

‘A catastrophe of epic proportions’

[theguardian.com/a-catastrophe-of-epic-proportions-4](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/sep/17/europe-floods) 17 September 2024



Drowning: As Central Europe braces for further flooding (above) experts warn that the bloc is in a life-threatening crisis, squeezed between the US and China.

Is Europe dying? European countries have been hit by major floods. Some say it represents the end of Europe as a great region.

What's happening?

Countries in large parts of **Europe** have been hit by big floods, caused by a storm called Storm Boris. So far 18 people have been killed.

The countries hit include Poland, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Find out more

Scientists think the floods have been made worse by **climate change**, which makes **extreme** weather more common.

But throughout the world, many cultures have a “flood **myth**”: a tale of a god sending a great flood to punish people for their sins.

Today, some see the flooding as a **metaphor** for the fall of Europe.

Europe has had a long history, full of ups and downs. The **Roman Empire** once spread its culture across Europe, but at the time it was Asia, India and China that were at the centre of the world.

Later, Europe took control of the Americas, and became a richer and more powerful place. European countries controlled large parts of the world. Today, many people all around the world speak Spanish, French or English.

Today, some think Europe's power is fading away. China has a huge and powerful **economy**. The **USA** is looked to as a world leader, with a strong army.

Meanwhile, most of the time, **politicians** in Europe cannot agree on what the continent's future should be.

Is Europe dying?

Some say

Yes! Every power has its time at the top. But Europe's time is over. It will soon be only a small power again, with China and the USA at the top.

Others think

No! Floods destroy. But they also mean rebirth. European leaders have a plan to make Europe into one huge power. They think they can compete with the US and China.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

“Europe was created by history. America was created by philosophy.”

Margaret Thatcher (1925 – 2013), former British prime minister

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - How do you feel about Europe? Mostly good or mostly bad?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Why do so many cultures have a flood myth?

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What do you think?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are put in charge of making Europe the most powerful place in the world. What do you suggest?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Which do you think is the most powerful country in the world? Discuss as a class.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Write a poem or song inspired by a huge flood.

Glossary

Europe - The second-smallest of the world's continents. It has a population of 746 million.

Climate change - Long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Human action is a major cause of climate change.

Extreme - Very great, or beyond what is expected.

Myth - A story told that is not based on real facts or evidence. They are often told over many years.

Metaphor - When a word or phrase is used to describe something, but it is not literally true.

Roman Empire - Lasting from 27BC to 476AD, the Roman Empire controlled regions around the Mediterranean in Europe, North Africa and Western Asia.

Economy - The way that money flows through a country, which affects wages and the cost of living.

USA - The United States of America is a country in North America. It has a population of 329 million.

Politicians - Someone whose job it is to be involved in running a country. Politicians try to persuade people they have the best ideas to run the country.