



**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Do you actually know your**

**rights?**

**EU4U ?**

**2B or not 2B ???**



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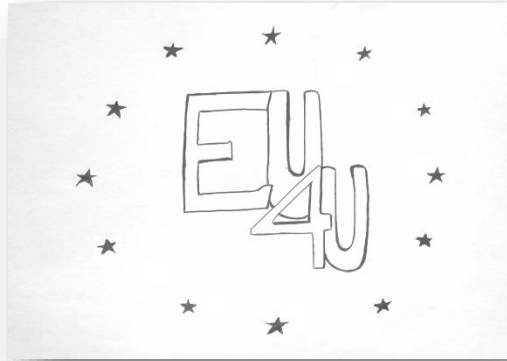
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# Joining the EU – the impact on our lives



Joining the European Union (EU) is a guarantee for great changes, for the country as well as for the people. The EU offers many perks for its members, such as the freedom of mobility in member countries and the opportunity to adapt euro as their currency. However, they do not come without responsibilities and obligations to the union. To offer our readers different perspectives, we have interviewed residents of some of the most recent EU member countries – Romania (2007), Bulgaria (2007) and Croatia (2013).

## **What were the biggest changes in your country after joining the European Union (EU)?**

**Alexandra, Romania:** When Romania joined the EU, travelling became much easier and was accessible for everyone. The country received more funding from the EU. In order to become a candidate country, Romania had to improve its infrastructure, among other things, which was also a positive outcome.

**Mia, Croatia:** Croatia had to adapt the legal system of the EU and adjust some of the laws. Joining the EU created more opportunities for small and medium establishments and youth networks. New roads were built and education received better funding.

**Maria, Bulgaria:** The general public in Bulgaria was pretty sceptical when we first joined but it's

getting better. As to the changes it brought – the infrastructure has been improved, the freedom of mobility has granted many advantages for the people. However, the prices have also grown and a lot of facilities had to be closed as they did not match the EU standards.

## **How did joining the EU affect you personally?**

**Alexandra, Romania:** As I said, it became easier to travel. I could now participate in more exchange programs and projects like this one [*Erasmus+ „EU with you“*]. I could also go on photography trainings abroad, financed by the EU commission.

**Mia, Croatia:** For me it created more opportunities for personal development. It made student exchanges and projects more accessible.

**Maria, Bulgaria:** When Bulgaria joined the EU, I was still in 7th grade. I didn't benefit from the freedom of mobility until 2015 but many of my friends have left to study abroad so now it will be easy to visit them.

## **Do you like being in the EU? Why or why not?**

**Alexandra, Romania:** Yes, definitely, we have more opportunities now.

**Mia, Croatia:** Yes. It's still early days so we can't really feel the greater impact yet but some smaller changes can already be noticed. Our country needs to continue developing and the funding from the EU has been very helpful so far.

**Maria, Bulgaria:** Yes, I definitely like it; I have more opportunities travel-wise and can gain more experience by working abroad. Unlike many Bulgarians, though, I would certainly want to return home if I went to live or work abroad. I love my country and I won't give up on it.

# To be or not to be (in the EU)?



*What happens if a country exits the EU? That question has certainly crossed the minds of member countries at some point. Apparently nobody has tried to answer it yet.*

Every member country of the European Union has the right to withdraw from the union if they want to, but nobody has ever left it. An exception to this is Greenland (as a part of the Danish Realm) who withdrew from the European Economic Community in 1985. However, the United Kingdom had the idea even earlier and held a referendum to leave the EEC in 1975 but as 67.2% of the public voted against, they did not leave. Now the issue about leaving has arisen once again, and while waiting for the referendum in 2017, the UK has held numerous opinions, most of which serve to show that the majority of the public prefers to quit the union.

Because no country has yet tried to exit the EU today, it is hard to predict the consequences. It is possible for the state to prosper, since it will no longer pay taxes to the union, and it could negotiate trade agreements with non-EU states, and therefore has its place in the single market. As the freedom of mobility would no longer apply to the country, it would be less accessible for immigrants. The economy could rise as the

country would no longer have to pay membership fees for the EU.

The absence of free trade with EU member states upon leaving could also be seen as a disadvantage as it might not be easy to establish new trade agreements and thus the economy might fall. Not belonging to the trade union could mean less power in negotiation for the country. The loss of freedom of mobility could also be perceived negatively as the citizens of the country would no longer have easy access to work and education abroad. In the case of the UK, exiting the EU and losing its place on the single market would also diminish its military influence and lead it to be seen as a less valuable ally.



# Human rights

Human rights are moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behaviour. They are regularly protected as legal rights in municipal and international law. They are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being. Those rights are therefore inherent in all human beings regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. The same rights apply to all people equally and universally.

The human rights are the basis for the laws that are created and followed globally. As an aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust those basic ideas led to the Human Rights Movement and then eventually to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in Paris in 1948. Human rights are based on the principles of peace, equality, democracy and freedom.

In 1950 the European Union passed the European Convention on Human Rights, thus accepting the following ideas:

- **Right to life**
- **Freedom from torture**
- **Freedom from slavery**
- **Right to a fair trial**
- **Freedom of speech**
- **Freedom of thought, conscience and religion**
- **Freedom of movement**
- **Freedom of association in movement**
- **Freedom of objection**
- **Freedom to vote**
- **Right to welfare**
- **Collective rights**
- **Freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity**
- **Right to water**
- **Right to childhood**
- **Right to study**
- **Right on health**