FROM COAL AND STEEL TO A COMMON EURO AND BEYOND

The Schuman declaration © European Communities, 1950

1940: World War II

1945-1946: The war destroys cities, roads and much of Europe's industry. Europe's economy was in shambles. The war was also devastating on a human scale: 55 million people worldwide were killed, 35 million people were injured and 190 million people fled their homes. The cry for peace was louder than ever before.

1950: Schuman Declaration

On 9 May 1950 the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, put forward a plan to merge coal and steel industries. The idea was to turn these industries into an ‘international state’ and to use the profits from the industries to pay for European recovery and future wars.

1951: Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community

On 25 May 1951, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Treaty of Paris in 1951. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established and these six countries agreed to gradually turn their separate economies into a single market.

1952: Introduction of the Euro

The citizens of the European Communities had been waiting for this moment for many years. The introduction of the Euro marked the beginning of the cooperation in agriculture, fisheries, harbor policy and transport policy. It also marked the beginning of the cooperation in nuclear energy, which aimed at joint development.

1957: Treaties of Rome: The European Economic Community (EEC) was established, starting with a customs union. This treaty agreed to gradually turn their separate economies into a common market, starting with a customs union. This treaty agreed to gradually turn their separate economies into a common market.

1960: The Rome Treaties entered into force in 1958. The countries had signed two new treaties in 1957: the EEC treaty and Euratom, also known as the Rome Treaties.


This treaty was signed in 1992 and entered into force in 1993. The Maastricht Treaty marked the actual beginning of cooperation on a political level, alongside the economic integration. Therefore they signed two new treaties in 1957: the EEC treaty and Euratom, also known as the Rome Treaties.

1997: Treaty of Amsterdam

With the aim of EU enlargement towards the east, the number of Member States increased significantly. With the accession date of the new Member States expected to be in 2004, a significant rise in the number of Member States. A few decisions based on unanimity and more on majority voting. The first attempt to change this was made in Nice (signed in 2001, into force in 2003).

2004-2005: The European Constitution

A draft almost ready to be made into law was rejected by the citizens of France and Netherlands. The Dutch and French governments decided to sign a new constitution, called ‘Treaty on European Union’. This treaty was signed in 2005 and introduced the idea that the European Union needed to have a constitution.

2007: Lisbon Treaty

The Lisbon Treaty succeeded in changing the ideas of the ‘European Union’, which had been formed by the ECSC and the EEC. The ‘new’ European Union consisted of three main pillars:

1. Cooperation on home/domestic affairs
2. Cooperation on economic and monetary policy
3. Cooperation on foreign and security policy

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1970: The European Parliament for the first time in June 1979. At the time there were nine countries, but more than 500 million people lived in the European Communities. The European Parliament consists of 700 members who are directly elected by the citizens.

2002: The EU Wins the Nobel Peace Prize

The EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its significant contribution towards peace, conciliation, democracy and human rights.

2016: UK Referendum on leaving the EU

The British government signed a withdrawal agreement on 29 March 2017. However, the British electorate voted to leave the European Union on 23 June 2016 by 51.9% of those who voted. A consequence of this vote was the triggering of Article 50 of the EU’s Treaty on European Union.

2020: The UK Officially withholds from the EU

The UK officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020, after three years of negotiations. The UK officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020, after three years of negotiations. The UK officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020, after three years of negotiations. The UK officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020, after three years of negotiations.

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