



# **Vocabulary of false myths about the European Union**

**English**

*The opinions expressed are solely those of the author(s). In no case should they be considered or construed as representing an official position of the European Union*



**Funded by  
the European Union**

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 1

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU funds Saudi Arabia**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

Internet and social networks

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

In January 2022, the European Union and Saudi Arabia maintained diplomatic and economic relations. The EU engages with Saudi Arabia in areas such as trade, investment, and political dialogue. However, the EU's financial assistance programs, which are commonly directed toward development projects, stability initiatives, or humanitarian aid, do not include Saudi Arabia as a primary recipient. The EU's financial relations with countries, including Saudi Arabia, are typically guided by specific agreements, partnerships, or cooperation frameworks. These arrangements may cover trade and economic cooperation but may not involve direct financial aid in the form of grants or budgetary support. It's important to consider that diplomatic and economic relations between countries can evolve, and new developments may occur. For the latest and most accurate information on the EU's financial interactions with Saudi Arabia, it's recommended to refer to official statements from EU institutions or relevant governmental sources.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

When discussing complex topics, especially those involving economic or political matters, it's essential to approach the conversation with a thoughtful and informed perspective. Ensure that your information comes from reputable and unbiased sources. Rely on official statements, government reports, or recognized news outlets.

Consider the historical context and the broader geopolitical and economic factors that may have influenced the situation.

Strive to maintain objectivity in your discussion. Avoid overly emotional or biased language, and present facts and opinions in a clear and rational manner.

If someone presents information, fact-check it before accepting it as true. And stay updated: Information evolves, and new developments may occur.

# Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

## Myth nr. 2

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

### **The EU worked to get Greece into a debt trap**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

It was a commonly discussed topic over the internet during and after the financial crisis of 2008.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Greece faced a severe financial crisis that started in late 2009, triggered by the turmoil of the world-wide Great Recession and structural weaknesses in the Greek economy with significant economic repercussions. The crisis was a complex situation with multiple contributing factors. One of the key elements was the revelation of Greece's substantial public debt, which had been underreported. The country faced challenges such as budget deficits, high levels of public spending, inadequate fiscal management, and issues related to the stability of its financial system. These factors, combined with global economic conditions, led to a crisis in the Greek economy. The EU, along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank (ECB), played a role in addressing the crisis through financial assistance packages. These assistance programs aimed to stabilise Greece's economy, implement structural reforms, and address the challenges in its fiscal management. However, the measures imposed were also a subject of criticism and sparked debates about the impact of austerity measures on the Greek population. It's important to note that the situation in Greece was multifaceted, involving both domestic and international factors. Discussions about the handling of the Greek financial crisis remain complex and vary depending on perspectives and analyses.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

Base your arguments on factual information and historical context. Use reputable sources to support your points and avoid spreading misinformation. This ensures

a more constructive and informed conversation. Understand that discussions about the Greek financial crisis may involve differing perspectives. Consider the viewpoints of various stakeholders, including economists, policymakers, and the general public. Acknowledge that opinions may differ based on individual experiences and analyses. Use the discussion as an opportunity to learn from historical events. Consider how lessons from the Greek financial crisis can inform policies and approaches to economic challenges in the future.

*Satyrical images published during the financial crisis*



## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 3

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **EU elections are being manipulated**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

It's a common narrative during heated political moments or in contexts where scepticism about governmental institutions is high.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Addressing the myth requires using official data from electoral commissions, institutions or reputable international organizations and emphasising factors such as voter turnout, transparency measures, and diverse political participation. This helps dispel the idea of widespread manipulation. Involvement of citizens and NGOs in monitoring the process further strengthens election integrity. Using fact-based narratives and reliable sources is crucial in combating misinformation. The official European Parliament website provides extensive election information, including voter turnout statistics from past EU member state elections. These statistics underscore citizens' active participation in shaping the democratic process of the EU. Several valuable resources provide comprehensive information on elections. Electoral Commission Websites of EU member states offer data on voter turnout, electoral procedures, and transparency measures. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is a global leader in democracy promotion, offering resources and reports on global electoral processes, including voter turnout and stakeholder involvement. Transparency International reports on corruption and transparency globally, with a focus on transparency measures during elections. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) conducts election monitoring missions, providing detailed reports on the integrity and transparency measures in various countries' elections. While there is no evidence to suggest manipulation in European Union elections, the Brexit referendum stands out as a stark example where the democratic process was marred by the influence of misleading narratives and

the deliberate dissemination of fake news. Extensive investigations have revealed instances of intentional misinformation campaigns aimed at swaying public opinion in favor of the "leave" campaign. This underscores the importance of vigilance and safeguarding democratic processes against the manipulation of information to ensure the integrity of electoral outcomes.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

Highlight the credibility of electoral processes by citing specific measures, such as voter registration protocols, ballot security, and independent oversight. Encourage critical thinking and guide individuals to reliable sources instead of getting into heated arguments. Maintain a calm demeanour, addressing concerns while steering the conversation towards verified information. Stay open to discussion but recognize when it's necessary to disengage if the conversation becomes unproductive.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 4

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

**European policymaking is decided by just a few member states**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

It's a common topic between people when talking about the European Union.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

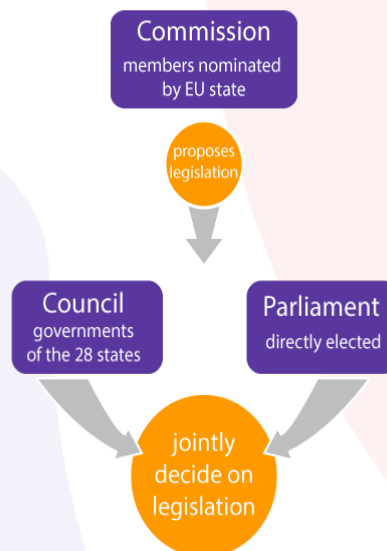
The European Union's decision-making process involves 4 institutions: the European Parliament, representing the citizens, the Council of the European Union and the European Council, representing EU governments, the European Commission, representing the EU's overall interests. These institutions have to come to an agreement on legislation that shapes the policies of the European Union. The first step towards an EU law is an impact assessment report made by the European Commission, to define the advantages and disadvantages of a policy; the input came from non-governmental organizations, national authorities and industry, as well as expert groups that give advice on technical issues. Then the European Commission presents its proposal and the Parliament and the Council review it and can propose amendments. The institutions meet to see if they agree on the amendments; if they cannot, a second reading takes place: the Parliament and the Council can propose further amendments and the Council can block them or agree with them. If the Parliament and the Council agree on the amendments, the proposal can be adopted. If they cannot agree, a conciliation committee is set up to try to find a solution. When the Parliament and the Council agree on the proposal, the law is published in the EU's Official Journal. All the information about the EU's functioning is available on the official website of the European Union.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

At times, there may be a perception that the diverse interests of European Union (EU) member countries don't align with European policies. However, the decision-



making process within the EU adheres to specific rules designed to ensure that the opinions of all member countries are considered, preventing any single interest from dominating discussions. Notably, certain policy areas in the EU Council require a unanimous vote, emphasizing the need for consensus. Critics argue that the requirement for unanimity in certain policy areas within the EU Council can be a point of contention. While this approach aims to ensure inclusivity and consideration of all member states' perspectives, some contend that it can impede swift decision-making and hinder progress. The discussion around unanimity underscores the ongoing evolution of the EU integration process, where debates about decision-making mechanisms play a crucial role in shaping the future trajectory of the union. As the EU navigates these intricacies, the decision-making process remains a dynamic aspect subject to scrutiny and potential modification in the ongoing pursuit of a more integrated and responsive European Union.



## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 5

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU is dictatorial**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

It is a common discussion when talking about the EU's decisions.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Becoming a member state of the European Union involves a specific procedure, encompassing adherence to the Copenhagen criteria. These criteria demand the establishment of a stable democracy, the upholding of the rule of law, the operation of a functional market economy, and a commitment to embracing all EU legislation. Upon accession to the EU, a country gains representation in the European Institutions. Subsequently, when decisions are made that impact all member states, an inclusive consultation process ensues involving all key institutions. When these decisions or regulations take effect, they may necessitate adjustments in national legislation and implementation by national agencies. Directives, in particular, must be incorporated into national legislation. The Commission plays a pivotal role in supporting this process by providing online resources, coordinating expert group meetings, and formulating implementation strategies and guidance documents. This comprehensive process is preceded by thorough groundwork, involving the participation of national representatives who contribute to the decision-making dynamics of the EU.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

When discussing the functioning of the European Union and how some decisions are made it is important to relate to the official pages of the European Union, where these procedures are explained. It is important to only refer to official sources that follow the upload of the policy-making process, available online for everyone and considering that all the countries are involved in those decisions.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 6

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU is forcing countries to host migrants**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

It's a very popular fake news disseminated by anti-immigration political leaders. The EU is then described as an oppressive power over national policies.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Migration is a structural phenomenon of human history accelerated by globalization. Within the EU, the Dublin Regulation establishes a mechanism for distributing refugees across Europe, designating the state that assumes responsibility for asylum applications based on its role in the applicant's entry into EU territory. This responsibility may fall on the state where the asylum seeker has family, the state that issued their residence permit, or the country through which the asylum seeker first entered. However, despite the framework provided by the Dublin Regulation, member states still maintain sovereignty over refugee acceptance, with some outright refusing to comply. According to the European Commission's "Statistics on migration to Europe" for 2021, European countries submitted 120,300 outgoing Dublin applications, but only 52% were accepted, resulting in a mere 19% actual transfers. Eurostat data for 2022 reveals that Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and Austria collectively received nearly three-quarters of all first-time asylum applications in the EU. As refugees find themselves accommodated by host countries, they often face challenging conditions, being crowded into living arrangements or left in overcrowded administrative detention centers, sometimes without even crossing the border. This situation has prompted calls for a much-needed reform in the system managing migration to Europe. The Commission's proposed Pact on Migration and Asylum, slated for introduction in early 2024, includes a "solidarity mechanism" aimed at achieving a more equitable distribution of migrants. However, it has also faced criticism, particularly regarding its security dimension.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

Approaching discussions on migration requires resisting the influence of alarmist rhetoric and impressions from migrant waves. It's necessary to promote comparisons between countries' different approaches to migration policy instead of making a general assessment. Official EU databases like Eurostat and reports from European institutions offer objective starting points. These sources highlight that countries resistant to accepting refugees maintained that stance. It's also crucial to emphasize that decisions on sovereign matters like migration policy cannot be made at the EU level without prior agreement among member states.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 7

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU is governed by the USA**

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Eurosceptics often discuss the role of the United States in European matters. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, there was a common perception that Europe was waiting for US guidance on how to deal with the situation.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Historically, relations between the EU and the USA have been exceptionally close, yet European institutions are actively working to assert Europe's autonomy and safeguard its interests. This enduring alliance is rooted in the aftermath of World War II, notably marked by the Marshall Plan, which played a pivotal role in rebuilding European economies and fostering transatlantic cooperation. The USA is paramountly an economic partner for the EU, and EU institutions are committed to maintaining a balanced partnership. According to the April 2023 European Parliament's Fact Sheet on relations with the United States, the EU stands as the leading investor in the United States, and reciprocally, the US is a significant investor in the EU. Moreover, it is noteworthy that 22 EU member states are also NATO members, with the United States holding a prominent role in the alliance. The security of the European Union has historically been underwritten, to a large extent, by the protection afforded by the United States. This commitment was formalized politically through the NATO-EU Declaration on Common Security and Defence Policy on December 16, 2002, highlighting the enduring ties between EU countries and the White House. However, the United States is not only a crucial ally but also a formidable economic competitor. Recent negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership were stymied at the request of certain member states due to concerns that the treaty disproportionately favored American interests. Additionally, the EU upholds stringent environmental and health standards for products entering its market, despite occasional trade disputes with the United States. For instance, the European Commission's

proposed "Corporate sustainability due diligence" directive in February 2022 underscores the EU's commitment to holding multinational companies, including non-European entities, accountable for human rights violations and environmental impacts worldwide, particularly when operating within the European market. These dynamics reflect the intricate and multifaceted nature of the EU-USA relationship, where economic collaboration and competition coexist amid efforts to balance autonomy and shared interests.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

In examining this issue, it is imperative to adopt a historical perspective on the evolution of EU-US relations since World War II. Taking a broader view unveils the EU's increasing autonomy while maintaining close ties with the USA. As the EU ascends to a more prominent role as a global player, it can now enter negotiations with major powers, including the USA, on equal footing. This is particularly evident in discussions on critical issues such as climate change and human rights. The 2023 European Parliament's Fact Sheet on human rights underscores the pivotal role of human rights in bilateral trade and cooperation agreements between the EU and third countries or regional organisations. It defines respect for human rights as an 'essential element,' emphasizing the importance of this dimension in fostering robust relationships.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 8

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU is undemocratic**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

It is a common false myth argued by detractors of the EU and Eurosceptics to attack the EU during debates, or on online media content.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

In order to tackle the myth there are a couple of steps that one needs to take:

1. Education and Disseminating Factual Information about the democratic structures of the EU.
2. Engaging in Public Discourse using platforms such as seminars and social media are a good means to discuss.
3. Highlight Democratic Processes: showcase how decisions are made collectively, involving representatives from member states.
4. Promote Transparency: the more citizens understand how decisions are reached, the less likely they are to perceive the EU is undemocratic.

To address myths effectively, a reliable starting point is to consult the official EU websites. Additionally, there are dedicated fact-checking organizations, such as EUFactCheck, and those affiliated with reputable news outlets like Politico, which specialize in debunking EU-related misinformation. Academic resources serve as valuable instruments too, offering in-depth insights and data to counter inaccuracies. When seeking official information, it is advisable to rely on foundational EU treaties, such as the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Treaty on European Union, as these documents articulate the EU's fundamental democratic principles and structures. Eurobarometer Surveys provide another valuable source by measuring public opinion on various EU-related matters, including perceptions of democracy and attitudes toward EU institutions.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

To contribute effectively to discussions regarding the democratic nature of the EU, it is crucial to comprehend the work of the EU's institutional framework. Individuals should acquaint themselves with the roles of key institutions, particularly the directly elected European Parliament, and understand the participatory nature of the decision-making process, which involves representatives from each member state. Promoting transparency within the EU is a fundamental aspect of refuting claims of undemocratic practices. It is essential to elucidate how EU institutions disseminate information to the public and operate through transparent processes. Participants should be encouraged to explore authoritative EU sources for updated and accurate information. Encouraging a comparative analysis between the democratic structures of the EU and national governments is valuable. Emphasize that, similar to national governance, the EU operates on principles of representative democracy and shared sovereignty. This comparison helps underscore the democratic foundations on which the EU is built. Ultimately, fostering an environment of respect and critical thinking is essential for those engaging in discussions about the democratic character of the EU. By equipping participants with a comprehensive understanding of the EU's democratic mechanisms and encouraging thoughtful comparison, discussions can be enriched and contribute to a more nuanced and informed discourse.



## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 9

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU tries to replace European cultures and citizens with Sub-Saharan people and Islam**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

This pervasive myth in Italy and other countries falsely suggests that the EU intends to encourage immigrants in the country to change cultural attitudes. Far-right politicians often amplify this narrative, employing slogans such as "*Prima gli italiani*" (Italians first), asserting that immigrants are taking jobs from Italians and posing a threat to the culture and traditions. This sentiment is particularly targeted at people arriving from African countries, contributing to the rise of racism and Islamophobia. Far-right parties, emphasizing the importance of the Catholic religion in Italian culture, argue that immigration jeopardizes cultural identity, heightened by a decline in natality. Some right-wing Italian politicians have faced accusations of using the term 'ethnic substitution,' associated with the dark period of the Holocaust and the Second World War.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Firstly, it's important to clarify that the concept of "Italian ethnicity" lacks validity if considered as something static. No nation or culture has remained the same over time; rather, they have evolved through exchanges and developments throughout history. Secondly, it is crucial to emphasize that no culture is immune to change; in fact, interculturality has always been a valuable means to enrich humanity. It is also essential to underscore that the percentage of the immigrant population is low, and the notion of being replaced is far from reality. The XIII annual report of the Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies in Italy provides clear data about foreigners in the Italian labor market. As of January 1, 2023, foreigners regularly resident in Italy constitute 8.6% of the population. This report also offers insights into their educational background and integration into the labor market. For additional data on non-EU citizens in Italy, ISTAT, the national statistical institute in Italy, provides information on their

website, including a comparison of the foreign population over a five-year period, spanning from 2018 to 2022.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

It's crucial to shift the focus towards the absence of any tangible threat: the data indicates that there is no risk of the so-called "invasion" and numerous countries have a significantly higher percentage of foreign population. Furthermore, the discussion should underscore the positive aspects of interculturality, an integral part of Italian history that has contributed to its richness and diversity.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 10

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU wastes a lot of taxpayer's money**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

This is a false myth that is always used to attack the EU, especially at national level and on social media.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

To counter the false myth that the EU wastes taxpayers' money, a comprehensive approach is needed, combining education, transparency, and evidence-based arguments. Utilizing official EU publications and financial reports is a potent strategy to debunk misconceptions, offering accurate data to provide a nuanced understanding of the EU budget's allocation and utilization. The primary tool for dispelling this myth involves leveraging factual information from official EU sources, emphasizing transparency and accountability mechanisms through financial reports and audits. Only 6% of the total EU budget is allocated to administration, covering salaries, pensions, and language services, while a substantial 94% goes directly to Member States and citizens. To put this in perspective, EU administration costs EUR 8.3 billion per year, a fraction compared to the EUR 2,200 billion spent annually by Member States on their administrations. An effective narrative to deconstruct the myth centers on highlighting the tangible benefits of EU spending, emphasizing the strategic allocation of funds to address common challenges. Providing specific examples of successful initiatives with measurable positive impacts reinforces the argument that the EU budget is a crucial tool for addressing shared concerns.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

To debunk the baseless myth that the EU wastefully expends taxpayers' money, adopt a fact-based approach. Start by highlighting that the EU budget constitutes only around 1% of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of member

states, providing essential context to gauge the scale of financial contributions. Focus on specific areas like agricultural support, regional development, and research initiatives to showcase the targeted and impactful use of funds. Demonstrate how these allocations contribute to broader goals such as cohesion, economic balance, and collaborative policies benefiting all member nations. Accentuate the positive impact of EU expenditures on member states, citing concrete examples of successful projects like infrastructure development and collaborative research initiatives. Emphasize that these ventures underscore the tangible benefits of the budget allocation. Promote a constructive dialogue that acknowledges concerns while encouraging a deeper understanding of the EU budget's purpose. Share data regarding expenditure percentages to highlight the low costs of bureaucracy compared to national states, providing a clear perspective on the efficiency and transparency of EU spending.

# Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

## Myth nr. 11

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

### **The EU will force us to eat bugs**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

This unfounded myth was widely propagated by the media, and politicians dedicated considerable discourse to it, placing significant emphasis - for example in Italy - on the concept of "Made in Italy" and the preservation of Italian food. In response, the government approved several decrees to regulate the sale of food containing insects. A considerable number of Italians took to social media to share various content regarding this false narrative, often using irony and/or expressing indignation. As a result, it became a topic of widespread public discussion.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Firstly, it's crucial to gather all the necessary information to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The official website of the EU is a valuable resource in this matter. On June 1, 2021, the European Commission adopted a legal act authorizing the classification of mealworms as a food. This is a formal acknowledgment by the EU, designating insects as 'novel food,' defined as any food not widely consumed in the EU before May 15, 1997. It's worth noting that the consumption of insects is not a new practice, as they are already a part of diets in many parts of the world. In Italy, this is exemplified by a traditional cheese in Sardinia called "Casu Marzu," although it is now considered illegal due to its content of fly larvae. Lastly, it's important to clarify that the decision follows scientific approval by the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority). Importantly, this doesn't imply compulsion to consume insects; rather, it signifies that many of them are edible and offer valuable proteins for the human body.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

It is crucial to redirect the discussion to the accurate perspective: the European Commission has simply acknowledged that insects can be a safe food source for humans. This recognition in no way implies a desire for us to consume insects, nor does it pose a threat to our Mediterranean diet or the integrity of Made in Italy and Italian food. There is no impending danger; it is simply a fact that, if we choose to do so freely, we can consume insects without any concerns about our health.

*A picture circulated on social media accompanied by comments originally posted in a newspaper.*



## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 12

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **There is a misuse of EU funds on a large scale**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

This is one of the most common discussions among employees in organizations that receive EU funding. People often seek a deeper understanding of how Civil Society Organizations operate, and some may compare the allocations between countries, leading to these assumptions.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

In discussions of this nature, it's crucial to bear in mind that the European Union maintains stringent regulations and oversight mechanisms to prevent and address any mismanagement of funds. It's noteworthy that instances of misuse typically involve a small percentage of the overall budget, arising from various factors such as administrative errors, inadequate control mechanisms, or intentional fraudulent activities by a limited number of individuals or entities. Regular scrutiny by the European Court of Auditors assesses EU spending and issues reports pinpointing areas of concern or irregularities. The EU continually enhances its financial control systems to mitigate such risks, incorporating measures like heightened transparency, more rigorous auditing procedures, and penalties for fraudulent activities. The public has access to funding details and evaluations, underscoring the rigorous monitoring and auditing processes in place. Moreover, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) actively investigates instances of fraud and irregularities involving EU funds. For a comprehensive understanding, reference official Reports and Audits from the European Court of Auditors, highlighting that irregularities represent a small fraction of the budget and emphasizing ongoing improvements in financial management.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

It's crucial to avoid generalizing isolated incidents of misuse, refraining from portraying them as indicative of widespread mismanagement across all EU-funded projects. The EU maintains a steadfast commitment to ensuring the proper utilization of funds and continues to implement measures aimed at bolstering financial accountability and transparency. Developing informative materials that elucidate EU fund allocation and monitoring processes can play a pivotal role in enhancing public understanding and trust. It is essential to underscore the limited scale of irregularities and the robustness of control mechanisms by using phrases such as "isolated incidents, not systemic issues." To fortify arguments against the prevailing myth, rely on official EU websites, reports from oversight bodies, and reputable media outlets as credible sources. This approach helps substantiate claims with authoritative information, debunking misconceptions about the management of EU funds.



## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 13

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **Countries like Germany do not profit from the EU**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

This false myth has been encountered on numerous occasions, both in general discussions and through its mention in newspapers and news reports. It can be considered a relatively widespread misconception.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Contrary to assertions suggesting that countries like Germany do not derive benefits from EU membership, substantial evidence supports the opposite perspective. As one of the EU's largest and most influential members, Germany has experienced considerable advantages:

- **Economic Prosperity:** Germany has flourished within the EU's single market, where the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor has propelled its exports. The EU, with over 450 million consumers, stands as Germany's largest trading environment, providing a significant market for its products.
- **Financial Contributions and Support:** While Germany contributes substantially to the EU budget as one of the wealthiest members, it also receives substantial support from EU structural funds. These funds contribute to the development of infrastructure, foster innovation, and support regional growth within Germany.
- **Political Influence:** Germany, as a leading member state, wields a robust influence in shaping EU policies and decisions. Its pivotal role in key EU institutions, such as the European Council and the Council of the EU, allows Germany to promote its interests and priorities, actively shaping the EU's agenda.
- **Research and Innovation:** Germany benefits from EU funding dedicated to research and innovation, notably through initiatives like Horizon Europe.

This support fosters collaboration with European partners, facilitates access to cutting-edge knowledge, and promotes the development of innovative solutions.

- Environmental Stewardship: Aligned with the EU's commitment to environmental protection, Germany reaps benefits from EU initiatives and funding directed towards transitioning to a low-carbon economy and addressing climate change. These initiatives contribute to Germany's efforts in sustainability and environmental protection.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

Before engaging in a debate about the EU, it's crucial to thoroughly research and gather information. Acknowledge the complexities of the EU as a multifaceted institution with policies affecting member countries differently, avoiding oversimplification. Consider not only economic gains but also non-economic benefits like increased cooperation, environmental efforts, and the promotion of democratic values. Always support your arguments with reliable sources such as academic research, official reports, or reputable news outlets to strengthen your position in the discussion.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 14

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU is against Hungary**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

The widespread myth that the EU is antagonistic towards Hungary is actively disseminated by the country's present government via billboards, "national consultation" forms, and official communication channels. This erroneous narrative is closely intertwined with another myth that posits the EU's purported aim to undermine national cultures.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

The myth perpetuated by the Hungarian government that the EU is against Hungary can be effectively addressed by examining the substantial EU funding received by the country. A practical approach involves accessing EU and Hungarian data to understand the significant role the EU plays in supporting various aspects of the country, including economic growth, job creation, environmental protection, research, and counterterrorism efforts. Additionally, adopting a critical perspective on Hungary's national media is crucial to recognizing potential information manipulation, emphasizing the importance of seeking information from diverse sources for a comprehensive understanding.

Various online platforms provide valuable resources for gaining insights into the EU's activities and budget in Hungary, including the official EU website ([https://european-union.europa.eu/index\\_hu](https://european-union.europa.eu/index_hu)) and the Hungarian representation of the EU ([https://hungary.representation.ec.europa.eu/strategia-es-prioritasok/az-eu-koltsegvetese-magyarorszagon\\_hu](https://hungary.representation.ec.europa.eu/strategia-es-prioritasok/az-eu-koltsegvetese-magyarorszagon_hu)). The Hungarian Parliament's website also offers information on the EU's activities (<https://www.parlament.hu/europai-unios-tevekenyseg>), while important EU websites are compiled on the official website of the Supreme Court of Hungary (<https://kuria-birosag.hu/hu/az-europai-unio-fontosabb-honlapjai>).

Moreover, independent media outlets such as Partizán ('Partisan'), Közélet Iskolája ('School of Public Life'), Mércse ('Standard'), K-Monitor ('Corruption Monitor'), and Átlátszó ('Transparent') offer critical perspectives and diverse insights into Hungarian and EU affairs. These platforms contribute to fostering transparency, accountability, and freedom of information, providing valuable resources for those seeking a nuanced understanding of the situation.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

In summary, it is advisable to adopt a practical approach by examining our surroundings and data from diverse sources. Maintaining a critical stance towards both sources and media is essential. Additionally, it is recommended to engage in conversations directly or indirectly with individuals, rather than solely directing them to resources.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 15

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU wants to destroy national cultures**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

This false myth is widely used in public discussions that involve populist and nationalist political movements. This kind of discourse can easily appeal to people that are unsatisfied with their living conditions and with politics in general.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Initiatives like Erasmus showcase the EU's acknowledgment and embrace of diversity. When students return from studying abroad in other EU countries, they bring back unique elements that enrich their own cultures. Additionally, second-generation citizens within the EU challenge stereotypes by highlighting the **richness of** cultural differences and the evolving nature of culture across generations. By leveraging these experiences, campaigns can be developed to promote and celebrate diversity. The EU actively supports cultural projects, particularly in music and film, as evidenced by events like the Eurovision Song Contest and programs like Creative Europe, which shine a spotlight on the diverse cultures of member states. It is essential to raise awareness about existing laws in these areas, such as the Audiovisual and Media Services Directives, to ensure continued support for cultural diversity.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

**Debating serves as the optimal method to convey our perspective, substantiated by examples that debunk false myths. Popular projects and events like Erasmus, the Eurovision Song Contest, and renowned international film festivals offer accessible platforms for reaching people. From there, it becomes plausible to delve deeper into the discourse. Organizing cultural events that accentuate the richness and diversity of national cultures within the EU can further contribute.**

Involving citizens is pivotal: encourage active participation in transnational cultural projects or exchanges. This firsthand experience enables individuals to appreciate the cultural diversity within the EU and understand the EU's role as a driving force of unity in diversity, supporting and enhancing all cultures.

## Vocabulary of false myth about the European Union

### Myth nr. 16

*Write here the false myth you are deconstructing*

#### **The EU wants to destroy the Christian heritage of Europe**

*Please provide the context where you heard/read (or you think you might hear/read) the false myth (example: a workplace, a public discussion, a meeting with a friend, a newspaper.). Is it a popular false myth that you heard a lot? Or was it just once?*

The myth that the EU intends to undermine the Christian heritage of Europe is pervasive and often encountered across countries, particularly in countries governed by extreme right-wing forces. Hungary's current government actively disseminates this myth through various channels, including billboards, 'national consultation' forms, and official communication outlets. Through these platforms, the myth swiftly permeates society on a large scale. This unfounded narrative is closely linked to another myth suggesting that the EU seeks to erode national cultures. It originates from the notion that Christianity, as a widely practiced religion in Europe, represents 'traditional' and 'Western' beliefs **in conflict with other identities**.

*How can we tackle it? Which instrument do you suggest to use to tackle the false myth? Did you use some official information to argue in the discussion? Can you provide useful data, sources and narrative to deconstruct it?*

Addressing this myth involves examining original sources to understand the social dynamics related to religion, rather than relying on statements from a government or party leaders. Additionally, maintaining a critical perspective on how national media operates in Hungary is recommended to recognize potential alterations or omissions of information about the EU. It is crucial to seek information from diverse sources when investigating a subject.

An investigative article from 2019 by [atlatzo.hu](http://atlatzo.hu) challenges the Hungarian government's assertion that Hungary is a Christian country. Despite 54.2 percent of the Hungarian population professing to be Christian, global statistics show that Hungary is among the least Christian among predominantly Christian countries. The article highlights the complexity of defining a country as Christian, pointing out that statistical counts based on self-declaration can be deceptive. For instance, during the census, 27 percent of respondents in Hungary chose not to

answer the question about religion, indicating a growing trend of secularization. Therefore, even the government's claim about Hungary being a Christian country lacks a solid basis in available statistics.

Furthermore, the EU, as stated in its motto, is founded on the principle of "unity in diversity," emphasizing the protection of cultural diversity while recognizing common principles and values.

*What is the best way to address this type of discussion? Provide useful tips for the people who might incur in such a debate.*

In conclusion, it's advisable to stay grounded by observing our surroundings and seeking information from various sources. It's important to critically assess information from the media as well. Furthermore, rather than merely directing individuals to resources, it is advantageous to engage in conversations with them, either directly or indirectly, to comprehend the roots of their prejudices and assist in deconstructing them.