- **Introduction**

The Council of Europe and the European Union were products of the same idea, the same spirit and the same ambition. They mobilised the energy and commitment of the same founding fathers of Europe. Both the Council and the Union adopted as their watchword the maxim coined by Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi between the wars: "A divided Europe leads to war, oppression and hardship; a united Europe leads to peace and prosperity."

- **Democracy**

  The functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy. Being a European citizen also means enjoying political rights. Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as candidate and to vote in their country of residence, or in their country of origin.