

The European Community is uniting the economies of nine nations: Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands.

The Community's six founding members — Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands — have established a customs union that the new members are now completing. The "Nine" are laying foundations of full economic and monetary union. They hope ultimately to form a European union.

Legally, there are three European communities, but they share the same institutions.

*The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)*, created by the Paris Treaty of April 18, 1951. It prepared the way for further economic unity by joining the coal and steel industries in a single "common market".

*The European Economic Community (EEC)*, created by the first Rome Treaty of March 25, 1957. On January 1, 1958, the EEC began to remove trade and economic barriers between its member countries and to unify their economic policies.

*The European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)*, created by the second Rome Treaty of March 25, 1957. Euratom promotes the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The European Community seeks to:

- put an end to national prejudice, discrimination and armed conflict, which have culminated in two world wars;
- make itself a single economic area, promoting social and technological progress and the efficient use of resources in both agriculture and industry;
- recover some of the world influence that Western Europe's nations can no longer command separately;
- become a strong force for peace and a generous provider of aid to the world's poorer nations;
- contribute to world stability and the beginning of international law and order.

The Community differs from traditional international organizations in that it provides for an "ever-closer union" of unlimited duration between member states. Its permanent institutions not only apply and administer the treaties, which are the Community's "constitution", but also engage in a continuous process of legislation, making and revising policy as the integration process progresses.

*Signing of the Treaties creating the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, Rome, March 25, 1957. The Community's six founding members pledged to achieve "ever closer union among the European peoples."*

