THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has 28 member states and is made up of seven institutions located in four different countries:

1. **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**
   - **Function:** Mainly shares legislative and budgetary authority over the EU with the Council of the European Union. It is the only directly elected EU body. It is made up of 751 MEPs – 73 from the UK.
   - **Location:** Strasbourg, Brussels, Luxembourg
   - **President:** Martin Schulz (German).

2. **THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL**
   - **Function:** Comprises all heads of state or government of the EU member states. It decides the EU’s political direction and meets four times a year. It’s the highest political body of the European Union.
   - **Location:** Brussels
   - **President:** Donald Tusk (Polish). The principal representative of the EU on the world stage, similar to a head of state.

3. **THE COUNCIL (of the European Union, also called Council of Ministers)**
   - **Function:** Holds legislative and some limited executive powers and is the main decision-making body of the Union, in conjunction with the parliament. It is separate from the European Council. The Council is composed of 28 national ministers (one per state). Those who attend are the relevant ministers to the subject area to be discussed – for example, agriculture.
   - **Location:** Brussels
   - **President:** Rotates between the states every six months.

4. **THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**
   - **Function:** Composed of one commissioner from each state, it is designed to be independent of national interests and to promote the general interest of the EU. The body is responsible for drafting all law of the European Union and has a near monopoly on proposing new laws (bills). It also deals with the day-to-day running of the Union and has the duty of upholding the law and treaties.
   - **Location:** Brussels
   - **President:** Jean-Claude Juncker (Luxembourger). The most powerful office in the EU.

5. **COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**
   - **Function:** The CJEU is the EU’s judicial branch and is responsible for interpreting EU law and treaties and ensuring that all EU countries and institutions abide by EU law.
   - **Location:** Luxembourg
   - **President:** Koen Lenaerts (Belgian).

6. **THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK**
   - **Function:** This is the central bank for the Eurozone. It controls monetary policy in the area with a remit to maintain price stability.
   - **Location:** Frankfurt
   - **President:** Mario Draghi (Italian).

7. **THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS**
   - **Function:** A court of no judicial powers. It ensures that taxpayer funds from the budget of the European Union have been correctly spent. It is composed of one member from each state.
   - **Location:** Luxembourg
   - **President:** Vitor Manuel da Silva Caldeira (Portuguese).

## INSIDE THE G8

**WHAT IT IS:** The Group of 8 forum is an annual political gathering of governmental leaders of the wealthiest developed countries – it is not an IGO but an informal forum. The members are: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US and Russia (currently suspended as a result of the Crimea crisis). The EU is also represented, but although it holds the privileges and obligations of membership it doesn’t have the right to host or chair a summit. The forum is held in and hosted by a different member country each year.

**FUNCTION:** To discuss global issues such as economic growth, crisis management, global security, energy and terrorism.

### FRANCE
- **President:** François Hollande
- **Location:** EU | G8 | G20 | NA | OE | UfM | UN/SC

### ITALY
- **Prime Minister:** Matteo Renzi
- **Location:** EU | G8 | G20 | NA | OE | UfM | UN

### GERMANY
- **Chancellor:** Angela Merkel
- **Location:** EU | G8 | G20 | NA | OE | UfM | UN

### CANADA
- **Prime Minister:** Justin Trudeau
- **Location:** Canada | G8 | G20 | NA | OE | UfM | UN

### UNITED STATES
- **President:** Barack Obama
- **Location:** United States | G8 | G20 | NA | OE | UfM | UN/SC

### BRAZIL
- **President:** Dilma Rousseff
- **Location:** Brazil | G8 | G20 | G77/24 | UN | US

### ARGENTINA
- **President:** Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner
- **Location:** Argentina | G8 | G20 | G77/24 | UN | US

## LET’S GET TOGETHER

Here are a few of the regional organisations and political and economic groupings that along with the UK shape our world – and some of the prominent world leaders at the heart of them.

KEY: AL Arab League; AU African Union; BR One of BRICS nations; CO Commonwealth country; EU Member of European Union; G8 Member of Group of 8; IGO Intergovernmental Organisation; NA NATO; OE OECD; NAM Non-Aligned Movement; SA South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation; UfM Union for Mediterranean; UN United Nations member; UN/SC Permanent member of UN Security Council; US Union of South American Nations; *Sea box on European Union: Suspended
BRITAIN IN 2016

OTHER GROUPS

G7 (economies)
Finance ministers and central bank governors from the G8 countries meet to discuss economic policies at several gatherings in a year.

G20
This is a more informal international forum for the finance ministers and central bank governors from 20 major economies, largely to promote international financial stability: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States - along with the EU.

G77
The Group of 77 is a loose coalition of developing countries - all members of the United Nations - who meet to promote the members’ collective economic interests. Although it first comprised 77, the number of founding members of the UN, it now has grown to encompass 134 UN members. Chairmanship rotates on a regional basis between Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean.

G24
This loose chapter of the G77 co-ordinates the positions of developing countries on international monetary and development finance issues and ensures that their interests are well represented.

g7+
This IGO brings together countries with recent experience of conflict and draws attention to the special challenges facing these “fragile states.”

FACTS & FIGURES

BRITAIN IN 2016

MORE LEADING ORGANISATIONS WORLDWIDE

The Arab League (AL) is a regional organisation of Arab countries, with 22 member states. It aims to create close relations with each other to safeguard independence and sovereignty.

The African Union (AU) comprises 54 countries in Africa with an aim to promote co-operation among the independent nations of Africa.

BRICS is an acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies which discusses how the countries could better co-operate in the future: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The Commonwealth of Nations is an IGO of 53 member states, mostly territories of the former British Empire. Headed by the Queen, it promotes democracy and individual liberty.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. It’s 120 members from across the globe meet to represent the interests and priorities of developing countries.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an IGO military alliance where 28 member states agree to mutual defence in response to attack by external parties.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation of 34 countries aiming to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) is an economic and geopolitical organisation of eight countries, aiming to foster more collective self-reliance and economic welfare.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is a partnership of 43 countries - the 28 member states of the EU and 15 partner countries from North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Europe.

The United Nations (UN) is an IGO with 193 member states. The UN Security Council (UNSC) is one of six main organs of the UN, principally charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Union of South American Nations (USAN) is an IGO comprising 12 South American countries to aid the continuing process of South American integration.