

“70 Years of EU Law” Book summary

For 70 years, the law has been the driving force behind the growing **integration of Europe**, which has moved **from an economic union to a union for its citizens**. In 1963, in a historic judgment, the Court of Justice ruled that every citizen could claim the rights conferred on him by Union law directly before any national judge. Accordingly, EU law protects every citizen of the Union equally, in all Member States. European law has brought Europe closer to its citizens and enabled us to react crisis after crisis.

The book “70 years of EU law – A Union for its citizens” celebrates 70 years of EU law. This book is a **collaborative project** of the Legal Service of the European Commission. It is the result of our reflections on the principles and foundations of EU law. It is written by lawyers whose daily work in the Legal Service ensures that EU law is correctly applied and properly implemented within the Union. EU law is the **guiding thread of European integration**. All major steps forward in the process of integration are reflected in acts of EU law. EU law characterises the past 70 years of the EU, from the ECSC to the EU of today.

The Book has a **preface** by the President of the European Commission, a **guest contribution** by the President of the European Parliament, and an introduction by the Director General of the Legal Service and his assistant. The **Introduction** provides a summary of the evolution of EU law through its landmark developments, and it presents the mission, organisation and tasks of the Legal Service.

The book is structured in five parts. The first part of the book focuses on how **‘EU law protects and promotes the values of the European Union’**. Chapter 1 describes how those values have evolved from principles to legal obligations. Chapter 2 presents the importance of the conditionality mechanism for the protection of the EU budget in order to ensure the respect of those values. Chapter 3 analyses how the EU promotes and enhances those values worldwide in its role as a geopolitical actor.

The second part is entitled **‘EU Law provides rights to EU citizens’**. Chapter 4 introduces the concept of EU citizenship. Chapter 5 focuses on the digital age and sets out the regime for data protection, including the ‘right to be forgotten’ in its different facets, presenting the challenges and opportunities for EU law when faced with modern technology. Chapter 6 compares the lives of EU citizens now and 70 years ago, by showing how the EU has evolved from an economic community to a union for its citizens, offering a broad range of rights to them.

The third part describes how **‘EU Law improves the lives of EU citizens’**. Chapter 7 outlines how the EU helps to protect our environment and tackle global climate change since the first environmental legislation was adapted in the 1970s. Chapter 8 describes how the common agricultural policy and the common fishery policy have ensured sufficient and high-quality food for EU citizens. Chapter 9 deals with an entirely different matter that affects everyone’s life

(and death): taxes. It shows how EU law has removed tax obstacles to live, work, invest, retire, and die in another Member State.

The fourth part covers how **'EU Law ensures fair competition in the EU internal market'**. Chapter 10 shows how EU competition law enforcement benefits consumers and can be invoked before any national judge. It thus proves that competition law is not just a matter for corporate lawyers. Chapter 11 deals with the distortion of competition by subsidies, and how a level-playing field is achieved in the internal. Chapter 12 brings in a new challenge: ensuring a level playing field not only within the EU, but worldwide. In particular, this applies to carbon pricing, which is an important tool for tackling global climate change.

The final part looks at **'The Commission as central actor of EU Law'**. Chapter 13 sets out the role and powers of the Commission as guardian of the treaties, in particular through the infringement procedure. Chapter 14 describes the Commission central role in the modern administrative system of multilayer governance, describing its right of initiative and its coordination powers. Chapter 15 presents the Commission's contribution to the quality of EU legislation. Chapter 16 describes the European Civil Service and its role in promoting and enforcing EU law. The responsible officials, by virtue of their status as European civil servants, are afforded the necessary independence in the performance of their tasks.

The conclusion on **'The Future of EU Law'** by the Director General and the Deputy Director General shines a light on the Conference on the Future of Europe, its follow-up, and the untapped potential of the EU Treaties.