



# HISTORIC EUROPE

**T**he European Union is an unprecedented community project that appeared at an unusually troubled point in history. In light of its development over time, the courage involved in its founding, and the effects it generated in entire generations of citizens, there is no structure like it. The origin of the Union implied a fundamental decision, generated, in its turn, by an unprecedented reality: the disaster of a world war that left a world in ruins and that brought humanity face to face with a catastrophic capacity for destruction. A Europe divided by hate, decimated, destructive and self-destructive emerged from the Second World War diminished and demoralized.

It is hard for anyone who did not live through those times to imagine the desolating picture the war left in its wake; it is perhaps even harder to imagine a decision to transform a peace guaranteed by treaties into a project for the future based on cooperation and nonaggression. Those who had the vision of a future protected from war, the so-called architects of the European project, nevertheless found the courage, but also the nobility, to establish *trust* at the base of the first form of pragmatic cooperation between states barely emerged from the conflagration of war. Their project was marked by trust and willingness to together conceive a better plan for all, a plan that would once again leave room for hope in Europe.

## — COOPERATION, THE SOLUTION THAT RAISED EUROPE FROM ASHES

From this kind of project, which replaced aggression with good will, competition with collaboration, and suspicion with mutual trust, emerged a form of cooperation that has stood at the base of the European Union as we know it today. If war taught political leaders anything,

then the first lesson put in practice was that they must do everything possible that another such conflict not break out. The first to have committed themselves to an agreement that would put peace above any hostility were the traditional rivals, France and Germany, who, through a decision of historic proportions, agreed to put their coal and steel industries under a neutral, supranational authority within the framework of an organization in which other states might participate.

**PEACE BECOMES  
THE NUMBER  
ONE PRIORITY  
FOR FRANCE  
AND GERMANY.** ★

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The simple theory behind the first organization that ultimately served as the basis for the European Union consisted in the assumption that if trust and understanding could exist between France and Germany, then collaboration would be possible among the others as well. The one who articulated this idea with

**MAY 9TH, ★  
THE DAY OF  
THE SCHUMAN  
DECLARATION,  
BECOMES  
EUROPE DAY.**

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conviction and courage was French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, in a declaration that would bear his name, presented on May 9, 1950. The Schuman Declaration stands at the base of the European Community project, and May 9<sup>th</sup> has become the birthday of the European Union. In 2008, the European Parliament officially recognized this date as Europe Day, celebrated all over the European Union.



## IT WAS ROBERT SCHUMAN

*who advanced this innovative idea with the advice of French diplomat and economist Jean Monnet, a strenuous supporter of cooperation among European states as the basis for assuring peace and regional well-being. These two are considered the founding parents of the Union—together with other visionary politicians who firmly and enthusiastically supported moving in the direction of a European community, notably Konrad Adenauer, Joseph Bech, Paul-Henri Spaak, Walter Hallstein, Altiero Spinelli and Alcide De Gasperi.*

The first states to join France and Germany in this organization for cooperation at the European level were Italy and the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. These six states founded the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), a new organization, whose creation resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Paris on April 18th, 1951. ECSC's executive leadership would be exercised by a High Authority (the future European Commission), whose first president was none other than Jean Monnet.

The first cooperative project based on integrating two important industrial sectors amounted to an essential step toward creating openness among states and harmonizing relations after the Second World War. In a short time, however, the signatories of the Treaty of Paris realized that fuller cooperation was necessary to economic development for the group as a whole. This desideratum resulted in the signing of the two Treaties of Rome in March 1957, following which two new organizations were born: the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

**THE TREATY ★  
OF ROME:  
THE DECISIVE  
STEP TOWARD  
A COMMON  
MARKET.**

With the Treaty of Rome, the signatory states were taking a decisive step toward what would become the Common Market, which, in time, would define the four specific liberties of European freedom : freedom of circulation for people, goods, services, and capital. At Rome, too, the signatories decided to create certain common policies and institutions aimed at harmonizing relations among the member states of the three organizations as a way of guaranteeing an increased living standard at the community level.

Closer cooperation with a view to coordinating national economies and social policies was thus the second major answer that the first states participating in the

## THE TREATY OF ROME

*refers generically to two treaties through which two communities essential to the European construction were born: the treaty to establish the European Economic Community (EEC) and the treaty that established the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). Six states (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) signed the treaty in Rome on March 25, 1957. The principle objectives of the EEC treaty were (1) the creation of the European Common Market and, (2) the coordination of the economic policies of the member states so as to generate economic development for the entire group. The foundations for the Common Market were laid at that moment. It would be a market characterized by the four freedoms and by the existence of a customs union. All the provisions of the Treaty of Rome established the direction of common policies, particularly in agriculture and transportation. Euratom, which in the meantime has become non-essential to the European construction, was intended to create a common market for atomic energy.*

European project offered to the question regarding stability and well-being in the region. These economic and social policies had notable benefits, one direct result being the elimination of customs duties inside the Community, while the clearly quantifiable progress of integration led to three other states wishing to become members. After prolonged negotiations, Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark adhered to the EC in January 1973.

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**ELIMINATION  
OF CUSTOMS  
TAXES OFFERS  
STABILITY,  
ECONOMIC,  
AND SOCIAL  
BENEFITS.**

In time, the EC developed increasingly efficient modes of institutional organization meant to assure the group an increasingly favorable framework in which to take decisions favorable to their citizens. These new plans of harmonizing institutions led to The Merger Treaty, or the Brussels Treaty, signed on April 8th 1965, with the intent of creating joint institutions for the three European Communities: the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. Two great moments deserve to be mentioned for the decisive role that the decisions taken then have played in the existence of the Union down to the present day.

In 1975, outside of the treaties and thus by unconventional means, the foundations of the European Council were established. The council reunited (and reunites) heads of state and heads of the governments

★ **SIMONE  
VEIL, FIRST  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT,  
CHOSEN BY FREE  
ELECTION.**

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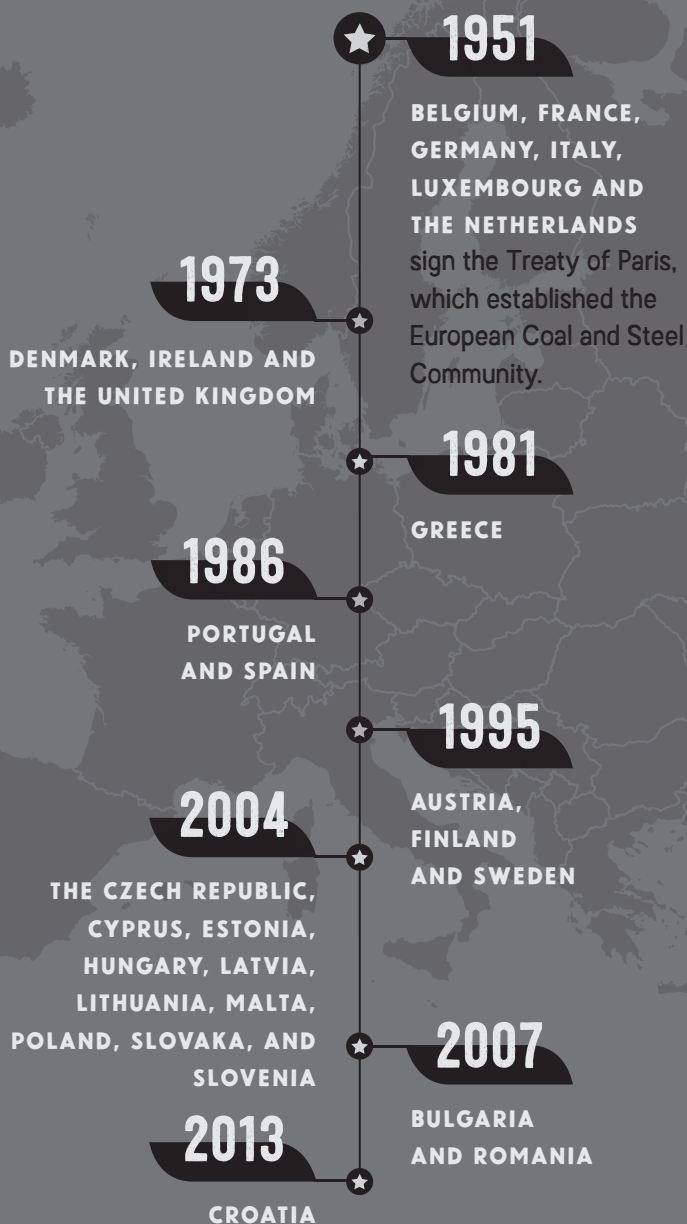
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of member states. Moreover, in 1979, the EC decided that the voices of citizens themselves should have greater weight in decisions taken at the Community level, the result being the introduction of free elections for members of the European Parliament. In that year, Simone Veil became the first freely elected president of the EC. A Holocaust survivor, Veil had been Minister of Health under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. In her inaugural address (July 18, 1979) Veil emphasized both the responsibilities and the prerogatives that reverted to the Parliament elected through universal suffrage, specifically to represent the will of 260 million people. For Veil, the elections that decided the composition of the European Parliament marked a crucial moment in the life of the Union: for the first time, citizens who had been at war with each other only a short time ago had voted together for a political body meant to represent their interests. Acquiring a new form of legitimacy born of its election by citizens, Parliament was entitled to authorize the Union's budget in the name of those who had voted for their representatives, a prerogative that the European Parliament maintains today.

As the single institution of the European Union whose members are elected by a free and direct vote, today



# THE EMERGENCE AND EXPANSION OF THE EU



Source: the European Union

# EU TREATIES

## THE FOUNDING TREATY OF THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY

APRIL 18, 1951 ✎  
JULY 23, 1952 ➡

1951

## THE TREATIES OF ROME

CEE and EURATOM  
MARCH 25, 1957 ✎  
JANUARY 1, 1958 ➡

1957

## THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT

FEBRUARY 17, 1986 (LUXEMBOURG) ✎  
FEBRUARY 28, 1986 (HAGUE) ✎  
JULY 1, 1987 ➡

1986

1965

## THE BRUSSELS MERGER TREATY

APRIL 8, 1965 ✎  
JULY 1, 1967 ➡

## THE MAASTRICHT TREATY

on the European Union  
FEBRUARY 7, 1992 ✎  
NOVEMBER 1, 1993 ➡

1992

1997

## THE TREATY OF NICE

FEBRUARY 26, 2001 ✎  
FEBRUARY 1, 2003 ➡

2001

## THE TREATY OF AMSTERDAM

OCTOBER 2, 1997 ✎  
MAY 1, 1999 ➡

2007

## THE TREATY OF LISBON

DECEMBER 13, 2007 ✎  
DECEMBER 1, 2009 ➡

✎ Signing date  
➡ Coming into effect date

Source: the European Union.