

## Eurozone

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | International relations*

### Why in News?

*Bulgaria, the poorest member of the European Union (EU), became the 21<sup>st</sup> member of the eurozone.*

- **Eurozone/euro area** - It represents a **monetary union within the EU**, distinct from the wider EU membership.
- In other words, it refers to the geographic and economic region comprising those **members of the European Union (EU)** that have **fully adopted the euro as their official currency**.
- **Maastricht Treaty, 1992** - It laid the foundation for the Eurozone by establishing
  - European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU);
  - A common currency - Euro;
  - European Central Bank (ECB); and
  - Common Economic Region.
- **Eurozone Membership** - The Total EU states is 27, of which 21 are members of the eurozone (with Bulgaria, Jan 2026).
- **Non-Eurozone EU states (6)** - Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania retain their own currencies.
- **Special Cases**
  - **Microstates with EU agreements** - Andorra, Monaco, the Vatican City and San Marino use the euro through agreements with the EU.
  - **Unofficial euro users** - Kosovo and Montenegro use the euro as their sole currency without an agreement.
- **Eurozone eligibility** - All EU member states, **except Denmark** (which availed an opt-out clause), satisfy certain “convergence criteria” under the Maastricht Treaty, and certain legal alignment with the European Central Bank (ECB) framework.
- **Transition to the Euro** - Starting January 1, both the **lev and the euro** can be used for transactions. From February 1, the euro will become the sole legal tender.
- **Gains for Bulgaria** - For Bulgaria, joining the Eurozone means credibility in global finance, a stronger European identity, and a tourism boost through seamless travel.

*After the US Dollar, the euro is the largest reserve currency, and a vital symbol of European integration and identity.*

- **Benefits of the eurozone** - The countries join the Eurozone to gain stability, competitiveness, cost savings, deeper EU integration, and global credibility.

## Reference

[Indian Express | Bulgaria joins eurozone](#)

