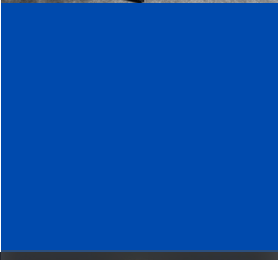


**CELEBRATION OF
EUROPE DAY
9 OF MAY**



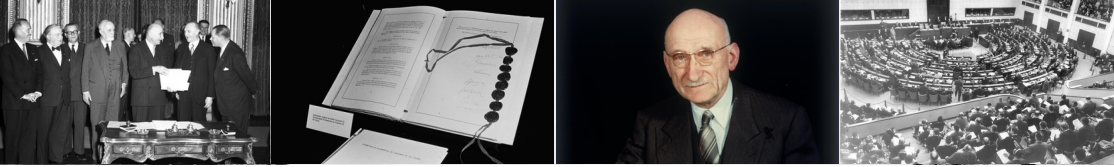
@EUinLaos



EUROPE DAY

9 MAY

On 9 May, the European Union (EU) celebrates its journey from a continent of conflict to a union built on peace, solidarity, and shared progress. Europe Day serves as a reminder that cooperation between nations can create a more stable and prosperous future for all.



WHAT IS EUROPE DAY?

Every year on 9 May, the EU celebrates Europe Day. This day marks peace and unity in Europe. It is an opportunity to reflect on how countries that were once in conflict have chosen cooperation, partnership, and shared progress.

Europe Day commemorates the historic Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950. On that day, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed a new form of political cooperation in Europe. His idea was simple but powerful: countries that work together on key industries - especially coal and steel - are less likely to go to war with each other. This proposal led to the creation of the first European community, bringing together six countries to jointly manage these industries. It laid the foundation for what is today the European Union.

Europe Day has been officially celebrated since 1985, when EU leaders decided to establish 9 May as a symbol of European unity and cooperation.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU began in the aftermath of the Second World War, when European leaders sought to prevent further conflict. Starting with six countries in the 1950s, the Union has gradually expanded and deepened cooperation in many areas, including trade, law, environment, and development. Over time, the EU has grown into one of the world's largest economies and a key global partner.

The EU has a flag - a circle of 12 golden stars on a blue background, which it has begun using in 1986. The flag does not represent the number of countries. Instead, the 12 stars symbolise unity, harmony, and solidarity. The number 12 is traditionally seen as a symbol of completeness and perfection. The blue background represents peace and stability.

The EU has also an anthem, adopted in 1985. It is based on the "Ode to Joy," a famous piece from the Ninth Symphony composed by Ludwig van Beethoven. "Ode to Joy" expresses ideals of freedom, peace, and solidarity among peoples. Importantly, the EU uses only the melody - without lyrics - so it can be shared and appreciated across all languages and cultures in Europe.

Both the flag and the anthem were chosen to reflect the EU's core purpose: bringing together diverse nations in a spirit of unity, peace, and cooperation.

WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN UNION TODAY?

The EU today is a partnership of 27 European countries that work together on political, economic, and social issues. Its main goal is to promote peace, stability, and prosperity among its members and beyond.

The EU as we know it today was formally created on 1 November 1993, when the Maastricht Treaty entered into force. However, the EU's origins go back much earlier: In 1951, six countries created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first step toward integration. These countries, often called "the original six" were: Belgium, France, Germany (then West Germany), Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands.

In 1957, the Treaties of Rome established the European Economic Community (EEC), expanding cooperation to a common market. Over the following decades, this cooperation deepened and expanded, eventually leading to the creation of the EU in 1993. So, while the EU officially began in 1993, its foundations were built gradually over more than 40 years of cooperation aimed at ensuring peace and shared prosperity in Europe.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- Peace and stability
- Economic integration
- Development and cooperation
- Common values
- Mobility and opportunity

THE 27 MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



WHAT DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION DO IN LAO PDR?

The EU is a long-term partner of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, working with the government and people to support sustainable development, economic growth, and regional integration. In 2025, the EU and the Lao People's Democratic Republic celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations.

The EU supports Laos in achieving its national development goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. EU cooperation covers several key areas:



Education and skills

improving schools, vocational training, and opportunities for young people.



Health and nutrition

supporting better maternal, child health and food security.



Agriculture and rural development

promoting sustainable farming, improving livelihoods, and helping farmers adapt to climate change.



Environment and climate action

protecting forests and biodiversity, and supporting renewable energy and a low-carbon economy.



Connectivity and trade

investing in infrastructure and supporting Laos' integration into regional and global markets.



Through a "Team Europe" approach, the EU and its Member States work together to maximise impact and support Laos in building a more inclusive, green, and resilient future.

Since the 1997 EU - Laos Cooperation Agreement, the partnership has expanded to also include political dialogue on governance, the rule of law, human rights, and global challenges such as climate change.

Four EU member states are represented in Lao PDR: France, Germany, Hungary and Luxembourg.