

Key dates in the history of the European Union

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Key dates in the history of the European Union

9 May 1950

In a speech inspired by Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, proposes that France and Germany pool their coal and steel resources.

18 April 1951

The *Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)* is signed in Paris by Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (the Six). The Treaty is concluded for a period of 50 years from the date of its entry into force.

27 May 1952

The Treaty establishing the European Defence Community (EDC) is signed in Paris by the Six.

23 July 1952

Entry into force of the ECSC Treaty. The ECSC institutions are the High Authority, the Special Council of Ministers, the Common Assembly and the Court of Justice. An advisory body assists the High Authority: the ECSC Consultative Committee.

30 August 1954

The French National Assembly rejects the EDC Treaty.

25 March 1957

The *Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC)* and the *Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom)* are signed in Rome by the Six. The *Convention on certain institutions common to the European Communities* is signed.

1 January 1958

Entry into force of the Rome Treaties establishing the EEC and Euratom. Each Community has its own Council and Commission. The Assembly and the Court of Justice are institutions common to all three Communities. As for the advisory bodies, the Economic and Social Committee is common to the two new Communities, whilst the ECSC retains its own Consultative Committee. The European Investment Bank (EIB) is responsible for financing regional development projects in the EEC. Within the two new Communities, decisions are taken by the Council on a proposal from the Commission. The Treaties provide for a consultation procedure with the Assembly.

8 April 1965

The *Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities*, known as the Merger Treaty, is signed in Brussels. A *Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Communities*, annexed to the Treaty, replaces the protocols of all three Communities.

28–29 January 1966

The Luxembourg Compromise provides that unanimous agreement is required where ‘very important interests of one or more partners are at stake’. After operating an ‘empty chair’ policy for seven months, France takes up its seat on the Council again.

1 July 1967

Entry into force of the Merger Treaty. The Commission, the Council, the Assembly and the Court of Justice are institutions common to all three Communities.

1 July 1968

Entry into force of the Customs Union. Measures include the elimination of all customs duties and quantitative restrictions on the import and export of goods among the Member States and the introduction of a Common Customs Tariff (CCT) applicable to third country goods.

22 April 1970

The *Treaty amending certain budgetary provisions of the Treaties establishing the European Communities and of the Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities* is signed in Luxembourg. The Treaty provides for ‘a strengthening of the budgetary powers of the European Parliament’ following ‘the replacement of financial contributions of Member States by the Communities’ own resources’. It enters into force on 1 January 1971.

1 January 1973

Accession of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom to the European Communities.

9–10 December 1974

At the Paris Summit, the Heads of State or Government of the Communities establish the European Council and agree to meet at least three times a year.

4 March 1975

Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission concerning the establishment of a conciliation procedure following an increase in the budgetary powers of the European Parliament.

22 July 1975

The *Treaty amending certain financial provisions of the Treaties establishing the European Communities and of the Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities* is signed in Brussels. The Treaty strengthens the budgetary powers of the European Parliament and provides for the creation of a Court of Auditors. It enters into force on 1 June 1977.

20 September 1976

Adoption of the *Act concerning the election of representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage*.

7–10 June 1979

First election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage.

1 January 1981

Accession of Greece to the European Communities.

14 June 1985

The *Agreement on the gradual abolition of checks at the common borders* is signed at Schengen by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

1 January 1986

Accession of Portugal and Spain to the European Communities.

17 and 28 February 1986

The *Single European Act* is signed in Luxembourg and The Hague. It contains provisions amending the Treaties establishing the European Communities and provisions establishing European Political Cooperation (EPC).

1 July 1987

Entry into force of the Single European Act (SEA). The SEA aims for the progressive establishment of an internal market over a period ending on 31 December 1992. In order to achieve this, it provides for the adoption of measures for the approximation of the laws of the Member States, including in the domains of health protection, the working environment, the environment and consumers. The SEA introduces cooperation and assent procedures. It increases the legislative powers of the European Parliament and extends the scope of qualified majority voting within the Council. The SEA institutionalises the European Council and makes official the name ‘European Parliament’, which has been used since 1962. It grants the Council the possibility of attaching to the Court of Justice a court of first instance. It also codifies

intergovernmental cooperation practices in terms of foreign policy (European Political Cooperation).

24 October 1988

Decision of the Council establishing a Court of First Instance of the European Communities.

19 June 1990

The *Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 on the gradual abolition of checks at the common borders* is signed in Schengen by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. This Convention supplements the Agreement of 14 June 1985.

7 February 1992

The *Treaty on European Union* is signed in Maastricht. It bases the Union on the European Communities (first pillar), supplemented by two fields of cooperation (second and third pillars): common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and justice and home affairs (JHA).

1 January 1993

Entry into force of the internal market. It comprises an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is assured.

1 November 1993

Entry into force of the Treaty on European Union. The European Economic Community (EEC) becomes the European Community (EC). Launch of the progressive realisation of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), which will eventually result in the adoption of a single currency and the establishment of a European Central Bank. Introduction of the codecision procedure. Strengthening of the European Parliament's legislative powers and control. Extension of the scope of qualified majority voting within the Council. Creation of the Committee of the Regions and the European Ombudsman. The Court of Auditors acquires institutional status. Establishment of citizenship of the European Union.

29 March 1994

At an informal session in Ioannina, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs adopt a compromise decision on the rules for qualified majority decision-making in the Council, in preparation for the fourth enlargement of the European Union.

1 January 1995

Accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden to the European Union.

26 March 1995

Entry into force of the Schengen Convention of 19 June 1990, in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Thereafter, the Schengen area progressively widens to include other States.

2 October 1997

The *Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts* is signed.

1 June 1998

The European Central Bank is established.

1 January 1999

The euro is officially launched. Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain adopt the euro as their single currency.

1 May 1999

Entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam. Strengthening of the European Parliament's legislative powers and control. Extension of the scope of qualified majority voting within the Council. The domain of 'visas,

asylum, immigration and other policies related to free movement of persons', which was part of the third pillar, is integrated into the first. The third pillar becomes that of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. Provision for possible closer cooperation. A protocol incorporates the Schengen *acquis*, concerning closer cooperation between thirteen States (the Fifteen with the exception of Ireland and the United Kingdom), into the framework of the European Union. Sanction mechanism for cases of serious and persistent breaches of common values.

7 December 2000

Solemn proclamation in Nice of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

1 January 2001

Greece joins the euro zone.

26 February 2001

The *Treaty of Nice amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related Acts* is signed.

1 January 2002

Introduction of euro coins and banknotes.

28 February 2002

In its Declaration on the Future of the European Union, the European Council, meeting in Laeken on 15 December 2001, convenes a *Convention on the Future of Europe*. The Convention meets in Brussels from 28 February 2002 to 10 July 2003.

23 July 2002

The ECSC Treaty expires, 50 years after its entry into force. The coal and steel sectors are incorporated into the EC Treaty. The Economic and Social Committee takes over the activities of the ECSC Consultative Committee.

1 February 2003

Entry into force of the Treaty of Nice. Strengthening of the European Parliament's legislative powers and control. Extension of the scope of qualified majority voting within the Council. Adjustments in the composition and operation of the institutions in preparation for the fifth enlargement of the Union (changes include weighting of votes in the Council, composition of the Commission, extension of the codecision procedure, jurisdiction of the Court of First Instance to hear and determine questions referred for a preliminary ruling, and possibility of attaching judicial panels to the Court). Relaxation of the system for closer cooperation. Prevention mechanism in the case of clear risk of a serious breach of common values.

18 July 2003

In accordance with the mandate conferred upon it by the Laeken European Council of 14 and 15 December 2001, the *Convention on the Future of Europe*, under the presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, submits the *draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* to the Italian Presidency of the European Council.

1 May 2004

Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia accede to the European Union.

29 October 2004

The *Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* is signed in Rome.

On 29 October 2004, in Rome, an intergovernmental conference adopts the *Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe*, based on the draft prepared by the European Convention. The failure of the referendums held in France on 29 May 2005 and in the Netherlands on 1 June 2005 leads other Member States to suspend their ratification process. In the absence of ratification by all the Member States, the Constitutional Treaty does not enter into force.

1 January 2007

Bulgaria and Romania accede to the European Union. Slovenia joins the euro zone.

13 December 2007

Signing of the *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community*.

This Treaty, based on the Constitutional Treaty, offers the European Union a way out of the institutional impasse in which it had found itself.

1 January 2008

Cyprus and Malta join the euro zone.

1 December 2009

Entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. It amends the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community; the latter is renamed the 'Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union'. Granting of legal personality to the Union. Merging of the three pillars. Strengthening of the legislative and budgetary powers of the European Parliament. New definition and extension of qualified majority voting in the Council. Reform of the European Union institutions (changes include a stable Presidency of the European Council and the introduction of the post of 'High Representative for the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy'). Strengthening of the role of national parliaments in the Union decision-making process. New Citizens' Initiative. Recognition of the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which becomes legally binding.

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