

Part One:

A Brief History of the European Union

Treaties

In 1992, the TEU, or the Maastricht Treaty as it is commonly known, made significant changes to the nature of the existing European Community (EC) and extended the process of European integration to new areas, giving rise to the European Union (EU). As a result, the EC refers to matters governed by the Treaties of Rome (as amended) essentially covering the single market, the associated legislation, and the functioning of the institutions within that sphere of competence.

The EU is a broader term introduced by the Maastricht Treaty. It is used when referring to the areas covered by the original Community Treaties¹ and also the areas of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA).

The TEU has also introduced a "Three Pillar" structure which clarifies the foregoing distinction between the EU and the EC. The first is the EC pillar, associated with community matters such as Economic and Monetary Union, the development of a single market, and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In this first pillar, the Commission has a central role and decisions are taken by qualified majority. The second and third pillars respectively cover matters related to the CFSP and JHA. They are characterised by an intergovernmental cooperation where decisions are taken by unanimity. However, considering the modifications brought by the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on October 20, 1997, we will present the EU fields of competence that are Community matters, CFSP and JHA without referring to the Three Pillar structure.

Indeed, in view of ensuring the freedom of movement of people, the Treaty of Amsterdam foresees many accompanying measures which transform the traditional distribution of responsibilities between the Community and the intergovernmental spheres, as well as the decision-making procedures. Some JHA issues on borders, visa policy, asylum, immigration, and judicial cooperation in civil matters will be partially and gradually transferred to the EC. In general, the control will however be shared among Member States and the Commission. The Commission will have only a

preponderant role in these JHA matters five years after the ratification of the Treaty. The Treaty of Amsterdam also states that JHA matters governed by intergovernmental cooperation will include provisions on customs, police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and a part of the Schengen acquis.

The Treaty of Amsterdam is the latest fundamental legal document adopted by the EU. It amends the TEU to make it more efficient and pave the way to the enlargement of the Union.

Chronology

- 1950** – Schuman Declaration which proposes the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)
- 1951** – Signing of the **Treaty of Paris** establishing the ECSC among the original 6 – Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands
- 1957** – Signing of the **Treaties of Rome** establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)
- 1967** – Merger Treaty – merging the institutions of the ECSC, EEC and Euratom
- 1968** – Completion of the Customs Union and establishment of a common external tariff
- 1973** – Accession of Denmark, Ireland and the UK to EC
- 1979** – First direct elections of the European Parliament by universal suffrage
- 1981** – Accession of Greece to EC
- 1984** – Second direct elections to European Parliament
- 1986** – Accession of Portugal and Spain to EC
 - Signing of the **Single European Act (SEA)**
- 1987** – Turkey applies to join EC
- 1989** – Third Parliamentary Elections
- 1990** – German unification
 - Cyprus and Malta apply to join EC
- 1992** – Signing of the **Treaty on European Union (TEU)**, also known as the Maastricht Treaty
- 1993** – Coming into force of the TEU creating the European Union upon ratification by the Member States. Introduction of the single

¹ The Treaty of Paris creating the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC, 1952); and the Treaties of Rome adding the European Economic Community (EEC, 1957), and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom, 1957).