



The Symbols of Europe

History
Meaning
Chances

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The Functions of Political Symbols

- Information

Just like trademarks, logos, or other symbols of “corporate identity“, political symbols tell „in a nutshell“ what kind of „product“ one is confronted with



- Identity

Flags, anthems and national holidays have kept their function to create a feeling of “belonging“



- Integration

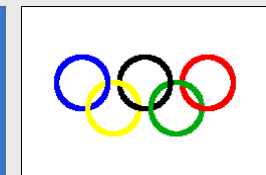
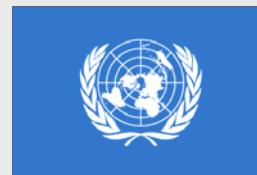
National symbols help to unite a nation, especially when it is composed of various races and religions.



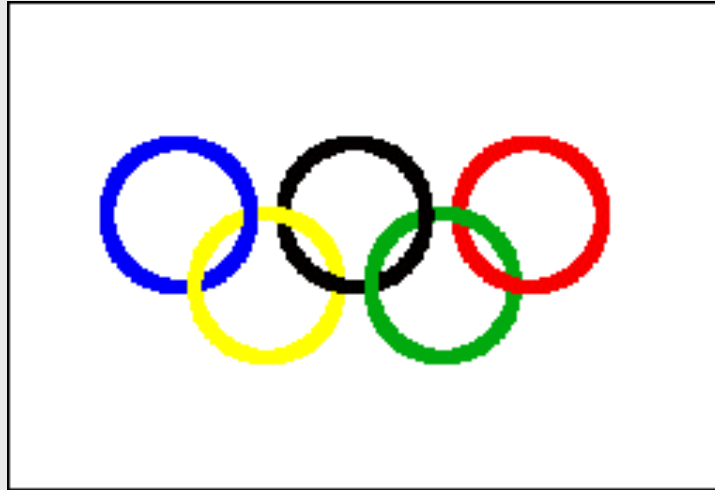
e pluribus unum

- International

International symbols intend to promote peace and cooperation between races, cultures, and nations.



The Olympic Rings



The rings were created by [Baron Pierre de Coubertin](#) (founder of the modern Olympic Movement) in 1913. In a white field, they symbolize peaceful contest among the five major regions of the world: the Americas, Asia, Africa, Europe, and Australia. Coubertin never said that the *colours* of the rings were linked with the five continents, but more often than not they are interpreted in this manner.

The Olympic Flag made its debut at the [1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp](#) – hence it is also referred to as the „Antwerp Flag“.

After the Cataclysm of World War I – a Nobleman's Vision



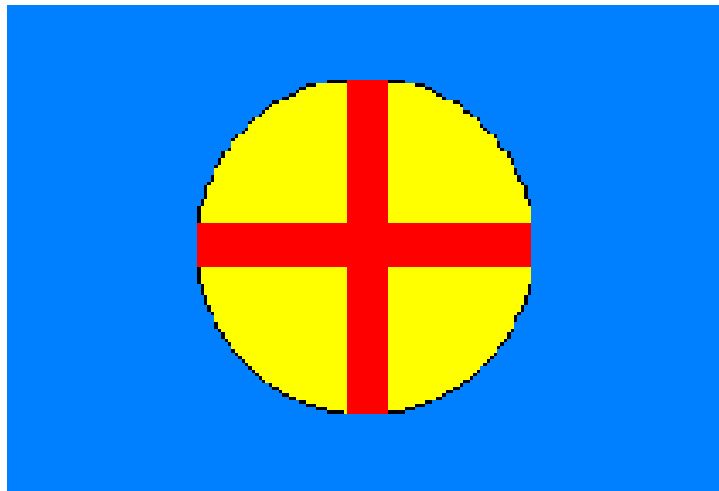
„Paneuropa“

Book published in 1923 by [Richard N. Count Coudenhove-Kalergi](#) (1894-1972).
The [Paneuropa Movement](#) had its central office in Vienna's Hofburg until 1938.

Interpretations of the Paneuropa Symbol

"Christ's Cross on Apollo's Sun"

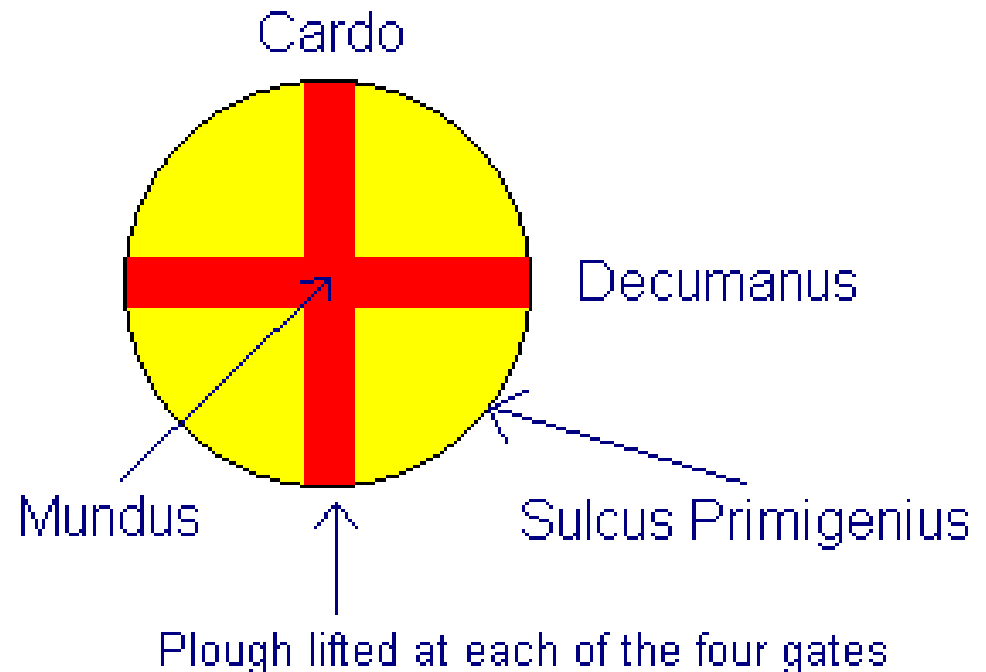
"The red cross of humanitarian compassion against the golden sun of enlightenment"



in a field azure - the blue sky as a symbol of untroubled peace"

"Urbs Quadrata"

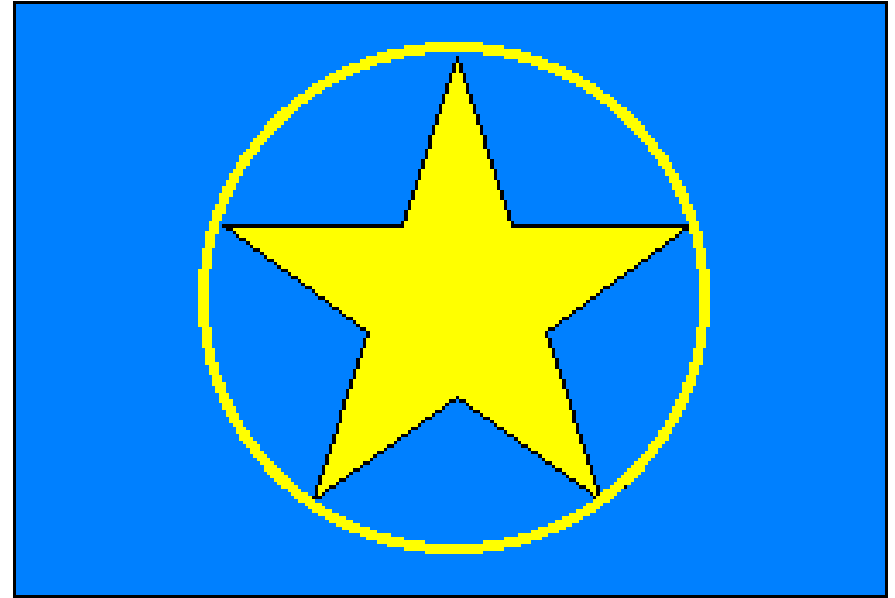
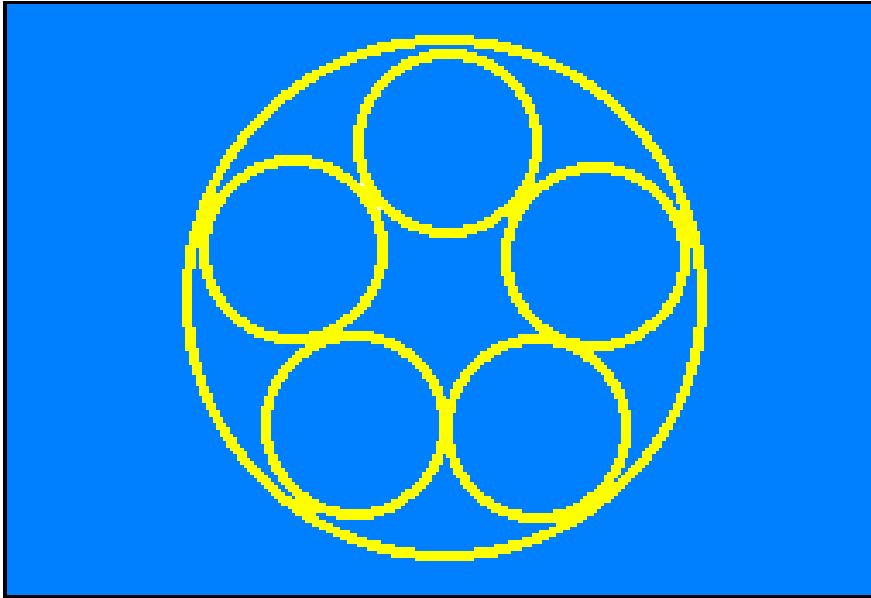
Founding an ancient Roman city by means of a plough (urbs ~ orbis)



The sun symbol is possibly also connected to C-K's Japanese mother and to buddhism

The League of Nations

Founded in 1920, at first no emblem could be agreed upon



In a 1929/30 contest 1640 proposals were submitted, but no first prize was granted. The above designs came second.

The League of Nations at New York 1939



Völkerbund-Emblem

Die Schwäche des Völkerbundes zeigte sich auch in dem lange vergeblich. Bemühen, ein verbindliches Symbol zu finden. Erst 1939 wurde dieses halboffizielle Emblem allgemein genutzt.



**Haack Taschenatlas der Weltgeschichte,
Klett 2002, Seite 174**

The League of Nations was unable to agree on a common symbol. Only in 1939, the flag shown above was used for a short period in New York. It contains these typical elements: the colors blue and white (for peace), the five-pointed star (for freedom and brotherhood), and the pentagram (symbolizing happiness and pointing to the five continents).

The Flag of the United Nations

Unlike the League of Nations, the UN sought from the very beginning to agree on a common symbol. It was published by the General Assembly on 20th October, 1947



<http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/maplib/flag.html>

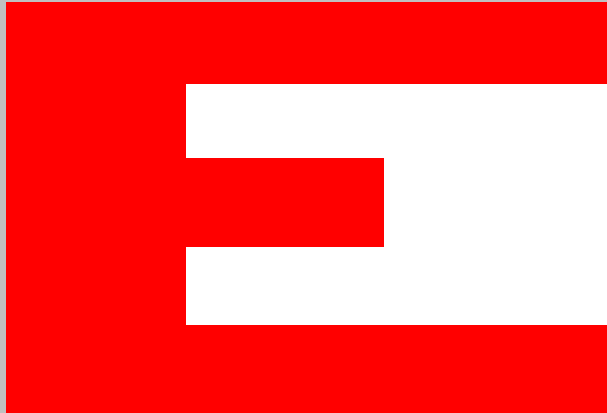
Description of the UN Flag

The United Nations emblem was first approved on 7 December 1946. The design is "a map of the world representing an azimuthal equidistant projection centred on the North Pole, inscribed in a wreath consisting of crossed conventionalized branches of the olive tree, in gold on a field of smoke-blue with all water areas in white. The projection of the map extends to 60 degrees south latitude, and includes five concentric circles".



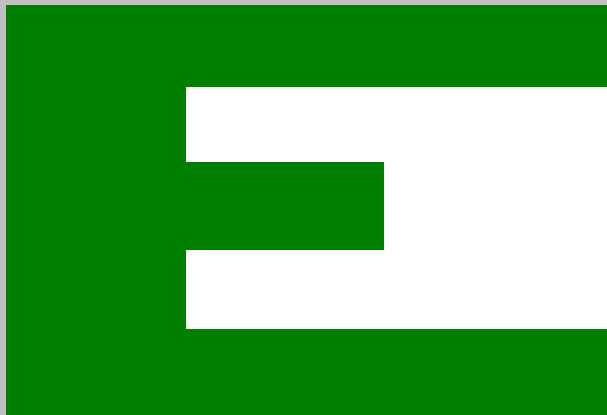
Olive branches symbolize peace. The world map depicts the area of concern to the United Nations in achieving its main purpose, peace and security.

Europe after World War II



**Duncan Sandys:
the first design after WW II**

**"Mouvement Europeen"
June, 1948, The Hague**

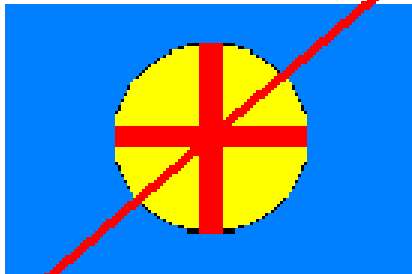


**Modified in August 1948
for a congress in
Strasbourg to symbolize
hope.**

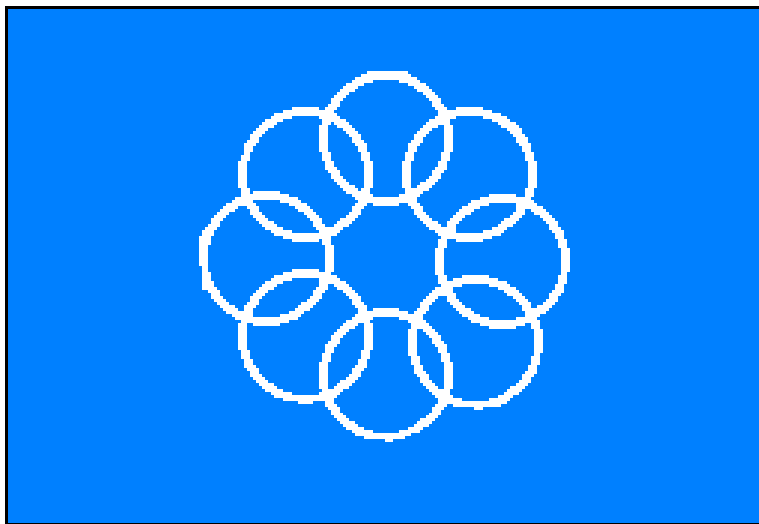
**First flown in London
in 1949**

"Churchill's underpants"

The Council of Europe 1950



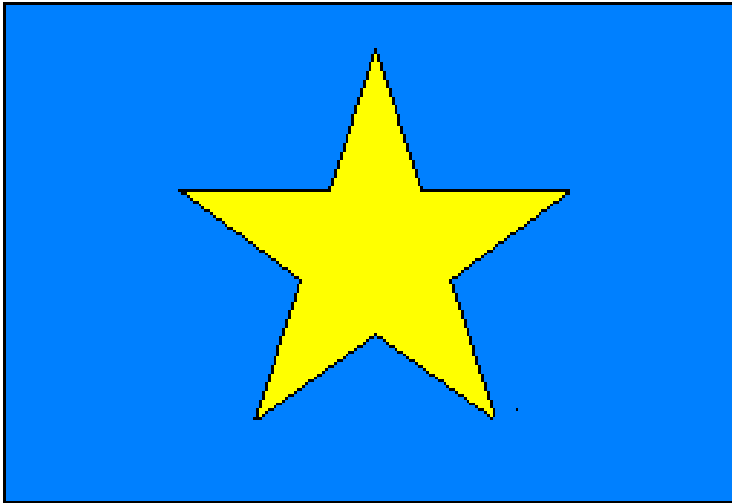
After 1950 the Council of Europe made an attempt to find a common symbol. The Paneuropa emblem was rejected by Islamic Turkey



On the model of the "Olympic Rings" eight silver rings were proposed to symbolise unity, but were rejected because of their similarity with "dial"; "chain" and "zeros".

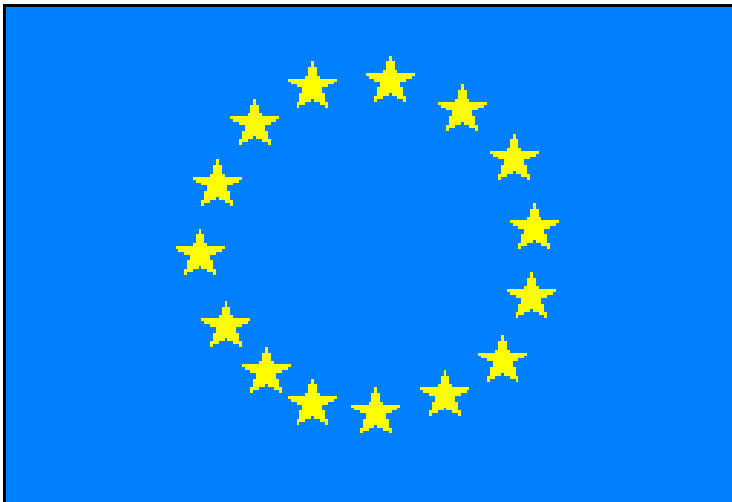
Council of Europe

The Council of Europe 1955



**Proposal by Carl Weidl Raymon,
a German living in Japan:**

**The proposal was rejected because
the design was too similar to the
flag of the then Belgian Congo and
to the emblem of Texas.**



**Paul M.G. Levy proposes 15 stars
according to the 15 member states of the
Council of Europe.**

**As this would have included the Saar,
Germany did not accept this proposal.**

[Council of Europe](#)

The Council of Europe 1955

“Since its foundation in 1949, the Council of Europe has been aware of the need to give Europe a symbol with which its inhabitants can identify. On 25 October 1955 the Parliamentary Assembly made the unanimous decision to adopt a circle of gold stars on a blue background as an emblem. On 8 December 1955 the Committee of Ministers adopted this as the European flag.”



„Against the blue sky of the Western world, the stars represent the peoples of Europe in a circle, the symbol of unity. Their number shall be invariably set at twelve, the symbol of completeness and perfection ... just like the twelve signs of the zodiac represent the whole universe, the twelve gold stars stand for all peoples of Europe – including those who cannot as yet take part in building up Europe in unity and peace.“

11th April, 1983:

The European Parliament accepts the flag as
the official emblem of the European Union



The correct proportion is 2:3 as presented above

http://www.europa.eu.int/abc/symbols/emblem/index_en.htm

Symbolic elements – „Old“ International Organisations

Colours: White, light blue, gold

Forms: Map, circle(s), five-pointed star(s)

Number: 5 → continents

Prototype: Olive branch, Olympic circles



Symbolic elements – European Union

Colours: cobalt blue, gold

Forms: circle, five-pointed stars

Number: 12 → perfection, completeness

Prototype: blue and gold, stars and circles



Green = youth, ecology, general hope for a better world

Light blue = sea, sky → remote hope for peace

Dark blue = security, order → realistic hope for peace

Gold stars = brotherhood; Sun = empire)

Connection of stars with Apocalypse 12,1 is a myth.



The European Anthem

The European Anthem (Ode to Joy) - adapted from the final movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony - was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1972 and has been used by the European Union since 1986. [Herbert von Karajan](#), one of the greatest conductors of this century, acceded to a request by the Council of Europe to write three instrumental arrangements for solo piano, wind and symphonic orchestras. It was recorded at Teatro da Trindade - Lisboa – 1994:



[Play or download anthem](#)

A Predecessor of the European Anthem

One might remember the „fanfare“ used by the [European Broadcasting Union \(EBU\)](#) to introduce and conclude European sports transmissions, the New Year’s Concert, the Eurosong Contest etc.

This very well known tune was taken from the „Te Deum“ of the French composer of baroque music, [Marc-Antoine Charpentier](#) (1643-1704). It was introduced by the EBU in 1950.



Die Europahymne auf Deutsch

Unser Herz schlägt für Europa
Und wir stehen dafür ein,
Dass dem Erdteil es gelinge,
In der Vielfalt eins zu sein.

Ewig wahren in Europa
Friede und Gerechtigkeit,
Und die Freiheit seiner Völker
Sei verbrieft auf alle Zeit.

Blühe, Vaterland Europa,
Bringt das große Werk voran!
Sternengold im blauen Banner,
Dieses Zeichen führt uns an.

Peter Diem, Wien
10. Oktober 2004

The European Anthem in English

Unity has come to Europe,
Unity is here to stay.
Unity is our future –
Long live Europe, come what may!

North and south will work together
Just as friends and neighbours should.
East and West will grow together –
Brotherhood and sisterhood!

Europe, may your peoples flourish,
Let the common banner rise!
Stars of gold and blue of sky
/:Are the colours that we prize.

Peter Diem (Vienna)

The European Anthem in Latin

EST EUROPA NUNC UNITA

ET UNITA MANEAT;

UNA IN DIVERSITATE

PACEM MUNDI AUGEAT.

SEMPER REGANT IN EUROPA

FIDES ET IUSTITIA

ET LIBERTAS POPULORUM

IN MAIORE PATRIA.

CIVES, FLOREAT EUROPA,

OPUS MAGNUM VOCAT VOS.

STELLAE SIGNA SUNT IN CAELO

AUREAE, QUI IUNGANT NOS.



On 5th May 1949, the Council of Europe was founded. For many years, this day was commemorated by member parliaments as „Day of Europe“.

During their Milan Summit in June 1985, EU leaders decided to choose the **9th of May as "Europe Day"**. On 9th May 1950, the Schuman Plan was presented in Paris. This occasion is considered to be the starting point of the process of European unification.

Europe Day

European Licence Plates



[Cf: some licence plates from Europe](#)

The Euro - a Tangible Symbol of Unity

In contrast to abstract symbols, the Euro is a **tangible proof of European unity** – economically and psychologically, especially when travelling through Europe – and even beyond the borders of the EU.



Unlike the totally „supranational“ banknotes, the Euro coins are „European“ only on one side whereas the reverse has been reserved to bear national design.

This has been interpreted as a bad compromise – but respecting national sovereignty of the mint can also be seen as an expression of a federalist concept of the European Union:

„in pluribus unum“ vs. **„e pluribus unum“**

The Euro Banknotes

Designed by the Austrian artist [Robert Kalina](#) the Euro banknotes show **two sets of symbols** with similar connotations:

Window/Door – as the symbols of openness, freshness and the invitation to join

The Bridge – as the symbol of connecting opposites, overcoming difficulties, and uniting people

Referring to the cultural traditions of Europe, seven periods of art and architecture are being quoted: Classical, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Industrial, Contemporary



The Euro Sign and Coins

The common side of the coins was designed by [Luc Luycx](#) of the Royal Belgian Mint. It depicts a map of the European Union against a background of parallel lines linking the 12 stars of the European Union flag.

The national side of the Euro used in Greece shows *Európe* being abducted to Crete by *Zeus*, who approached her as a bull.



Conclusions

- Use of the symbols of Europe is part of the efforts to enhance the (emotional) acceptance of the idea of European unity.
- What adult education can do :
 - inform the public about the meaning of the EU symbols
 - fly your national flag always together with the European flag
 - open official meetings with national and European anthems
 - print flag or „European“ logo on conference papers
 - put „European“ links on your Web site
 - commemorate the 9th of May with some „European“ initiative
 - „europeanize“ your national holiday (→ „neighbourhood day“)
 - invite (your) Members of the European Parliament (MEP)
 - organize a contest to find lyrics to the European Anthem
 - fight against all national stereotypes and prejudices

Long live Europe!



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