

# EUROPEAN



# UNION

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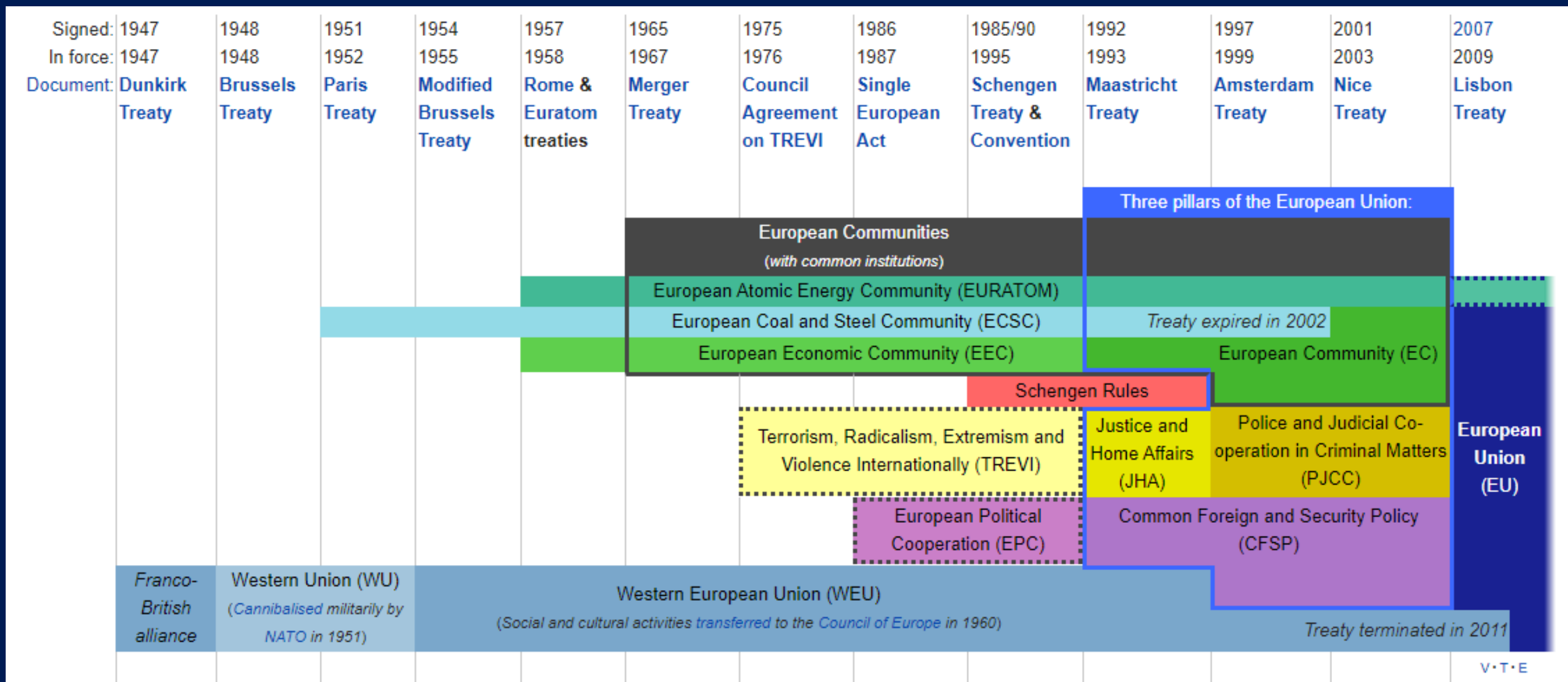
The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe.

The EU has developed an internal single market through a standardised system of laws that apply in all member states in those matters, and only those matters, where members have agreed to act as one. EU policies aim to ensure the **free movement of people, goods, services and capital** within the internal market, enact legislation in justice and home affairs and maintain common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries and regional development.

# SOME FACTS ABOUT EU

1. The European Union has its own flag, complete with twelve stars, that generally thought of as a symbol of unity and perfection.
2. The European Union has a motto. It reads: *United in Diversity*.
3. There are 24 official languages in the European Union.
4. The main currency in the EU is the Euro, but not every country has adopted it. Today, it is the official currency of 19 countries.
5. Member countries aren't forced to remain in the European Union. Any country is allowed to leave if they so choose, but they obviously must notify the EU of that decision.
6. The European Union has won the Nobel Peace Prize. It was awarded to the EU in 2012 based on its contributions towards peace and reconciliation.
7. The European Parliament is the largest and only directly-elected international body in the world.

# TIMELINE



## ➤ World War II

After World War II, **European integration** was seen as an antidote to the extreme nationalism which had devastated parts of the continent.

## ➤ Treaty of Paris

In 1952, disappointed by the lack of progress within the Council of Europe, six nations decided to go further and created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), this community helped to economically integrate and coordinate the large number of Marshall Plan funds from the United States.

## ➤ Treaty of Rome

In 1957, six Countries signed the Treaty of Rome, which created the European Economic Community (EEC) and established a customs union. They also signed another pact creating the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for co-operation in developing nuclear energy.

## ➤ Maastricht Treaty

The European Union was formally established when the Maastricht came into force on 1 November 1993. The expansion of the EU introduced a new level of complexity and discord.

## ➤ Lisbon Treaty

On 1 December 2009, the Lisbon Treaty entered into force and reformed many aspects of the EU. In particular, it **changed the legal structure** of the European Union, merging the EU three pillars system into a single legal entity provisioned with a legal personality, created a permanent President of the European Council, and strengthened the position of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.



***MEMEBERS***





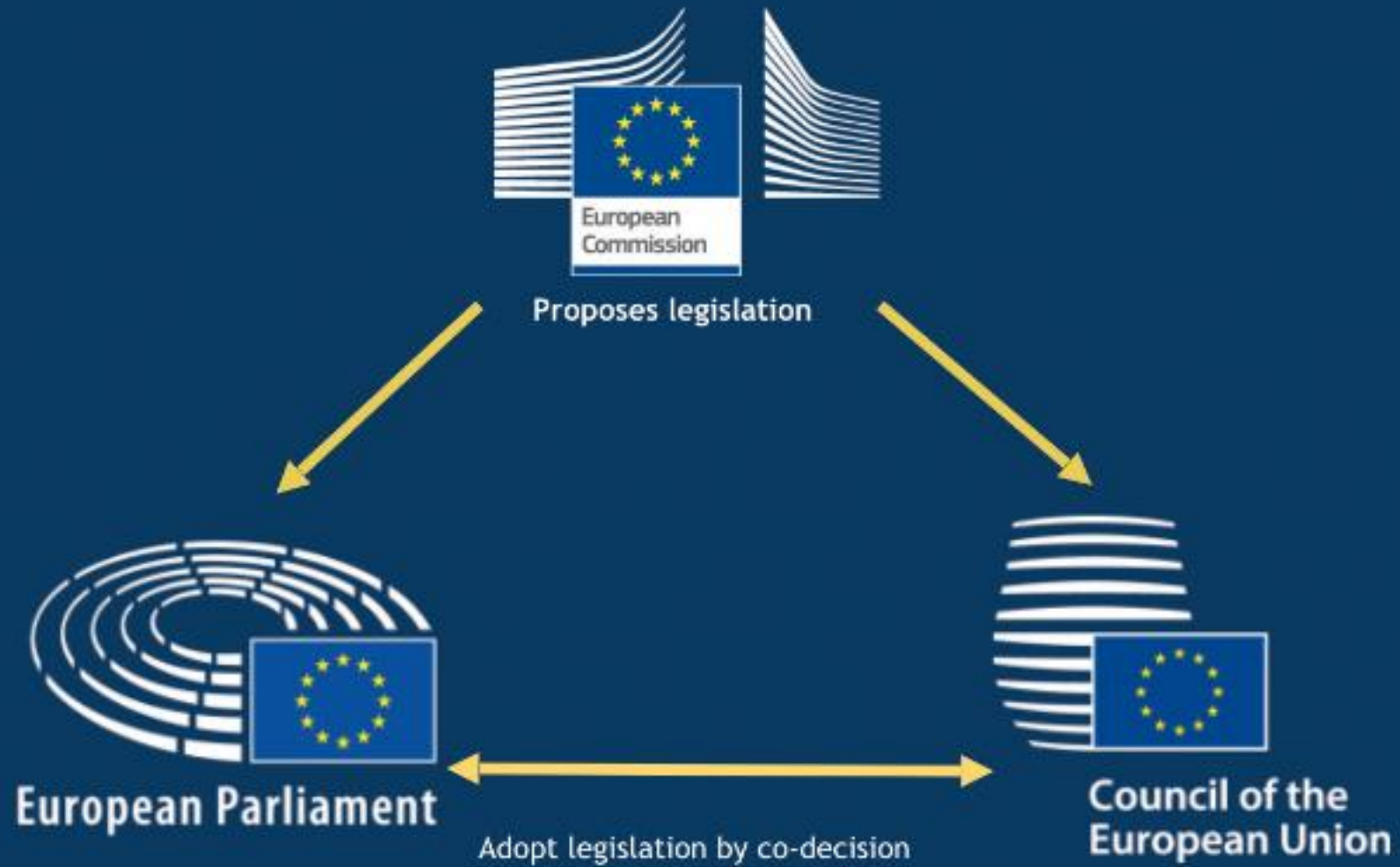
- |                |  |  |                |
|----------------|--|--|----------------|
| Belgium        |  |  | Lithuania      |
| Bulgaria       |  |  | Luxembourg     |
| Czech Republic |  |  | Hungary        |
| Denmark        |  |  | Malta          |
| Germany        |  |  | Netherlands    |
| Estonia        |  |  | Austria        |
| Ireland        |  |  | Poland         |
| Greece         |  |  | Portugal       |
| Spain          |  |  | Romania        |
| France         |  |  | Slovenia       |
| Croatia        |  |  | Slovakia       |
| Italy          |  |  | Finland        |
| Cyprus         |  |  | Sweden         |
| Latvia         |  |  | United Kingdom |

The protocol order of the Member States is based on the alphabetical order of their geographical names in the original language.



- ❑ To become a member, the country must satisfy the conditions for membership, these conditions are known as the **'Copenhagen criteria'**
- ❑ The original members were the Inner Six: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany.
- ❑ Croatia was the last to join European Union.
- ❑ In January 2020, the **United Kingdom** became the first member state ever to leave the EU. However, until at least 31 December 2020, it remains subject to EU law and part of the EU single market and customs union.
- ❑ Potential candidate countries do not yet fulfil the requirements for EU membership:-
  - a) Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - b) Kosovo
- ❑ The euro (€) is the official currency of 19 out of 27 EU countries. These countries are collectively known as the **Eurozone**.
- ❑ The **Schengen Area** is one of the greatest achievements of the EU. It is an area without internal borders, an area within which citizens, many non-EU nationals, business people and tourists can freely circulate without being subjected to border checks.





***STRUCTURE***

# EUROPEAN UNION

Legislative

Executive

Judiciary

Financial  
Auditor

Central  
Bank

European  
Parliament

Council of  
European  
Union

European  
Council

European  
Commission

Court of  
Justice of the  
European  
Union

European  
Court of  
Auditors

European  
Central  
Bank



# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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- ❖ The European Parliament is the legislative branch of the European union. Together with the Council of the European Union, it adopts European Legislation, normally on a proposal from the European Commission.
- ❖ The Parliament is composed of **705 members (MEPs)**. Who are directly elected by European Union Citizens, every five years.
- ❖ The European Parliament has three places of work-
  - a) Luxembourg city is home to the administrative offices
  - b) Meetings of the whole Parliament take place in Strasbourg and in Brussels.
  - c) Committee meetings are held in Brussels.
- ❖ Powers and Functions:-
  - a) Legislative Power- Can approve, amend or reject legislation proposed by the Commission.
  - b) Budgetary Power- Adoption and implementation of Budget
  - c) Supervisory Power- Can call other institutions to answer questions and if necessary to take them to court if they break EU law or treaties. Powers over the appointment of the members of the Court of Auditors and the president and executive board of the European Central Bank

# COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- ❖ The Council of the European Union is one of two legislative bodies and together with the European Parliament serves to amend and approve the proposals of the European Commission.
- ❖ Its decisions are made by **qualified majority** voting in most areas, **unanimity** in others, or just **simple majority** for procedural issues. Usually where it operates unanimously, it only needs to consult the Parliament. However, in most areas the ordinary legislative procedure applies meaning both Council and Parliament share legislative and budgetary powers equally, meaning both have to agree for a proposal to pass. In a few limited areas the Council may initiate new EU law itself.
- ❖ It ensures coordination of the broad economic and social policy and sets out guidelines for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).
- ❖ The Council meets in **10 different configurations** of 27 national ministers (one per state). The precise membership of these configurations varies according to the topic under consideration.
- ❖ The Council has its seat in Brussels but in April, June, and October, it holds its meetings in Luxembourg City.

# EUROPEAN COUNCIL

- ❖ The European Council is a collective body that defines the European Union's overall political direction and priorities. It comprises the heads of state or government of the EU member states, along with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission.
- ❖ The European Council is able to **provide an impetus** to guide legislative policy. Beyond the need to provide "impetus", the Council has developed further roles: to "settle issues outstanding from discussions at a lower level", to lead in foreign policy – acting externally as a "collective Head of State", "formal ratification of important documents" and "involvement in the negotiation of the treaty changes".
- ❖ The meetings of the European Council, still commonly referred to as EU summits, are chaired by its president and take place at least twice every six months; usually in the Europa building in Brussels.
- ❖ Decisions of the European Council are taken by **consensus**, except where the Treaties provide otherwise.



# EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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- ❖ The European Commission is the executive branch of the European Union, responsible for **proposing legislation**, implementing decisions, upholding the EU treaties and **managing the day-to-day business** of the EU.
- ❖ Furthermore, the Commission is responsible for the **implementation of the EU budget**, ensuring, along with the Court of Auditors, that EU funds are **correctly spent**.
- ❖ The Commission is composed of a college of "Commissioners" of 27 members, including the President and vice-presidents. Even though each member is nominated on the basis of the suggestions made by the national governments, one per state, they do not represent their state in the Commission.
- ❖ The Commission is primarily based in **Brussels**.

# COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- ❖ The Court of Justice of the European Union is the judicial branch of the European Union (EU). Seated in the **Kirchberg** quarter of Luxembourg City, Luxembourg.
- ❖ This EU institution consists of two separate courts:
  - a) The Court of Justice- which hears applications from national courts for preliminary rulings, annulment and appeals
  - b) The General Court- which hears applications for annulment from individuals, companies and, less commonly, national governments (focusing on competition law, state aid, trade, agriculture and trade marks).
- ❖ It is the chief judicial authority of the European Union and oversees the uniform **application and interpretation** of European Union law, in co-operation with the national judiciary of the member states.
- ❖ It also **resolves legal disputes** between national governments and EU institutions, and may take action against EU institutions on behalf of individuals, companies or organisations whose rights have been infringed.

# EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

- ❖ The European Court of Auditors was established in 1975 in Luxembourg in order to improve EU financial management.
- ❖ It is a professional external **investigatory audit agency**.
- ❖ The primary role of the ECA is to externally check if the budget of the European Union has been implemented correctly, in that EU funds have been spent legally and with sound management. In doing so, the ECA checks the paperwork of all persons handling any income or expenditure of the Union and carries out spot checks.
- ❖ The ECA is composed of one member from each EU Member State, each of whom is appointed unanimously by the Council of the European Union for a **renewable term of six years**.
- ❖ The members then elect one of their number as the President of the ECA for a **renewable three-year term**.

# EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

- ❖ The European Central Bank (ECB) is the central bank for the euro and administers monetary policy within the Eurozone, which comprises 19 member states of the European Union and is one of the largest monetary areas in the world
- ❖ The primary objective of the ECB, is to **maintain price stability** within the Eurozone. Its basic tasks are to set and **implement the monetary policy** for the Eurozone, to conduct **foreign exchange operations**, to take care of the foreign reserves of the European System of Central Banks and operation of the financial market .
- ❖ The ECB has, the exclusive right to authorise the **issuance of euro banknotes**. Member states can issue euro coins, but the amount must be authorised by the ECB beforehand.

# CONCLUSION

The European Union has had a significant positive economic impact on member states. According to a 2019 study of the member states who joined from 1973 to 2004, "without European integration, per capita incomes would have been, on average, approximately 10% lower in the first ten years after joining the EU."

The European Union has contributed to peace in Europe, in particular by pacifying border disputes. The European Union has contributed to the spread of democracy, in particular by encouraging democratic reforms in aspiring member states. the EU has proved beneficial to leaders who are overseeing democratic backsliding, as the EU is reluctant to intervene in domestic politics, gives the authoritarians funds which they can use to strengthen their regimes, and because freedom of movement within the EU allows dissenting citizens to leave their backsliding countries.