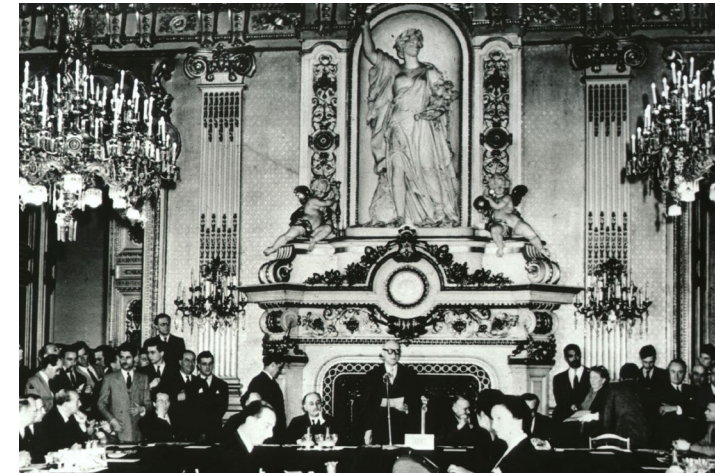


FROM COAL AND STEEL TO A COMMON EURO AND BEYOND



Schuman declaration © European Communities, 1950"

1950: SCHUMAN DECLARATION

On **9 May 1950** the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Robert Schuman**, held a press conference. He called upon other European countries to pool coal and steel resources. As coal and steel are necessary components for arms production, he hoped this cooperation would render future war impossible. On top of that, coal and steel were also very important in rebuilding the continent after the war.



Signing of the Rome Treaties © AP, 1957
Source EC Audiovisual Service.

1957: TREATIES OF ROME: EEC AND EURATOM TREATIES

The first six countries wanted an even stronger economic integration. Therefore they signed two new treaties in 1957: the **EEC** treaty and **Euratom**, also known as the **Rome Treaties**.
- **European Economic Community (EEC)**: The countries agreed to gradually turn their separate economies into a common market, starting with a customs union. This treaty marked the beginning of the cooperation in agriculture, fisheries, harbour policy and transport policy.
- **Euratom**: This cooperation in nuclear energy aimed at joint research into the possible civilian applications of nuclear energy.
The Rome Treaties entered into force in 1958.



Polling office in the European elections, Belgium © European Communities, 1979

1979: FIRST DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The citizens of the **European Communities** directly elected their representatives in the European Parliament for the first time in **June 1979**. At the time there were nine countries, electing 410 members of Parliament for the period of **1979-1984**.



1986: THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT

Thirty years after the countries had decided to establish a common market (the **Rome Treaties**), it was still not in effect. With the **Single European Act** the Member States decided that all obstacles to trade and free movement had to be removed (signed in **1986**, into force in **1987**).

1993: OPEN BORDERS

On **1 January 1993** the internal borders of the Member States of the European Union "disappeared": The Single Market with free movement of persons, goods, services and capital came into effect.

2002: INTRODUCTION OF THE EURO

The euro was introduced into the banking system in **1999**. But people only started using euro coins and notes on **1 January 2002** in **12 EU** countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.
8 countries have since then adopted the euro as well: **Slovenia** (2007), **Cyprus** (2008), **Malta** (2008), **Slovakia** (2009), **Estonia** (2011), **Latvia** (2014), **Lithuania** (2015), and **Croatia** (2023).
Bulgaria is expected to join in 2026.



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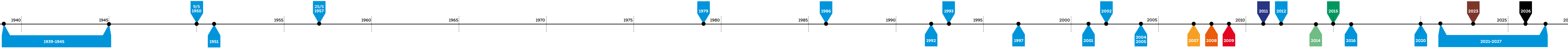
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2012: THE EU WINS THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

This prize was awarded to recognise European efforts towards peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights.



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WORLD WAR II

Europe was in ruins after **World War II**. The war destroyed 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.



1951: TREATY ESTABLISHING THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY

France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg reacted positively to Robert Schuman's declaration. These six countries signed the **Treaty of Paris** in 1951. The European Coal and Steel Community (**ECSC**) entered into force in 1952.



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1992: TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION-MAASTRICHT TREATY

The **Maastricht Treaty** marked the actual beginning of cooperation on a political level, alongside the existing economic integration. A new name was given to the former European Communities: the European Union. The "new" European Union consisted of three main pillars:
1. Economic integration: The Member States decided to enhance economic integration and to establish a common European currency: the euro.
2. Cooperation on foreign and security policy.
3. Cooperation on home/domestic affairs and justice.
This treaty was signed in 1992 and entered into force in 1993.

1997: TREATY OF AMSTERDAM

With the prospect of **EU** enlargement towards Eastern Europe, the **EU** needed to be ready for a significant rise in the number of Member States. A reform of the decision-making process was needed: fewer decisions based on unanimity and more on majority voting. The first attempt to change this was with the **Amsterdam Treaty** (signed in 1997, into force in 1999). The treaty however did not live up to this expectation.

2001: TREATY OF NICE

With the accession date of the new countries coming closer, a second attempt to reform the European Union was made in **Nice** (signed in 2001, into force in 2003). It also failed to make the EU decision making easier.

2004-2005: THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION

A third attempt was made with the **European Constitution** in June 2004. Because of the importance of the European Constitution and also the fact that the word "constitution" was used, some countries decided to organise a referendum. The population of France and the Netherlands voted against this new "Constitution for Europe". "Since every new EU Treaty has to be approved by every single Member State, the Constitution couldn't be adopted".

2007: LISBON TREATY

The Lisbon Treaty succeeded in changing the functioning of the EU institutions making decisions at European level became easier. The new rules entered into force in December 2009 and determine how the EU still functions today.



Heads of state in Lisbon, for the signing of the Treaty. © European Communities, 2007

2016: UK REFERENDUM ON LEAVING THE EU

On **23 June 2016**, most British citizens and some other UK residents were asked this question: "Should the UK remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" 51.9 % voted to leave and 48.1 % voted to remain, triggering negotiations on the UK's exit from the European Union and making it the first country ever to leave. The UK officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020, after three years of negotiations.



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2021: NEXT GENERATION EU

To help deal with the social and economic effects of the **COVID-19** pandemic, the EU agreed on a large recovery plan. This plan added €806.9 billion to the **EU's long-term budget for 2021-2027**, bringing the total to €1,210.9 billion (in current prices and after the revision of the EU long-term budget in 2024). The recovery fund is financed by borrowing money from financial markets, on a scale never seen before in the EU.



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