

## The European Council

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The European Council is an institution which was not initially provided for in the basic Treaties of the European Communities. It was established during meetings at the December 1974 Paris Summit on the initiative of the President of the French Republic, Giscard d'Estaing. The aim was to give a regular form and a new impetus to European summit meetings, which had been convened since 1961. The Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the Communities became aware of the need for a new political impetus. Its creation responded to a concern for the adoption of a global approach to problems. The European Council was established as an authority responsible for both Community affairs and issues relating to European political cooperation in areas subject to the intergovernmental approach. Its first meeting took place in March 1975 in Dublin.

The 1977 London Declaration and the 1983 Stuttgart Solemn Declaration on European Union include information relating to the functioning and the role of the European Council. The 1986 Single European Act institutionalised the European Council, but it did not define its role. The 1992 Treaty on European Union set out the functions, composition, frequency of meetings and the interinstitutional relations of the European Council. The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam also extended its role.