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Birth of the European Union and chronology of the integration

5th May 1949: Council of Europe

On 5 May 1949, in London, ten countries sign the Statute of the Council of Europe. The founding members of the Community were Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

This is the first international Parliamentary Assembly of all time, composed of MPs from Parliament or government of each member state.

The headquarters of the Council of Europe are in Strasbourg and its aim is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress. The Assembly of the Council of Europe quickly launches many projects in favor of the European unification in many areas such as transportations, public health and agriculture. It has also created a European project of common market within the member states and their overseas territories. The Assembly also proposes to implement a federal system of political authority.

The Council of Europe plays an important role regarding the cultural, social and scientific cooperation. It maps out international conventions in various areas such as academic cooperation and diploma and degree equivalence, language studies, the protection and development of the artistic and archaeological heritage, the translation and diffusion of European literature, the harmonization of social welfare, the fight against unemployment, and further standardization of passports.

The Council of Europe's most famous achievement is *the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, which was adopted on November 1950. It is the first international treaty that tends to promote awareness of and respect for human rights in the member states. The Council of Europe defines itself as a place for dialogue, cooperation and where charters and conventions are elaborated in terms of European identity.

However, as far as it concerns territory defense the Council of Europe is not competent.

In 2010, the Council of Europe counts 47 member states with some 800 million citizens.

18 april 1951 : European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)

On April 1951 the treaty implementing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was signed in Paris by "the inner six": Robert Schuman for France, Konrad Adenauer for West Germany, Paul van Zeeland and Joseph Meurice for Belgium, the count Carlo Sforza for Italy, Joseph Bech for Luxembourg, Dirk Stikker and Jan Van den Brink for the Netherlands.

The institutions of the ECSC were the *High Authority*, the *Common Assembly*, the *Special Council of Ministers* and the *Court of Justice*.

The Authority's principle innovation was its supranational character. Despite being appointed by agreement of national governments acting together, the members were to pledge not to represent their national interest, but rather took a oath to defend the general interests of the Community as a whole. It had a broad area of competence to ensure the objectives of the treaty were met.

The financial autonomy of the High Authority, thanks to a flat tax, a levy on production with a maximum rate of one percent, should reinforce its independence towards the six governments.

The various institutions started working in 1952 :

On 10 August 1952, the inaugural session of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community is held in Luxembourg, the issue of the seat is still unresolved.

On 8 September 1952, meeting of the ECSC Special Council of Ministers headed by Konrad Adenauer.

On 10 September 1952, the first meeting of the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community opens in Strasbourg with the Belgian, Paul-Henri Spaak, in the chair.

On 10 December 1952, in Luxembourg, the first Judges of the Court of Justice of the European Coal and Steel Community took the oath.

In 1953, the common market succeeded to achieve several fundamental – economical and political – aims. The common market represents a growing factor of the production and of the intra-european exchanges.

The treaty was launched on 23 July 1952 for 50 years and finally expired on 23 July 2002.

1954 - The European Defense Community (EDC)

Plans for the EDC keen that the establishment of a German army should be undertaken within the confines of a European structure, the French Premier, René Pleven, put forward to his European partners a plan proposing the constitution of a European army of 100 000 men. The Pleven Plan was to combine battalions from various European countries, including Germany. The European army, though run by a European Minister for Defence and endowed with a common budget, would be placed under the supreme command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Negotiations began on 15 February 1951. With American support, the members of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) signed the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community (EDC) on 27 May 1952 in Paris. The planned European army would consist of 40 national divisions of 13 000 soldiers wearing a common uniform.

The Treaty also provided for the creation of a Commissariat of nine members, a Council of Ministers, and an EDC Assembly with the task of drafting a plan for a European political authority.

The EDC Treaty, signed for a period of 50 years, could not, however, come into force until it had been ratified by all the signatory states.

Weakened by the successive governmental crises of the Fourth Republic, the new government under Mendès France, itself split between those for and those against the EDC, met with considerable difficulties in its efforts to have such a controversial bill adopted. The *Mouvement républicain populaire* (MRP - Popular Republican Movement), and the *Rassemblement du peuple français* (RPF – Gathering of the French People) led by Charles de Gaulles, fought for the ratification of the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community (EDC), which it considered to be the decisive step in moving towards federal unity in Europe and the best way to prevent a revival of German nationalism. At that time, memories of the Nazi occupation were still strong, and the rearmament of Germany was anathema to many.

The EDC went for ratification in the French National Assembly on 30 August 1954, and failed by a vote of 264-319 (Judt, 2005:245). The plan never went into effect.

25 March 1957 : The European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC)

The signing in Rome on 25 March 1957 of the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) marked a key stage in the history of European integration. The Rome Treaties made no provision for a time limit or a withdrawal procedure.

The Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) created a general common market characterised by a customs union which was based both on the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital and the drawing up of common policies, in particular in the sectors of agriculture and transport.

The Treaty establishing the EEC provided for a transitional period of twelve years in which to abolish customs barriers between Member States and to adopt a common external tariff. This objective was attained in 1968.

The introduction of a common agricultural policy (CAP) was to take place gradually. This was a particularly vital issue as the Treaty of Rome created an agricultural market of 200 million consumers. A transitional period was to allow those countries whose agricultural industries were not yet as efficient as those of their partners to close the gap with the help of an adjustment scheme.

The Treaty assigned five objectives to the common agricultural policy (CAP):

- to increase agricultural productivity;
- to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community;
- to stabilise markets;
- to assure the availability of agricultural supplies in the Six;
- to ensure that supplies reached consumers at reasonable prices.

However, the Treaty did not lay down implementing methods. After four years of bargaining, the following basic principles were finally selected:

- unity of the market, based on the free movement of agricultural products and on price unity within countries of the Community;
- Community preference;
- financial solidarity;
- common market intervention.

The CAP was born on 21 April 1970.

The European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom)

Euratom (the European Atomic Energy Community) is responsible for coordinating nuclear energy research programs. Its mission is to contribute to “the formation and development of nuclear industries” within the six founding Member States.

Eurotom also aims at limiting nuclear dependence thanks to civilian nuclear energy – especially after the Suez crisis which had caused oil supply problems when coal energy was being replaced by nuclear energy in the electric industry. In the fifties, nuclear energy promoters were convinced that this new energy source would be able to take over oil and coal energy.

Euratom was initially established to facilitate investments and create large markets for nuclear industry. However, its ambitions had to be tempered since the subject is sensitive. France, Germany Belgium Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have indeed conflicting interests in terms of nuclear policy. It also turns out to be difficult to draw a clear distinction between military and civilian applications of the atom.

Euratom’s functioning is hindered by the absence of supranational authority and by conflicting national interests.

10 June 1979 : The first elections by universal suffrage of the European Parliament

The origins of the European Parliament can be found in the Common Assembly, a purely consultative assembly set up in 1951 by the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). There is no reference to an Assembly as part of the ECSC in the Declaration of 9 May 1950 presented by the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman. The concept was put forward by Jean Monnet on the second day of the treaty negotiations as a way of monitoring and providing a counterweight to the High Authority.

The institution of the Common Assembly thus provided the democratic legitimacy required by the Community. Although its powers were limited, it was a Parliamentary Assembly and was therefore both representative and sovereign. Article 20 of the ECSC Treaty refers to representatives of the peoples, a phrase which demonstrates that the authors wanted to distinguish the Common Assembly from traditional assemblies established within international organisations and made up of representatives of the national governments. The Common Assembly was the first international assembly based on a parliamentary model. Article 21 of the ECSC Treaty explains that it was to be ‘composed of delegates whom the parliaments of each of the member States shall be called upon to designate once a year from among their own membership, or who shall be elected by direct universal suffrage, according to the procedure determined by each respective High Contracting Party’.

After signing the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community (EDC) on 26 May 1952, the Foreign Ministers of the Six asked the Common Assembly, as early as September 1952, to draw up a draft Treaty establishing a European Political Community. The ECSC Assembly therefore became a constituent assembly referred to as the Ad Hoc Assembly.

After the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) in 1957, it was agreed that a single assembly would have the powers and responsibilities that the EEC and the EAEC Treaties assigned to it. The single Assembly would also replace the Common Assembly of the ECSC and enjoy the same powers and responsibilities (Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention on certain institutions common to the European Communities).

The single Assembly convened for the first time from 19 to 21 March 1958. Right from its very first session it adopted the name European Parliamentary Assembly. A few years later, on 30 March 1962, it became known as the European Parliament. That designation was made official by the Single European Act of 1986.

As early as 1951, the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) provided for the possibility of electing representatives to the Common Assembly by direct universal suffrage. Article 21 of the Treaty states that ‘The Assembly shall be composed of delegates whom the parliaments of each of the member States shall be called upon to designate once a year from among their own membership, or who shall be elected by direct



universal suffrage, according to the procedure determined by each respective High Contracting Party.’

In 1958, the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) provided for the representatives to be appointed by and from among the members of the national parliaments, but also stipulated that ‘The Assembly shall draw up proposals for elections by direct universal suffrage in accordance with a uniform procedure in all Member States’ (Articles 138 and 108 respectively).

Directly elected every 5 years by universal suffrage since June 1979, the powers of the European Parliament have been reinforced with the european construction.

In 2010, the Parliament is composed of 736 MEPs (Members of the European Parliament). They are elected every 5 years by the citizens of the 27 member States (500 millions).

The European Parliament has 3 main powers :
The legislative procedure, the budget, the control of the executive.

The Schengen Agreement

On 14 June 1985, in Schengen (Luxembourg), France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Benelux countries sign the Schengen Agreement on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders.

Indeed, the other countries of the Union successively joined the founding group: Italy on 27 November 1990, Spain and Portugal on 25 June 1991, Greece on 6 November 1992, Austria on 28 April 1995 and Sweden, Finland and Denmark on 19 November 1996. Norway and Iceland, countries outside the Union, but members of the Nordic Passport Union, acceded to the Schengen area as associate members on 19 December 1996. Only the United Kingdom and Ireland do not take part and maintain their own border checks.

The Schengen Agreement provides for the gradual abolition of borders between the States, this being offset by a more effective surveillance of their external borders. It establishes short-term measures — simplifying internal border checks and coordinating the fight against drug trafficking and crime — and long-term measures — the harmonisation of legislative and regulatory provisions relating to drugs and arms trafficking, police cooperation and the harmonisation of visa policies.

On 19 June 1990, a Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement was signed. Its aim is to strengthen external border checks, to define the specific procedures for issuing uniform visas, to harmonise procedures regarding the right of asylum, to establish a Schengen Information System and to take measures against drug trafficking.

The implementation of the Schengen Agreement, planned for 1 January 1993, was faced with many difficulties and had to be delayed on a number of occasions. Its date was irrevocably set on 26 March 1995.

From then onwards, it is gradually applied to the signatory countries, and provision is made for provisional derogation clauses. Italy and Greece have invoked such clauses because of difficulties encountered in monitoring their maritime borders. Likewise, France invoked them during the 1995 terrorist attacks and continues to do so today, in order to monitor its borders with Belgium and Luxembourg, because of drug trafficking originating in the Netherlands.

The Schengen acquis is part of the European Community pillar established in the Treaty of Amsterdam of 2 October 1997, but does not apply to the United Kingdom and Ireland, which countries have secured derogations.



Effective application of the Schengen Agreement :

- **26 March 1995** : Germany, Belgium, France (with some restrictions until March 1996), Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.
- **26 October 1997**: Italy
- **1 December 1997**: Austria
- **8 December 1997**: Greece. This country apply the agreement only in airports and harbors (mainly between Igoumenitsa and various italian harbors), because it does not have any terrestrial borders with another state wich apply the Schengen Agreement. Moreover, this country does not apply the Schengen Agreement for citizens of Macedonia.

- **25 March 2001**: Denmark, Finland, Island, Norway and Sweden.
- **21 December 2007**: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Malta.
- **12 December 2008**: Switzerland



The Single European Act : 17 February 1986 and 28 February 1986

On 17 February 1986, only Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom signed the SEA in Luxembourg.

On 27 February 1986, 56.2 % of the Danish population voted in favour of the Treaty.

On 28 February 1986, it was the turn of Denmark, Italy and Greece to sign the Single Act in The Hague.

Now signed by the Twelve, the SEA still needed to be ratified by the national parliaments during 1986 and 1987, according to the constitutional requirements of each signatory State. The SEA could not enter into force until the first day of the month following the deposit of the final instrument of ratification. The Single European Act, which amended the European Communities' founding Treaties, came into force on 1 July 1987.

In a single document, the Single European Act shows all of the provisions relating :

- to institutional reform,
- to the extension of Community powers,
- to European political cooperation on foreign affairs.

The SEA was, moreover, an essential stage in the completion of the single market as it enabled attainment of the 1992 Objective to be speeded up and supported. It hopes to realise the potential of the Common Market, established by the Treaty of Rome (1957), and to add the finishing touches to the Community structure by enabling the institutions to operate more efficiently. Designed to accelerate the completion of the Single Market, the Single European Act also envisaged the establishment of a European area without internal frontiers and more than 300 000 000 consumers. The SEA provided for the establishment of a single market and for the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital by 31 December 1992.

The Treaty of Amsterdam

In Article N of the Treaty on European Union, signed at Maastricht on 7 February 1992, provisions were laid down for the revision of the Treaty in 1996.

Accordingly, the Fifteen convened an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in Turin on 29 March 1996, which, under the successive Presidencies of Italy, Ireland and the Netherlands, drew up a draft treaty that was adopted by the Amsterdam European Council on 16 and 17 June 1997.

Only minor amendments were made before the Treaty was signed in Amsterdam on 2 October by the Foreign Ministers of the 15 EU Member States. After being ratified by all Member States, the Treaty of Amsterdam entered into force on 1 May 1999.

The Treaty of Amsterdam, building on the existing Treaties, amended certain provisions of the Maastricht Treaty and the Treaties establishing the European Communities and of other related Acts.

Most notably, it permitted :

- the strengthening of the position of human rights within the Union. Explicit reference is made to human rights and to the principles of freedom, democracy and rule of law. Compliance therewith became a condition for accession to the Union, with any failure to do so leading to possible sanctions being imposed by the Council.
- the incorporation of the Schengen acquis into the European Union,
- the repeal of the United Kingdom's derogation on social policy,
- the establishing of an area of freedom, security and justice, which strengthened the means for taking action in matters of foreign policy.
- Community policies on the environment, health and consumer protection were strengthened. The role of 'services of general economic interest' (or public services) was also recognised.

Moreover, the principle of enhanced cooperation was also laid down in the Treaty in order to allow those Member States that wished to do so to cooperate more closely to do so through the Union's institutions and means for taking action, without harming the process of European integration as a whole.

As for the EU institutions, progress was made with regard to democratisation with the extension of the European Parliament's powers.

Legislative codecision with the Council now encompassed new fields, and the procedure was also simplified. Parliament would henceforth give its approval of, and not simply its opinion on, the appointment of the President of the European Commission by the governments, which



in turn would consult Parliament before nominating new Commissioners. With a view to a further enlargement of the Union, the ceiling for the total number of MEPs was increased to 700.

Accordingly, the Treaty of Amsterdam — this being its most apparent shortcoming — provided no solution to the central issue of the efficiency of the decision-making process in a Union that had enlarged from 12 to 15 Member States and would soon be enlarging again with the accession of a further dozen countries.

The Treaty of Nice

The process of enlargement of the European Union to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs), Malta and Cyprus, which began at the end of the 1990s, required more substantial institutional reforms than those introduced in 1997 by the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The Treaty of Nice was signed on 26 February 2001, and came into force on 1 February 2003.

All in all, the results of the Intergovernmental Conference and the Treaty of Nice did not really meet the objective of making the Union capable of coping with enlargement without losing its effectiveness. The large Member States, which wanted to increase their weight in the institutions, sacrificed their second Commissioner without securing a sufficient corresponding increase in the number of their votes in the Council, where the many small Member States were over-represented, as in the Commission and the European Parliament. Decision-making would be more difficult with 27 than with 15, and the Union would become even more heterogeneous.

For the British, the treaty allows them to retain their veto on matters which they regard as vital and to retain the intergovernmental character of the developing common foreign, security and defence policy.

The Spanish and the Poles were happy to be ‘almost big’ countries.

Germany did not secure the few votes — or even the symbolic vote — that it was demanding in the Council on the basis of its greater population size, but it did win the possibility for this to be taken into account by having adopted the requirement that 62 % of the Union’s population was needed to confirm Council decisions taken by a weighted majority. Moreover, Germany was the only Member State not to see a reduction in its representation in the European Parliament — already increased following reunification — with the increase from 15 to 27 Member States. Above all, it was Germany that appeared most determined to move forward with political integration, securing the convening of a new Intergovernmental Conference (IGC).

France, on the other hand, although it maintained formal parity with Germany in the Council, had its position weakened by giving the impression that it was clinging to the status quo without offering a vision of the way forward, as it had done in the past. At all events, the Franco-German pairing had not played its role as a dynamic force and needed to be restored. After Nice, the German and French leaders would respond in order to restore their good relations, move their positions closer together and attempt to speak with a single voice.

The Treaty of Lisbon

On 13 December 2007, the Treaty of Lisbon was signed by the 27 EU member states. It amends the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC). This treaty is the result of negotiations between EU member countries in an intergovernmental conference, in which the Commission and Parliament were also involved.

Europe is facing new challenges in the 21st century. Thus it needed to modernise. The EU has recently expanded from 15 to 27 members; it needs effective, coherent tools so it can function properly and respond to the rapid changes in the world. That means rethinking some of the ground rules for working together.

When European leaders reached agreement on the new rules, they were thinking of the political, economic and social changes going on, and the need to live up to the hopes and expectations of the European public. The Treaty of Lisbon defines what the EU can and cannot do, and what means it can use. It alters the structure of the EU's institutions and how they work. As a result, the EU is more democratic and its core values are better served. The treaty signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007 sets out to do just that.

The treaty was ratified by each of the EU's 27 members. It was up to each country to choose the procedure for ratification, in line with its own national constitution.

The Treaty of Lisbon amends the current EU and EC treaties, without replacing them. It provides the Union with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet future challenges and to respond to citizens' demands.

1. A more democratic and transparent Europe, with a strengthened role for the European Parliament and national parliaments, more opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard and a clearer sense of who does what at European and national level.

- A strengthened role for the European Parliament: the European Parliament, directly elected by EU citizens, is provided with important new powers regarding EU legislation, the EU budget and international agreements. In particular, the increase of co-decision procedure in policy-making ensures that the European Parliament is placed on an equal footing with the Council, representing Member States, for the vast bulk of EU legislation.
- A greater involvement of national parliaments: national parliaments have greater opportunities to be involved in the work of the EU, in particular thanks to a new mechanism to monitor that the Union only acts where results can be better attained at EU level (subsidiarity). Together with the strengthened role for the European Parliament, it will enhance democracy and increase legitimacy in the functioning of the Union.

- A stronger voice for citizens: thanks to the Citizens' Initiative, one million citizens from a number of Member States have the possibility to call on the Commission to bring forward new policy proposals.
- Who does what: the relationship between the Member States and the European Union become clearer with the categorisation of competences.
- Withdrawal from the Union: the Treaty of Lisbon explicitly recognises for the first time the possibility for a Member State to withdraw from the Union.

2. A more efficient Europe, with simplified working methods and voting rules, streamlined and modern institutions for a EU of 27 members and an improved ability to act in areas of major priority for today's Union.

- Effective and efficient decision-making: qualified majority voting in the Council is extended to new policy areas to make decision-making faster and more efficient. From 2014 on, the calculation of qualified majority will be based on the double majority of Member States and people, thus representing the dual legitimacy of the Union. A double majority will be achieved when a decision is taken by 55% of the Member States representing at least 65% of the Union's population.
- A more stable and streamlined institutional framework: the Treaty of Lisbon creates the function of President of the European Council elected for two and a half years, introduces a direct link between the election of the Commission President and the results of the European elections, provides for new arrangements for the future composition of the European Parliament, and includes clearer rules on enhanced cooperation and financial provisions.
- Improving the life of Europeans: the Treaty of Lisbon improves the EU's ability to act in several policy areas of major priority for today's Union and its citizens. This is the case in particular for the policy areas of freedom, security and justice, such as combating terrorism or tackling crime. It also concerns to some extent other areas including energy policy, public health, civil protection, climate change, services of general interest, research, space, territorial cohesion, commercial policy, humanitarian aid, sport, tourism and administrative cooperation.

3. A Europe of rights and values, freedom, solidarity and security, promoting the Union's values, introducing the Charter of Fundamental Rights into European primary law, providing for new solidarity mechanisms and ensuring better protection of European citizens.

- Democratic values: the Treaty of Lisbon details and reinforces the values and objectives on which the Union is built. These values aim to serve as a reference point for European citizens and to demonstrate what Europe has to offer its partners worldwide.

- Citizens' rights and Charter of Fundamental Rights: the Treaty of Lisbon preserves existing rights while introducing new ones. In particular, it guarantees the freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and gives its provisions a binding legal force. It concerns civil, political, economic and social rights.
- Freedom of European citizens: the Treaty of Lisbon preserves and reinforces the "four freedoms" and the political, economic and social freedom of European citizens.
- Solidarity between Member States: the Treaty of Lisbon provides that the Union and its Member States act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the subject of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. Solidarity in the area of energy is also emphasised.
- Increased security for all: the Union gets an extended capacity to act on freedom, security and justice, which brings direct benefits in terms of the Union's ability to fight crime and terrorism. New provisions on civil protection, humanitarian aid and public health also aim at boosting the Union's ability to respond to threats to the security of European citizens.

4. Europe as an actor on the global stage will be achieved by bringing together Europe's external policy tools, both when developing and deciding new policies. The Treaty of Lisbon gives Europe a clear voice in relations with its partners worldwide. It harnesses Europe's economic, humanitarian, political and diplomatic strengths to promote European interests and values worldwide, while respecting the particular interests of the Member States in Foreign Affairs.

- A new High Representative for the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, also Vice-President of the Commission, will increase the impact, the coherence and the visibility of the EU's external action.
- A new European External Action Service will provide back up and support to the High Representative.
- A single legal personality for the Union will strengthen the Union's negotiating power, making it more effective on the world stage and a more visible partner for third countries and international organisations.
- Progress in European Security and Defence Policy will preserve special decision-making arrangements but also pave the way towards reinforced cooperation amongst a smaller group of Member States.

The Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009.

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