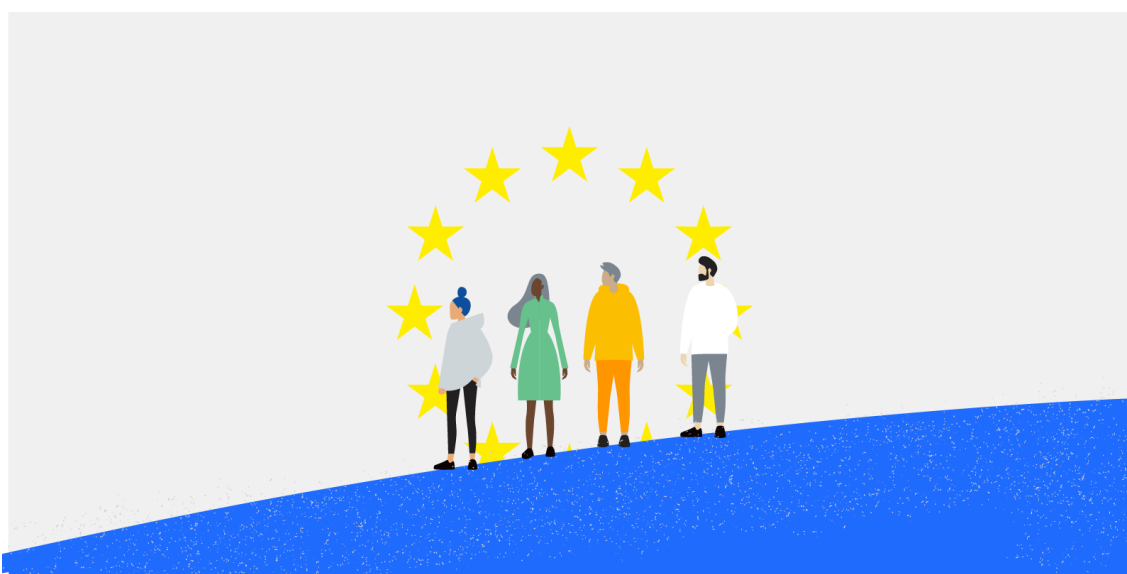


30 years of EU single market: benefits and challenges (infographics)

Over the past 30 years the single market has brought unity and opportunities to Europeans. MEPs believe it has to be adapted further to respond to current challenges.



During the plenary session in mid-January 2023, MEPs discussed how the single market has transformed Europe since its launch in 1993 and what else should be done to make full use of its potential.

Parliament [adopted a resolution](#) saying the single market's accomplishments could not be taken for granted and its further development would require renewed commitment and political will from EU countries and institutions.

The single market: bringing Europe together

One of the cornerstones of EU integration, the single market makes it possible for goods, services, capital and people to move across the bloc as freely as within a single country.

It includes both EU and non-EU countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway take part through the European Economic Area they have established with the EU, while Switzerland has

concluded a series of bilateral agreements with the EU that give the country partial access to the single market.

THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET

The single market, **launched in 1993**, guarantees the free movement of:

- Goods
- Services
- Capital
- People

Current members:

- EU countries
- ▨ Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA)
Iceland Liechtenstein Norway
- ▨ Bilateral agreements
Switzerland

Sources: European Commission and European Parliament

Map of the EU and non-EU countries that are part of the single market

Benefits of the single market

Harmonisation and mutual recognition of standards allow businesses to sell their products to a market of more than 450 million.

The removal of obstacles has led to a significant increase in trade within the EU. While exports of goods to other EU countries amounted to €671 billion in 1993, they rose to more than €3.4 trillion in 2021.

The single market has helped turn the EU into one of the most powerful trade blocs in the world, on a par with other global trade powers such as the US and China.

EU citizens benefit from high product safety standards and can study, live, work and retire in any EU country.



The main benefits of the single market



BOOSTING TRADE WITHIN THE EU

The removal of obstacles **has increased trade between EU countries**

Intra-EU exports of goods (billion €)



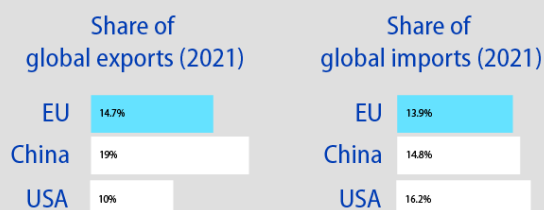
Source: European Commission

Boosting trade between EU countries



GLOBAL TRADE POWER

The EU rivals the United States and China in terms of share of **world exports and imports**



Source: Eurostat (EXT_LT_INTROEU27_2020)

Global trade power



HIGH-QUALITY PRODUCTS

The single market establishes **common standards** to ensure products have the **same quality** across the EU

Over 3,600 standards
had been harmonised
at the EU level by 2022



Source: European Commission

High-quality products



PROTECTING CONSUMERS

EU rules aim to ensure that all products in the EU, whether **sold online** or in **traditional shops**, are **safe** and that consumers have the knowledge to make **informed choices**.



Sources: European Commission, European Parliament

Protecting consumers

The road ahead for the single market

Thirty years after its launch, the single market remains a work in progress. The EU is striving to get rid of the remaining obstacles to free movement and to adapt the market to new developments such as the digital transformation and the transition to a less carbon-intensive and more sustainable economy.

The European Parliament [adopted the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act](#) in 2022, which impose a common set of requirements on digital platforms across the EU, in order to create a safer, fairer and more transparent online environment.

MEPs are pushing for the establishment of a [right to repair products](#), as the difficulties consumers face with fixing things mean ever-increasing mountains of waste.

Parliament would also like to see the single market become more resilient to crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which risk causing temporary disruptions to the free movement of goods or people.

In a [statement on the 30th anniversary of the single market](#), [Anna Cavazzini](#) (Greens/EFA, Germany), the chair of Parliament's internal market committee, called for further steps to develop the rules on which the single market is based.

"The single market has to become a tool to implement our policy goals and values, from fighting the climate crisis to defending our democracy online. High consumer, social and environmental standards is what makes our market so attractive globally. Businesses will profit from European standards that will become a global yardstick," Cavazzini said.

THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET

THE ROAD AHEAD

The European Parliament continues to work on improving how the single market functions and adapts to new challenges.



Source: European Parliament

The road ahead for the single market

SUPPORTING THE DIGITAL TRANSITION BY:



- Creating a framework for a harmonised and trustworthy digital market
- Developing a common approach to artificial intelligence
- Creating conditions for free flow of data across EU countries



Source: European Parliament

Supporting the digital transition

SUPPORTING THE GREEN TRANSITION BY:

- Introducing a common charger for mobile devices to reduce waste and save consumers money
- Making sure that products last longer and can be easily repaired



Source: European Parliament

Supporting the green transition

PREVENTING DISRUPTIONS

Boosting the resilience of the single market to prevent supply chain shortages and other problems in times of crisis



Source: European Parliament

Preventing disruptions

NEW IMPETUS NEEDED

MEPs want to see a renewed commitment from EU institutions and countries towards improving the single market



Source: European Parliament

New impetus needed for the single market