

Customs union projects

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Customs union projects

After the end of World War II, several projects for the creation of regional customs unions emerged in Western Europe. For example, in 1947, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland, well aware of the small scale of their domestic market, considered the creation of a Scandinavian customs union. In 1949, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom also began negotiations for a regional economic union to be dubbed Uniscan. At the same time, France and Italy negotiated a tariff union treaty that was never ratified. In January 1948, France, pressed by the United States to ensure the success of European integration, proposed the creation of a customs union to Italy and the Benelux countries. This economic association for the liberalisation of trade and exchange rates was first called Fritalux, which was later changed to Finebel (France–Italy–Netherlands–Belgium–Luxembourg). In September 1947, a plan for a customs union between Greece and Turkey was also announced. However, none of these projects advanced beyond the exploratory stage, and they all appeared too limited compared to the generalised liberalisation of trade advocated by the OEEC and the planned creation of a European Payments Union (EPU), which was actively supported by the United States.