

EUROPE, FULDA, AND I

How does the EU impact our daily lives?

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Europe, Fulda, and I

How does the EU impact our daily lives?

Work, leisure, shopping, health, travel, education, security, and much more: The European Union permeates our lives in all areas. But how does European policy affect us here in Fulda?

This photography exhibition marks the European election on June 9th 2024 by showcasing 26 people from the city and region of Fulda along with their connections to the EU via large format portraits by Walter M. Rammler. They are all connected to Europe in their daily lives in varied ways, as private citizens, professionally, or through their businesses. The people depicted here talk about their experiences and perspectives, about challenges inside the European Union, and about their hopes and ideas for the future of Europe.



KULTURSTADT FULDA
VONDERAU MUSEUM

They invite us to recognize the influence of Europe in our daily lives. The exhibition is a collaborative project by the Vonderau Museum, EUROPE DIRECT Fulda, and Pulse of Europe Fulda in cooperation with the photographer Walter M. Rammler.

The exhibition is supported by a comprehensive program involving workshops, presentations, discussion panels, readings, screenings, and a podcast.

Learn more at www.museum-fulda.de

I was able to start up my own business 18 years ago without a German passport thanks to the right to freedom of movement in Europe. We source our products directly from Spain without additional red tape or tax burdens. Thanks to the streamlining of bureaucratic processes and common standards for the EU's internal market, we can focus on what we do best: providing high quality fine foods to our customers. Our bistro is more than a culinary venue—it is an example of a dream come true in the restaurant business in Europe.

Maria Arresta, 53 years old

Spanish/Italian bistro owner



Casa España



To me, Europe is about discovering people, places, and history. Interesting personalities and ideas are an inspiration for me. Other cultures broaden my horizon. The VIA REGIA is a cultural route of the Council of Europe that represents the oldest and longest overland connection between Eastern and Western Europe. It runs right across Europe and brings history to life. As a regional guide, I invite guests and the interested public to learn about various small and important episodes. Europe meets Fulda.

Renate Christ, 59 years old

Tour guide and member of the VIA REGIA network

My dissertation research examines the decision-making processes involved in EU policies on anti-discrimination. While the EU has taken important steps towards equality already, it still has a long way to go. One example is the need to take into account the rights of trans and intersex people. My research is intended to contribute to a better understanding of the processes inside the EU. Perhaps more transparency can also strengthen citizens' interest in these matters.

Nicola D., 29 years old

PhD candidate at Fulda University of Applied Sciences





Intercultural connections have enriched my life. I first experienced the European ideal of intercultural understanding as a child on a trip to Como, Italy—Fulda’s oldest sister city. And I later fell in love with Fulda’s French sister city Arles during student exchange trips. Today, I am in a position to keep this European idea going by facilitating meetings between artists across Europe.

Monika Ebertowski, 71 years old

Head of the Artistic Hub
“Kunststation Kleinsassen” Association

My training includes control engineering and robotics as well. Our practical training lessons are held at the automation center of the Ferdinand-Braun-Schule vocational school, which is subsidized by the EU.

Inside the center, I am able to visualize what the control systems we develop using computers might look like in reality. Being trained on the robots is a lot of fun and helps me to better understand the subject matter.

Diana F., 21 years old

Precision engineering apprentice





I am a woman.

In contrast to many others, I have the privilege of being white and living in Europe. And most of the time I am not discriminated against based on my gender. But Europe must not rest on its laurels just because women enjoy more rights than in other parts of the world. I want a Europe that does not discriminate between women and men—a Europe in which the word “No” is enough to allow for prosecution. I want to see the laws around sexual offenses reformed.

Frauke Goldbach, 18 years old

Student activist

The EU impacts me and my company via intra-European free trade and providing access to products and services. Europe fosters solidarity and community and secures peace for young people as well. European values and cooperation on global challenges like climate change should continue to be strengthened. I wish for a Europe that allows cultural diversity, traditions, as well as skilled crafts and trades to flourish in a modern format.

Marco Wigbert Gretsche, 50 years old

Master carpenter and mechanical engineer



werk9



The network "It's your part" is all about collecting and recycling used paper cups. However, excessive regulation and red tape such as the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive make it difficult to implement projects aimed at product recycling. We need more incentives instead of prohibitive measures. It is about the big picture and not about decimal points.

Torsten Gröger, 40 years old

Authorized officer of a marketing agency and originator of the "It's your part" network

The EU has a major impact on my private and professional life. I can travel across the Schengen area without a passport.

Thanks to the EU single market, we enjoy a streamlined trade in goods as well as a single currency. But I see the European principle of unanimity as problematic. It prevents important issues from being addressed while individual national goals are prioritized. I would like for Europe to grow closer together so we can handle global issues like the refugee crisis better.

Patrick Hartung, 35 years old

Grocery, floral, and egg buyer





*I am a European with all my heart,
and I feel at home anywhere in Europe!
I was born in Fulda and grew up in Luxembourg.
That is where I learned many languages
together with other nationalities in the oldest
Europaschule (European School). I travel all
across Europe and especially Greece for work.
This is what Europe means to me: Decades of
peace and the redundancy of borders.
We eat pork roast, pizza, and paella,
vacation in Mallorca or Crete.
Let nobody undermine that again!*

Dr. Wolfgang Hautumm, 70 years old

Archaeologist, tour operator, publisher, and olive oil trader

The beekeepers' association was able to open up an educational apiary thanks to EU funding. This represents an educational opportunity for children, adults, and beekeepers in the region.

It supports honeybee protections and their proliferation, which is important for biodiversity.

It would be great if the application process for EU funding could be simplified.

When trading bees inside the EU and when importing foodstuffs, it is important to focus on preventing the spread of animal diseases and adhering to EU standards.

Thomas Heil, 64 years old

1. Chairman of the Beekeepers' Association for Neuhof and surrounding areas





The EU's LEADER funding program contributes to strengthen and a sustainable rural development.

For almost 20 years, LEADER funds have been used to support civic engagement, private business development and public projects in the Fulda Southwest funding region.

Despite bureaucratic hurdles and narrow guidelines for action, it is a great pleasure to develop the region using the bottom-up approach by the people, for the people and to achieve the best possible outcome.

Stefan Hesse, 42 years old

Regional manager Regionalforum Fulda Südwest e.V.

We were able to launch our developer studio and develop our first computer game thanks to an EXIST fellowship co-funded by the EU. Germany is a comparatively costly location for the international gaming industry, so that developer studios rely on subsidies like the Creative Europe program.

I would like for the EU to provide uniform regulations at the international level to solve the issue of competitiveness for the German gaming industry and put computer games on the same footing as other cultural areas.

Lara Klimm, 30 years old

Programmer and co-founder of a gaming developer studio





The EU impacts my professional life as well as that of employees in general. It sets minimum standards, e.g., when it comes to working time regulations, employment protections, anti-discrimination, and occupational health. Together, these ensure uniformity across the single market. I benefit from the free circulation of goods and people, common European consumer and environmental protection standards, and also labor laws. I would like to see a strong and above all democratic EU in the future.

Berthold Leinweber, 62 years old

District executive director for ver.di MainKinzig-Osthessen

I am from Greece originally and have been living in Fulda for four years. Here is where I completed my Masters in intercultural communication and European studies. I also volunteer as a coordinator for emergency aid to Ukrainian refugees at the Welcome In Stadtteiltreff Fulda Innenstadt. To me, cultural diversity is not just a theory but a personal concern. A European identity is reflected in the different cultures, languages, and perspectives. Diversity and integration are preconditions for harmonious coexistence in Europe.

Elena Martou, 29 years old

City employee working on immigration issues





A lot of legislation affecting consumers in Fulda are prepared at the European level. This streamlining effort enables comparable standards when it comes to consumer rights and also a uniform legal framework. Customers benefit from this when they shop online in other European countries. For those reasons, it is natural for me as a consumer protection agent to think as a European and take part in European elections.

Marcel Mayka, 30 years old

Customer protection agent

*Being a farmer is my dream job.
EU regulations impact my day-to-day work,
because they represent a lot of bureaucracy.
EU subsidies are designed to make food
affordable for everyone. These subsidies ensure
the survival of farming businesses since market
prices are not profitable. At the same time,
farmers are bound by regulations.
My wish is for food and the farming
profession to be valued.*

Jürgen Müller, 49 years old

Butcher and farmer, owner of an organic dairy farm





I was able to experience the amazing benefits of a united EU during my apprenticeship. The EU's Erasmus+ program for general and professional education enabled me to complete an international internship in Italy. Naturally, the whole endeavor requires a good amount of preparation, bureaucracy, and applications in English. If all goes well, you feel a little more European after a few months. You do not speak your own language anymore while your vocabulary and grammar in the foreign language grows over time.

Julius K. Rammler, 33 years old

Carpenter

My profession—producing custom clothing based on customer preferences—is also my connection to Europe. Most of the fabrics come from Ireland, Italy, and France.

Great Britain's exit from the EU was a catastrophe for us. Our custom ready-made-suits are produced in Portugal and our shirts in Poland. We would not have a viable way of pursuing our profession since hardly anyone in Germany produces fabrics anymore.

Eva Schönherr, 45 years old

Custom tailor for men's and women's fashion





Stumpi
Omnibusbetrieb

I am passionate about large vehicles on Europe's highways. There are massive benefits for me: No more border checks and long waits at the borders are a thing of the past. However, each country has its own import laws, different rules for billing mileage, and varying tolls—it is a huge amount of bureaucracy! I just want my work to help people have a good time vacationing and to be on the road in Europe.

Michael Spranger, 55 years old

Truck and bus driver

We have been benefiting from European medical care for decades, e.g., Eurotransplant and the European Medicines Agency I am very proud of the fact that my specialist qualifications in gastroenterology and hepatoLOGY are recognized at the European level. During the COVID pandemic, we saw old barriers resurface that we thought we had already overcome. Cross-border intensive medical care for severe cases was unique in the world. EU—utilizing our strength together.

Dr. Klaus Stienecker, 60 years old

Internist





There are a lot of EU regulations regarding hygiene or labeling that I have to adhere to with my cheesery. Feta or sheep's milk cheese are registered terms for cheese made from goat or sheep's milk. Therefore, our cow's milk cheese has to be labeled as shepherd's or Balkan cheese. It is actually misleading since there are no shepherds herding our cows and the cheese is produced in the Rhön area.

There are very detailed regulations pertaining to agriculture, and unfortunately, the German government is often more demanding than the EU regulations stipulate.

Claudia Storch, 58 years old

Direct marketer for unpasteurized cheese

My Erasmus internship at the German-Hungarian chamber of industry and commerce in Budapest gave me direct insight into the daily work of the European Union. I had an opportunity to get to know and appreciate the benefits of European cooperation. The EU is creating a platform for cross-border education, culture, and economics that improves our daily lives. It creates opportunities and inspires me to do more for a united Europe.

Anita Straßheim, 25 years old

Student at Fulda University of Applied Sciences





The idea of Europe is a model for success for industry as well. Mechanical engineering in particular is one of the largest industry sub-sectors within the EU economy, and as such, Europe is its domestic market. A seamless single market is the foundation for goods and capital as well as employees and services. After all, you cannot sell machines without installation, start-up, or service and maintenance. Looking at the future, industry in the EU has a central role in the transition toward climate neutrality and digitization.

Julia Uth, 33 years old

Head of design and development in a
mechanical engineering company

We renovated a former US barracks on Washingtonlee and transformed it into an open space office. That project was made possible by the financial support of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). We also benefit from free trade and the single market thanks to the EU. It enables us to operate in a larger market without barriers. Moreover, the EU provides stability and legal certainty, which is vital for long-term planning.

Simon Weber, 41 years old

Director of an IT systems company





*The EU offers tremendous support to our
civil defense and disaster relief efforts.
Member states support each other during natural
disasters and other large-scale emergencies
via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.
I do my part in this international system of
solidarity as a volunteer international expert
of the Federal Agency for Technical Relief.
For example, I participated in the coordination
of relief supplies to Ukraine in 2023.
My hope for the future is continued cooperation
among the community of states in the area
of civil protection.*

David Wehner, 30 years old

Squad leader, Federal Agency for Technical Relief, Neuhof



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