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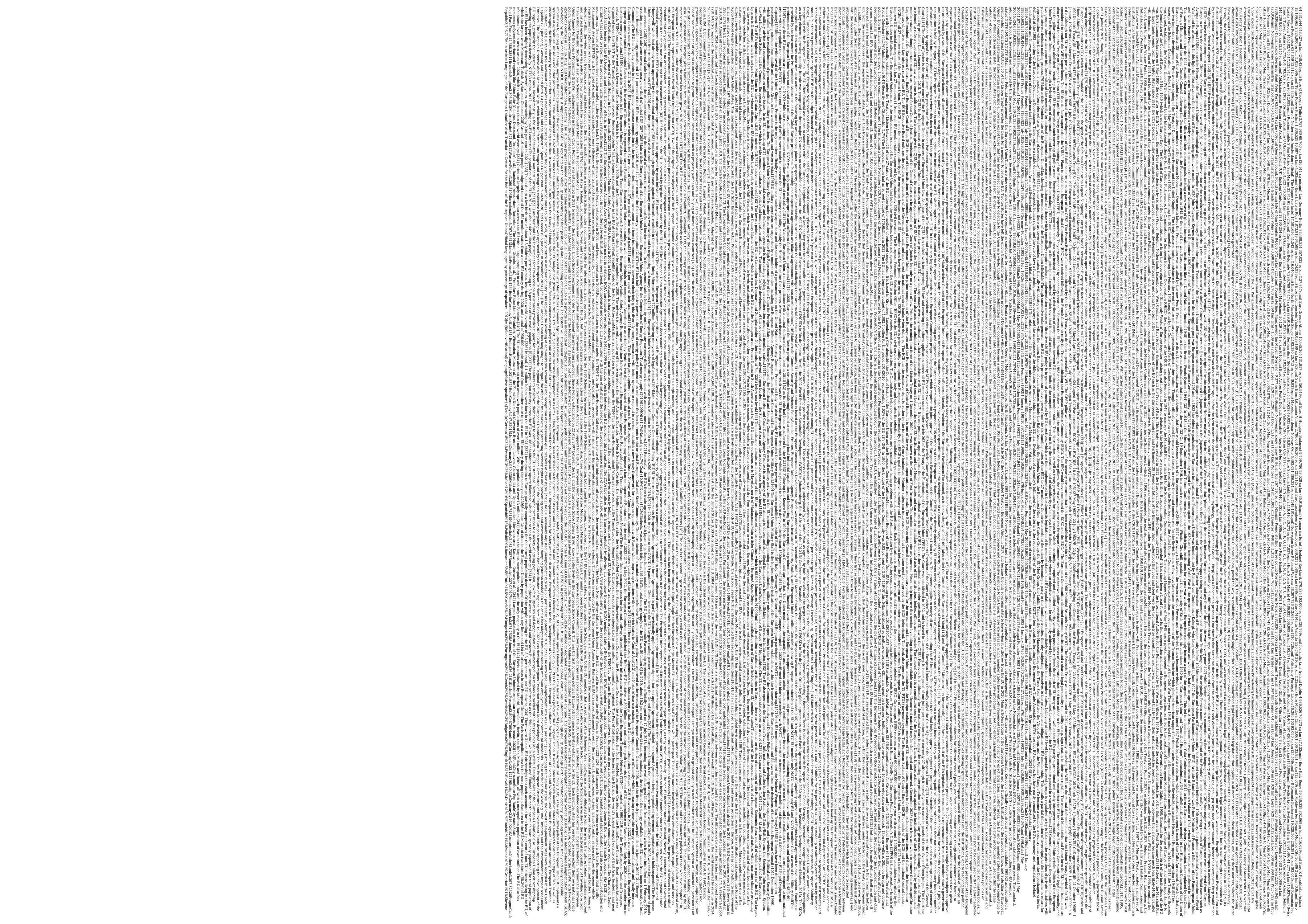
The European Union (EU) is a unique economic and political union between 27 European countries. The EU that we know today has its roots in several treaties signed in the aftermath of the Second World War. The first step was to foster economic cooperation, based on the idea that countries that trade with one another become economically interdependent and so are more likely to avoid conflict. The result was the European Economic Community, created in 1958 with the initial aim of increasing economic cooperation between countries. Since then, the EU has grown in size and scope, adding more and more countries and extending its remit to new areas such as the environment, consumer protection, education, and foreign policy. The EU's main economic engine has always been the common market. It enables goods, services, money and people to move freely between the member states. Tariffs and other barriers to trade have been removed, and a common currency, the euro, has been introduced in 19 countries (see map below). The EU also has its own currency, the euro, which is used by 19 of its 27 member states. The EU also has its own passport, which allows citizens to travel freely within the EU without needing to show their passports at borders. The EU also has its own parliament, which is elected every five years by the citizens of the member states. The parliament has the power to pass laws and to hold the other institutions to account. The EU also has its own court, which interprets EU law and makes sure that it is applied fairly and consistently in all member states. The EU also has its own central bank, which manages the euro and sets interest rates for the eurozone. The EU also has its own foreign policy, which aims to promote peace and stability in the world. The EU also has its own development policy, which aims to reduce poverty and inequality in the world. The EU also has its own environmental policy, which aims to protect the environment and combat climate change. The EU also has its own consumer protection policy, which aims to protect the rights of consumers. The EU also has its own education policy, which aims to promote lifelong learning and mobility among students and teachers. The EU also has its own research policy, which aims to promote innovation and competitiveness in the EU. The EU also has its own cultural policy, which aims to promote the diversity and richness of European culture. The EU also has its own enlargement policy, which aims to extend the EU to other countries that meet the criteria for membership. The EU also has its own neighbourhood policy, which aims to promote stability and prosperity in the countries that are close to the EU but not members of it. The EU also has its own trade policy, which aims to promote free and fair trade between the EU and the rest of