



10 things you didn't know about the EU

- 1** European economic integration began in 1951 when six countries - Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Netherlands - set up the European Coal and Steel Community.
- 2** The European flag has twelve gold stars because the number twelve is a traditional symbol of perfection, completeness and unity. It is also the number of months in a year and the number of hours on a clock face.
- 3** The anthem of the European Union is the "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. This melody, which almost everyone knows, consists of only six notes spread over twenty-four bars.
- 4** The 9th of May is Europe Day. It was on the 9th of May 1950 that Robert Schuman, the then French Minister of Foreign Affairs, proposed that France and Germany integrate their coal and steel industries.
- 5** Europe is the world's most popular tourist destination. Four EU member states - France, Spain, Italy and the UK - were ranked among the world's top six tourist destinations in 2001.
- 6** In addition to being the legal tender for twelve EU member states (not including Denmark, Sweden and the UK) the euro is also used in Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City.
- 7** Every year a number of European cities are chosen as "cultural capitals". The European Capitals of Culture for 2004 are Genova, in Italy, and Lille, in France; in 2005 it will be Cork, in Ireland.
- 8** Every year or two, the EU organises a series of special events in connection with a particular European issue. 2001 was the "European Year of Languages"; 2004 is the "European Year of Education through Sport".
- 9** One of the aims of the EU is to create a frontier-free area in which (1) people, (2) goods, (3) services and (4) money can all move freely. These are sometimes referred to as "the four freedoms".
- 10** On the 1st of May 2004 the number of official languages in the EU will rise from eleven to twenty. Any of these languages may be used for corresponding with the institutions of the EU.