European Union law

A quick guide to EU law terminology

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This guide is not a glossary, so please do not use it as one. Its purpose is to clarify some core EU law terminology, so that when you start your studies of EU law you feel confident about what these terms mean. This guide does not include all relevant terms, but focuses on those that most often confuse students of EU law.

This guide includes references to some human rights legislation and a court that are often mistakenly believed to be elements of EU law.

We recommend that you read this guide during Week 1, then return to is as often as you need to during your studies. Unit 1 also introduces you to all the topics that you will study during the course of this module. If you need guidance regarding any term that you cannot find in this guide, you can re-visit Unit 1 to refresh your memory.

Treaties	
European Community Treaty	The **European Community Treaty** (EC Treaty) is the usual name for the Treaty of Rome, which was created in 1957. It has now been re-titled the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**, so the original title should be used only in historical contexts. Sample application The EC Treaty was one of the most important documents in the establishment of what was then the European Community.
Treaty on European Union	The **Treaty on European Union** (TEU) is also known as the Maastricht Treaty. It has been significantly amended, but remains an important piece of primary legislation. Sample application Article 50 TEU outlines the process of a Member State's withdrawal from the European Union.
Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union	The **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union** (TFEU) is the re-titled and amended EC Treaty. It remains an important piece of primary legislation. Sample application Article 28 TFEU prohibits barriers to the free movement of goods between EU member states.
Treaty of Lisbon	The **Treaty of Lisbon** is the source of the most recent major amendments to the existing treaties. It amended the **EC Treaty** and the **Treaty on European Union**. The Treaty of Lisbon re-titled the EC Treaty as the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**. The title of the **Treaty on European Union** was retained. The Treaty of Lisbon includes a consolidated version of the TEU and the TFEU. The Treaty of Lisbon is not described as a new piece of legislation, but as an instrument of reform. Sample application It was not until the creation of the Treaty of Lisbon that the Charter of Fundamental Rights became a binding document in EU law.

Human rights: EU and non-EU legislation, and a non-EU institution

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union	The Charter of Fundamental Rights is a legally binding document in EU law. It protects a series of rights, including the right to life, respect for private and family life, and data protection. Sample application In its application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the court ruled in favour of the appellant.
European Convention on Human Rights	The European Convention on Human Rights is **not** an instrument of EU law. The EU adheres to the Convention by implementing its content. Sample application The Charter of Fundamental Rights is consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights.
European Court of Human Rights	The European Court of Human Rights is **not** a European Union institution. It is an international court, established in 1959, that determines cases in which applicants allege violations of the European Convention on Human Rights. Sample application The European Court of Human Rights rules on cases involving the European Convention on Human Rights, but not on European Union law.

The judicature of the EU

Court of Justice of the European Union	The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) is the EU's judicature. It consists of three bodies: the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service Tribunal. Sample application The CJEU interprets European Union law.
Court of Justice	The Court of Justice is one of the bodies of the CJEU. Most of the cases that you will study will have been heard in the Court of Justice. Sample application In a recent request for preliminary rulings from a German court, the Court of Justice ruled in favour of the German authorities.
General Court	The General Court is one of the bodies of the CJEU, which you will study in more detail following your case study. Sample application The General Court recently ruled in favour of the UK in a case against the European Central Bank.