki/Crete) where she gave birth to [Minos](/wiki/Minos), [Rhadamanthus](/wiki/Rhadamanthus), and [Sarpedon](/wiki/Sarpedon). For [Homer](/wiki/Homer), Europe ([Template:Lang-grc](/wiki/Template:Lang-grc), *Eurṓpē*; see also [List of Greek place names](/wiki/List_of_Greek_place_names)) was a mythological queen of Crete, not a geographical designation.

The etymology of *Europe* is uncertain.[[24]](#cite_note-24) One theory suggests that it is derived from the [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language) εὐρύς (*eurus*), meaning "wide, broad"[[25]](#cite_note-25) and ὤψ/ὠπ-/ὀπτ- (*ōps*/*ōp*-/*opt-*), meaning "eye, face, countenance",[[26]](#cite_note-26) hence *Eurṓpē*, "wide-gazing", "broad of aspect" (compare with [*glauk****ōp****is* (γλαυκῶπις 'grey-eyed') Athena](/wiki/Athena#Cult_and_attributes) or [*bo****ōp****is* (βοὠπις 'ox-eyed') Hera](/wiki/Hera)). *Broad* has been an [epithet](/wiki/Epithet) of Earth herself in the reconstructed [Proto-Indo-European religion](/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_religion).[[27]](#cite_note-27) Another theory suggests that it is based on a [Semitic](/wiki/Semitic_languages) word such as the [Akkadian](/wiki/Akkadian_language) *erebu* meaning "to go down, set"[[28]](#cite_note-28) (in reference to the sun), [cognate](/wiki/Cognate) to [Phoenician](/wiki/Phoenician_language) *'ereb* "evening; west" and Arabic [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb), Hebrew *ma'arav* (see also [*Erebus*](/wiki/Erebus), [PIE](/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_language) *\*h1regʷos*, "darkness"). [Martin Litchfield West](/wiki/Martin_Litchfield_West) states that "phonologically, the match between Europa's name and any form of the Semitic word is very poor".[[29]](#cite_note-29) However, [Michael A. Barry](/wiki/Michael_A._Barry), professor in [Princeton University's](/wiki/Princeton_University) Near Eastern Studies Department, finds the mention of the word *Ereb* on an Assyrian stele with the meaning of "night", "[the country of] sunset", in opposition to *Asu* "[the country of] sunrise", i.e. Asia (Anatolia coming equally from Ἀνατολή, "(sun)rise", "east").[[30]](#cite_note-30) In the [*Homeric Hymns*](/wiki/Homeric_Hymns) written in the seventh century BC, *Eurôpè* still represents, the western shore of the [Aegean Sea](/wiki/Aegean_Sea).

Whatever the origin of the name of the mythological figure, Εὐρώπη is first used as a geographical term in the 6th century BC, by Greek geographers such as [Anaximander](/wiki/Anaximander) and [Hecataeus](/wiki/Hecataeus_of_Miletus). Anaximander placed the boundary between Asia and Europe along the [Phasis River](/wiki/Phasis_River) (the modern Rioni) in the Caucasus, a convention still followed by [Herodotus](/wiki/Herodotus) in the 5th century BC.[[31]](#cite_note-31) But the convention received by the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages) and surviving into modern usage is that of the [Roman era](/wiki/Roman_era) used by Roman era authors such as [Posidonius](/wiki/Posidonius),[[32]](#cite_note-32) [Strabo](/wiki/Strabo)[[33]](#cite_note-33) and [Ptolemy](/wiki/Ptolemy),[[34]](#cite_note-34)who took the [Tanais](/wiki/Tanais) (the modern Don River) as the boundary. [thumb|100px|right|The](/wiki/File:Vinca_clay_figure_02.jpg) [*Lady of Vinča*](/wiki/Lady_of_Vinča), neolithic pottery from [Serbia](/wiki/Serbia)

The term "Europe" is first used for a cultural sphere in the [Carolingian Renaissance](/wiki/Carolingian_Renaissance) of the 9th century. From that time, the term designated the sphere of influence of the [Western Church](/wiki/Western_Church), as opposed to both the [Eastern Orthodox](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox) churches and to the [Islamic world](/wiki/Islamic_world). The modern convention, enlarging the area of "Europe" somewhat to the east and the southeast, develops in the 19th century.

Most major world languages use words derived from "Europa" to refer to the continent. Chinese, for example, uses the word *Ōuzhōu* (歐洲/欧洲); a similar Chinese-derived term [Template:Nihongo](/wiki/Template:Nihongo) is also sometimes used in Japanese such as in the Japanese name of the European Union, [Template:Nihongo](/wiki/Template:Nihongo), despite the [katakana](/wiki/Katakana) [Template:Nihongo](/wiki/Template:Nihongo) being more commonly used. However, in some Turkic languages the originally Persian name [*Frangistan*](/wiki/Frangistan) (land of the [Franks](/wiki/Franks)) is used casually in referring to much of Europe, besides official names such as *Avrupa* or *Evropa*.[[35]](#cite_note-35)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

### Prehistory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Stonehenge,_Condado_de_Wiltshire,_Inglaterra,_2014-08-12,_DD_09.JPG)[Stonehenge](/wiki/Stonehenge) monument, from [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom) (Late Neolithic from 3000 - 2000 BC).

[*Homo erectus georgicus*](/wiki/Homo_erectus_georgicus), which lived roughly 1.8 million years ago in [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)), is the earliest [hominid](/wiki/Hominid) to have been discovered in Europe.[[36]](#cite_note-36) Other hominid remains, dating back roughly 1 million years, have been discovered in [Atapuerca](/wiki/Archaeological_Site_of_Atapuerca), [Spain](/wiki/Spain).[[37]](#cite_note-37) [Neanderthal man](/wiki/Neanderthal_man) (named after the [Neandertal](/wiki/Neandertal) valley in [Germany](/wiki/Germany)) appeared in Europe 150,000 years ago and disappeared from the fossil record about 28,000 BC, with this extinction probably [due to climate change](/wiki/Neanderthal_extinction_hypotheses), and their final refuge being present-day [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal). The Neanderthals were supplanted by modern humans ([Cro-Magnons](/wiki/Cro-Magnons)), who appeared in Europe around 43 to 40 thousand years ago.[[38]](#cite_note-38) [thumb|150px|left|The](/wiki/File:Nebra_Scheibe.jpg) [Nebra sky disk](/wiki/Nebra_sky_disk) from [Bronze Age](/wiki/Bronze_Age) (1600 BC ), [Germany](/wiki/Germany)

The [European Neolithic](/wiki/European_Neolithic) period—marked by the cultivation of crops and the raising of livestock, increased numbers of settlements and the widespread use of pottery—began around 7000 BC in [Greece](/wiki/Greece) and the [Balkans](/wiki/Balkans), probably influenced by earlier farming practices in [Anatolia](/wiki/Anatolia) and the [Near East](/wiki/Near_East).[[39]](#cite_note-39) It spread from the Balkans along the valleys of the [Danube](/wiki/Danube) and the [Rhine](/wiki/Rhine) ([Linear Pottery culture](/wiki/Linear_Pottery_culture)) and along the [Mediterranean coast](/wiki/Mediterranean_coast) ([Cardial culture](/wiki/Cardial_Ware)). Between 4500 and 3000 BC, these central European neolithic cultures developed further to the west and the north, transmitting newly acquired skills in producing copper artefacts. In Western Europe the Neolithic period was characterised not by large agricultural settlements but by field monuments, such as [causewayed enclosures](/wiki/Causewayed_enclosure), [burial mounds](/wiki/Burial_mound) and [megalithic tombs](/wiki/Megalithic_tomb).[[40]](#cite_note-40) The [Corded Ware](/wiki/Corded_Ware) cultural horizon flourished at the transition from the Neolithic to the [Chalcolithic](/wiki/Chalcolithic). During this period giant [megalithic](/wiki/Megalithic) monuments, such as the [Megalithic Temples of Malta](/wiki/Megalithic_Temples_of_Malta) and [Stonehenge](/wiki/Stonehenge), were constructed throughout Western and Southern Europe.[[41]](#cite_note-41)[[42]](#cite_note-42) The [European Bronze Age](/wiki/European_Bronze_Age) began c. 3200 BC in Greece with the [Minoan civilization](/wiki/Minoan_civilization) on [Crete](/wiki/Crete), the first advanced civilization in Europe.[[43]](#cite_note-43) The Minoans were followed by the [Myceneans](/wiki/Mycenean_Greece), who collapsed suddenly around 1200 BC, ushering the [European Iron Age](/wiki/European_Iron_Age).[[44]](#cite_note-44) Iron Age colonisation by the [Greeks](/wiki/Greeks) and [Phoenicians](/wiki/Phoenicians) gave rise to early [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean_basin) cities. Early [Iron Age Italy](/wiki/Iron_Age_Italy) and [Greece](/wiki/Archaic_Greece) from around the 8th century BC gradually gave rise to historical Classical antiquity, whose beginning is sometimes dated to 776 BC, the year the first [Olympic Games](/wiki/Ancient_Olympic_Games).[[45]](#cite_note-45)

### Classical antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:The_Parthenon_in_Athens.jpg) [Parthenon](/wiki/Parthenon) in [Athens](/wiki/Athens) (432 BC)

Ancient Greece was the founding culture of Western civilisation. Western [democratic](/wiki/Democracy) and [individualistic culture](/wiki/Individualism) are often attributed to Ancient Greece.[[46]](#cite_note-46) The Greeks city-state, the [polis](/wiki/Polis), was the fundamental political unit of classical Greece.[[47]](#cite_note-47) In 508 BC, [Cleisthenes](/wiki/Cleisthenes) instituted the world's first [democratic](/wiki/Athenian_democracy) system of government in [Athens](/wiki/Athens).[[48]](#cite_note-48) The Greek political ideals were rediscovered in the late 18th century by European philosophers and idealists. Greece also generated many cultural contributions: in [philosophy](/wiki/Philosophy), [humanism](/wiki/Humanism) and [rationalism](/wiki/Rationalism) under [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle), [Socrates](/wiki/Socrates) and [Plato](/wiki/Plato); in [history](/wiki/Historiography) with [Herodotus](/wiki/Herodotus) and [Thucydides](/wiki/Thucydides); in dramatic and narrative verse, starting with the epic poems of [Homer](/wiki/Homer);[[46]](#cite_note-46) in drama with [Sophocles](/wiki/Sophocles) and [Euripides](/wiki/Euripides), in medicine with [Hippocrates](/wiki/Hippocrates) and [Galen](/wiki/Galen); and in science with [Pythagoras](/wiki/Pythagoras), [Euclid](/wiki/Euclid) and [Archimedes](/wiki/Archimedes).[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50)[[51]](#cite_note-51) In the course of the 5th century BC, several of the Greek [city states](/wiki/City_states) would ultimately check the [Achaemenid Persian](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire) advance in Europe through the [Greco-Persian Wars](/wiki/Greco-Persian_Wars), considered a pivotal moment in world history,[[52]](#cite_note-52) as the 50 years of peace that followed are known as [Golden Age of Athens](/wiki/Fifth-century_Athens), the seminal period of ancient Greece that laid many of the foundations of Western civilization.

[thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:RomanEmpire_117.svg) [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire) at its greatest extent in 117 AD.

Greece was followed by [Rome](/wiki/Ancient_Rome), which left its mark on [law](/wiki/Roman_law), [politics](/wiki/Politics), [language](/wiki/Latin), [engineering](/wiki/Roman_engineering), [architecture](/wiki/Roman_architecture), [government](/wiki/Centralized_government) and many more key aspects in western civilisation.[[53]](#cite_note-53) Expanding from their base in Italy beginning in the 3rd century BC, the Romans gradually expanded to eventually rule the entire Mediterranean basin and western Europe by the turn of the millennium. The [Roman Republic](/wiki/Roman_Republic) ended in 27 BC, when [Augustus](/wiki/Augustus) proclaimed the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire). The two centuries that followed are known as the [*pax romana*](/wiki/Pax_romana), a period of unprecedented peace, prosperity, and political stability in most of Europe.[[54]](#cite_note-54) The empire continued to expand under emperors such as [Hadrian](/wiki/Hadrian), [Antoninus Pius](/wiki/Antoninus_Pius), and [Marcus Aurelius](/wiki/Marcus_Aurelius), who all spent time on the Empire's northern border fighting [Germanic](/wiki/Germanic_peoples), [Pictish](/wiki/Picts) and [Scottish](/wiki/Scottish_people) tribes.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) The Empire began to decline in the 3rd century, particularly in the west. [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) was [legalised](/wiki/Constantine_the_Great_and_Christianity) by [Constantine I](/wiki/Constantine_I) in 313 AD after three centuries of [imperial persecution](/wiki/Persecution_of_early_Christians_in_the_Roman_Empire). Constantine also permanently moved the capital of the empire from Rome to the city of [Byzantium](/wiki/Byzantium), which was renamed [Constantinople](/wiki/Constantinople) in his honour (modern-day [Istanbul](/wiki/Istanbul)) in 330 AD. Christianity became the sole official religion of the empire in 380 AD, and in 391-392 AD, the emperor [Theodosius](/wiki/Theodosius_I) outlawed pagan religions.[[57]](#cite_note-57) This is sometimes considered to mark the end of antiquity; alternatively antiquity is considered to end with the [fall of the Western Roman Empire](/wiki/Fall_of_the_Western_Roman_Empire) in 476 AD; the closure of the pagan [Platonic Academy of Athens](/wiki/Platonic_Academy) in 529 AD;[[58]](#cite_note-58) or the rise of Islam in the early 7th century AD.

### Early Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image)

During the [decline of the Roman Empire](/wiki/Decline_of_the_Roman_Empire), Europe entered a long period of change arising from what historians call the "[Age of Migrations](/wiki/Age_of_Migrations)". There were numerous invasions and migrations amongst the [Ostrogoths](/wiki/Ostrogoths), [Visigoths](/wiki/Visigoths), [Goths](/wiki/Goths), [Vandals](/wiki/Vandals), [Huns](/wiki/Huns), [Franks](/wiki/Franks), [Angles](/wiki/Angles), [Saxons](/wiki/Saxons), [Slavs](/wiki/Slavs), [Avars](/wiki/Pannonian_Avars), [Bulgars](/wiki/Bulgars) and, later on, the [Vikings](/wiki/Vikings), [Pechenegs](/wiki/Pechenegs), [Cumans](/wiki/Cumans) and [Magyars](/wiki/Magyars).[[54]](#cite_note-54) [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance) thinkers such as [Petrarch](/wiki/Petrarch) would later refer to this as the "Dark Ages".[[59]](#cite_note-59) Isolated monastic communities were the only places to safeguard and compile written knowledge accumulated previously; apart from this very few written records survive and much literature, philosophy, mathematics, and other thinking from the classical period disappeared from Western Europe though they were preserved in the east, in the Byzantine Empire.[[60]](#cite_note-60) While the Roman empire in the west continued to decline, Roman traditions and the Roman state remained strong in the predominantly Greek-speaking [Eastern Roman Empire](/wiki/Eastern_Roman_Empire), also known as the [Byzantine Empire](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire). During most of its existence, the Byzantine Empire was the most powerful economic, cultural, and military force in Europe. Emperor [Justinian I](/wiki/Justinian_I) presided over Constantinople's first golden age: he established a [legal code](/wiki/Code_of_Justinian) that forms the basis of many modern legal systems, funded the construction of the [Hagia Sophia](/wiki/Hagia_Sophia), and brought the Christian church under state control.[[61]](#cite_note-61) [Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image)

From the 7th century onwards, Muslim [Arabs](/wiki/Arabs) started to encroach on historically Roman territory. As the Byzantines and neighbouring [Sasanid Persians](/wiki/Sasanids) were severely weakened by the time due the protracted, centuries-lasting and frequent [Byzantine–Sasanian wars](/wiki/Byzantine–Sasanian_wars), the Muslims toppled the Sasanids, and made inroads into Byzantine [Asia Minor](/wiki/Asia_Minor). In the mid 7th century AD, following the [Muslim conquest of Persia](/wiki/Muslim_conquest_of_Persia), Islam penetrated into the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus) region.[[62]](#cite_note-62) Over the next centuries Muslim forces took [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus_in_the_Middle_Ages), [Malta](/wiki/Malta), [Crete](/wiki/Emirate_of_Crete), [Sicily](/wiki/Emirate_of_Sicily) and [parts of southern Italy](/wiki/History_of_Islam_in_southern_Italy).[[63]](#cite_note-63) In the East, [Volga Bulgaria](/wiki/Volga_Bulgaria) became an Islamic state in the 10th century.[[64]](#cite_note-64) Between 711 and 720, most of the [Iberian Peninsula](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula) was brought under [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim) rule — save for small areas in the northwest ([Asturias](/wiki/Asturias)) and largely [Basque](/wiki/Basque_people) regions in the [Pyrenees](/wiki/Pyrenees). This territory, under the Arabic name [Al-Andalus](/wiki/Al-Andalus), became part of the expanding [Umayyad Caliphate](/wiki/Umayyad_Caliphate). The unsuccessful [second siege of Constantinople](/wiki/Siege_of_Constantinople_(717–718)) (717) weakened the [Umayyad dynasty](/wiki/Umayyad) and reduced their prestige. The Umayyads were then defeated by the [Frankish](/wiki/Frankish_Empire) leader [Charles Martel](/wiki/Charles_Martel) at the [Battle of Poitiers](/wiki/Battle_of_Tours) in 732, which ended their northward advance.

During the Dark Ages, the [Western Roman Empire](/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire) fell under the control of various tribes. The Germanic and Slav tribes established their domains over Western and Eastern Europe respectively.[[65]](#cite_note-65) Eventually the Frankish tribes were united under [Clovis I](/wiki/Clovis I).[[66]](#cite_note-66) [Charlemagne](/wiki/Charlemagne), a Frankish king of the [Carolingian](/wiki/Carolingian) dynasty who had conquered most of Western Europe, was anointed "[Holy Roman Emperor](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor)" by the Pope in 800. This led in 962 to the founding of the [Holy Roman Empire](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire), which eventually became centred in the German principalities of central Europe.[[67]](#cite_note-67) [East Central Europe](/wiki/East_Central_Europe) saw the creation of the first Slavic states and the adoption of [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) (circa 1000 AD). The powerful [West Slavic](/wiki/West_Slavs) state of [Great Moravia](/wiki/Great_Moravia) spread its territory all the way south to the Balkans, reaching its largest territorial extent under [Svatopluk I](/wiki/Svatopluk_I_of_Moravia) and causing a series of armed conflicts with [East Francia](/wiki/East_Francia). Further south, the first [South Slavic states](/wiki/South_Slavs) emerged in the late 7th and 8th century and adopted [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity): the [First Bulgarian Empire](/wiki/First_Bulgarian_Empire), the [Serbian Principality](/wiki/Principality_of_Serbia_(medieval)) (later [Kingdom](/wiki/Serbian_Kingdom) and [Empire](/wiki/Serbian_Empire)), and the [Duchy of Croatia](/wiki/Duchy_of_Croatia) (later [Kingdom of Croatia](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Croatia_(925–1102))). To the East, the [Kievan Rus](/wiki/Kievan_Rus) expanded from its capital in [Kiev](/wiki/Kiev) to become the largest state in Europe by the 10th century. In 988, [Vladimir the Great](/wiki/Vladimir_the_Great) adopted [Orthodox Christianity](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) as the religion of state.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### High and Late Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) The period between the year 1000 and 1300 is known as the [High Middle Ages](/wiki/High_Middle_Ages), during which the population of Europe experienced significant growth, culminating in the [Renaissance of the 12th century](/wiki/Renaissance_of_the_12th_century). Economic growth, together with the lack of safety on the mainland trading routes, made possible the development of major commercial routes along the coast of the [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea) and [Baltic Seas](/wiki/Baltic_Sea). The growing wealth and independence acquired by some coastal cities gave the [Maritime Republics](/wiki/Maritime_Republics) a leading role in the European scene.

[thumbnail|left|](/wiki/File:Philip_II_and_Tancred_meeting_in_Messina_-_British_Library_Royal_MS_16_G_vi_f350r_(detail).jpg) [Tancred of Sicily](/wiki/Tancred_of_Sicily) and [Philip II of France](/wiki/Philip_II_of_France), during the [Third Crusade](/wiki/Third_Crusade) (1189–1192)

The Middle Ages on the mainland were dominated by the two upper echelons of the social structure: the nobility and the clergy. [Feudalism](/wiki/Feudalism) developed in [France](/wiki/France) in the Early Middle Ages and soon spread throughout Europe.[[68]](#cite_note-68) A struggle for influence between the [nobility](/wiki/Nobility) and the [monarchy](/wiki/Monarchy) in England led to the writing of the [Magna Carta](/wiki/Magna_Carta) and the establishment of a [parliament](/wiki/Parliament).[[69]](#cite_note-69) The primary source of culture in this period came from the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church). Through monasteries and cathedral schools, the Church was responsible for education in much of Europe.[[68]](#cite_note-68) The [Papacy](/wiki/Papacy) reached the height of its power during the High Middle Ages. An [East-West Schism](/wiki/East-West_Schism) in 1054 split the former Roman Empire religiously, with the [Eastern Orthodox Church](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) in the [Byzantine Empire](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) and the Roman Catholic Church in the former Western Roman Empire. In 1095 [Pope Urban II](/wiki/Pope_Urban_II) called for a [crusade](/wiki/Crusades) against [Muslims](/wiki/Muslims) occupying [Jerusalem](/wiki/Jerusalem) and the [Holy Land](/wiki/Holy_Land).[[70]](#cite_note-70) In Europe itself, the Church organised the [Inquisition](/wiki/Inquisition) against heretics. In [Spain](/wiki/Spain), the [Reconquista](/wiki/Reconquista) concluded with the fall of [Granada](/wiki/Granada) in 1492, ending over seven centuries of Islamic rule in the [Iberian Peninsula](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula).[[71]](#cite_note-71) In the east a resurgent Byzantine Empire recaptured Crete and Cyprus from the Muslims and reconquered the Balkans. Constantinople was the largest and wealthiest city in Europe from the 9th to the 12th centuries, with a population of approximately 400,000.[[72]](#cite_note-72) The Empire was weakened following the defeat at [Manzikert](/wiki/Battle_of_Manzikert) and was weakened considerably by the [sack of Constantinople in 1204](/wiki/Siege_of_Constantinople_(1204)), during the [Fourth Crusade](/wiki/Fourth_Crusade).[[73]](#cite_note-73)[[74]](#cite_note-74)[[75]](#cite_note-75)[[76]](#cite_note-76)[[77]](#cite_note-77)[[78]](#cite_note-78)[[79]](#cite_note-79)[[80]](#cite_note-80)[[81]](#cite_note-81) Although it would recover Constantinople in 1261, [Byzantium](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) [fell in 1453](/wiki/Fall_of_Constantinople) when [Constantinople was taken](/wiki/Fall_of_Constantinople) by the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire).[[82]](#cite_note-82)[[83]](#cite_note-83)[[84]](#cite_note-84) [thumb|upright|The sacking of](/wiki/File:Mongols_suzdal.jpg) [Suzdal](/wiki/Suzdal) by [Batu Khan](/wiki/Batu_Khan) in 1238, during the [Mongol invasion of Europe](/wiki/Mongol_invasion_of_Europe).

In the 11th and 12th centuries, constant incursions by nomadic [Turkic](/wiki/Turkic_peoples) tribes, such as the [Pechenegs](/wiki/Pechenegs) and the [Cuman-Kipchaks](/wiki/Cuman-Kipchak_Confederation), caused a massive migration of [Slavic](/wiki/Slavic_peoples) populations to the safer, heavily forested regions of the north and temporarily halted the expansion of the Rus' state to the south and east.[[85]](#cite_note-85) Like many other parts of [Eurasia](/wiki/Eurasia), these territories were [overrun by the Mongols](/wiki/Mongol_invasion_of_Rus).[[86]](#cite_note-86) The invaders, who became known as [Tatars](/wiki/Tatars), were mostly Turkic-speaking peoples under Mongol suzerainty. They established the state of the [Golden Horde](/wiki/Golden_Horde) with headquarters in Crimea, which later adopted Islam as a religion and ruled over modern-day southern and central Russia for more than three centuries.[[87]](#cite_note-87)[[88]](#cite_note-88) After the collapse of Mongol dominions, the first Romanian states (principalities) emerged in the 14th century: Moldova and Walachia. Previously, these territories were under the successive control of Pechenegs and Cumans.[[89]](#cite_note-89) From the 12th to the 15th centuries, the [Grand Duchy of Moscow](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Moscow) grew from a small principality under Mongol rule to the largest state in Europe, overthrowing the Mongols in 1480 and eventually becoming the [Tsardom of Russia](/wiki/Tsardom_of_Russia). The state was consolidated under [Ivan III the Great](/wiki/Ivan_III_the_Great) and [Ivan the Terrible](/wiki/Ivan_the_Terrible), steadily expanding to the east and south over the next centuries.

The [Great Famine of 1315–1317](/wiki/Great_Famine_of_1315–1317) was the first [crisis](/wiki/Crisis_of_the_Late_Middle_Ages) that would strike Europe in the late Middle Ages.[[90]](#cite_note-90) The period between 1348 and 1420 witnessed the heaviest loss. The population of [France](/wiki/France_in_the_Middle_Ages) was reduced by half.[[91]](#cite_note-91)[[92]](#cite_note-92) Medieval Britain was afflicted by 95 famines,[[93]](#cite_note-93) and France suffered the effects of 75 or more in the same period.[[94]](#cite_note-94) Europe was devastated in the mid-14th century by the [Black Death](/wiki/Black_Death), one of the most deadly [pandemics](/wiki/Pandemic) in human history which killed an estimated 25 million people in Europe alone—a third of the [European population](/wiki/Medieval_demography) at the time.[[95]](#cite_note-95) The plague had a devastating effect on Europe's social structure; it induced people to live for the moment as illustrated by [Giovanni Boccaccio](/wiki/Giovanni_Boccaccio) in [*The Decameron*](/wiki/The_Decameron) (1353). It was a serious blow to the Roman Catholic Church and led to increased [persecution of Jews](/wiki/Persecution_of_Jews), foreigners, [beggars](/wiki/Beggars) and [lepers](/wiki/Leper).[[96]](#cite_note-96) The plague is thought to have returned every generation with varying [virulence](/wiki/Virulence) and mortalities until the 18th century.[[97]](#cite_note-97) During this period, more than 100 plague [epidemics](/wiki/List_of_epidemics) swept across Europe.[[98]](#cite_note-98)

### Early modern period[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|240px|left|](/wiki/File:La_scuola_di_Atene.jpg)[The School of Athens](/wiki/School_of_Athens) by [Raphael](/wiki/Raphael) (1511): Contemporaries such as [Michelangelo](/wiki/Michelangelo) and [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci) (centre) are portrayed as classical scholars

The Renaissance was a period of cultural change originating in [Florence](/wiki/Florence) and later spreading to the rest of Europe. The rise of a [new humanism](/wiki/Renaissance_humanism) was accompanied by the recovery of forgotten [classical Greek](/wiki/Classical_Greece) and Arabic knowledge from [monastic](/wiki/Monasticism) libraries, often translated from Arabic into [Latin](/wiki/Latin_language).[[99]](#cite_note-99)[[100]](#cite_note-100)[[101]](#cite_note-101) The Renaissance spread across Europe between the 14th and 16th centuries: it saw the flowering of [art](/wiki/Renaissance_art), [philosophy](/wiki/Philosophy), [music](/wiki/Music), and the [sciences](/wiki/History_of_science_in_the_Renaissance), under the joint patronage of [royalty](/wiki/Royal_family), the nobility, the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), and an emerging merchant class.[[102]](#cite_note-102)[[103]](#cite_note-103)[[104]](#cite_note-104) Patrons in Italy, including the [Medici](/wiki/Medici) family of Florentine bankers and the [Popes](/wiki/Pope) in [Rome](/wiki/Rome), funded prolific [quattrocento](/wiki/Quattrocento) and [cinquecento](/wiki/Cinquecento) artists such as [Raphael](/wiki/Raphael), [Michelangelo](/wiki/Michelangelo), and [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci).[[105]](#cite_note-105)[[106]](#cite_note-106) Political intrigue within the Church in the mid-14th century caused the [Western Schism](/wiki/Western_Schism). During this forty-year period, two popes—one in [Avignon](/wiki/Avignon) and one in Rome—claimed rulership over the Church. Although the schism was eventually healed in 1417, the papacy's spiritual authority had suffered greatly.[[107]](#cite_note-107) [thumb|upright|right|](/wiki/File:Lucas_Cranach_d.Ä._-_Martin_Luther,_1528_(Veste_Coburg).jpg)[Martin Luther](/wiki/Martin_Luther) (1483–1546) initiated the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation)

The Church's power was further weakened by the Protestant Reformation (1517–1648), initially sparked by [the works](/wiki/The_Ninety-Five_Theses) of German theologian [Martin Luther](/wiki/Martin_Luther), an attempt to start a reform within the Church. The Reformation also damaged the Holy Roman Emperor's influence, as German princes became divided between [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) and Roman Catholic faiths.[[108]](#cite_note-108) This eventually led to the [Thirty Years War](/wiki/Thirty_Years_War) (1618–1648), which crippled the Holy Roman Empire and devastated much of [Germany](/wiki/Early_Modern_history_of_Germany), killing between 25 and 40 percent of its population.[[109]](#cite_note-109) In the aftermath of the [Peace of Westphalia](/wiki/Peace_of_Westphalia), France rose to predominance within Europe.[[110]](#cite_note-110) The 17th century in southern, central and eastern Europe was a period of general [decline](/wiki/The_General_Crisis).[[111]](#cite_note-111) Central and Eastern Europe experienced more than 150 famines in a 200-year period between 1501 and 1700.[[112]](#cite_note-112) From the 15th to 18th centuries, when the disintegrating khanates of the [Golden Horde](/wiki/Golden_Horde) were conquered by Russia, [Tatars](/wiki/Crimean_Tatars) from the [Crimean Khanate](/wiki/Crimean_Khanate) frequently [raided](/wiki/Crimean-Nogai_raids_into_East_Slavic_lands) Eastern Slavic lands to capture slaves.[[113]](#cite_note-113) Further east, the [Nogai Horde](/wiki/Nogai_Horde) and [Kazakh Khanate](/wiki/Kazakh_Khanate) frequently raided the Slavic-speaking areas of Russia, Ukraine and Poland for hundreds of years, until the Russian expansion and conquest of most of northern Eurasia (i.e. Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Siberia). Meanwhile, in the south, the Ottomans had conquered the Balkans by the 15th century, [laying siege to Vienna in 1529](/wiki/Siege_of_Vienna). In the [Battle of Lepanto](/wiki/Battle_of_Lepanto) in 1571, the [Holy League](/wiki/Holy_League_(1571)) checked Ottoman power in the Mediterranean. The Ottomans again laid siege to Vienna in 1683, but the [Battle of Vienna](/wiki/Battle_of_Vienna) permanently ended their advance into Europe, and marked the political hegemony of the [Habsburg dynasty](/wiki/Habsburg_dynasty) in central Europe.

The Renaissance and the [New Monarchs](/wiki/New_Monarchs) marked the start of an Age of Discovery, a period of exploration, invention, and scientific development.[[114]](#cite_note-114) Among the great figures of the Western [scientific revolution](/wiki/Scientific_revolution) of the 16th and 17th centuries were [Copernicus](/wiki/Copernicus), [Kepler](/wiki/Kepler), [Galileo](/wiki/Galileo), and [Isaac Newton](/wiki/Isaac_Newton).[[115]](#cite_note-115) According to Peter Barrett, "It is widely accepted that 'modern science' arose in the Europe of the 17th century (towards the end of the Renaissance), introducing a new understanding of the natural world."[[99]](#cite_note-99) In the 15th century, [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal) and [Spain](/wiki/Spain), two of the greatest naval powers of the time, took the lead in exploring the world.[[116]](#cite_note-116)[[117]](#cite_note-117) [Christopher Columbus](/wiki/Christopher_Columbus) reached the [New World](/wiki/New_World) in 1492 and [Vasco da Gama](/wiki/Vasco_da_Gama) opened the ocean route to the [East](/wiki/Orient) in 1498, and soon after the Spanish and Portuguese began establishing colonial empires in the Americas and Asia.[[118]](#cite_note-118) France, the [Netherlands](/wiki/Netherlands) and [England](/wiki/England) soon followed in building large colonial empires with vast holdings in Africa, [the Americas](/wiki/The_Americas), and Asia.

### 18th and 19th centuries[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Napoleons_retreat_from_moscow.jpg)[Napoleon's](/wiki/Napoleon) retreat from Russia in 1812. Napoleon's [*Grande Armée*](/wiki/Grande_Armée) had lost about half a million men.

The Age of Enlightenment was a powerful intellectual movement during the 18th century promoting scientific and reason-based thoughts.[[119]](#cite_note-119)[[120]](#cite_note-120)[[121]](#cite_note-121) Discontent with the aristocracy and clergy's monopoly on political power in France resulted in the French Revolution and the establishment of the [First Republic](/wiki/French_First_Republic) as a result of which the monarchy and many of the nobility perished during the initial [reign of terror](/wiki/Reign_of_Terror).[[122]](#cite_note-122) [Napoleon Bonaparte](/wiki/Napoleon) rose to power in the aftermath of the French Revolution and established the [First French Empire](/wiki/First_French_Empire) that, during the [Napoleonic Wars](/wiki/Napoleonic_Wars), grew to encompass large parts of Europe before collapsing in 1815 with the [Battle of Waterloo](/wiki/Battle_of_Waterloo).[[123]](#cite_note-123)[[124]](#cite_note-124) [Napoleonic rule](/wiki/Napoleonic_Empire) resulted in the further dissemination of the ideals of the French Revolution, including that of the [nation-state](/wiki/Nation_state), as well as the widespread adoption of the French models of [administration](/wiki/Centralised_government), [law](/wiki/Napoleonic_code), and [education](/wiki/Education_in_France).[[125]](#cite_note-125)[[126]](#cite_note-126)[[127]](#cite_note-127) The [Congress of Vienna](/wiki/Congress_of_Vienna), convened after Napoleon's downfall, established a new [balance of power](/wiki/Balance_of_power_(international_relations)) in Europe centred on the five "[Great Powers](/wiki/Great_Power)": the [UK](/wiki/United_Kingdom), [France](/wiki/France), [Prussia](/wiki/Prussia), [Austria](/wiki/Austrian_Empire), and Russia.[[128]](#cite_note-128) This balance would remain in place until the [Revolutions of 1848](/wiki/Revolutions_of_1848), during which liberal uprisings affected all of Europe except for Russia and the [UK](/wiki/United_Kingdom). These revolutions were eventually put down by conservative elements and few reforms resulted.[[129]](#cite_note-129) The year 1859 saw the unification of Romania, as a nation-state, from smaller principalities. In 1867, the [Austro-Hungarian empire](/wiki/Austro-Hungarian_empire) was [formed](/wiki/Ausgleich); and 1871 saw the unifications of both [Italy](/wiki/Italian_unification) and [Germany](/wiki/Unification_of_Germany) as [nation-states](/wiki/Nation-states) from smaller principalities.[[130]](#cite_note-130) [thumb|left|upright|](/wiki/File:The_ottoman_empire_and_its_successors_(1923)_-_Ottoman_Empire_in_1856.png)[Template:Legend0](/wiki/Template:Legend0)

In parallel, the [Eastern Question](/wiki/Eastern_Question) grew more complex ever since the Ottoman defeat in the [Russo-Turkish War (1768–1774)](/wiki/Russo-Turkish_War_(1768–1774)). As the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire seemed imminent, the [Great Powers](/wiki/Great_Power) struggled to safeguard their strategic and commercial interests in the Ottoman domains. The [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire) stood to benefit from the decline, whereas the [Habsburg Empire](/wiki/Habsburg_Empire) and [Britain](/wiki/Great_Britain) perceived the preservation of the Ottoman Empire to be in their best interests. Meanwhile, the [Serbian revolution](/wiki/Serbian_revolution) (1804) and [Greek War of Independence](/wiki/Greek_War_of_Independence) (1821) marked the beginning of the end of Ottoman rule in the [Balkans](/wiki/Balkans), which ended with the [Balkan Wars](/wiki/Balkan_Wars) in 1912-1913.[[131]](#cite_note-131) Formal recognition of the *de facto* independent principalities of [Montenegro](/wiki/Montenegro), [Serbia](/wiki/Principality_of_Serbia) and [Romania](/wiki/Romania) ensued at the [Congress of Berlin](/wiki/Congress_of_Berlin) in 1878.

[thumb|Marshall's](/wiki/File:Marshall's_flax-mill,_Holbeck,_Leeds_-_interior_-_c.1800.jpg) [Temple Works](/wiki/Temple_Works) (1840), the [Industrial Revolution](/wiki/Industrial_Revolution) started in [Great Britain](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain)

The [Industrial Revolution](/wiki/Industrial_Revolution) started in [Great Britain](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain) in the last part of the 18th century and spread throughout Europe. The invention and implementation of new technologies resulted in rapid urban growth, mass employment, and the rise of a new working class.[[132]](#cite_note-132) Reforms in social and economic spheres followed, including the [first laws](/wiki/Factory_Acts) on [child labour](/wiki/Child_labour), the legalisation of [trade unions](/wiki/Trade_union),[[133]](#cite_note-133) and the [abolition of slavery](/wiki/Abolitionism_in_the_United_Kingdom).[[134]](#cite_note-134) In Britain, the [Public Health Act of 1875](/wiki/Public_Health_Act_of_1875) was passed, which significantly improved living conditions in many British cities.[[135]](#cite_note-135) Europe's population increased from about 100 million in 1700 to 400 million by 1900.[[136]](#cite_note-136) The last major famine recorded in Western Europe, the [Irish Potato Famine](/wiki/Great_Famine_(Ireland)), caused death and mass emigration of millions of Irish people.[[137]](#cite_note-137) In the 19th century, 70 million people left Europe in migrations to various European colonies abroad and to the [United States](/wiki/United_States).[[138]](#cite_note-138) Demographic growth meant that, by 1900, Europe's share of the world's population was 25%.[[139]](#cite_note-139)

### 20th century to the present[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Vierbund05h.jpg)[Template:Ublist](/wiki/Template:Ublist)

Two World Wars and an economic depression dominated the first half of the 20th century. World War I was fought between 1914 and 1918. It started when [Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria](/wiki/Archduke_Franz_Ferdinand_of_Austria) was assassinated by the [Yugoslav nationalist](/wiki/Yugoslav_nationalism)[[140]](#cite_note-140) [Gavrilo Princip](/wiki/Gavrilo_Princip).[[141]](#cite_note-141) Most European nations were drawn into the war, which was fought between the [Entente Powers](/wiki/Entente_Powers) ([France](/wiki/French_Third_Republic), [Belgium](/wiki/Belgium), [Serbia](/wiki/Serbia), Portugal, [Russia](/wiki/Russian_Empire), the United Kingdom, and later [Italy](/wiki/Italy), [Greece](/wiki/Greece), [Romania](/wiki/Romania), and the United States) and the [Central Powers](/wiki/Central_Powers) ([Austria-Hungary](/wiki/Austria-Hungary), [Germany](/wiki/German_Empire), [Bulgaria](/wiki/Bulgaria), and the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire)). The War left more than 16 million civilians and military dead.[[142]](#cite_note-142) Over 60 million European soldiers were mobilised from 1914 to 1918.[[143]](#cite_note-143) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Serbian_retreat_WWI.jpg)[Serbian war efforts](/wiki/Serbian_Campaign_of_World_War_I) (1914–1918) cost the country one quarter of its population.[[144]](#cite_note-144)[[145]](#cite_note-145)[[146]](#cite_note-146)[[147]](#cite_note-147)[[148]](#cite_note-148)

Russia was plunged into the [Russian Revolution](/wiki/Russian_Revolution), which threw down the [Tsarist monarchy](/wiki/Russian_Empire) and replaced it with the [communist](/wiki/Communist) [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union).[[149]](#cite_note-149) [Austria-Hungary](/wiki/Austria-Hungary) and the Ottoman Empire collapsed and broke up into separate nations, and many other nations had their borders redrawn. The [Treaty of Versailles](/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles), which officially ended World War I in 1919, was harsh towards Germany, upon whom it placed full responsibility for the war and imposed heavy sanctions.[[150]](#cite_note-150) Excess deaths in Russia over the course of World War I and the [Russian Civil War](/wiki/Russian_Civil_War) (including the postwar [famine](/wiki/Russian_famine_of_1921)) amounted to a combined total of 18 million.[[151]](#cite_note-151) In 1932–1933, under [Stalin's](/wiki/Stalin) leadership, confiscations of grain by the Soviet authorities contributed to the [second Soviet famine](/wiki/Soviet_famine_of_1932-1933) which caused millions of deaths;[[152]](#cite_note-152) surviving [kulaks](/wiki/Kulak) were persecuted and many sent to [Gulags](/wiki/Gulag) to do [forced labour](/wiki/Unfree_labour). Stalin was also responsible for the [Great Purge](/wiki/Great_Purge) of 1937–38 in which the [NKVD](/wiki/NKVD) executed 681,692 people;[[153]](#cite_note-153) millions of people were [deported and exiled](/wiki/Population_transfer_in_the_Soviet_Union) to remote areas of the Soviet Union.[[154]](#cite_note-154) Economic instability, caused in part by debts incurred in the First World War and 'loans' to Germany played havoc in Europe in the late 1920s and 1930s. This and the [Wall Street Crash of 1929](/wiki/Wall_Street_Crash_of_1929) brought about the worldwide Great Depression. Helped by the economic crisis, social instability and the threat of communism, [fascist movements](/wiki/Fascism) developed throughout Europe placing [Adolf Hitler](/wiki/Adolf_Hitler) of [Nazi Germany](/wiki/Nazi_Germany), [Francisco Franco](/wiki/Francisco_Franco) of Spain and [Benito Mussolini](/wiki/Benito_Mussolini) of Italy in power.[[155]](#cite_note-155)[[156]](#cite_note-156) In 1933, Hitler became the leader of Germany and began to work towards his goal of building Greater Germany. Germany re-expanded and took back the [Saarland](/wiki/Saarland) and [Rhineland](/wiki/Rhineland) in 1935 and 1936. In 1938, [Austria](/wiki/Austria) became a part of Germany following the [Anschluss](/wiki/Anschluss). Later that year, following the [Munich Agreement](/wiki/Munich_Agreement) signed by Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy, Germany annexed the [Sudetenland](/wiki/Sudetenland), which was a part of [Czechoslovakia](/wiki/Czechoslovakia) inhabited by ethnic Germans, and in early 1939, the remainder of Czechoslovakia was split into the [Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia](/wiki/Protectorate_of_Bohemia_and_Moravia), controlled by Germany, and the [Slovak Republic](/wiki/Slovak_Republic_(1939–1945)). At the time, Britain and France preferred a policy of [appeasement](/wiki/Appeasement).

[thumb|Bombed and burned-out buildings in](/wiki/File:Hamburg_after_the_1943_bombing.jpg) [Hamburg](/wiki/Hamburg), 1944/45

With tensions mounting between Germany and Poland over the future of [Danzig](/wiki/Danzig), the Germans turned to the Soviets, and signed the [Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact](/wiki/Molotov–Ribbentrop_Pact), which allowed the Soviets to invade the Baltic states and parts of Poland and Romania. Germany [invaded Poland](/wiki/Invasion_of_Poland) on 1 September 1939, prompting France and the United Kingdom to declare war on Germany on 3 September, opening the [European Theatre of World War II](/wiki/European_Theatre_of_World_War_II).[[157]](#cite_note-157)[[158]](#cite_note-158) The [Soviet invasion of Poland](/wiki/Soviet_invasion_of_Poland) started on 17 September and Poland fell soon thereafter. On 24 September, the Soviet Union attacked the [Baltic countries](/wiki/Occupation_of_the_Baltic_states) and later, Finland. The British hoped to land at [Narvik](/wiki/Battles_of_Narvik) and send troops to aid Finland, but their primary objective in the landing was to encircle Germany and cut the Germans off from Scandinavian resources. Around the same time, Germany moved troops into Denmark. The [Phoney War](/wiki/Phoney_War) continued.

In May 1940, Germany [attacked France](/wiki/Battle_of_France) through the Low Countries. France capitulated in June 1940. By August Germany began a [bombing offensive on Britain](/wiki/Battle_of_Britain), but failed to convince the Britons to give up.[[159]](#cite_note-159) In 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union in the [Operation Barbarossa](/wiki/Operation_Barbarossa).[[160]](#cite_note-160) On 7 December 1941 [Japan's](/wiki/Empire_of_Japan) [attack on Pearl Harbor](/wiki/Attack_on_Pearl_Harbor) drew the United States into the conflict as allies of the [British Empire](/wiki/British_Empire) and other [allied](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_II) forces.[[161]](#cite_note-161)[[162]](#cite_note-162)[thumb|The "](/wiki/File:Yalta_summit_1945_with_Churchill,_Roosevelt,_Stalin.jpg)[Big Three](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_II)" at the [Yalta Conference](/wiki/Yalta_Conference) in 1945; seated (from the left): [Winston Churchill](/wiki/Winston_Churchill), [Franklin D. Roosevelt](/wiki/Franklin_D._Roosevelt), and [Joseph Stalin](/wiki/Joseph_Stalin) After the staggering [Battle of Stalingrad](/wiki/Battle_of_Stalingrad) in 1943, the German offensive in the Soviet Union turned into a continual fallback. The [Battle of Kursk](/wiki/Battle_of_Kursk), which involved the largest [tank battle](/wiki/Battle_of_Prokhorovka) in history, was the last major German offensive on the [Eastern Front](/wiki/Eastern_Front_(World_War_II)). In 1944, British and American forces invaded France in the [D-Day landings](/wiki/Normandy_landings), opening a new front against Germany. [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin) finally fell in 1945, ending World War II in Europe. The war was the largest and most destructive in human history, with [60 million dead across the world](/wiki/World_War_II_casualties).[[163]](#cite_note-163) More than 40 million people in Europe had died as a result of World War II,[[164]](#cite_note-164) including between 11 and 17 million people who perished during [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust).[[165]](#cite_note-165) The Soviet Union [lost around 27 million people](/wiki/World_War_II_casualties_of_the_Soviet_Union) (mostly civilians) during the war, about half of all World War II casualties.[[166]](#cite_note-166) By the end of World War II, Europe had more than 40 million [refugees](/wiki/Refugee).[[167]](#cite_note-167) Several [post-war expulsions](/wiki/World_War_II_evacuation_and_expulsion) in Central and Eastern Europe displaced a total of about 20 million people.[[168]](#cite_note-168) [thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Schuman_Declaration.jpg) [Schuman Declaration](/wiki/Schuman_Declaration) led to the creation of the [European Coal and Steel Community](/wiki/European_Coal_and_Steel_Community). It began the [integration process](/wiki/European_integration) of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union). ([9 May](/wiki/Europe_Day) 1950, at the [French Foreign Ministry](/wiki/French_Foreign_Ministry)) World War I and especially World War II diminished the eminence of Western Europe in world affairs. After World War II the map of Europe was redrawn at the [Yalta Conference](/wiki/Yalta_Conference) and divided into two blocs, the Western countries and the communist Eastern bloc, separated by what was later called by [Winston Churchill](/wiki/Winston_Churchill) an "[Iron Curtain](/wiki/Iron_Curtain)". The United States and Western Europe established the [NATO](/wiki/NATO) alliance and later the Soviet Union and Central Europe established the [Warsaw Pact](/wiki/Warsaw_Pact).[[169]](#cite_note-169) The two new [superpowers](/wiki/Superpower), the United States and the Soviet Union, became locked in a fifty-year-long Cold War, centred on [nuclear proliferation](/wiki/Nuclear_proliferation). At the same time [decolonisation](/wiki/Decolonisation), which had already started after World War I, gradually resulted in the independence of most of the European colonies in Asia and Africa.[[6]](#cite_note-6)In the 1980s the [reforms](/wiki/Glasnost) of [Mikhail Gorbachev](/wiki/Mikhail_Gorbachev) and the [Solidarity](/wiki/Solidarity_(Polish_trade_union)) movement in Poland accelerated the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the end of the Cold War. Germany was reunited, after the symbolic [fall of the Berlin Wall](/wiki/Fall_of_the_Berlin_Wall) in 1989, and the maps of Central and Eastern Europe were redrawn once more.[[155]](#cite_note-155) [European integration](/wiki/European_integration) also grew after World War II. The [Treaty of Rome](/wiki/Treaty_of_Rome) in 1957 established the [European Economic Community](/wiki/European_Economic_Community) between six Western European states with the goal of a unified economic policy and common market.[[170]](#cite_note-170) In 1967 the EEC, [European Coal and Steel Community](/wiki/European_Coal_and_Steel_Community) and [Euratom](/wiki/Euratom) formed the [European Community](/wiki/European_Community), which in 1993 became the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union). The EU established a [parliament](/wiki/European_Parliament), [court](/wiki/European_Court_of_Justice) and [central bank](/wiki/European_Central_Bank) and introduced the [euro](/wiki/Euro) as a unified currency.[[171]](#cite_note-171) In 2004 and 2007, more Central and Eastern European countries began joining, [expanding the EU](/wiki/Enlargement_of_the_European_Union) to its current size of 28 European countries, and once more making Europe a major economical and political centre of power.[[172]](#cite_note-172)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|260px|Relief map of Europe and surrounding regions](/wiki/File:Europe_topography_map_en.png)

Europe makes up the western fifth of the [Eurasian](/wiki/Eurasia) landmass.[[19]](#cite_note-19) It has a higher ratio of coast to landmass than any other continent or subcontinent.[[173]](#cite_note-173) Its maritime borders consist of the Arctic Ocean to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and the Mediterranean, Black, and Caspian Seas to the south.[[174]](#cite_note-174)Land relief in Europe shows great variation within relatively small areas. The southern regions are more mountainous, while moving north the terrain descends from the high [Alps](/wiki/Alps), [Pyrenees](/wiki/Pyrenees), and [Carpathians](/wiki/Carpathian_Mountains), through hilly uplands, into broad, low northern plains, which are vast in the east. This extended lowland is known as the [Great European Plain](/wiki/Great_European_Plain), and at its heart lies the [North German Plain](/wiki/North_German_Plain). An arc of uplands also exists along the north-western seaboard, which begins in the western parts of the islands of [Britain](/wiki/Great_Britain) and [Ireland](/wiki/Ireland), and then continues along the mountainous, fjord-cut spine of Norway.

This description is simplified. Sub-regions such as the [Iberian Peninsula](/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula) and the [Italian Peninsula](/wiki/Italian_Peninsula) contain their own complex features, as does mainland Central Europe itself, where the relief contains many plateaus, river valleys and basins that complicate the general trend. Sub-regions like [Iceland](/wiki/Iceland), Britain, and Ireland are special cases. The former is a land unto itself in the northern ocean which is counted as part of Europe, while the latter are upland areas that were once joined to the mainland until rising sea levels cut them off.

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|260px|](/wiki/File:Vegetation_Europe.png)[Biomes](/wiki/Biome) of Europe and surrounding regions:   
[Template:Legend0](/wiki/Template:Legend0) [Template:Legend0](/wiki/Template:Legend0) [Template:Legend0](/wiki/Template:Legend0) [Template:Legend0](/wiki/Template:Legend0)   
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Europe lies mainly in the [temperate](/wiki/Temperate) climate zones, being subjected to [prevailing westerlies](/wiki/Prevailing_westerlies). The climate is milder in comparison to other areas of the same latitude around the globe due to the influence of the [Gulf Stream](/wiki/Gulf_Stream).[[175]](#cite_note-175) The Gulf Stream is nicknamed "Europe's central heating", because it makes Europe's climate warmer and wetter than it would otherwise be. The Gulf Stream not only carries warm water to Europe's coast but also warms up the prevailing westerly winds that blow across the continent from the Atlantic Ocean.

Therefore, the average temperature throughout the year of Naples is 16 °C (60.8 °F), while it is only 12 °C (53.6 °F) in New York City which is almost on the same latitude. Berlin, Germany; Calgary, Canada; and Irkutsk, in the Asian part of Russia, lie on around the same latitude; January temperatures in Berlin average around 8 °C (15 °F) higher than those in Calgary, and they are almost 22 °C (40 °F) higher than average temperatures in Irkutsk.[[175]](#cite_note-175) Similarly, northern parts of Scotland have a tempertate marine climate. The yearly average temperature in city of Inverness is 9.05 degrees Celsius (48.3 degrees Fahrenheit). However, Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, is on roughly the same latitude and has an average temperature of -6.5 degrees Celsius (20.3 degrees Fahrenheit), giving it a nearly subarctic climate.

### Geology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Mount_Elbrus_May_2008.jpg)[Mount Elbrus](/wiki/Mount_Elbrus) in [Russia](/wiki/Russia) is the highest mountain in Europe.

The geological history of Europe traces back to the formation of the [Baltic Shield](/wiki/Baltic_Shield) (Fennoscandia) and the [Sarmatian craton](/wiki/Sarmatian_craton), both around 2.25 billion years ago, followed by the [Volgo–Uralia](/wiki/Volgo–Uralia) shield, the three together leading to the [East European craton](/wiki/East_European_craton) (≈ [Baltica](/wiki/Baltica)) which became a part of the [supercontinent](/wiki/Supercontinent) [Columbia](/wiki/Columbia_(supercontinent)). Around 1.1 billion years ago, Baltica and Arctica (as part of the [Laurentia](/wiki/Laurentia) block) became joined to [Rodinia](/wiki/Rodinia), later resplitting around 550 million years ago to reform as Baltica. Around 440 million years ago [Euramerica](/wiki/Euramerica) was formed from Baltica and Laurentia; a further joining with [Gondwana](/wiki/Gondwana) then leading to the formation of [Pangea](/wiki/Pangea). Around 190 million years ago, Gondwana and [Laurasia](/wiki/Laurasia) split apart due to the widening of the Atlantic Ocean. Finally, and very soon afterwards, Laurasia itself split up again, into Laurentia (North America) and the Eurasian continent. The land connection between the two persisted for a considerable time, via [Greenland](/wiki/Greenland), leading to interchange of animal species. From around 50 million years ago, rising and falling sea levels have determined the actual shape of Europe, and its connections with continents such as Asia. Europe's present shape dates to the late [Tertiary period](/wiki/Tertiary_period) about five million years ago.[[176]](#cite_note-176) [thumb|Europa Point as seen from the](/wiki/File:Gibraltar-Europa-Point-LH-from-the-sea.jpg) [Strait of Gibraltar](/wiki/Strait_of_Gibraltar). The geology of Europe is hugely varied and complex, and gives rise to the wide variety of landscapes found across the continent, from the [Scottish Highlands](/wiki/Scottish_Highlands) to the rolling [plains](/wiki/Plain) of Hungary.[[177]](#cite_note-177) Europe's most significant feature is the dichotomy between highland and mountainous [Southern Europe](/wiki/Southern_Europe) and a vast, partially underwater, northern plain ranging from Ireland in the west to the [Ural Mountains](/wiki/Ural_Mountains) in the east. These two halves are separated by the mountain chains of the [Pyrenees](/wiki/Pyrenees) and [Alps](/wiki/Alps)/[Carpathians](/wiki/Carpathian_Mountains). The northern plains are delimited in the west by the [Scandinavian Mountains](/wiki/Scandinavian_Mountains) and the mountainous parts of the British Isles. Major shallow water bodies submerging parts of the northern plains are the [Celtic Sea](/wiki/Celtic_Sea), the [North Sea](/wiki/North_Sea), the [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea) complex and [Barents Sea](/wiki/Barents_Sea).

The northern plain contains the old geological continent of [Baltica](/wiki/Baltica), and so may be regarded geologically as the "main continent", while peripheral highlands and mountainous regions in the south and west constitute fragments from various other geological continents. Most of the older geology of western Europe existed as part of the ancient [microcontinent](/wiki/Microcontinent) [Avalonia](/wiki/Avalonia).

### Flora[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

Having lived side-by-side with agricultural peoples for millennia, Europe's animals and plants have been profoundly affected by the presence and activities of man. With the exception of [Fennoscandia](/wiki/Fennoscandia) and northern Russia, few areas of untouched wilderness are currently found in Europe, except for various [national parks](/wiki/National_park).

[thumb|left|Land use map of Europe with arable farmland (yellow), forest (dark green), pasture (light green), and tundra or bogs in the north (dark yellow)](/wiki/File:Europe_land_use_map.png)

The main natural vegetation cover in Europe is mixed [forest](/wiki/Forest). The conditions for growth are very favourable. In the north, the [Gulf Stream](/wiki/Gulf_Stream) and [North Atlantic Drift](/wiki/North_Atlantic_Current) warm the continent. Southern Europe could be described as having a warm, but mild climate. There are frequent summer droughts in this region. Mountain ridges also affect the conditions. Some of these ([Alps](/wiki/Alps), [Pyrenees](/wiki/Pyrenees)) are oriented east-west and allow the wind to carry large masses of water from the ocean in the interior. Others are oriented south-north ([Scandinavian Mountains](/wiki/Scandinavian_Mountains), [Dinarides](/wiki/Dinaric_Alps), [Carpathians](/wiki/Carpathian_Mountains), [Apennines](/wiki/Apennine_Mountains)) and because the rain falls primarily on the side of mountains that is oriented towards the sea, forests grow well on this side, while on the other side, the conditions are much less favourable. Few corners of mainland Europe have not been grazed by [livestock](/wiki/Livestock) at some point in time, and the cutting down of the pre-agricultural forest habitat caused disruption to the original plant and animal ecosystems.

[thumb|Floristic regions of Europe and neighbouring areas, according to Wolfgang Frey and Rainer Lösch](/wiki/File:Floristic_regions_in_Europe_(english).png)

Probably 80 to 90 percent of Europe was once covered by forest.[[178]](#cite_note-178) It stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Arctic Ocean. Though over half of Europe's original forests disappeared through the centuries of [deforestation](/wiki/Deforestation), Europe still has over one quarter of its land area as forest, such as the [broadlef and mixed](/wiki/Temperate_broadleaf_and_mixed_forest) forests, [taiga](/wiki/Taiga) of Scandinavia and Russia, mixed [rainforests](/wiki/Rainforest) of the Caucasus and the [Cork oak](/wiki/Cork_oak) forests in the western Mediterranean. During recent times, deforestation has been slowed and many trees have been planted. However, in many cases monoculture [plantations](/wiki/Plantation) of [conifers](/wiki/Pinophyta) have replaced the original mixed natural forest, because these grow quicker. The plantations now cover vast areas of land, but offer poorer habitats for many European forest dwelling species which require a mixture of tree species and diverse forest structure. The amount of natural forest in Western Europe is just 2–3% or less, in European Russia 5–10%. The country with the smallest percentage of forested area is [Iceland](/wiki/Iceland) (1%), while the most forested country is Finland (77%).[[179]](#cite_note-179) In temperate Europe, mixed forest with both [broadleaf](/wiki/Flowering_plant) and coniferous trees dominate. The most important species in central and western Europe are [beech](/wiki/Beech) and [oak](/wiki/Oak). In the north, the taiga is a mixed [spruce](/wiki/Spruce)–[pine](/wiki/Pine)–[birch](/wiki/Birch) forest; further north within Russia and extreme northern Scandinavia, the taiga gives way to [tundra](/wiki/Tundra) as the Arctic is approached. In the Mediterranean, many [olive](/wiki/Olive) trees have been planted, which are very well adapted to its arid climate; [Mediterranean Cypress](/wiki/Cupressus_sempervirens) is also widely planted in southern Europe. The semi-arid Mediterranean region hosts much scrub forest. A narrow east-west tongue of Eurasian [grassland](/wiki/Grassland) (the [steppe](/wiki/Steppe)) extends eastwards from [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine) and southern Russia and ends in Hungary and traverses into taiga to the north.

### Fauna[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [right|thumb|](/wiki/File:Europe_biogeography_countries.svg)[Biogeographic regions](/wiki/Biogeography) of Europe and bordering regions

Glaciation during the [most recent ice age](/wiki/Quaternary_glaciation) and the presence of man affected the distribution of [European fauna](/wiki/Fauna_of_Europe). As for the animals, in many parts of Europe most large animals and top [predator](/wiki/Predator) species have been hunted to extinction. The [woolly mammoth](/wiki/Woolly_mammoth) was extinct before the end of the [Neolithic](/wiki/Neolithic) period. Today [wolves](/wiki/Wolf) ([carnivores](/wiki/Carnivore)) and [bears](/wiki/Bear) ([omnivores](/wiki/Omnivore)) are endangered. Once they were found in most parts of Europe. However, deforestation and hunting caused these animals to withdraw further and further. By the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages) the bears' habitats were limited to more or less inaccessible mountains with sufficient forest cover. Today, the [brown bear](/wiki/European_brown_bear) lives primarily in the [Balkan peninsula](/wiki/Balkan), Scandinavia, and Russia; a small number also persist in other countries across Europe (Austria, Pyrenees etc.), but in these areas brown bear populations are fragmented and marginalised because of the destruction of their habitat. In addition, [polar bears](/wiki/Polar_bear) may be found on [Svalbard](/wiki/Svalbard), a Norwegian archipelago far north of Scandinavia. The [wolf](/wiki/Eurasian_wolf), the second largest predator in Europe after the brown bear, can be found primarily in [Central and Eastern Europe](/wiki/Central_and_Eastern_Europe) and in the Balkans, with a handful of packs in pockets of [Western Europe](/wiki/Western_Europe) (Scandinavia, Spain, etc.).

[thumb|Once roaming the great temperate forests of Eurasia,](/wiki/File:Neandertal_-_Wisent.jpg) [European bison](/wiki/European_bison) now live in nature preserves in [Białowieża Forest](/wiki/Białowieża_Forest), on the border between [Poland](/wiki/Poland) and [Belarus](/wiki/Belarus).[[180]](#cite_note-180)[[181]](#cite_note-181)

European wild cat, foxes (especially the red fox), jackal and different species of martens, hedgehogs, different species of reptiles (like snakes such as vipers and grass snakes) and amphibians, different birds (owls, hawks and other birds of prey).

Important European herbivores are snails, larvae, fish, different birds, and mammals, like rodents, deer and roe deer, boars, and living in the mountains, marmots, steinbocks, chamois among others. A number of insects, such as the [small tortoiseshell](/wiki/Small_tortoiseshell) butterfly, add to the biodiversity.[[182]](#cite_note-182) The extinction of the [dwarf hippos](/wiki/Cretan_Dwarf_Hippopotamus) and [dwarf elephants](/wiki/Dwarf_elephant) has been linked to the earliest arrival of humans on the islands of the [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean).[[183]](#cite_note-183) Sea creatures are also an important part of European flora and fauna. The sea flora is mainly [phytoplankton](/wiki/Phytoplankton). Important animals that live in European seas are [zooplankton](/wiki/Zooplankton), [molluscs](/wiki/Mollusc), [echinoderms](/wiki/Echinoderm), different [crustaceans](/wiki/Crustacean), [squids](/wiki/Squid) and [octopuses](/wiki/Octopuses), fish, [dolphins](/wiki/Dolphin), and [whales](/wiki/Whales).

Biodiversity is protected in Europe through the Council of Europe's [Bern Convention](/wiki/Convention_on_the_Conservation_of_European_Wildlife_and_Natural_Habitats), which has also been signed by the [European Community](/wiki/European_Community) as well as non-European states.

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The list below includes all entities falling even partially under any of the [various common definitions of Europe](/wiki/Geopolitical_divisions_of_Europe), geographic or political. The data displayed are per sources in cross-referenced articles.

{| class="sortable wikitable" ! style="line-height:95%; width:2em" class="unsortable" | [Flag](/wiki/Flag) ! style="line-height:95%; width:2em" class="unsortable" | [Arms](/wiki/Coat_of_arms) ! Name ! [Area](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_area)  
(km²) ! [Population](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population)  
! [Population density](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_density)  
(per km²) ! [Capital](/wiki/Capital_city) ! [Name(s) in official language(s)](/wiki/Language) |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Albania](/wiki/Albania) | style="text-align:right;"| 28,748 | style="text-align:right;"| 2,831,741 | style="text-align:right;"| 98.5 | [Tirana](/wiki/Tirana) | Shqipëria |-| | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Andorra](/wiki/Andorra) | style="text-align:right;"| 468 | style="text-align:right;"| 68,403 | style="text-align:right;"| 146.2 | [Andorra la Vella](/wiki/Andorra_la_Vella) | Andorra |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Armenia](/wiki/Armenia) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 29,800 | style="text-align:right;"| 3,229,900 | style="text-align:right;"| 101 | [Yerevan](/wiki/Yerevan) | Hayastan |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Austria](/wiki/Austria) | style="text-align:right;"| 83,858 | style="text-align:right;"| 8,169,929 | style="text-align:right;"| 97.4 | [Vienna](/wiki/Vienna) | Österreich |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 86,600 | style="text-align:right;"| 9,165,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 105.8 | [Baku](/wiki/Baku) | Azǝrbaycan |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Belarus](/wiki/Belarus) | style="text-align:right;"| 207,560 | style="text-align:right;"| 9,458,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 45.6 | [Minsk](/wiki/Minsk) | Belarus |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Belgium](/wiki/Belgium) | style="text-align:right;"| 30,528 | style="text-align:right;"| 11,007,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 360.6 | [Brussels](/wiki/Brussels) | België/Belgique/Belgien |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina) | style="text-align:right;"| 51,129 | style="text-align:right;"| 3,843,126 | style="text-align:right;"| 75.2 | [Sarajevo](/wiki/Sarajevo) | Bosna i Hercegovina |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Bulgaria](/wiki/Bulgaria) | style="text-align:right;"| 110,910 | style="text-align:right;"| 7,621,337 | style="text-align:right;"| 68.7 | [Sofia](/wiki/Sofia) | Bălgarija |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Croatia](/wiki/Croatia) | style="text-align:right;"| 56,542 | style="text-align:right;"| 4,437,460 | style="text-align:right;"| 77.7 | [Zagreb](/wiki/Zagreb) | Hrvatska |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 9,251 | style="text-align:right;"| 788,457 | style="text-align:right;"| 85 | [Nicosia](/wiki/Nicosia) | Kýpros/Kıbrıs |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Czechia](/wiki/Czechia) | style="text-align:right;"| 78,866 | style="text-align:right;"| 10,256,760 | style="text-align:right;"| 130.1 | [Prague](/wiki/Prague) | Česká republika |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Denmark](/wiki/Denmark) | style="text-align:right;"| 43,094 | style="text-align:right;"| 5,564,219 | style="text-align:right;"| 129 | [Copenhagen](/wiki/Copenhagen) | Danmark |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Estonia](/wiki/Estonia) | style="text-align:right;"| 45,226 | style="text-align:right;"| 1,340,194 | style="text-align:right;"| 29 | [Tallinn](/wiki/Tallinn) | Eesti |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Finland](/wiki/Finland) | style="text-align:right;"| 336,593 | style="text-align:right;"| 5,157,537 | style="text-align:right;"| 15.3 | [Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki) | Suomi/Finland |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [France](/wiki/France) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 547,030 | style="text-align:right;"| 66,104,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 115.5 | [Paris](/wiki/Paris) | France |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 69,700 | style="text-align:right;"| 4,661,473 | style="text-align:right;"| 64 | [Tbilisi](/wiki/Tbilisi) | Sakartvelo |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Germany](/wiki/Germany) | style="text-align:right;"| 357,021 | style="text-align:right;"| 80,716,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 233.2 | [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin) | Deutschland |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Greece](/wiki/Greece) | style="text-align:right;"| 131,957 | style="text-align:right;"| 11,123,034 | style="text-align:right;"| 80.7 | [Athens](/wiki/Athens) | Elláda |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Hungary](/wiki/Hungary) | style="text-align:right;"| 93,030 | style="text-align:right;"| 10,075,034 | style="text-align:right;"| 108.3 | [Budapest](/wiki/Budapest) | Magyarország |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Iceland](/wiki/Iceland) | style="text-align:right;"| 103,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 307,261 | style="text-align:right;"| 2.7 | [Reykjavík](/wiki/Reykjavík) | Ísland |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Ireland](/wiki/Republic_of_Ireland) | style="text-align:right;"| 70,280 | style="text-align:right;"| 4,234,925 | style="text-align:right;"| 60.3 | [Dublin](/wiki/Dublin) | Éire/Ireland |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Italy](/wiki/Italy) | style="text-align:right;"| 301,230 | style="text-align:right;"| 60,655,464 | style="text-align:right;"| 197.7 | [Rome](/wiki/Rome) | Italia |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Kazakhstan](/wiki/Kazakhstan) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 2,724,900 | style="text-align:right;"| 15,217,711 | style="text-align:right;"| 5.6 | [Astana](/wiki/Astana) | Kazakhstan |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Latvia](/wiki/Latvia) | style="text-align:right;"| 64,589 | style="text-align:right;"| 2,067,900 | style="text-align:right;"| 34.2 | [Riga](/wiki/Riga) | Latvija |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Liechtenstein](/wiki/Liechtenstein) | style="text-align:right;"| 160 | style="text-align:right;"| 32,842 | style="text-align:right;"| 205.3 | [Vaduz](/wiki/Vaduz) | Liechtenstein |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Lithuania](/wiki/Lithuania) | style="text-align:right;"| 65,200 | style="text-align:right;"| 2,988,400 | style="text-align:right;"| 45.8 | [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius) | Lietuva |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Luxembourg](/wiki/Luxembourg) | style="text-align:right;"| 2,586 | style="text-align:right;"| 448,569 | style="text-align:right;"| 173.5 | [Luxembourg](/wiki/Luxembourg_(city)) | Lëtzebuerg/Luxemburg/Luxembourg |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [(Former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia](/wiki/Republic_of_Macedonia) | style="text-align:right;"| 25,713 | style="text-align:right;"| 2,054,800 | style="text-align:right;"| 81.1 | [Skopje](/wiki/Skopje) | Makedonija |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Malta](/wiki/Malta) | style="text-align:right;"| 316 | style="text-align:right;"| 397,499 | style="text-align:right;"| 1,257.9 | [Valletta](/wiki/Valletta) | Malta |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Moldova](/wiki/Moldova) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 33,843 | style="text-align:right;"| 4,434,547 | style="text-align:right;"| 131.0 | [Chișinău](/wiki/Chișinău) | Moldova |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Monaco](/wiki/Monaco) | style="text-align:right;"| 1.95 | style="text-align:right;"| 31,987 | style="text-align:right;"| 16,403.6 | [Monaco](/wiki/Monaco) | Monaco |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Montenegro](/wiki/Montenegro) | style="text-align:right;"| 13,812 | style="text-align:right;"| 616,258 | style="text-align:right;"| 44.6 | [Podgorica](/wiki/Podgorica) | Crna Gora |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Netherlands](/wiki/Netherlands) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 41,526 | style="text-align:right;"| 16,902,103 | style="text-align:right;"| 393.0 | [Amsterdam](/wiki/Amsterdam) | Nederland |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Norway](/wiki/Norway) | style="text-align:right;"| 385,178 | style="text-align:right;"| 5,018,836 | style="text-align:right;"| 15.5 | [Oslo](/wiki/Oslo) | Norge/Noreg |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Poland](/wiki/Poland) | style="text-align:right;"| 312,685 | style="text-align:right;"| 38,625,478 | style="text-align:right;"| 123.5 | [Warsaw](/wiki/Warsaw) | Polska |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 91,568 | style="text-align:right;"| 10,409,995 | style="text-align:right;"| 110.1 | [Lisbon](/wiki/Lisbon) | Portugal |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Romania](/wiki/Romania) | style="text-align:right;"| 238,391 | style="text-align:right;"| 21,698,181 | style="text-align:right;"| 91.0 | [Bucharest](/wiki/Bucharest) | România |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Russia](/wiki/Russia) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 17,075,400 | style="text-align:right;"| 143,975,923 | style="text-align:right;"| 8.3 | [Moscow](/wiki/Moscow) | Rossiya |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [San Marino](/wiki/San_Marino) | style="text-align:right;"| 61 | style="text-align:right;"| 27,730 | style="text-align:right;"| 454.6 | [San Marino](/wiki/San_Marino,_San_Marino) | San Marino |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Serbia](/wiki/Serbia) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 88,361 | style="text-align:right;"| 7,120,666 | style="text-align:right;"| 91.9 | [Belgrade](/wiki/Belgrade) | Srbija |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Slovakia](/wiki/Slovakia) | style="text-align:right;"| 48,845 | style="text-align:right;"| 5,422,366 | style="text-align:right;"| 111.0 | [Bratislava](/wiki/Bratislava) | Slovensko |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Slovenia](/wiki/Slovenia) | style="text-align:right;"| 20,273 | style="text-align:right;"| 2,050,189 | style="text-align:right;"| 101 | [Ljubljana](/wiki/Ljubljana) | Slovenija |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Spain](/wiki/Spain) | style="text-align:right;"| 504,851 | style="text-align:right;"| 47,059,533 | style="text-align:right;"| 93.2 | [Madrid](/wiki/Madrid) | España |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Sweden](/wiki/Sweden) | style="text-align:right;"| 449,964 | style="text-align:right;"| 9,090,113 | style="text-align:right;"| 19.7 | [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm) | Sverige |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland) | style="text-align:right;"| 41,290 | style="text-align:right;"| 7,507,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 176.8 | [Bern](/wiki/Bern) | Schweiz/Suisse/Svizzera/Svizra |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 783,562 | style="text-align:right;"| 77,695,904 | style="text-align:right;"| 101 | [Ankara](/wiki/Ankara) | Türkiye |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine) | style="text-align:right;"| 603,700 | style="text-align:right;"| 45,360,000 | style="text-align:right;"| 75.1 | [Kiev](/wiki/Kiev) | Ukrajina |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom) | style="text-align:right;"| 244,820 | style="text-align:right;"| 64,105,654 | style="text-align:right;"| 244.2 | [London](/wiki/London) | United Kingdom |- | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | style="text-align:center;"| [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City) | style="text-align:right;"| 0.44 | style="text-align:right;"| 900 | style="text-align:right;"| 2,045.5 | [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City) | Città del Vaticano/Civitas Vaticana |- class="sortbottom" style="font-weight:bold;" | colspan="3" | Total | style="text-align:right;"| 10,180,000[Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 742,000,000[Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | style="text-align:right;"| 70 |}

Within the above-mentioned states are several [de facto](/wiki/De_facto) independent countries with [limited to no international recognition](/wiki/List_of_states_with_limited_recognition). None of them are members of the UN:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Flag**](/wiki/Flag) | [**Arms**](/wiki/Coat_of_arms) | **Name** | [**Area**](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_area) **(km²)** | [**Population**](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population) **(1 July 2002 est.)** | [**Population density**](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_density) **(per km²)** | [**Capital**](/wiki/Capital_(political)) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Abkhazia](/wiki/Abkhazia) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | 8,432 | 216,000 | 29 | [Sukhumi](/wiki/Sukhumi) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Kosovo](/wiki/Kosovo) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | 10,887 | 1,804,838[[184]](#cite_note-184) | 220 | [Pristina](/wiki/Pristina) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Nagorno-Karabakh](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | 11,458 | 138,800 | 12 | [Stepanakert](/wiki/Stepanakert) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Northern Cyprus](/wiki/Northern_Cyprus) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | 3,355 | 265,100 | 78 | [Nicosia](/wiki/Nicosia) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [South Ossetia](/wiki/South_Ossetia) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | 3,900 | 70,000 | 18 | [Tskhinvali](/wiki/Tskhinvali) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Transnistria](/wiki/Transnistria) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) | 4,163 | 537,000 | 133 | [Tiraspol](/wiki/Tiraspol) |

Several dependencies and similar territories with broad autonomy are also found within or in close proximity to Europe. This includes Åland (a [region of Finland](/wiki/Region_of_Finland)), two constituent countries of the Kingdom Denmark (other than Denmark itself), three [Crown dependencies](/wiki/Crown_dependencies), and two [British Overseas Territories](/wiki/British_Overseas_Territories). Not included are the three [countries of the United Kingdom](/wiki/Countries_of_the_United_Kingdom) with devolved powers and the two [Autonomous Regions of Portugal](/wiki/Autonomous_Regions_of_Portugal), which despite having a unique degree of autonomy, are not largely self-governing in matters other than international affairs. Areas with little more than a unique tax status, such as [Svalbard](/wiki/Svalbard), [Heligoland](/wiki/Heligoland) and the [Canary Islands](/wiki/Canary_Islands), are also not included for this reason.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Flag**](/wiki/Flag) | [**Arms**](/wiki/Coat_of_arms) | **Name** | [**Area**](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_area) **(km²)** | [**Population**](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population) **(1 July 2002 est.)** | [**Population density**](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_density) **(per km²)** | [**Capital**](/wiki/Capital_(political)) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia](/wiki/Akrotiri_and_Dhekelia) (UK) | 254 | 15,000 | 59.1 | [Episkopi Cantonment](/wiki/Episkopi_Cantonment) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Åland](/wiki/Åland) (Finland) | 13,517 | 26,008 | 16.8 | [Mariehamn](/wiki/Mariehamn) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Bailiwick of Guernsey](/wiki/Bailiwick_of_Guernsey) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) (UK) | 78 | 64,587 | 828.0 | [St. Peter Port](/wiki/St._Peter_Port) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Bailiwick of Jersey](/wiki/Jersey) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) (UK) | 116 | 89,775 | 773.9 | [Saint Helier](/wiki/Saint_Helier) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Faroe Islands](/wiki/Faroe_Islands) (Denmark) | 1,399 | 46,011 | 32.9 | [Tórshavn](/wiki/Tórshavn) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Gibraltar](/wiki/Gibraltar) (UK) | 5.9 | 27,714 | 4,697.3 | [Gibraltar](/wiki/Gibraltar) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Greenland](/wiki/Greenland) (Denmark) | 2,166,086 | 55,847 | 0.0028 | [Nuuk](/wiki/Nuuk) |
| [Template:Flagicon](/wiki/Template:Flagicon) | [Template:Coat of arms](/wiki/Template:Coat_of_arms) | [Isle of Man](/wiki/Isle_of_Man) [Template:Cref2](/wiki/Template:Cref2) (UK) | 572 | 73,873 | 129.1 | [Douglas](/wiki/Douglas,_Isle_of_Man) |

### Integration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Supranational European Bodies](/wiki/Template:Supranational_European_Bodies) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) European integration is the process of political, legal, economic (and in some cases social and cultural) integration of states wholly or partially in Europe. While the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe)—which includes almost all European states—has promoted pan-Europe cooperation, the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) has been the focus of economic integration on the continent. More recently, the [Eurasian Economic Union](/wiki/Eurasian_Economic_Union) has been established as a counterpart comprising former Soviet states.

28 European states are members of the politico-economic European Union, 26 of the border-free [Schengen Area](/wiki/Schengen_Area) and 19 of the monetary union [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone). Among the smaller European organizations are the [Nordic Council](/wiki/Nordic_Council), the [Benelux](/wiki/Benelux), the [Baltic Assembly](/wiki/Baltic_Assembly) and the [Visegrád Group](/wiki/Visegrád_Group).

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[thumb|right|200px|European and bordering nations by](/wiki/File:Europe-GDP-PPP-per-capita-map.png) [GDP](/wiki/GDP) (PPP) per capita in 2015 [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

As a continent, the economy of Europe is currently the largest on Earth and it is the richest region as measured by assets under management with over $32.7 trillion compared to North America's $27.1 trillion in 2008.[[185]](#cite_note-185) In 2009 Europe remained the wealthiest region. Its $37.1 trillion in assets under management represented one-third of the world's wealth. It was one of several regions where wealth surpassed its precrisis year-end peak.[[186]](#cite_note-186) As with other continents, Europe has a large variation of wealth among its countries. The richer states tend to be in the [West](/wiki/Western_Europe); some of the [Central and Eastern European](/wiki/Central_and_Eastern_Europe) economies are still emerging from the [collapse of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Collapse_of_the_Soviet_Union) and [Yugoslavia](/wiki/SFR_Yugoslavia).

The European Union, a political entity composed of 28 European states, comprises the [largest single economic area](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP) in the world. 18 EU [countries](/wiki/Eurozone) share the [euro](/wiki/Euro) as a common currency. Five European countries rank in the top ten of the world's largest [national economies in GDP (PPP)](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)). This includes (ranks according to the [CIA](/wiki/The_CIA_World_Factbook)): Germany (5), the UK (6), Russia (7), France (8), and Italy (10).[[187]](#cite_note-187) There is huge disparity between many European countries in terms of their income. The richest in terms of GDP per capita is Monaco with its US$172,676 per capita (2009) and the poorest is Moldova with its GDP per capita of US$1,631 (2010).[[188]](#cite_note-188) [Monaco](/wiki/Monaco) is the richest country in terms of GDP per capita in the world according to the World Bank report.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Country** | [**GDP**](/wiki/List_of_IMF_ranked_countries_by_past_and_projected_GDP_(nominal)) **(nominal, 2014) millions of** [**USD**](/wiki/International_dollar) |
| 1 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 3,874,437 |
| 2 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 2,950,039 |
| 3 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 2,833,687 |
| 4 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 2,147,744 |
| 5 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 1,860,598 |
| 6 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 1,406,538 |
| 7 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 880,716 |
| 8 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 799,535 |
| 9 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 703,852 |
| 10 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 570,591 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Country** | [**GDP**](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_past_and_projected_GDP_(PPP)) **(PPP, 2014) millions of** [**USD**](/wiki/International_dollar) |
| 1 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 3,748,094 |
| 2 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 3,745,157 |
| 3 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 2,591,170 |
| 4 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 2,569,218 |
| 5 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 2,135,359 |
| 6 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 1,572,112 |
| 7 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 1,514,859 |
| 8 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 959,845 |
| 9 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 808,796 |
| 10 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 483,331 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Country** | [**GDP**](/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_in_Europe_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita) **(PPP per capita, 2014) in** [**USD**](/wiki/International_dollar) |
| 1 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 64 893 |
| 2 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 47 804 |
| 3 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 47 130 |
| 4 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 46 164 |
| 5 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 45 615 |
| 6 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 45 143 |
| 7 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 44 862 |
| 8 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 43 392 |
| 9 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 42 725 |
| 10 | align=left|[Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 39 754 |

[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

Industrial growth (1760–1945)

Capitalism has been dominant in the Western world since the end of feudalism.[[189]](#cite_note-189) From Britain, it gradually spread throughout Europe.[[190]](#cite_note-190) The [Industrial Revolution](/wiki/Industrial_Revolution) started in Europe, specifically the United Kingdom in the late 18th century,[[191]](#cite_note-191) and the 19th century saw Western Europe industrialise. Economies were disrupted by World War I but by the beginning of World War II they had recovered and were having to compete with the growing economic strength of the United States. World War II, again, damaged much of Europe's industries.

Cold War (1945–1991)

[thumb|right|Fall of the](/wiki/File:Thefalloftheberlinwall1989.JPG) [Berlin Wall](/wiki/Berlin_Wall) in 1989.

After World War II the economy of the UK was in a state of ruin,[[192]](#cite_note-192) and continued to suffer relative economic decline in the following decades.[[193]](#cite_note-193) Italy was also in a poor economic condition but regained a high level of growth by the 1950s. West Germany [recovered quickly](/wiki/Wirtschaftswunder) and had doubled production from pre-war levels by the 1950s.[[194]](#cite_note-194) France also staged a remarkable comeback enjoying rapid growth and modernisation; later on Spain, under the leadership of [Franco](/wiki/Francisco_Franco), also recovered, and the nation recorded huge unprecedented economic growth beginning in the 1960s in what is called the [Spanish miracle](/wiki/Spanish_miracle).[[195]](#cite_note-195) The majority of [Central and Eastern European](/wiki/Central_and_Eastern_Europe) states came under the control of the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) and thus were members of the [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance](/wiki/Council_for_Mutual_Economic_Assistance) (COMECON).[[196]](#cite_note-196) The states which retained a [free-market](/wiki/Free-market) system were given a large amount of aid by the United States under the [Marshall Plan](/wiki/Marshall_Plan). [[197]](#cite_note-197) The western states moved to link their economies together, providing the basis for the EU and increasing cross border trade. This helped them to enjoy rapidly improving economies, while those states in COMECON were struggling in a large part due to the cost of the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War). Until 1990, the [European Community](/wiki/European_Community) was expanded from 6 founding members to 12. The emphasis placed on resurrecting the West German economy led to it overtaking the UK as Europe's largest economy.

Reunification (1991–2016)

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Carte_zone_euro.svg) [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) (blue color)

With the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in 1991, the post-socialist states began free market reforms: Poland, Hungary, and [Slovenia](/wiki/Slovenia) adopted them reasonably quickly, while [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine) and Russia are still in the process of doing so.

After [East](/wiki/East_Germany) and West Germany were reunited in 1990, the economy of West Germany struggled as it had to support and largely rebuild the infrastructure of East Germany. By the millennium change, the EU dominated the economy of Europe comprising the five largest European economies of the time namely Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Spain. In 1999, 12 of the 15 members of the EU joined the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) replacing their former national currencies by the common euro. The three who chose to remain outside the Eurozone were: the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Sweden. The European Union is now the largest economy in the world.[[198]](#cite_note-198)[Template:Better source](/wiki/Template:Better_source)

Figures released by [Eurostat](/wiki/Eurostat) in 2009 confirmed that the Eurozone had gone into [recession](/wiki/Late_2000s_recession_in_Europe) in 2008.[[199]](#cite_note-199) It impacted much of the region.[[200]](#cite_note-200) In 2010, fears of a [sovereign debt crisis](/wiki/European_sovereign-debt_crisis)[[201]](#cite_note-201) developed concerning some countries in Europe, especially Greece, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal.[[202]](#cite_note-202) As a result, measures were taken, especially for Greece, by the leading countries of the Eurozone.[[203]](#cite_note-203) The [EU-27](/wiki/EU-27) unemployment rate was 10.3% in 2012.[[204]](#cite_note-204) For those aged 15–24 it was 22.4%.[[204]](#cite_note-204)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Demographics_of_Europe.svg)[Population growth](/wiki/Population_growth) in and around Europe in 2010[[205]](#cite_note-205)

Since the [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance), Europe has had a major influence in culture, economics and social movements in the world. The most significant [inventions](/wiki/Invention) had their origins in the Western world, primarily Europe and the United States.[[206]](#cite_note-206)[[207]](#cite_note-207) Approximately 70 million Europeans died through war, violence and famine between 1914 and 1945.[[208]](#cite_note-208) Some current and past issues in European demographics have included [religious emigration](/wiki/Emigration), [race relations](/wiki/Race_relations), [economic immigration](/wiki/Economic_migrant), a declining [birth rate](/wiki/Birth_rate) and an [ageing population](/wiki/Ageing_population).

In some countries, such as [Ireland](/wiki/Republic_of_Ireland) and Poland, access to [abortion](/wiki/Abortion) is limited. It remains illegal on the island of [Malta](/wiki/Malta). Furthermore, three European countries (the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland) and the [Autonomous Community](/wiki/Autonomous_Community) of [Andalusia](/wiki/Andalusia) (Spain)[[209]](#cite_note-209)[[210]](#cite_note-210) have allowed a limited form of [voluntary euthanasia](/wiki/Voluntary_euthanasia) for some terminally ill people.

In 2005, the population of Europe was estimated to be 731 million according to the United Nations,[[211]](#cite_note-211) which is slightly more than one-ninth of the world's population. A century ago, Europe had nearly a quarter of the [world's population](/wiki/World_population).[[212]](#cite_note-212) The population of Europe has grown in the past century, but in other areas of the world (in particular Africa and Asia) the population has grown far more quickly.[[211]](#cite_note-211) Among the continents, Europe has a relatively high [population density](/wiki/Population_density), second only to Asia. The most densely populated country in Europe (and in the world) is [Monaco](/wiki/Monaco). Pan and Pfeil (2004) count 87 distinct "peoples of Europe", of which 33 form the majority population in at least one sovereign state, while the remaining 54 constitute [ethnic minorities](/wiki/Ethnic_minority).[[213]](#cite_note-213)According to UN population projection, Europe's population may fall to about 7% of world population by 2050, or 653 million people (medium variant, 556 to 777 million in low and high variants, respectively).[[211]](#cite_note-211) Within this context, significant disparities exist between regions in relation to [fertility rates](/wiki/Human_overpopulation). The average number of [children per female](/wiki/List_of_countries_and_territories_by_fertility_rate) of child bearing age is 1.52.[[214]](#cite_note-214) According to some sources,[[215]](#cite_note-215) this rate is higher among [Muslims in Europe](/wiki/Islam_in_Europe). The UN predicts a steady [population decline](/wiki/Population_decline) in [Central and Eastern Europe](/wiki/Central_and_Eastern_Europe) as a result of emigration and low birth rates.[[216]](#cite_note-216) [thumb|left|Galician bagpipers or](/wiki/File:Gaiteiros_em_romaria_galega.jpg) [*gaiteiros*](/wiki/Galician_gaita) in Spain

Europe is home to the highest number of migrants of all global regions at 70.6 million people, the [IOM's](/wiki/International_Organisation_for_Migration) report said.[[217]](#cite_note-217) In 2005, the EU had an overall net gain from [immigration](/wiki/Immigration) of 1.8 million people. This accounted for almost 85% of Europe's total [population growth](/wiki/Population_growth).[[218]](#cite_note-218) The European Union plans to open the job centres for legal migrant workers from Africa.[[219]](#cite_note-219)[[220]](#cite_note-220)[Template:Update after](/wiki/Template:Update_after) In 2008, 696,000 persons were given citizenship of an EU27 member state, a decrease from 707,000 the previous year.[[221]](#cite_note-221) [Emigration from Europe](/wiki/Emigration_from_Europe) began with Spanish and Portuguese settlers in the 16th century,[[222]](#cite_note-222)[[223]](#cite_note-223) and French and English settlers in the 17th century.[[224]](#cite_note-224) But numbers remained relatively small until waves of mass emigration in the 19th century, when millions of poor families left Europe.[[225]](#cite_note-225) Today, [large populations of European descent](/wiki/European_diaspora) are found on every continent. European ancestry predominates in North America, and to a lesser degree in South America (particularly in [Uruguay](/wiki/Uruguay), [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina), [Chile](/wiki/Chile) and [Brazil](/wiki/Brazil), while most of the other [Latin American](/wiki/Latin_America) countries also have a considerable [population of European origins](/wiki/White_Latin_American)). [Australia](/wiki/Australia) and [New Zealand](/wiki/New_Zealand) have large European derived populations. Africa has no countries with European-derived majorities (or with the exception of [Cape Verde](/wiki/Cape_Verde) and probably [São Tomé and Príncipe](/wiki/São_Tomé_and_Príncipe), depending on context), but there are significant minorities, such as the [White South Africans](/wiki/White_South_African). In Asia, European-derived populations predominate in [Northern Asia](/wiki/Northern_Asia) (specifically [Russians](/wiki/Russians)), some parts of Northern [Kazakhstan](/wiki/Kazakhstan) and [Israel](/wiki/Israel).[[226]](#cite_note-226)

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Overview map of the distribution of major European languages](/wiki/File:Language_Families_in_Europe_(en).svg)

European languages mostly fall within three [Indo-European](/wiki/Indo-European_languages) language groups: the [Romance languages](/wiki/Romance_languages), derived from the [Latin](/wiki/Latin_language) of the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire); the [Germanic languages](/wiki/Germanic_languages), whose ancestor language came from southern Scandinavia; and the [Slavic languages](/wiki/Slavic_languages).[[176]](#cite_note-176) Slavic languages are most spoken by the number of native speakers in Europe, they are spoken in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. Romance languages are spoken primarily in south-western Europe as well as in [Romania](/wiki/Romania) and [Moldova](/wiki/Moldova), in Central or Eastern Europe. Germanic languages are spoken in Northern Europe, the British Isles and some parts of [Central Europe](/wiki/Central_Europe).[[176]](#cite_note-176) Many other languages outside the three main groups exist in Europe. Other Indo-European languages include the [Baltic](/wiki/Baltic_languages) group (that is, [Latvian](/wiki/Latvian_language) and [Lithuanian](/wiki/Lithuanian_language)), the [Celtic](/wiki/Celtic_languages) group (that is, [Irish](/wiki/Irish_language), [Scottish Gaelic](/wiki/Scots_Gaelic_language), [Manx](/wiki/Manx_language), [Welsh](/wiki/Welsh_language), [Cornish](/wiki/Cornish_language), and [Breton](/wiki/Breton_language)[[176]](#cite_note-176)), [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language), [Armenian](/wiki/Armenian_language), and [Albanian](/wiki/Albanian_language). In addition, a distinct group of [Uralic languages](/wiki/Uralic_languages) ([Estonian](/wiki/Estonian_language), [Finnish](/wiki/Finnish_language), and [Hungarian](/wiki/Hungarian_language)) is spoken mainly in [Estonia](/wiki/Estonia), [Finland](/wiki/Finland), and [Hungary](/wiki/Hungary), while [Kartvelian languages](/wiki/Kartvelian_languages) ([Georgian](/wiki/Georgian_language), [Mingrelian](/wiki/Mingrelian_language), and [Svan](/wiki/Svan_language)), are spoken primarily in [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)), and two other language families reside in the North Caucasus (termed [Northeast Caucasian](/wiki/Northeast_Caucasian_languages), most notably including [Chechen](/wiki/Chechen_language), [Avar](/wiki/Avar_language) and [Lezgin](/wiki/Lezgian_language) and [Northwest Caucasian](/wiki/Northwest_Caucasian_languages), notably including [Adyghe](/wiki/Adyghe_language)). [Maltese](/wiki/Maltese_language) is the only [Semitic language](/wiki/Semitic_language) that is official within the EU, while [Basque](/wiki/Basque_language) is the only European [language isolate](/wiki/Language_isolate). [Turkic languages](/wiki/Turkic_languages) include [Azerbaijani](/wiki/Azerbaijani_language) and [Turkish](/wiki/Turkish_language), in addition to the [languages of minority nations](/wiki/Languages_of_Russia) in Russia.

Multilingualism and the protection of regional and minority languages are recognised political goals in Europe today. The [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe) [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](/wiki/Framework_Convention_for_the_Protection_of_National_Minorities) and the Council of Europe's [European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages](/wiki/European_Charter_for_Regional_or_Minority_Languages) set up a legal framework for language rights in Europe.

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|Religions in Europe.](/wiki/File:Europe_religion_map_en.png)

[Historically](/wiki/History_of_religion), religion in Europe has been a major influence on [European art](/wiki/Western_art_history), [culture](/wiki/Culture_of_Europe), [philosophy](/wiki/Western_philosophy) and [law](/wiki/European_Union_law). The largest religion in Europe is [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity), with 76.2% of Europeans considering themselves [Christians](/wiki/Christian),[[227]](#cite_note-227) including [Catholic](/wiki/Catholic), [Eastern Orthodox](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) and various [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) denominations (especially historically state-supported European ones such as [Lutheranism](/wiki/Lutheranism), [Anglicanism](/wiki/Anglicanism) and the [Reformed faith](/wiki/Reformed_faith)). The notion of "Europe" and the "[Western World](/wiki/Western_World)" has been intimately connected with the concept of "[Christianity and Christendom](/wiki/Christendom)" many even attribute Christianity for being the link that created a unified [European identity](/wiki/European_identity).[[228]](#cite_note-228)[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Petersdom_von_Engelsburg_gesehen.jpg)[St. Peter's Basilica](/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica) in [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City), the largest church in Europe [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity), including the Roman [Catholic Church](/wiki/Catholic_Church),[[229]](#cite_note-229)[[230]](#cite_note-230) has played a prominent role in the shaping of [Western civilization](/wiki/Western_civilization) since at least the 4th century.[[231]](#cite_note-231)[[232]](#cite_note-232)[[233]](#cite_note-233)[[234]](#cite_note-234) and for at least a millennium and a half, Europe has been nearly equivalent to [Christian culture](/wiki/Christian_culture), even though the religion was inherited from the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East). [Christian culture](/wiki/Christian_culture) was the predominant force in [western civilization](/wiki/Western_civilization), guiding the course of [philosophy](/wiki/Philosophy), [art](/wiki/Art), and [science](/wiki/Science).[[235]](#cite_note-235)[[236]](#cite_note-236) The second most popular religion is [Islam](/wiki/Islam) (6%)[[237]](#cite_note-237) concentrated mainly in the Balkans and eastern Europe ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina), [Albania](/wiki/Albania), [Kosovo](/wiki/Kosovo), [Kazakhstan](/wiki/Kazakhstan), [North Cyprus](/wiki/TRNC), [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey), [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan), [North Caucasus](/wiki/North_Caucasus), and the [Volga-Ural region](/wiki/Idel-Ural)). Other religions, including Judaism, [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism), and [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism) are minority religions (though Tibetan Buddhism is the majority religion of Russia's [Republic of Kalmykia](/wiki/Republic_of_Kalmykia)). The 20th century saw the revival of [Neopaganism](/wiki/Neopaganism) through movements such as [Wicca](/wiki/Wicca) and [Druidry](/wiki/Druidry).

Europe has become a relatively [secular](/wiki/Secular) continent, with an increasing number and proportion of [irreligious](/wiki/Irreligion), [atheist](/wiki/Atheism) and [agnostic](/wiki/Agnosticism) people which make up about 18.2% of Europeans population,[[238]](#cite_note-238) actually the largest secular in the [Western world](/wiki/Western_religion). There are a particularly high number of self-described non-religious people in the Czech Republic, [Estonia](/wiki/Estonia), Sweden, former East Germany, and France.[[239]](#cite_note-239)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Pierre-Auguste_Renoir,_Le_Moulin_de_la_Galette.jpg)[*Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette*](/wiki/Bal_du_moulin_de_la_Galette), 1876, by Pierre-Auguste Renoir The culture of Europe can be described as a series of overlapping cultures; cultural mixes exist across the continent. Scholar Andreas Kaplan describes Europe as "embracing maximum cultural diversity at minimal geographical distances".[[240]](#cite_note-240) There are cultural [innovations](/wiki/Innovation) and movements, sometimes at odds with each other. Thus, the question of "common culture" or "common values" is complex.

According to historian [Hilaire Belloc](/wiki/Hilaire_Belloc), for several centuries the peoples of Europe based their self-identification on the remaining traces of the [Roman culture](/wiki/Culture_of_ancient_Rome) and on the concept of [Christendom](/wiki/Christendom), because many European-wide military alliances were of religious nature: the [Crusades](/wiki/Crusades) (1095–1291), the [Reconquista](/wiki/Reconquista) (711–1492), the [Battle of Lepanto](/wiki/Battle_of_Lepanto) (1571).[[241]](#cite_note-241)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Col-begin](/wiki/Template:Col-begin) [Template:Col-3](/wiki/Template:Col-3)

Politics

* [Eurodistrict](/wiki/Eurodistrict)
* [Euroregion](/wiki/Euroregion)
* [Flags of Europe](/wiki/Flags_of_Europe)
* [List of sovereign states by date of formation](/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_by_date_of_formation)
* [Names of European cities in different languages](/wiki/Names_of_European_cities_in_different_languages)
* [OSCE countries statistics](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe_statistics)
* [European Union as a potential superpower](/wiki/European_Union_as_a_potential_superpower)

[Template:Col-3](/wiki/Template:Col-3)

Demographics

* [Area and population of European countries](/wiki/Area_and_population_of_European_countries)
* [European Union statistics](/wiki/European_Union_statistics)
* [Largest cities of the EU](/wiki/Largest_cities_of_the_European_Union_by_population_within_city_limits)
* [Largest urban areas of the European Union](/wiki/Largest_urban_areas_of_the_European_Union)
* [List of cities in Europe](/wiki/List_of_cities_in_Europe)
* [List of metropolitan areas in Europe](/wiki/List_of_metropolitan_areas_in_Europe)
* [List of villages in Europe](/wiki/List_of_villages_in_Europe)
* [Pan-European identity](/wiki/Pan-European_identity)

[Template:Col-3](/wiki/Template:Col-3)

Economics

* [Economy of the European Union](/wiki/Economy_of_the_European_Union)
* [Financial and social rankings of European countries](/wiki/Financial_and_social_rankings_of_European_countries)
* [Healthcare in Europe](/wiki/Healthcare_in_Europe)
* [Telecommunications in Europe](/wiki/Telecommunications_in_Europe)
* [List of European television stations](/wiki/List_of_European_television_stations)
* [List of European countries by GDP (nominal)](/wiki/List_of_European_countries_by_GDP_(nominal))

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## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist) [Template:Refbegin](/wiki/Template:Refbegin) [Template:Refend](/wiki/Template:Refend)

## Sources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

* [National Geographic Society](/wiki/National_Geographic_Society) (2005). *National Geographic Visual History of the World*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society. ISBN 0-7922-3695-5.
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Council of Europe](http://www.coe.int/)
* [European Union](http://europa.eu/)
* [The Columbia Gazetteer of the World Online](http://www.columbiagazetteer.org/) [Columbia University Press](/wiki/Columbia_University_Press)
* ["Introducing Europe"](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/europe) from [Lonely Planet](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/) Travel Guides and Information

**Historical Maps**

* [Borders in Europe 3000BC to the present](http://geacron.com/home-en/?&sid=GeaCron747702) Geacron [Historical atlas](/wiki/Historical_atlas)
* [Online history of Europe in 21 maps](http://www.euratlas.net/history/europe/index.html)

[Template:Navboxes](/wiki/Template:Navboxes) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[Category:Europe](/wiki/Category:Europe) [Category:Continents](/wiki/Category:Continents)