



Jean Monnet Chair

EU Institutions, Rights and Judicial Integration

Questions and Answers about

EU Law

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1. What is the European Union (EU)?

Answer:

The EU is a unique economic and political union between European countries, established to promote integration and cooperation. It has its own institutions and legal system that affect both Member States and individuals.

2. What are the primary objectives of the EU?

Answer:

The main objectives include:

- Promoting peace, democracy, and human rights
- Establishing a single market
- Ensuring economic, social, and territorial cohesion
- Promoting sustainable development and balanced economic growth

3. What is the legal nature of the EU?

Answer:

The EU is considered a sui generis (unique) international organization. It has legal personality, allowing it to sign international treaties and be a subject of international law.

4. What are the sources of EU law?

Answer:

EU law stems from:

- Primary law: Treaties (TEU, TFEU)
- Secondary law: Regulations, Directives, Decisions
- Case law: Decisions of the European Court of Justice (ECJ)
- International agreements and general principles of law

5. What is the difference between a regulation and a directive?

Answer:

- A regulation is directly applicable in all Member States and does not need transposition into national law.
- A directive sets goals for Member States but leaves the form and method of implementation to national authorities.

6. What are the main EU institutions?

Answer:

- European Commission: Proposes legislation, enforces EU law
- European Parliament: Represents EU citizens, co-legislator
- Council of the EU: Represents Member States, co-legislator
- European Council: Defines political direction
- Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU): Ensures uniform interpretation of EU law

7. What is the principle of supremacy of EU law?

Answer:

It means that EU law takes precedence over conflicting national laws of Member States. This principle ensures uniform application of EU law.

8. What is the principle of direct effect?

Answer:

This principle allows individuals to invoke EU law directly before national courts, provided the provision is clear, precise, and unconditional.

9. What role does the European Court of Justice (ECJ) play in the EU legal order?

Answer:

The ECJ ensures that EU law is interpreted and applied uniformly across Member States. It settles legal disputes and ensures compliance with treaties.

10. How does the EU uphold fundamental rights?

Answer:

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU enshrines civil, political, economic, and social rights. It has binding legal force and is interpreted alongside the European Convention on Human Rights.

11. What are the founding treaties of the European Union?

Answer:

- Treaty on European Union (TEU) – Maastricht Treaty
 - Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) – formerly the Treaty of Rome
- These form the primary legal basis of the EU.

12. What is the single market?

Answer:

The single market allows for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people within the EU, removing internal barriers and harmonizing laws.

13. What is the role of the European Commission?

Answer:

The Commission:

- Proposes legislation
- Ensures correct implementation of EU law
- Manages the EU budget
- Represents the EU internationally in specific areas

14. What is the role of the European Parliament?

Answer:

- Shares legislative power with the Council of the EU
- Exercises democratic supervision over institutions
- Adopts the EU budget

15. What is the composition of the European Council?

Answer:

It consists of:

- Heads of state or government of the Member States
- The President of the European Council
- The President of the European Commission

16. What is the principle of conferral in EU law?

Answer:

The EU can only act within the limits of the competences conferred upon it by the treaties. Powers not given to the EU remain with the Member States.

17. What are exclusive competences of the EU?

Answer:

Only the EU can legislate in these areas:

- Customs union
- Competition rules for the internal market
- Common commercial policy
- Monetary policy for eurozone countries

18. What are shared competences?

Answer:

Both the EU and Member States can legislate in areas like:

- Internal market
- Environment
- Consumer protection
- Transport

19. What is the principle of subsidiarity?

Answer:

In areas of shared competence, the EU acts only when objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by Member States and can be better achieved at the EU level.

20. What is the principle of proportionality?

Answer:

EU action must not exceed what is necessary to achieve treaty objectives. It ensures EU institutions do not overstep their powers.