It is appropriate to begin our investigation of the world’s geographic realms in Europe because over the past five centuries Europe and Europeans have influenced and changed the rest of the world more than any other realm or people has done. European empires spanned the globe and transformed societies far and near. European colonialism propelled the first wave of globalization. Millions of Europeans migrated from their homelands to the Old World as well as the New, changing (and sometimes nearly obliterating) traditional communities and creating new societies from Australia to North America. Colonial power and economic incentive combined to impel the movement of millions of imperial subjects from their ancestral homes to distant lands: Africans to the Americas, Indians to Africa, Chinese to Southeast Asia, Malays to South Africa’s Cape, Native Americans from east to west. In agriculture, industry, politics, and other spheres, Europe generated revolutions—and then exported those revolutions across the world, thereby consolidating the European advantage.

But throughout much of that 500-year period of European hegemony, Europe also was a cauldron of conflict. Religious, territorial, and political disputes precipitated bitter wars that even spilled over into the colonies. During the twentieth century, Europe twice plunged the world into war. The terrible, unprecedented toll of World War I (1914–1918) was not enough to stave off World War II (1939–1945), which ended with the first-ever use of nuclear weapons in Japan. In the aftermath of that war, Europe’s weakened powers lost most of their colonial possessions and a new rivalry emerged: an ideological Cold War between the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist United States. This Cold War lowered an Iron Curtain across the heart of Europe, leaving most of the east under Soviet control and most of the west in the American camp. Western Europe proved resilient, overcoming the destruction of war and the loss of colonial power to regain economic strength. Meanwhile the Soviet communist experiment failed at home and abroad, and in 1990 the last vestiges of the Iron Curtain were lifted. Since then, a massive effort has been underway to reintegrate and reunify Europe from the Atlantic coast to the Russian border, the key geographic story of this chapter.

As Figure 1-1 shows, Europe is a realm of peninsulas and islands on the western margin of the world’s largest landmass, Eurasia. It is a realm of 585 million people and 39 countries, but it is territorially quite small. Yet despite its modest proportions it has had—and continues to have—a major impact on world affairs. For many centuries Europe has been a hearth of achievement, innovation, and invention.

The European realm is bounded on the west, north, and south by Atlantic, Arctic, and Mediterranean waters, respectively. But where is Europe’s eastern limit? Some scholars place it at the Ural Mountains, deep inside Russia, thereby recognizing a “European” Russia and, presumably, an “Asian” one as well. Our regional definition places Europe’s eastern boundary between Russia and its numerous European neighbors to the west. This definition
is based on several geographic factors including Euro-
population size, cultural properties, and historic aspects, all
discernible on the maps in Chapters 1 and 2.

Europe’s peoples have benefited from a large and
diverse store of raw materials. Whenever the opportunity
or need arose, the realm proved to contain what was re-
quired. Early on, these requirements included cultivable
soils, rich fishing waters, and wild animals that could
be domesticated; in addition, extensive forests provided
wood for houses and boats. Later, mineral fuels and ores
propelled industrialization.

From the balmy shores of the Mediterranean Sea to
the icy peaks of the Alps, and from the moist woodlands
and moors of the Atlantic fringe to the semiarid prairies
north of the Black Sea, Europe presents an almost infi-
nite range of natural environments (Fig. 1-2). Compare
Western Europe and eastern North America on Figure
G-8 (pp. 14–15) and you will see the moderating influ-
ence of the warm ocean current known as the North At-
lantic Drift and its onshore windflow.

The European realm is home to peoples of numerous
Cultural-linguistic stocks, including not only Latins,
Germanics, and Slavs but also minorities such as Finns,
Magyars (Hungarians), Basques, and Celts. This diver-
sity of ancestries continues to be an asset as well as a lia-

bility. It has generated not only interaction and ex-
change, but also conflict and war.

Europe also has outstanding locational advantages.
its relative location, at the heart of the land hemisphere,
creates maximum efficiency for contact with much of the
rest of the world (Fig. 1-3). A “peninsula of peninsulas,”
Europe is nowhere far from the ocean and its avenues
of seaborne trade and conquest. Hundreds of miles of
navigable rivers, augmented by an unmatched system
of canals, open the interior of Europe to its neighboring
seas and to the waterways of the world.

Also consider the scale of the maps of Europe in this
chapter. Europe is a realm of moderate distances and
close proximities. Short distances and large cultural dif-
fences make for intense interaction, the constant circu-
lation of goods and ideas. That has been the hallmark of
Europe’s geography for over a millennium.

LANDSCAPES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Europe’s area may be small, but its landscapes are varied
and complex. Regionally, we identify four broad units: the
Central Uplands, the southern Alpine Mountains, the West-
ern Uplands, and the North European Lowland (Fig. 1-4).
The Central Uplands form the heart of Europe. It is a region of hills and low plateaus loaded with raw materials whose farm villages grew into towns and cities when the Industrial Revolution transformed this realm.

The Alpine Mountains, a highland region named after the Alps, extend from the Pyrenees on the French-Spanish border to the Balkan Mountains near the Black Sea, and include Italy’s Appennines and Eastern Europe’s Carpathians.

The Western Uplands, geologically older, lower, and more stable than the Alpine Mountains, extend from Scandinavia through western Britain and Ireland to the heart of the Iberian Peninsula in Spain.

The North European Lowland extends in a lengthy arc from southeast Britain and central France across Germany and Denmark into Poland and Ukraine, from where it continues well into Russia. Also known as the Great European Plain, this has been an avenue for human
migration time after time, so that complex cultural and economic mosaics developed here together with a jigsaw-like political map. As Figure 1-4 shows, many of Europe’s major rivers and connecting waterways serve this populous region, where many of Europe’s leading cities (London, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Berlin, Warsaw) are located.

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

Modern Europe was peopled in the wake of the Pleistocene’s most recent glacial retreat and global warming—a gradual warming that caused tundra to give way to deciduous forest and ice-filled valleys to turn into grassy vales. On Mediterranean shores, Europe witnessed the rise of its first great civilizations, on the islands and peninsulas of Greece and later in what is today Italy.

Ancient Greece lay exposed to influences radiating from the advanced civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley, and in their fragmented habitat the Greeks laid the foundations of European civilization. Their achievements in political science, philosophy, the arts, and other spheres have endured for 25 centuries. But the ancient Greeks never managed to unify their domain, and their persistent conflicts proved fatal when the Romans challenged them from the west. By 147 B.C., the last of the sovereign Greek intercity leagues (alliances) had fallen to the Roman conquerors.

The center of civilization and power now shifted to Rome in present-day Italy. Borrowing from Greek culture, the Romans created an empire that stretched from Britain to the Persian Gulf and from the Black Sea to Egypt; they made the Mediterranean Sea a Roman lake carrying armies to distant shores and goods to imperial Rome. With an urban population that probably exceeded 1 million, Rome was the first metropolitan-scale urban center in Europe.

The Romans founded numerous other cities throughout their empire and linked them to the capital through a vast system of highway and water routes, facilitating political control and enabling economic growth in their provinces. It was an unparalleled infrastructure, much of which long outlasted the empire itself.

Roman rule brought disparate, isolated peoples into the imperial political and economic sphere. By guiding (and often forcing) these groups to produce particular goods or materials, they launched Europe down a road for which it would become famous: local functional specialization. The workers on Elba, a Mediterranean island, mined iron ore. Those near Cartagena in Spain produced silver and lead. Certain farmers were taught irrigation to produce specialty crops. Others raised livestock for meat or wool. The production of particular goods by particular people in particular places became and remained a hallmark of the realm.

The Romans also spread their language across the empire, setting the stage for the emergence of the Romance languages; they disseminated Christianity; and they established durable systems of education, administration, and commerce. But when their empire collapsed in the fifth century, disorder ensued, and massive migrations soon brought Germanic and Slavic peoples to their present positions on the European stage. Capitalizing on Europe’s weakness, the Arab-Berber Moors from North Africa, energized by Islam, conquered most of Iberia and penetrated France. Later the Ottoman Turks invaded Eastern Europe and reached the outskirts of Vienna.

Europe’s revival—its Renaissance—did not begin until the fifteenth century. After a thousand years of feudal turmoil marking the “Dark” and “Middle” Ages, powerful monarchies began to lay the foundations of modern states. The discovery of continents and riches across the oceans opened a new era of mercantilism, the competitive accumulation of wealth chiefly in the form of gold and silver. Best placed for this competition were the kingdoms of Western Europe. Europe was on its way to colonial expansion and world domination.

THE REVOLUTIONS OF MODERNIZING EUROPE

Even as Europe’s rising powers reached for world domination overseas, they fought with each other in Europe itself. Powerful monarchies and land-owning (“landed”) aristocracies had their status and privilege challenged by ever-wealthier merchants and businesspeople. Demands for political recognition grew; cities mushroomed with the development of industries; the markets for farm products burgeoned; and Europe’s population, more or less stable at about 100 million since the sixteenth century, began to increase.

The Agrarian Revolution

We know Europe as the focus of the Industrial Revolution, but before this momentous development occurred another revolution was already in progress: the agrarian revolution. Port cities and capital cities thrived and expanded, and their growing markets created economic opportunities for farmers. This led to revolutionary changes in land ownership and agricultural methods. Improved farm practices, better equipment, superior storage facilities, and more efficient transport to the urban markets marked a revolution in the countryside. The
colonial merchants brought back new crops (the American potato soon became a European staple), and market prices rose, drawing more and more farmers into the economy.

The transformation of Europe’s farmlands reshaped its economic geography, producing new patterns of land use and market links. The economic geographer Johann Heinrich von Thünen (1783–1850), himself an estate farmer who had studied these changes for several decades, published his observations in 1826 in a pioneering work entitled *The Isolated State*, chronicling the geography of Europe’s agricultural transformation.

Von Thünen used information from his own farmstead to build what today we call a model (an idealized representation of reality that demonstrates its most important properties) of the location of productive activities in Europe’s farmlands. Since a model is an abstraction that must always involve assumptions, von Thünen postulated a self-contained area (hence the “isolation”) with a single market center, flat and uninterrupted land without impediments to cultivation or transportation. In such a situation, transport costs would be directly proportional to distance.

Von Thünen’s model revealed four zones or rings of land use encircling the market center (Fig. 1-5). Innermost and directly adjacent to the market would lie a zone of intensive farming and dairying, yielding the most perishable and highest-priced products. Immediately beyond lay a zone of forest used for timber and firewood (still a priority in von Thünen’s time). Next there would be a ring of field crops, for example, grains or potatoes. A fourth zone would contain pastures and livestock. Beyond lay wilderness, from where the costs of transport to market would become prohibitive.

In many ways, von Thünen’s model was the first analysis in a field that would eventually become known as location theory. Von Thünen knew, of course, that the real Europe did not present the conditions postulated in his model. But it did demonstrate the economic-geographic forces that shaped the new Europe, which is why it is still being discussed today. More than a century after the publication of *The Isolated State*, geographers Samuel van Valkenburg and Colbert Held produced a map of twentieth-century European agricultural intensity, revealing a striking, ring-like concentricity focused on the vast urbanized area lining the North Sea—now the dominant market for a realmwide, macroscale “Thünian” agricultural system (Fig. 1-6).

The Industrial Revolution

The term Industrial Revolution suggests that an agrarian Europe was suddenly swept up in wholesale industrialization that changed the realm in a few decades. In reality, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe had been industrializing in many spheres, long before the chain of events known as the Industrial Revolution began. From the textiles of England and Flanders to the iron farm implements of Saxony (in present-day Germany), from Scandinavian furniture to French linens, Europe had already entered a new era of local functional specialization. It would therefore be more appropriate to call what happened next the period of Europe’s industrial intensification.

In the 1780s, the Scotsman James Watt and others devised a steam-driven engine, which was soon adopted for numerous industrial uses. At about the same time, coal (converted into carbon-rich coke) was recognized as a vastly superior substitute for charcoal in smelting iron. These momentous innovations had a rapid effect. The power loom revolutionized the weaving industry. Iron smelters, long dependent on Europe’s dwindling forests for fuel, could now be concentrated near coalfields. Engines could move locomotives as well as power looms. Ocean shipping entered a new age.

Britain had an enormous advantage, for the Industrial Revolution occurred when British influence reigned worldwide and the significant innovations were achieved in Britain itself. The British controlled the flow of raw materials, they held a monopoly over products
that were in global demand, and they alone possessed the skills necessary to make the machines that manufactured the products. Soon the fruits of the Industrial Revolution were being exported, and the modern industrial spatial organization of Europe began to take shape. In Britain, manufacturing regions, densely populated and heavily urbanized, developed near coalfields in the English Midlands, at Newcastle to the northeast, in southern Wales, and along Scotland’s Clyde River around Glasgow.

In mainland Europe, a belt of major coalfields extends from west to east, roughly along the southern margins of the North European Lowland, due eastward from southern England across northern France and Belgium, Germany (the Ruhr), western Bohemia in the Czech Republic, Silesia in southern Poland, and the Donets Basin (Donbas) in eastern Ukraine. Iron ore is found in a broadly similar belt, and the industrial map of Europe reflects the resulting concentrations of economic activity (Fig. 1-7). Another set of manufacturing zones emerged in and near the growing urban centers of Europe, as the same map demonstrates.

London—already Europe’s leading urban focus and Britain’s richest domestic market—was typical of these developments. Many local industries were established here, taking advantage of the large supply of labor, the ready availability of capital, and the proximity of so great a number of potential buyers. Although the Industrial Revolution thrust other places into prominence, London did not lose its primacy: industries in and around the British capital multiplied.

The industrial transformation of Europe, like the agrarian revolution, became the focus of geographic research. One of the leaders in this area was the economic geographer Alfred Weber (1868–1958), who published a spatial analysis of the process titled Concerning the Location of Industries (1909). Unlike von Thünen, Weber focused on activities that take place at particular points rather than over large areas. His model, therefore, represented the factors of industrial location, the clustering or dispersal of places of intense manufacturing activity.

One of Weber’s most interesting conclusions has to do with what he called agglomerative (concentrating) and deglomerative (dispersive) forces. It is often advantageous for certain industries to cluster together, sharing equipment, transport facilities, labor skills, and other assets of urban areas. This is what made London (as well as Paris and other cities that were not situated on rich deposits of industrial raw materials) attractive to many manufacturing plants that could benefit from agglomeration and from the large markets that these cities anchored. As Weber found, however, excessive agglomeration may lead to disadvantages such as competition for increasingly
expensive space, congestion, overburdening of infrastructure, and environmental pollution. Manufacturers may then move away, and deglomerative forces will increase.

The Industrial Revolution spread eastward from Britain onto the European mainland throughout the middle and late nineteenth century (see inset, Fig. 1-7). Population skyrocketed, emigration mushroomed, and industrializing cities burst at the seams. European states already had acquired colonial empires before this revolution started; now colonialism gave Europe an unprecedented advantage in its dominance over the rest of the world.

**Political Revolutions**

Revolution in a third sphere—the political—had been going on in Europe even longer than the agrarian or industrial revolutions. Europe’s political revolution took many different forms and affected diverse peoples and countries, but in general it headed toward parliamentary representation and democracy.

Historical geographers point to the Peace (Treaty) of Westphalia in 1648 as a key step in the evolution of Europe’s state system, ending decades of war and recognizing territories, boundaries, and the sovereignty of countries. This treaty’s stabilizing effect lasted until 1806, by which time revolutionary changes were again sweeping across Europe.

Most dramatic was the French Revolution (1789–1795), but political transformation had come much earlier to the Netherlands, Britain, and Scandinavian countries. Other parts of Europe remained under the control of authoritarian (dictatorial) regimes headed by monarchs or despots. Europe’s patchy political revolution lasted into the twentieth century, and by then revolutionary changes were again sweeping across Europe.

When you look at the political map of Europe, the question that arises is how did so small a geographic realm come to be divided into so many political entities? Europe’s map is a legacy of its feudal and royal periods, when powerful kings, barons, dukes, and other rulers, rich enough to fund armies and powerful enough to exact taxes and tribute from their domains, created bounded territories in which they reigned supreme. Royal marriages, alliances, and conquests actually simplified Europe’s political map. In the early nineteenth century there still were 39 German states; Germany as we know it today did not emerge until the 1870s.

Europe’s political revolution produced a form of political-territorial organization known as the **nation-state**, a state embodied by its culturally distinctive population. But what is a nation-state and what is not? The term **nation** has multiple meanings. In one sense it refers to a people with a single language, a common history, a similar ethnic background. In the sense of **nationality** it relates to legal membership in the state, that is, citizenship. Very few states today are so homogeneous culturally that the culture is conterminous with the state. Europe’s prominent nation-states of a century ago—France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy—have become multicultural societies, their nations defined more by an intangible “national spirit” and emotional commitment than by cultural or ethnic homogeneity. Today, Poland, Hungary, and Sweden are among the few states that still satisfy the definition of the nation-state in Europe.

Mercantilism and colonialism empowered the states of Western Europe; the United Kingdom (Britain) was the superpower of its day. But all countries, even Europe’s nation-states in their heyday, are subject to divisive stresses. Political geographers use the term **centrifugal forces** to identify and measure the strength of such division, which may result from religious, racial, linguistic, political, or regional factors. In the United States, racial issues form a centrifugal force; during the Vietnam (Indochina) War (1964–1975) politics created strong and dangerous disunity.

Centrifugal forces are measured against **centripetal forces**, the binding, unifying glue of the state. General satisfaction with the system of government and administration, legal institutions, and other functions of the state (notably including its treatment of minorities) can ensure stability and continuity when centrifugal forces threaten. In the recent case of Yugoslavia, the centrifugal forces unleashed after the end of the Cold War exceeded the weak centripetal forces in that relatively young state, and it disintegrated.

Europe’s political revolution continues. Today a growing group of European states is trying to create a realmwide union that might some day become a European superstate.

**CONTEMPORARY EUROPE**

Europe has been a regional laboratory of political revolution and evolution, and some of its nation-states were among the first of their kind to emerge on the world stage. Enriched and empowered by colonialism, European states competed and fought with each other, but Europe’s nations survived and prospered. Strong cultural identities and historic durability gave European peoples a confidence that continues to mark the realm today, long after Europe’s global empires collapsed.
The European realm exhibits only limited geographic homogeneity, which is a challenge that confronts those leading states that want to create a more unified Europe. As Figure 1-8 shows, most Europeans speak Indo-European languages, but in fact Europe remains a veritable Tower of Babel. Not only are many of those Indo-European languages not mutually understandable, but peoples such as the Hungarians and the Finns have other linguistic sources. English has become Europe’s lingua franca, but generally with declining effectiveness from west to east.

Christian religious traditions, another factor that might serve as a unifier, have instead been the source of endless conflict. Shared Christian values, for example, have done little to bring peace to Northern Ireland, where longstanding sectarian strife continues. Religion and politics remain closely connected, and some national and regional political parties still have religious names, such as Germany’s Christian Democratic Union and Bavaria’s Christian Social Union.

The name “European” is sometimes taken to refer not just to someone residing in Europe, but as a racial reference, describing a common ancestry. But here again, Europe’s purported homogeneity is more apparent than real. In terms of physical characteristics, Europeans, from Swede to Spaniard and from Scot to Sicilian, are as varied as any of the world’s other geographic realms.

Spatial Interaction

If not culture, what does unify Europe? The answer lies in this realm’s outstanding opportunities for productive contact and profitable interaction. The ancient Romans knew it, but they centered their system on the imperial capital. Modern Europeans have seized the same opportunities to create a regionwide structure of spatial interaction that links regions, countries, and places in countless ways. The American geographer Edward Ullman conceptualized this process around three operating principles: (1) complementarity, (2) transferability, and (3) intervening opportunity.

Complementarity occurs when one area has a surplus of a commodity required by another area. The mere existence of a particular resource or product is no guarantee of trade: it must be needed elsewhere. One of Europe’s countless examples (at various levels of scale) involves Italy, leader among Mediterranean countries in economic development but lacking adequate coal supplies. Italy imports coal from Western Europe, and in turn Italy exports to Western Europe its citrus fruits, olives, and grapes—which are in high demand on Western European markets. This is a case of double complementarity.
Europe’s internal spatial interaction is facilitated by what in many respects is the world’s most effective network of railroads, highways, waterways, and air routes. This network is continuously improving as tunnels, bridges, high-speed rail lines (see photo at left), and augmented airports are built. The continent’s burgeoning cities and their environs, however, are increasingly troubled by severe congestion.

**An Urbanized Realm**

Overall, 73 percent of Europe’s population resides in cities and towns, but this average is exceeded by far in the west and not attained in the east.

Large cities are the crucibles of their nations’ cultures. In his 1939 study of the pivotal role of great cities in the development of national cultures, American geographer Mark Jefferson postulated the law of the **primate city**, which stated that “a country’s leading city is always disproportionately large and exceptionally expressive of national capacity and feeling.” Though imprecise, this “law” can readily be demonstrated using European examples. Certainly Paris personifies France in countless ways, and nothing in England rivals London. In both of these prime cities, the culture and history of a nation and empire are indelibly etched in the urban landscape. Similarly, Vienna is a microcosm of Austria, Warsaw is the heart of Poland, Stockholm typifies Sweden, and Athens is Greece. Today, each of these (together with the other prime cities of Europe) sits atop a hierarchy of urban centers that has captured the lion’s share of its national population growth since World War II.

Prime cities tend to be old, and in general the European cityscape looks quite different from the American. Seemingly haphazard inner-city street systems impede traffic; central cities may be picturesque, but they are also cramped. The urban layout of the London region (Fig. 1-9) reveals much about the internal spatial structure of the European **metropolis** (the central city and its suburban ring). The metropolitan area remains focused on the large city at its center, especially the downtown **central business district** (CBD), which is the oldest part of the urban agglomeration and contains the region’s largest concentration of business, government, and shopping facilities as well as its wealthiest and most prestigious residences. Wide residential sectors radiate outward from the CBD across the rest of the central city, each one home to a particular income group. Beyond the central city lies a sizeable suburban ring, but residential densities are much higher here than in the United States because the European tradition is one of setting aside recreational spaces (in “greenbelts”) and living in apartments rather than in detached single-family

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**FROM THE FIELD NOTES**

“It seemed the quickest way to go from central London to central Paris: the Eurostar “Chunnel” Express from Waterloo Station to the Gare du Nord in less than three hours. But it was also a study in contrasts. On the British side of the English Channel, the train chugged along, sometimes at less than 40 mph (65 kph). Once in the tunnel beneath the Channel, the track was smoother and the speed picked up. On the French side, we moved at 150 mph (250 kph), not fast enough, however, to make up for lost time. The conductor’s announcement pointedly referred to delays on the Angleterre segment of the journey being the cause of the late arrival at the Paris terminal. This money-losing link between the United Kingdom and the continent is nevertheless symbolic of unifying Europe, but it reveals some other contrasts: the dreadful breakfast out of London and the delightful dinner out of Paris, the chaotic security and immigration scene at Waterloo and the smooth process at Gare du Nord ( wasn’t this supposed to be a domestic intra-EU excursion?), and both ways the complete lack of passenger information—no map, no brochure on the train and its manufacture, no history of the link. Who’s in charge here?” © H. J. de Blij

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13 **Transferability** refers to the ease with which a commodity is transported between producer and consumer. Sheer distance, in terms of cost and time, may make it economically impractical to transfer a product. This is not a problem in modestly sized Europe, where distances are short and transport systems efficient.

14 **Intervening opportunity**, the third of Ullman’s spatial interaction principles, holds that potential trade between two places, even if they are in a position of complementarity and do not have problems of transferability, will develop only in the absence of a closer, intervening source of supply. Using our current example, if a major coal reserve were discovered in southern Switzerland, Italy would avail itself of that (intervening) opportunity, reducing or eliminating its imports from Western Europe.
houses. There is also a greater reliance on public transportation, which further concentrates the suburban development pattern. That has allowed many nonresidential activities to suburbanize as well, and today ultramodern outlying business centers increasingly compete with the CBD in many parts of urban Europe (see photo p. 57).

**A Changing Population**

When a population urbanizes, average family size declines, and so does the overall rate of natural increase. There was a time when Europe’s population was (in the terminology of population geographers) exploding, sending millions to the New World and the colonies and still growing at home. But today Europe’s indigenous population, unlike most of the rest of the world’s, is actually shrinking. To keep a population from declining, the (statistically) average woman must bear 2.1 children. For Europe as a whole, that figure was 1.4 in 2004. Several large countries recorded 1.3, including Germany and Italy. And no fewer than ten Eastern European countries recorded 1.2—the lowest ever seen in any human population.

Such *negative population growth* poses serious challenges for any nation. When the population pyramid becomes top-heavy, the number of workers whose taxes pay for the social services of the aged goes down, leading to reduced pensions and dwindling funds for health care. Governments that impose tax increases endanger the business climate; their options are limited. Europe, and especially Western Europe, is experiencing a *population implosion* that will be a formidable challenge in decades to come.

Meanwhile, *immigration* is partially offsetting the losses European countries face. Millions of Turkish Kurds (mainly to Germany), Algerians (France), Moroccans (Spain), West Africans (Britain), and Indonesians (Netherlands) are changing the social fabric of what once were unicultural nation-states. One key dimension of this change is the spread of Islam in Europe (Fig. 1-10). Muslim populations in Eastern Europe (such as Albania’s, Kosovo’s, and Bosnia’s) are local, Slavic communities converted during the period of Ottoman Turkish rule. The Muslim sectors of Western European countries, on the other hand, represent more recent immigrations.

The vast majority of these immigrants are intensely devout, politically aware, and culturally insular. They continue to arrive in a Europe where native populations are stagnant or declining, where religious institutions are weakening, where secularism is rapidly rising, where
political positions often appear to be anti-Islamic, and where cultural norms are incompatible with Muslim traditions. Many young men, unskilled and uncompetitive in a European Union (EU) where unemployment is already high, get involved in petty crime or the drug trade, are harassed by the police, and turn to their faith for solace and reassurance. Unlike most other immigrant groups, Muslim communities also tend to resist assimilation, making Islam the essence of their identity. In Britain alone there are more than 1500 mosques, in themselves a transformation of local cultural landscapes.

In truth, European governments have not done enough to foster the very integration they see Muslims rejecting. The French assumed that their North African immigrants would aspire to assimilation as Muslim children went to public schools from their urban public-housing projects; instead they got into disputes over the dress codes of Muslim girls. The Germans for decades would not award German citizenship to children of immigrant parents born on German soil. The British found their modest efforts at integration stymied by the Muslim practice of importing brides from Islamic countries, which had the effect of perpetuating segregation. In many European cities, the housing projects that form the living space of Muslim residents (by now many of them born and retired there) are dreadful, barren, impoverished environments unseen by Europeans whose images of Paris, Manchester, or Frankfurt are far different.

The social and political implications of Europe’s demographic transformation are numerous and far-reaching. Long known for tolerance and openness, European societies are attempting to restrict immigration in various ways; political parties with anti-immigrant platforms are gaining ground. Multiculturalism poses a growing challenge in a changing Europe.
At the end of World War II, much of Europe lay shattered, its cities and towns devastated, its infrastructure wrecked, its economies devastated. The Soviet Union had taken control over the bulk of Eastern Europe, and communist parties seemed poised to dominate the political life of major Western European countries.

In 1947, U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed a European Recovery Program designed to counter all this dislocation and to create stable political conditions in which democracy would survive. Over the next four years, the United States provided about $13 billion in assistance to Europe (almost $100 billion in today’s money). Because the Soviet Union refused U.S. aid and forced its Eastern European satellites to do the same, the Marshall Plan applied solely to 16 European countries, including defeated (West) Germany, and Turkey.

**European Unification**

The Marshall Plan did far more than stimulate European economies. It showed European leaders that their countries needed a joint economic-administrative structure not only to coordinate the financial assistance, but also to ease the flow of resources and products across Europe’s mosaic of boundaries, to lower restrictive trade tariffs, and to seek ways to effect political cooperation.

For all these needs Europe’s governments had some guidelines. While in exile in Britain, leaders of three small countries—Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg—had been discussing an association of this kind even before the end of the war. There, in 1944, they formulated and signed the Benelux Agreement, intended to achieve total economic integration. When the Marshall Plan was launched, the Benelux precedent helped speed the creation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which was established to coordinate the investment of America’s aid (see box titled “Supranationalism in Europe”).

Soon the economic steps led to greater political cooperation as well. In 1949, the participating governments created the Council of Europe, the beginnings of what was to become a European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg, France. Europe was embarked on still another political revolution, the formation of a multinational union involving a growing number of European countries.
states. Geographers define supranationalism as the voluntary association in economic, political, or cultural spheres of three or more independent states willing to yield some measure of sovereignty for their mutual benefit. In later chapters we will encounter other supranational organizations, including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but none had reached the plateau achieved by the European Union (EU).

In Europe, the key initiatives arose from the Marshall Plan and lay in the economic arena; political integration came more haltingly. Under the Treaty of Rome, six countries joined to become the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, also called the “Common Market.” In 1973 the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark joined, and the renamed European Community (EC) had nine members. As Figure 1-11 shows, membership reached 15 countries in 1995, after the organization had been renamed yet one more time to become the European Union (EU).

The European Union is not just a paper organization for bankers and manufacturers. It has a major impact on the daily lives of its member countries’ citizens in countless ways. (You will see one of these ways when you arrive at an EU airport and find that EU-passport holders move through inspection at a fast pace, while non-EU citizens wait in long immigration lines.) Taxes tend to be high in Europe, and those collected in the richer member-states

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### Supranationalism in Europe

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Benelux Agreement signed.</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) established.</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>Council of Europe created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) Agreement signed (effective 1952).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Treaty signed (effective 1960).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway apply for EEC membership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>France vetoes United Kingdom EEC membership; Ireland, Denmark, and Norway withdraw applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>European Community (EC) inaugurated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>All customs duties removed for intra-EC trade; common external tariff established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland admitted as members of EC, creating “The Nine.” Norway rejects membership in the EC by referendum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>First general elections for a European Parliament held; new 410-member legislature meets in Strasbourg. European Monetary System established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Greece admitted as member of EC, creating “The Ten.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Greenland, acting independently of Denmark, withdraws from EC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Spain and Portugal admitted as members of EC, creating “The Twelve.” Single European Act ratified, targeting a functioning European Union in the 1990s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Turkey and Morocco make first application to join EC. Morocco is rejected; Turkey is told that discussions will continue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Charter of Paris signed by 34 members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Former East Germany, as part of newly reunified Germany, incorporated into EC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Maastricht meeting charts European Union (EU) course for the 1990s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Single European Market goes into effect. Modified European Union Treaty ratified, transforming EC into EU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Austria, Finland, and Sweden admitted into EU, creating “The Fifteen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>European Monetary Union (EMU) goes into effect. Helsinki summit discusses fast-track negotiations with six prospective members and applications from six others; prospects for Turkey considered in longer term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Denmark’s voters reject EMU participation by 53 to 47 percent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The euro is introduced as historic national currencies disappear in 12 countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>First draft of a European Constitution is published to mixed reviews from member-states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Historic expansion of EU from 15 to 25 countries with the admission of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are used to subsidize growth and development in the less prosperous ones. This is one of the burdens of membership that is not universally popular in the EU, to say the least. But it has strengthened the economies of Portugal, Greece, and other national and regional economies to the betterment of the entire organization. Some countries also object to the terms and rules of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which, according to critics, supports farmers far too much and, according to others, far too little. (France in particular obstructs efforts to move the CAP closer to consensus, subsidizing its agricultural industry relentlessly while arguing that this protects its rural cultural heritage as well as its farmers.)

**New Money**

Ever since the first steps toward European unification were taken, EU planners dreamed of a time when the EU would have a single currency not only to symbolize its strengthening unity but also to establish a joint counterweight to the mighty American dollar. A European Monetary Union (EMU) became a powerful objective of EU
planners, but many observers thought it unlikely that member-states would in the end be willing to give up their historic marks, francs, guilders, liras, and escudos. Yet it happened. In 2002, twelve of the (then) fifteen EU countries withdrew their currencies and began using the euro, with only the United Kingdom (Britain), Denmark, and Sweden staying out (Fig. 1-11). Add nonmember Norway to this group, and not a single Scandinavian country has converted to the euro.

**Momentous Expansion**

Expansion has always been an EU objective, and the subject has always aroused passionate debate (see the Issue Box titled “Europe: How Desirable Is Economic and Political Union?”). Will the incorporation of weaker economies undermine the strength of the whole? Despite such misgivings, negotiations to expand the EU have long been in progress, and in 2004 a momentous milestone was reached: ten new members were added, creating a greater European Union with 25 member-states. Geographically, these ten came in three groups: the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania); five contiguous states in Eastern Europe extending from Poland and the Czech Republic through Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia; and two Mediterranean island-states, the minstate of Malta and the still-divided state of Cyprus (Fig. 1-11).

Numerous structural implications arise from this, affecting all EU countries. A common agricultural policy is now even more difficult to achieve, given the poor condition of farming in most of the new members. Some of the former EU’s poorer states, which were on the receiving end of the subsidy program that aided their development, now will have to pay up to support the much poorer new eastern members. Disputes over representation at EU’s Brussels headquarters arose quickly. Even before the new members’ 2004 accession, Poland was demanding that the representative system favor medium-sized members (such as Poland and Spain) over larger ones such as Germany and France.

The geographic consequences of this momentous EU expansion for Europe as a whole are far-reaching. As Figure 1-11 shows, the EU’s new eastern borders leave several groups of countries and peoples outside the Union: (1) the former Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova; (2) two major Eastern European states, Romania and Bulgaria; and (3) the states arising from the breakup of Yugoslavia along with impoverished Albania. Already, negotiations between the EU leadership and Romania and Bulgaria are in progress, and the entry of these countries is expected in 2007 or soon thereafter. In the former Yugoslavia, Croatia may eventually follow its neighbor Slovenia into the EU. But in the rest of Eastern Europe the process will undoubtedly slow down. Political instability, undemocratic regimes, weak economies, and other obstacles stand in the way.

We should take note of still another potential candidate for EU membership: Turkey. EU leaders would like to include a mainly Muslim country in what Islamic states sometimes call the “Christian Club,” but Turkey needs to make progress on social standards, human rights, and economic policies before its accession can be contemplated. Still, the fact that the EU has now reached deeply into Eastern Europe, encompasses 25 members, has a common currency and a parliament, is considering a constitution, and is even contemplating expansion beyond the realm’s borders constitutes a tremendous and historic achievement in this fragmented, fractious part of the world. The EU now has a combined population of almost 460 million constituting one of the world’s richest markets; its member-states account for more than 40 percent of the
IN SUPPORT OF UNION

“As a public servant in the French government I have been personally affected by the events of the past half-century. I am in favor of European unification because Europe is a realm of comparatively small countries, all of which will benefit from economic and political union. Europe’s history is bedeviled by its fragmentation—its borders and barriers and favored cores and disadvantaged peripheries, its different economies and diverse currencies, its numerous languages and varied cultures. Now we have the opportunity and determination to overcome these divisions and to create an entity whose sum is greater than its parts, a supranational Europe that will benefit all of its members.

“In the process we will not only establish a common currency, eliminate trade barriers and customs barriers among our members, and enable citizens of one member-state to live and work in any of the others. We will also make European laws that will supersede the old “national” laws and create regulations that will be adhered to by all members on matters ranging from subsidies to help small farms survive to rules regarding environmental protection. In order to assist the poorer members of this European Union, the richer members will send billions of euros to the needy ones, paid for from the taxes levied on their citizens. This has already lifted Spain and Ireland from poverty to prosperity. But to ensure that “national” economies do not get out of line, there will be rules to govern their fiscal policies, including a debt limit of 3 percent of GDP.

“The EU will require sacrifices from people and governments, but the rewards will make these worth it. Our European Parliament, with representatives from all member countries, is the harbinger of a truly united Europe. The European Commission deals with the practical problems as we move toward unification, including the momentous EU enlargement of 2004. Less than a half-century after the first significant steps were taken, the EU has 25 member-states including former wartime enemies, reformed communist economies, and newly independent entities. Rather than struggling alone, these member-states will form part of an increasingly prosperous and economically powerful whole.

“I hope that administrative coordination and economic union will be followed by political unification. The ultimate goal of this great movement should be the creation of a federal United States of Europe, a worthy competitor and countervailing force in a world dominated by another federation, the United States of America.”

IN OPPOSITION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

“I am a taxi driver in Vienna, Austria, and here’s something to consider: the bureaucrats, not the workers, are the great proponents of this European Union plan. Let me ask you this: how many member countries’ voters have had the chance to tell their governments whether they want to join the EU and submit to all those confounded regulations? It all happened before we realized the implications. At least the Norwegians had common sense: they stayed out of it, because they didn’t want some international body to tell them what to do with their oil and gas and their fishing industry. But I can tell you this: if the workers of Europe had had the chance to vote on each step in this bureaucratic plot, we’d have ended it long ago.

“So what are we getting for it? Higher prices for everything, higher taxes to pay for those poor people in southern Italy and needy Portugal, costly environmental regulations, and—here’s the worst of it—a flood of cheap labor and an uncontrolled influx of immigrants. Notice that this new 2004 expansion wasn’t voted on by the Germans (they’re too small to matter much, but Germany is the largest EU member), and do you know why? Because the German government knew well and good that the people wouldn’t support this ridiculous scheme. This whole European Union program is concocted by the elite, and we have to accept it whether we like it or not.

“Does make me wonder, though. Do these EU-planners have any notion of the real Europe they’re dealing with? They talk about how those “young democracies” joining in 2004 will have their democratic systems and their market reforms locked into place by being part of the Union, but I have friends who try to do business in Poland and Slovakia, and they tell me that there may be democracy, but all they experience is corruption, from top to bottom. I’ll bet that those subsidies we’ll be paying for to help these “democracies” get on their feet will wind up in Swiss bank accounts. By the way, the Swiss, you’ll notice, aren’t EU members either. Wonder why?

“A United States of Europe? Not as far as I am concerned. I am Austrian, and I am and will always be a nationalist as far as my country is concerned. I speak German, but already English is becoming the major EU language, though the Brits were smart enough not to join the euro. I’m afraid that these European Commission bureaucrats have their heads in the clouds, which is why they can’t see the real Europe they’re putting in a straitjacket.”

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world’s exports. Although, as we will note later, Europe is currently experiencing budgetary troubles, it remains an economic power of global significance.

It is remarkable that all this has been accomplished in little more than half a century. Some of the EU’s leaders want more than economic union: they envisage a United States of Europe, a political as well as an economic competitor for the United States. To others, such a “federalist” notion is an abomination not even to be mentioned (the British in general are especially wary of such an idea) and certainly not to be made part of any European constitution. Whatever happens, Europe is going
through still another of its revolutionary changes, and when you study its evolving map you are looking at history in the making.

**Centrifugal Forces**

For all its dramatic progress toward unification, Europe remains a realm of geographic contradictions. Europeans are well aware of their history of conflict, division, and repeated self-destruction. Will supranationalism finally overcome the centrifugal forces that have so long and so frequently afflicted this part of the world?

Even as Europe’s states have been working to join forces in the EU, many of those states are confronting severe centrifugal stresses. The term *devolution* has come into use to describe the powerful centrifugal forces whereby regions or peoples within a state, through negotiation or active rebellion, demand and gain political strength and sometimes autonomy at the expense of the center. Most states exhibit some level of internal regionalism, but the process of devolution is set into motion when a key centripetal binding force—the nationally accepted idea of what a country stands for—eroses to the point that a regional drive for autonomy, or for outright secession, is launched.

As Figure 1-12 shows, numerous European countries are affected by devolution. States large and small, young and old, EU members and non-EU members must deal with the problem. Even the long-stable United Kingdom is affected. England, the historic core area of the British Isles, dominates the UK in terms of population as well as political and economic power. The country’s three other entities—Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland—were acquired over several centuries and attached to England (hence the “United” Kingdom). But neither time nor representative democratic government was enough to eliminate all latent regionalism in these three components of the UK. During the 1960s and 1970s the British government confronted a virtual civil war in Northern Ireland and rising tides of nationalism in Scotland and Wales. In 1997, the government in London gave the Scots and Welsh the opportunity to vote for greater autonomy in new regional parliaments that would have limited but significant powers over local affairs. The Scots voted overwhelmingly in favor, and the Welsh by a slim majority—and thus a major devolutionary step was taken in one of Europe’s oldest, most durable, and most unified states.

Even while this devolutionary process was ongoing, the British government still joined the European Union on behalf not only of the English, but also of the Scots, Welsh, and Northern Irishers seeking a new relationship with London. As the map shows, the UK is not alone in such contradiction. Spain faces severe devolutionary forces in its Basque area and lesser ones in Catalonia and Galicia; France contends with a secessionist movement on its island of Corsica; Belgium is riven by Flemish-Walloon separatism; Italy confronts devolutionary pressures in South Tyrol and Lombardy. In recent decades Eastern Europe has been a cauldron of devolution as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia collapsed, Moldova fragmented, and Ukraine suffered from the stresses of its historical (Russian-penetrated) geography.

Political devolution is not the only centrifugal force to buffet European states. As the European Union materialized, its freedoms (in the form of money flows, labor movements, and transferabilities) led to the emergence of powerful urban regions as hubs of economic power and influence, in some ways beyond the control of their national governments. Examples include the Rhône-Alpes region in France, centered on Lyon; Lombardy in Italy, focused on Milan; Catalonia in Spain, anchored by Barcelona; and Baden-Württemberg in Germany, headquartered by Stuttgart. This group, known as the *Four Motors of Europe*, bypasses not only their national governments in dealing with each other but even extends their business channels to span the world. The Japanese economist Kenichi Ohmae calls such economic powerhouses *regional states*, entities that defy old borders and are shaped by the globalizing economy of which they have become a part.

Like devolutionary forces, these emerging regional states are changing the map of Europe. In some ways, they are beginning to supplant the old framework that arose from the nation-states of an earlier period. Elsewhere, economic development on both sides of international boundaries is having a similar effect, creating *Euroregions* that foster more localized, cross-border cooperation on a continent once rigidly partitioned.

All these developments underscore how far-reaching Europe’s current transformation is. The Marshall Plan jump-started it; good economic times sustained it; and the end of the Cold War stimulated it. But Europe’s gains remain clouded by violent discord in parts of the United Kingdom, Spain, France, and the Balkans, by devolutionary forces elsewhere, and by uncertainties over EU expansion and further political integration.

**From Coast to Coast?**

You cannot look at maps of the eastward expansion of the European Union without a thought crossing your mind: will the European Union eventually include even Russia, and will the EU, as a result, extend from the Atlantic coast to Pacific shores?

This optimistic projection is popular with those who see a European superpower emerge as a counterweight to
the United States and even to a future superpower China, but in 2005 the prospects were not favorable. Even as democracy, free markets, and human rights on the European model were progressing in Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, and even Turkey, Russia was losing the gains it had made in the previous decade. Government in Russia was becoming more authoritarian, economic controls were tightening, the media were losing their freedom and independence, and the human rights issue raised growing concern in Europe. Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, stated repeatedly that he wished Russia to become, as the Soviet Union had been before its collapse, a global political, economic, and military power. Clearly he had in mind a Russian, not a Russian-European, power. He left no doubt that Russia’s continuing influence in former colonies of the Soviet Empire, including parts of Eastern Europe, the Transcaucasus, and Central Asia, were part of this plan. Surveys indicated that he was accurately reflecting public opinion in his country.

In late 2004 a presidential election in Ukraine, Europe’s largest country territorially now wedged between the European Union and Russia, became a stage for
Russia’s geopolitical strategy. As we note in more detail later, Russian influences (and a historic Russian presence) are far stronger in the east of this former Soviet Socialist Republic than in the west. The two candidates for the presidency represented the “European” west and the “Russian” east, respectively, and Putin intervened directly in Ukrainian politics by openly campaigning for the pro-Russian candidate. The election result was close (in favor of the pro-Russian candidate), and hundreds of thousands of protesters took to the streets, protesting alleged fraud and intimidation. After a tense standoff the election was voided and repeated, and this time the pro-European candidate prevailed—but not before eastern parts of the country had proclaimed their intent to investigate the possibility of seceding should the result be reversed.

Ukraine was a clear contest between European and Russian spheres of interest. In general, western Ukrainians want to take their country into the European Union. Easterners want closer association with Moscow and its geopolitical designs. Clearly, it will be a long time before visions of a European Union stretching from Atlantic to Pacific become reality—if they ever materialize at all.

So complex are Europe’s physical and human geographies that it proves to be one of the most difficult geographic realms when it comes to regionalization. Europe may not be large territorially, but it incorporates enormous environmental, cultural, political, and economic diversity. Europe extends from moist Atlantic shores to continental Russian borders and from Arctic cold to Mediterranean warmth. Small as Europe is, the realm contains nearly 40 countries.

To better comprehend Europe’s geographic diversity, we group its countries into five regions based on their proximity, environmental similarities, historical associations, cultural congruities, social parallels, and economic linkages. On such bases, we map (1) Western Europe, (2) the British Isles, (3) Northern (Nordic) Europe, (4) Mediterranean Europe, and (5) Eastern Europe (Fig. 1-13).

A few years ago an irritated American secretary of defense spoke contemptuously of an “Old Europe” that kept harking back to the past and a “New Europe” that would lead the way to the future. By “Old Europe” he meant uncooperative Western Europe, and particularly France and Germany, the region colored yellow in Figure 1-13. Indeed, the map shows the way Europe has been perceived for centuries: a Western Europe dominant, flanked by the United Kingdom offshore; a Northern (Nordic) Europe, remote and sparsely populated; a Southern (Mediterranean) Europe, the real Old Europe with its ancient Greek and Roman histories; and an Eastern Europe, always lagging behind in almost every way. Here in Eastern Europe, the secretary implied, lies the “New Europe,” the Europe of populous Poland and obliging Romania, of new NATO members and participants in the U.S.-led coalition operating in the ongoing struggle in Iraq.

In fact, this regionalization of Europe still has some merit, but it is being overtaken by events. Northern Europe will always be cold and Mediterranean Europe comparatively warm, and Western Europe will always be moist and Eastern Europe comparatively dry; but human endeavors, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, are changing the functional map. The growing European Union is the most prominent manifestation of this change. As the divisive effects of European boundaries diminish and cross-border interconnections increase, a new regionalization of Europe is emerging. Using this functional-region concept, we would recognize a European core, consisting essentially of regions (1) through

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**MAJOR CITIES OF THE REALM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population* (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam, Netherlands</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens, Greece</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona, Spain</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankfurt, Germany</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, UK</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon, France</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid, Spain</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan, Italy</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuttgart, Germany</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna, Austria</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 2006 estimates.
Embedded in this functional framework are the “Four Motors,” “Euroregions,” and other spatial expressions of Europe’s growing interconnections.

The framework in Figure 1-13 continues to be useful because it provides insight into both Europe’s enduring formal regions and its changing functional regions.

For all its operational integration, Europe still is a realm whose differences in natural environments, economic opportunities, historical experiences, and relative locations have produced societies and countries with particular, often contrasting, cultural traditions and outlooks. These contrasts make Europe’s political map what it is: one of the most tortuously fragmented in the world. And
as we noted earlier, devolutionary forces are at work to fracture it even further. The outcome of Europe’s contest between centripetal and centrifugal forces is far from certain.

**WESTERN EUROPE**

“Old” or not, Western Europe remains the heart of the realm and its Union, the hub of its economic power, and the focus of its unifying drive. Germany and France dominate it, flanked by the three Benelux countries in the northwest and the three Alpine states in the east (Fig. 1-14). With a combined population of some 186 million representing eight of the world’s richest economies, Western Europe is a powerful force not only in Europe but also on the international stage.

**Dominant Germany**

Germany today is Europe’s most populous country (82.4 million), its most powerful (albeit faltering) economy, and, together with France, its most ardent advocate of union. Germany has been the largest financial contributor to the EU’s coffers by far. German leaders ceaselessly promote notions of greater European unity and often try to outdo even the French in their pursuit of a Europe united not only economically but also politically.
Twice during the twentieth century Germany plunged Europe and the world into war, until, finally, in 1945, the defeated and devastated German state was divided into two parts, West and East (see the red map label and line in Fig. 1-15). Its eastern boundaries were also changed, leaving the industrial district of Silesia in newly defined Poland, that of Saxony in communist-ruled and Soviet-controlled East Germany, and the Ruhr in West Germany (Fig. 1-14). Aware that these were the industrial centers that had enabled Nazi Germany to seek world domination through war, the victorious allies laid out this new boundary framework to make sure this would not happen again.

In the aftermath of World War II, Soviet and Allied administration of East and West Germany differed. Soviet rule in East Germany was established on the Russian-communist model and, given the extreme hardships the USSR had suffered at German hands during the war, harshly punitive. The American-led authority in West Germany was less strict and aimed more at rehabilitation. When the Marshall Plan was instituted, West Germany was included, and its economy recovered rapidly. Meanwhile, West Germany was reorganized politically into a modern federal state along democratic foundations.
West Germany’s economy thrived. Between 1949 and 1964, its GNI tripled while industrial output rose 60 percent. It absorbed millions of German-speaking refugees from Eastern Europe (and many escapees from communist East Germany as well). Since unemployment was virtually nonexistent, hundreds of thousands of Turkish and other foreign workers arrived to take jobs Germans could not fill or did not want.

Simultaneously, West Germany’s political leaders participated enthusiastically in the OEEC and in the negotiations that led to the six-member Common Market. Geography worked in West Germany’s favor: it had common borders with all but one of the EEC member-states. Its transport infrastructure, rapidly rebuilt, was second to none in the realm. More than compensating for its loss of Saxony and Silesia were the expanding Ruhr (in the hinterland of the Dutch port of Rotterdam) and the newly emerging industrial complexes centered on Hamburg in the north, Frankfurt (the leading financial center as well) in the center, and Stuttgart in the south. West Germany exported huge quantities of iron, steel, motor vehicles, machinery, textiles, and farm products.

No economy grows without setbacks and slowdowns, however, and Germany experienced such problems in the 1970s and 1980s, when energy shortages, declining competitiveness on world markets, lagging modernization (notably in the aging Ruhr), and social dilemmas involving rising unemployment, an aging population, high taxation, and a backlash against foreign resident workers roiled West German society. And then, quite suddenly, the collapse of the communist Soviet Union opened the door to reunification with East Germany.

In 1990, West Germany had a population of about 62 million and East Germany 17 million. Communist misrule in the East had yielded outdated factories, crumbling infrastructures, polluted environments, drab cities, inefficient farming, and inadequate legal and other institutions. Reunification was more a rescue than a merger, and the cost to West Germany was enormous. When the West German government imposed sales-tax increases and an income-tax surcharge on its citizens, a sizeable percentage of Westerners doubted the wisdom of reunification. It was projected that it would take decades to reconstruct Virginia-sized East Germany; ten years later, exports from the former East still contributed only about 7 percent of the national total.

Once again, however, the German economy proved its capacity for recovery. Helped by the initial (but, as it turned out, temporary) weakness of the new European currency, the euro, German exports rebounded on world markets. Economic and social conditions in former East Germany showed signs of improvement, helped by the relocation of the national capital from Bonn to Berlin. But by the middle of the current decade Germany’s national economy, in need of further reform, had slowed, and the magnitude of the challenge to bring the East up to par with the West was starkly evident.

A Federal Republic

Germany’s enthusiasm for the EU should be seen in the context of its own political geography. Following the Allied victory in 1945, the United States organized West Germany into a democratic, federal republic consisting of ten States or Länder (Fig. 1-15). Meanwhile, in East Germany the Soviet Union established 15 administrative districts including East Berlin. The smooth functioning of the maturing Federal Republic in the West made possible the absorption of East Germany, which was immediately reorganized into six new States based on its traditional provinces. Political parties active in the West now campaigned for votes in these new States, and the political transformation went remarkably smoothly. But, as Figure 1-15 underscores, the economic picture was darker. Regional disparity, as reflected by per-capita income levels, reflects the East’s continuing poverty. Note that five of the East’s States (Berlin being the sole exception) are in the lowest income categories, while none of the West’s States has such low incomes. Similar contrasts exist in other criteria ranging from unemployment (much higher in the East) to productivity per worker (much lower). Such economic differences have significant political implications, and the rebuilding of Germany has a long way to go.

France

German dominance in the European Union is a constant concern in the other leading Western European country. The French and the Germans have been rivals in Europe for centuries. France (population: 60.5 million) is an old state, by most measures the oldest in Western Europe. Germany is a young country, created in 1871 after a loose association of German-speaking states had fought a successful war against . . . the French.

Territorially, France is much larger than Germany, and the map suggests that France has a superior relative location, with coastlines on the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and, at Calais, even a window on the North Sea. But France does not have any good natural harbors, and oceangoing ships cannot navigate its rivers and other waterways far inland. France has no equivalent to Rotterdam either internally or externally.

The map of Western Europe (Fig. 1-14) reveals a significant demographic contrast between France and Germany. France has one dominant city, Paris, at the heart of the Paris Basin, France’s core area. No other city in France comes close to Paris in terms of population or centrality: Paris has 9.8 million residents, whereas its closest rival, Lyon, has only 1.4 million. Germany has no city to match
If the greatness of a city were to be measured solely by its number of inhabitants, Paris (9.8 million) would not even rank in the world’s top 20. But if greatness is measured by a city’s historic heritage, cultural content, and international influence, Paris has no peer. Old Paris, near the Île de la Cité that housed the original village where Paris began and carries the eight-century-old Notre Dame Cathedral, contains an unparalleled assemblage of architectural and artistic landmarks old and new. The Arc de Triomphe, erected by Napoleon in 1806 (though not completed until 1836), commemorates the emperor’s victories and stands as a monument to French neoclassical architecture, overlooking one of the world’s most famous streets, the Champs Elysées, which leads to the grandest of city squares, the Place de la Concorde, and on to the magnificent palace-turned-museum, the Louvre.

Even the Eiffel Tower, built for the 1889 International Exposition over the objections of Parisians who regarded it as ugly and unsafe, became a treasure. From its beautiful Seine River bridges to its palaces and parks, Paris embodies French culture and tradition. It is perhaps the ultimate primate city in the world.

As the capital of a globe-girdling empire, Paris was the hearth from which radiated the cultural forces of Francophone assimilation, transforming much of North, West, and Equatorial Africa, Madagascar, Indochina, and many smaller colonies into societies on the French model. Distant cities such as Dakar, Abidjan, Brazzaville, and Saigon acquired a Parisian atmosphere. France, meanwhile, spent heavily to keep Paris, especially Old Paris, well maintained—not just as a relic of history, but as a functioning, vibrant center, an example to which other cities can aspire.

Today, Old Paris is ringed by a new and different Paris. Stand on top of the Arc de Triomphe and turn around from the Champs Élysées, and the tree-lined avenue gives way to La Défense, an ultramodern high-rise complex that is one of Europe’s leading business districts (see photo, p. 57). But from atop the Eiffel Tower you can see as far as 50 miles (80 km) and discern a Paris visitors rarely experience: grimy, aging industrial quarters, and poor, crowded neighborhoods where discontent and unemployment fester—and where Muslim immigrants cluster in a world apart from the splendor of the old city.

Paris, but it does have a number of cities with populations between 1 and 5 million. And as Table G-1 shows, Germany is much more highly urbanized overall than France.

Why should Paris, without major raw materials nearby, have grown so large? Whenever geographers investigate the evolution of a city, they focus on two important locational qualities: its site (the physical attributes of the place it occupies) and its situation (its location relative to surrounding areas of productive capacity, other cities and towns, barriers to access and movement, and other aspects of the greater regional framework in which it lies).

The site of the original settlement at Paris lay on an island in the Seine River, a defensible place where the river was often crossed. This island, the Île de la Cité, was a Roman outpost 2000 years ago; for centuries its security ensured continuity. Eventually the island became overcrowded, and the city expanded along the banks of the river (Fig. 1-16, left map).

Soon the settlement’s advantageous situation stimulated its growth and prosperity. Its fertile agricultural hinterland thrived, and, as an enlarging market, Paris’s focality increased steadily. The Seine River is joined near Paris by several navigable tributaries (the Oise, Marne, and Yonne). When canals extended these waterways even farther, Paris was linked to the Loire Valley, the Rhône-Saône Basin, Lorraine (an industrial area), and the northern border with Belgium. When Napoleon reorganized France and built a radial system of roads—followed later
Because the Seine has a meandering course in an often steep-sided valley, large ships can sail upstream only as far as Rouen, not to the French capital of Paris. At the river’s mouth, the port of Le Havre is no great natural harbor, so that the lower Seine is lined with smaller riverside ports handling such commodities as oil, coal, and (as in the photo at the left) scrap iron. Beyond and to the southeast of Paris lies Bourgogne (Burgundy), famous for its vineyards and wines and known also for crops such as wheat, rye, mustard, and sunflowers. From the top of an old church I had a superb view of the rural landscape of Burgundy, with its nucleated settlements and its highly fragmented fields. The diversity of colors signifies the variety of crops even in this small area, but farming here is quite efficient. Farmers, who often own several separate parcels of land, use downsized mechanized equipment; in the Burgundy tradition they live in their clustered villages where they have vegetable gardens and keep their few livestock."