

Introduction:

EU Treaties, Institutions and Decision making of the European Union

Economic and political integration is often identified with a decrease of the sovereignty of the States and an increase of the influence of the central supranational authority.

1. Institutions of the EU

The Treaties entrust the operation of the EU (European Union) to 6 principal institutions:

- 1. Council of Ministers of the EU**
- 2. Commission**
- 3. European Parliament**
- 4. Court of Justice**
- 5. Court of Auditors**
- 6. European Council**

1.-Council of Ministers of the EU: 6-month rotating presidency by the Heads of government (Head of State for France, the French Republic President) of the Member States.

The Council is the EU's main decision-making body. It represents the member states, and its meetings are attended by one minister from each of the EU's national governments.

Ministers attend which meeting depends on what subjects are on the agenda. If, for example, the Council is to discuss economic and financial issues, the meeting will be attended by the Economy and Finance Minister from each EU country. It will be known as the "*ECOFIN Council*" or if the Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers were attending them is the *Agriculture and Fisheries Council* or for security and judicial regulation the *Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council*.

The EU's relations with the rest of the world are dealt with by the *General Affairs and External Relations Council*. However, this Council configuration also has more comprehensive responsibility for general policy issues, so its meetings are attended by whichever Minister or State Secretary each government chooses.

2.-Commission: The Commission is the politically independent institution that represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole. 5-year term;

Roles:

- Guardian of the Treaties;
- The quasi-monopoly of PROPOSALS (No subject can be discussed without a Proposal, *but now the BCE can have initiatives in his area of responsibilities*);
- Mediator at meetings of the Council;

- Negotiates for the Community (International Treaties only one voice at the EU); - Limited power to legislate (mainly in the implementation of the CAP);
- Specific powers in administering EU rules;
- Management of EU funds.

3.-**European Parliament:** Directly Elected by EU citizens every 5 years, Parliament expresses the **democratic will of the Union's citizens**, and it represents their interests in discussions with the other EU institutions **after Brexit reduced to 705 seats** for the 27 Member States (from the 2014 enlargement to 28 countries the number of seats is 751).

European Parliament: Facts and figures file:///G:/Mi%20unidad/EEI/Lessons%202023-24/L2.1.3%20%20European%20Parliament_%20Facts%20and%20Figures.pdf

4.-**Court of Justice:** Its job is to ensure that EU legislation (technically known as "Community law") **is interpreted and applied in the same way in each member state**. In other words, that it is always identical for all parties and in all circumstances. The Court has the power to settle legal disputes between member states, EU institutions, businesses and individuals.

https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/court-justice-european-union-cjeu_en

5. - Court of Auditors

The mission of the European Court of Auditors is to **audit the collection and spending of European Union funds independently** and, through this, to assess the way that the European institutions discharge these functions. The Court examines whether financial operations have been properly recorded, legally and regularly executed and managed so as to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-court-auditors-eca_en

6. - European Council

Who is in the European Council?

The members are **Heads of government** (Head of State for France) and the **President of the Commission foreign ministers** of the Member States, and **2 commissioners**.

The origins of the European Council are in the European Summits: For crucial decisions about EU politics, e.g., Single market, Euro, enlargement, ...

Heads of government (Head of State for France) of the member states had Informal meetings at the beginning, now meeting officially every 6 months formally (meaning that it is an institution of the EU).

7.- Other institutions:

- **European Central Bank** (ECB) http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/ecb/index_en.htm
- Court of Auditors; Court of First Instance;
- Economic and Social Committee (ESC);
- Committee of Regions (CR);
- European Investment Bank (EIB)

EU institutions and other bodies

The European Union (EU) is not a federation like the United States. Nor is it simply an organisation for cooperation between governments, like the United Nations. **It is, in fact, unique.**

The countries that make up the EU (its 'member states') remain **independent sovereign nations, but they pool their sovereignty in order to gain a strength and world influence** none of them could have on their own.

Pooling sovereignty means, in practice, that the member states **delegate** some of their decision-making powers to shared institutions they have created so that **decisions** on specific matters of joint interest **can be made democratically at European level.**

The EU's decision-making process [see https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en) in general and the [co-decision procedure](#) [*The EU's standard decision-making procedure is known as 'Ordinary Legislative Procedure' (ex "co-decision"). This means that the directly elected European Parliament has to approve EU legislation together with the Council (the governments of the 27 EU countries). The Commission drafts and implements EU legislation.*]

The EU's **decision-making process** https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en, in particular, involves three main institutions:

1. The **European Parliament (EP)**, which represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them;
2. The **Council of Ministers of the European Union**, which represents the individual member states;
3. The **European Commission**, which seeks to uphold the interests of the Union as a whole.

This 'institutional triangle' produces the policies and laws that apply throughout the EU. In principle, it is the Commission that proposes new laws, but it is the Parliament and Council that adopt them. The Commission and the member states then implement them, and the Commission ensures that the laws are properly taken on board.

Other institutions of the EU

Two other institutions have a vital part to play: the Court of Justice upholds the rule of European law, and the Court of Auditors checks the financing of the Union's activities.

The powers and responsibilities of these institutions are laid down in the Treaties, which are the foundation of everything the EU does. They also lay down the rules and procedures that the EU institutions must follow. The Treaties are agreed by the presidents and/or prime ministers of all the EU countries and ratified by their parliaments.

In addition to its institutions, the EU has a number of other bodies that play specialised roles:

- the **European Economic and Social Committee** represents civil society, employers and employees;
- the **Committee of the Regions** represents regional and local authorities;
- the **European Investment Bank** finances EU investment projects, and helps small businesses via the European Investment Fund;
- the **European Central Bank** is responsible for European monetary policy;
- the **European Ombudsman** investigates complaints about maladministration by EU institutions and bodies;
- the **European Data Protection Supervisor** safeguards the privacy of people's personal data;
- the **Office for Official Publications of the European Communities** publishes information about the EU;
- the **European Personnel Selection Office** recruits staff for the EU institutions and other bodies;
- the **European Administrative School** task is to provide training in specific areas for members of EU staff.
- In addition, specialized agencies have been set up to handle certain technical, scientific, or management tasks.



2. From the European Community to the European Union (History)

From the EC to the EU – Communities, Treaties, Members, Institutions Community Law

1.- Treaty of Rome (TEEC) (1959)

2.- Single European Act (1985)

3.- Maastricht Treaty (TEU) (1993)

4.- Lisbon Treaty¹ (2009)

¹ <<The treaty is designed to streamline decision-making and give the EU greater influence in world affairs. It creates two new posts - President of the European Council and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs. The BBC's Jonny Dymond, in Brussels, says the introduction of the treaty may appear low-key but the way decisions are made in the EU will change. (...) As High Representative for Foreign Affairs, [from 2019-24 Josep Borrel](#)) will command a more powerful position with a new, and eventually vast, European diplomatic service.

One of the treaty's key areas is the removal of national vetoes in a number of areas. These include the fight against climate change, energy security and emergency aid.

Unanimity will still be needed in tax, foreign policy, defence and social security.

Mr Reinfeldt said that "in the future, when we make decisions concerning citizens' freedom, security and justice, our main principle will be to make them together with the European Parliament".

The treaty makes the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding for EU institutions and, according to Mr Reinfeldt, "we make clear equality between men and women and protection of children's rights within all policy areas". >> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8387648.stm>

The **Lisbon Treaty** also establish a permanent **president of the European Council** (from 2019 Charles Michel)

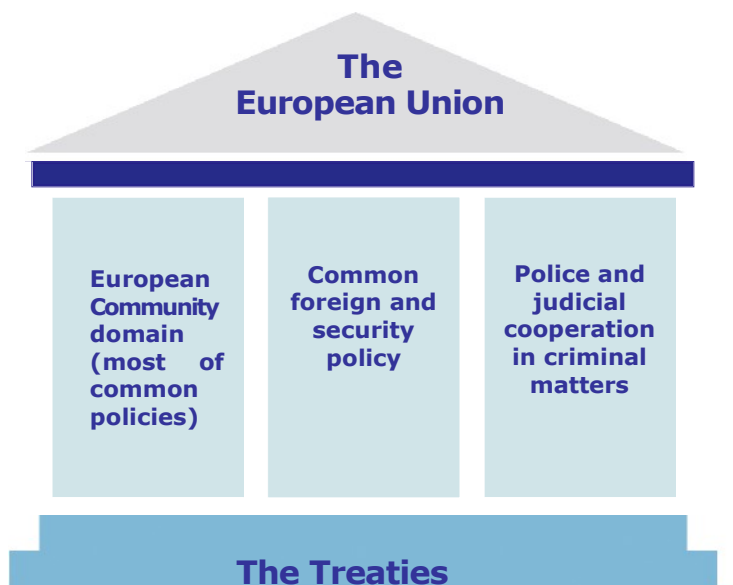
- **Function:** The European Council **defines the EU's overall political direction and priorities**. It is not one of the EU's legislating institutions, so does not negotiate or adopt EU laws. Instead, it sets the EU's policy agenda, traditionally by adopting 'conclusions' during European Council meetings which identify issues of concern and actions to take.
- **Members: Heads of State or Government of the EU countries, President of the European Council, President of the European Commission**
- **President: Charles Michel**
- **Date of creation: 1974 (informal forum), 1992 (official status) and 2009 (official EU institution)**
- **Headquarters: Brussels (Belgium)**

Basic reforms in the decision-making process:

- Qualify majority in the Council for more affairs
 - **Unanimity** will still be needed in **tax, foreign policy, defence and social security**.
 - Fewer topics require unanimity. One of the Treaty's key areas is the **removal of national vetoes** in several areas:
 - These include topics like the fight against **climate change, energy security and emergency aid**.
- **Double majority: 55% of ME and 65% of the population**
- President of the Council elected for 2,5 years (from 2019 Charles Michel; former president Herman van Rompuy 2009-19)

- Greater visibility and coherence in external policy, home affairs and a Vice-President for the Commission (Josep Borrel 2019-24).
- Greater powers for the European Parliament: co-decision for most of the legislation with the Council
- **Citizens' initiative:** at least one million citizens² from different ME can make a proposal to the Commission.

² Difficult to reach, never use up to date



The EU, as a structure based on three main pillars:

1st) EC (European Community policies: CAP Common Agricultural Policies, Environment, Energy, R&D)

2nd) CFSP Common Foreign and Security Policy

3rd) CJHA Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs

Efforts to reach a European Union Constitution

- I. **Treaty of Amsterdam (1997)** Target: the consolidation of the three pillars
 1. - Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – objectives & tasks
 2. -Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs (CJHA) – common action
 3. -Application for entry – preconditions & history
- II. **Treaty of Nice (2001)** encompasses all Rome, Maastricht and Amsterdam.
- III. The European Constitution (not approved): Treaty signed 29 October 2004 (published on the Official Journal 16 December 2004) would be enforced once approved in each member state, article IV-447 of the Treaty.

However, it did not pass referenda in France and the Netherlands.

- IV. **Lisbon Treaty (2009) is the current "constitutional" treaty of the EU.**
 - A. Is an international treaty, not a real constitution due to the issues suffered during the approval process.

3. European Union Institutions

European Institutions have overlapping roles, functions and powers, leading to the sharing of Legislative and Executive power by the Commission, the Council and Parliament. The judicial power is independent. The following paragraphs synthesise the leading institutional roles

1. - Council of the EU (Ministers of the European Union)

Who is in the Council of Ministers?

The ministers of the Member States national governments and the commissioners are members.

E.g. The Council of Agriculture and Fisheries: Agriculture Commissioner plus the 27 ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries of the member states.

The President is one of the Heads of government (or Head of State for France) rotating between the Member States every 6 months.

Altogether there are nine different Council configurations:

- General Affairs and External Relations
- Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN)
- Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)
- Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs
- Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry and Research)
- Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
- Agriculture and Fisheries
- Environment
- Education, Youth and Culture

Nevertheless, the Council remains one single institution. To know more see

http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-council/index_en.htm

Council of the EU

Council of Ministers of the Member States official name is **Council of the EU** represents the member states' governments. Informally also known as the EU Council

- **Role:** Voice of EU member governments, adopting EU laws and coordinating EU policies
- **Members:** Government **ministers** from each EU country, according to the policy area to be discussed
- **President:** Each EU country holds the presidency on a 6-month rotating basis

It generally decides issues by consensus – but by unanimity or qualified majority in some cases. Only the heads of state/government can vote.

1. **a simple majority** (14 member states vote in favour)
2. **a qualified majority** (55% of member states, representing at least 65% of the EU population, vote in favour)
3. **unanimous vote** (all votes are in favour)

Eurogroup

The Eurogroup is an **informal body** where the ministers of the **euro area member states** discuss matters relating to their shared responsibilities related to the Euro.

Tasks

Its main task is to ensure **close coordination of economic policies** among the euro area member states. It also aims to promote conditions for **stronger economic growth**.

The Eurogroup is also responsible for preparing the **Euro Summit** meetings and for their follow-up.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/eurogroup/>

What does the Council do?

The Council has six key responsibilities:

- 1. To pass European laws. In many fields, it legislates jointly with the European Parliament.**
- 2. To coordinate the broad economic policies of the member states.**
- 3. To conclude international agreements between the EU and one or more states or international organisations.**
- 4. To approve the EU's budget, jointly with the European Parliament.**
- 5. To develop the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, based on guidelines set by the European Council.**
- 6. To coordinate cooperation between the national courts and police forces in criminal matters.**

Most of these responsibilities relate to the *Community* domain - i.e. areas of action where the member states have decided to pool their sovereignty and delegate decision-making powers to the EU institutions. This domain is the **first pillar** of the European Union.

However, the last two responsibilities relate mainly to areas in which the member states have not delegated their powers but are merely working together. The latter is called **"intergovernmental cooperation"** and it covers the *second and third "pillars"* of the European Union (CFSP and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters).

ECOFIN: Coordinating the economic policies of member states

The EU countries have decided that they want an overall economic policy based on close co-ordination between their national economic policies. This coordination is carried out by the **economics and finance ministers**, who collectively form the Economic and Financial Affairs (**ECOFIN**) Council and for the euro area the day before meets the Eurogroup that adopt decisions to be next day formally approved in the ECOFIN.

Concluding international agreements

Each year the Council "*concludes*" (i.e., officially signs) several agreements between the European Union and non-EU countries, as well as with international organisations. These agreements may cover broad areas such as trade, cooperation and development, or they may deal with specific subjects such as textiles, fisheries, science and technology, transport, and others.

Approving the EU budget

The EU's annual budget is decided jointly by the Council and the European Parliament. If the two institutions do not agree, the rules allow the **Council to take the final decision on "compulsory expenditure"** (mainly agricultural expenditure and expenses arising from international agreements with non-EU countries).

Parliament has the last word on "non-compulsory" expenditure and the final approval of the budget as a whole.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

The member states are developing a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). However, foreign policy, security and defence are matters over which the individual EU member states retain independent control. They have not pooled their national sovereignty in these areas, so Parliament and the European Commission play only a limited role here.

2.- Commission

Who is in the Commission?

The Commission is committed to acting in the interests of the Union as a whole and not taking instructions from national governments.

Current President of the Commission: Mrs Ursula van Derlayen (2019-2024). Former presidents were: Mr Herman Van Rompuy (2010-19) and José Manuel Durao Barroso (2005-2010).

What does the Commission do?

The European Commission has four leading roles:

1. to propose legislation to Parliament and the Council;
2. to manage and implement EU policies and the budget;
3. to enforce European law (jointly with the Court of Justice);
4. to represent the European Union on the international stage, for example, by negotiating agreements between the EU and other countries.

1. Proposing new legislation

Under the Treaty, the Commission has the "**right of initiative**".

In other words, it is responsible for drawing up proposals for **new European legislation**, which it presents to Parliament and the Council. These proposals must aim to defend the interests of the Union and its citizens, not those of specific countries or industries.

Before making any proposals, the Commission must be aware of new situations and problems developing in Europe and it must consider whether EU legislation is the best way to deal with them. That is why the Commission is in constant touch with a wide range of interest groups.

It is obliged to consult two advisory bodies: the *Economic and Social Committee* (made up of employers' and trade unions' representatives) and the *Committee of the Regions* (made up of representatives of local and regional authorities). It also seeks the opinions of national parliaments and governments.

2. Representing the EU on the international stage

The European Commission is an essential mouthpiece for the European Union on the international stage. It enables the EU member states to speak "with one voice" in international forums such as the World Trade Organisation.

The Commission also has the responsibility of negotiating international agreements on behalf of the EU. One well-known example is the *Cotonou Agreement*, which sets out the terms of an essential aid and trade partnership between the EU and developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

How is the Commission's work organised?

It is up to the Commission President to decide which Commissioner will be responsible for which policy area and to reshuffle these responsibilities (if necessary) during the Commission's term of office. The President, with the Commission's approval, is also entitled to demand a commissioner's resignation.

The "college" of commissioners meets once a week, usually on Wednesdays in Brussels. Each item on the agenda is presented by the Commissioner responsible for that policy area, and the College takes a collective decision on it.

The Commission's staff is organised into departments, known as "Directorates-General" (DGs) and "services" (such as the Legal Service).

Each DG is responsible for a particular policy area and is headed by a Director-General who is answerable to one of the commissioners.

It is the DGs that devise and draft the Commission's legislative proposals, but these proposals become official only when "adopted" by the College at its weekly meeting. The procedure is rough as follows.

Suppose, for example, that the Commission sees a need for EU legislation to prevent pollution of Europe's rivers. The Directorate-General for the Environment will draw up a proposal, based on extensive consultations with European industry and farmers, with environment ministries in the Member States and with environmental organisations.

The proposed legislation will then be discussed with all relevant Commission departments and amended if necessary. It will then be checked by the Legal Service and approved by the commissioners' "cabinets" (personal political staff).

Once the proposal is fully ready, the Secretary-General will put it on the agenda for a forthcoming Commission meeting. At this meeting, the Environment Commissioner will explain to his or her colleagues why this legislation is being proposed, and they will then discuss it. If there is an agreement, the College will "adopt" the proposal. Next, the document will be sent to the Council and the European Parliament for their consideration.

If there is disagreement among the commissioners, the President will ask them to vote on it. If the majority is in favour, the proposal will be adopted. After that, it will have the unconditional support of all the Commission members.

The size of the Commission is limited to 27 Commissioners

The Commission is composed of the College of Commissioners from 27 EU countries. Together, the 27 Members of the College are the Commission's political leadership during a 5-year term. They are assigned responsibility for specific policy areas by the President.

COLLEGE (2019-2024)

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024_en#:~:text=The%20Commission%20is%20composed%20of,policy%20areas%20by%20the%20President

3.- Court of Justice

Who is in the Court of Justice?

There are 15 judges, appointed by European Parliament for renewable 6-year terms.

The Court is composed of one judge per member state so that all the EU's national legal systems are represented. Even after enlargement, there will still be one judge per member state. However, for the sake of efficiency, the Court will be able to sit as a "Grand Chamber" of just 11 judges (instead of always having to meet in a plenary session attended by all the judges).

The Court is assisted by eight "advocates-general ". Their role is to present reasoned opinions on the cases brought before the Court. They must do so publicly and impartially.

The judges and advocates-general are either former members of the highest national courts or highly competent lawyers who can be relied on to show impartiality. They are appointed by joint agreement of the governments of the member states. Each is appointed for a term of six years, after which they may be reappointed for one or two further periods of three years.

To help the Court of Justice cope with the thousands of cases brought before it, and to offer citizens better legal protection, a "Court of First Instance "was created in 1989. This Court (which is attached to the Court of Justice) is responsible for giving rulings on certain kinds of case, particularly actions brought by private individuals and cases relating to unfair competition between businesses.

Legal instruments of the EU:

- I. Regulations
- II. Directives
- III. Decisions
- IV. Recommendations
- V. Opinions

I. **Regulations** are of general application, binding in their entirety, and **directly applicable** in all member states without the need for individual member states to enact these domestically (see [community law](#)).

II. **Directives** are addressed to one or more member states and require them to achieve (**by amending national law if necessary**) specified results.

They are **not directly applicable**—they do not create enforceable Community rights in member states until the state has legislated following the directive: the domestic statute then creates the rights for the citizens of that country.

A directive **cannot**, therefore, **impose legal obligations** on individuals or private bodies. However, by its **direct effect**, it confers rights on individuals against the state and state bodies, even before it has been implemented by changes to national law, by decisions of the European Court.

III. **Decisions** may be addressed either to **States or persons** and **are binding on them in their entirety**.

*Both the Council and the Commission may also make **recommendations**, give **opinions**, and issue **notices**, but these are not legally binding.*

Principles:

- **Acquis Communautaire**: the existing EU legislation and institutional framework
- **Mutual recognition** amongst the Member States of legislative acts which are national responsibility of the Member States.
- **Precedence over national law**: any EU natural or legal person/ State may bring a complaint/action before the Court of Justice if an infringement of Community law by (application of) national laws.

4.- European Parliament

Powers:

- **Force Commission Resignation**; The Commission remains politically answerable to Parliament, which has the power to dismiss it by adopting a motion of censure. The Commission attends all the sessions of the European Parliament, where it must clarify and justify its policies. The Commission also replies regularly to written and oral questions posed by MEPs.
- Adopt/Reject **Community Budget**
- Assert/Refuse **treaties of association/accession**;
- **Committees of Enquiries** to Council/foreign ministers of Member States.

To prevent the European Parliament growing indefinitely every time a new member state joins the EU. This is why the Treaty sets a number of restrictions:

- The maximum number of MEPs is 750 plus the President
- The maximum number of MEPs per country is 96
- The minimum number of MEPs per country is 6
- The division of seats should be according to degressive proportionality: meaning the more citizens a member state has, the more seats it will get, but also the more citizens each MEP will represent. So MEPs from smaller countries represent fewer people than their colleagues from larger states.

The allocation of seats is also being adjusted to consider changes in the population of member states.

5.- European System of Central Banks (ESCB)

Central Banks from Member States (monetary policy implementation)
 European Central Bank (ECB) (monetary policy design)
 For more information: <http://www.ecb.de/home/html/index.en.html>

Country	Is the in the eurozone in 2011?	Is the in the EMU-2 in 2005?	EU Member State since the year
Belgium	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Bulgaria	-	-	2007
Cyprus	Yes (from 2008)	-	2004
Czech Republic	-	Yes	2004
Denmark	No, opted out in 1999	Yes	1973
Germany	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Greece	Yes (from 2001)	-	1981
Spain	Yes (from 1999)	-	1986
Estonia	Yes (from 2011)	-	2004
France	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Hungary	-	Yes	2004
Ireland	Yes (from 1999)	-	1973
Italy	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Latvia	-	Yes	2004
Lithuania	-	Yes	2004
Luxembourg	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Malta	Yes (from 2008)	Yes	2004
Netherlands	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Austria	Yes (from 1999)	-	1995
Poland	-	Yes	2004
Portugal	Yes (from 1999)	-	1986
Romania	-	-	2007
Slovakia	Yes (from 2009)	-	2004
Slovenia	Yes (from 2007)	Yes	2004
Finland	Yes (from 1999)	-	1995
Sweden	No, opted out in 1999	Yes	1995
United Kingdom**	No, opted out in 1999	¿?	Integrated 1973- >2020 Brexit
Bulgaria	No	-	2007
Rumania	No	-	2007
Croatia	No	-	2013
TOTAL	17	10	28

*Currently (2023) *Croatia became Member State in 2013 since The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia now named North Macedonia, is a candidate country.*

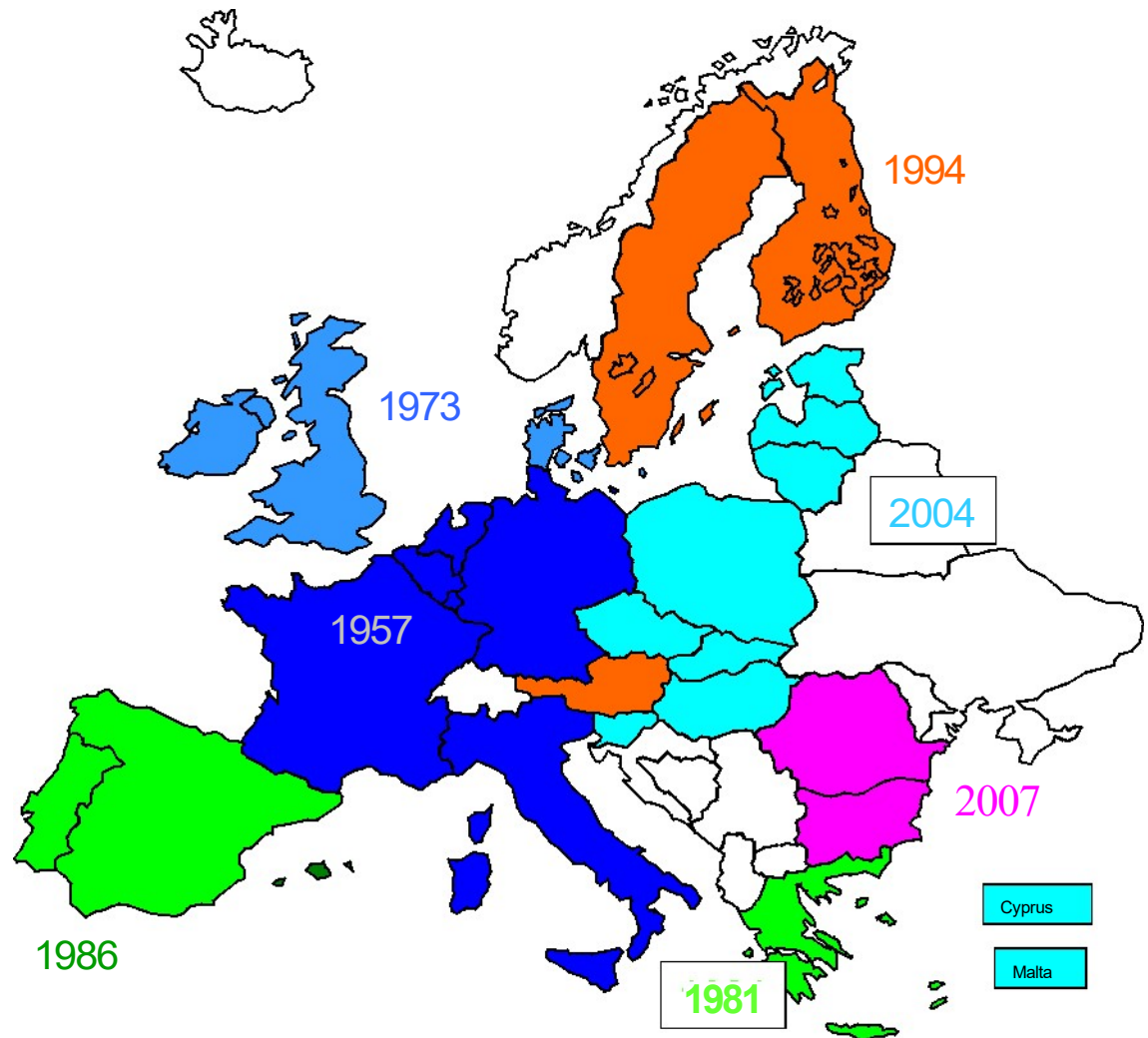
**Following the consent vote of the European Parliament on January 29, 2020, and the Council Decision on the conclusion of the withdrawal agreement on January 30, 2020, the withdrawal agreement entered into force on February 1, 2020 (Brexit).

Economic and Monetary Union: the next steps

See the presentation: The economic governance of the euro area

4.- An Overview of the Process of European Integration

- 1.- Customs Union: From 1957 to 1985 (EEC+EURATOM+ECSC, and EC1 0)
- 2.- Common Market: From 1986 to 1992. Integration of the internal market and Single European Act (EC12)
- 3.- Economic and Monetary Union: 1992 and beyond. Treaty on European Union:



Common market & economic and monetary union. Treaty of Amsterdam and its four main objectives. Citizenship and individual rights.

Monetary Union in 1999, 2002 introduction of Euro coins and notes: 12 countries in the eurozone (after Greece join the single currency in 2001) with a single monetary policy and other 13 countries, still using their on national currencies, but in the EMU-2 European Monetary System with the Euro as central exchange rate. The Lisbon Treaty refers to them as "countries subject to an exception".

In 2015 The Euro is the official currency of 19 Member States (out of 28 MS), also referred to as the eurozone. Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland. They are the original 11 Eurozone countries starting in 1999. Greece joined one year later. And subsequently incorporated Slovenia

(2007), Cyprus and Malta (2008), Slovakia (2009), Estonia (2011), Latvia (2014), and Lithuania (2015).

And 12 other non-EU countries (former European colonies: eg. Mauritius) and small states like Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican City also use the Euro even though they are not members of the EU (previously used currencies that were replaced by the Euro). The French territories of Mayotte and Saint Pierre and Miquelon also use the Euro under an agreement with the European Union, although they are not allowed to mint their own coins.

The other 13 EU states that do not use the Euro are Bulgaria, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Slovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic Romania and Croatia.

More detailed information about Member States of the European Union:

<http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/>

From the 1 December, 2002, North Korea has replaced the US dollar by the Euro as its currency for international trade, as its own currency, the won, is not convertible.

TOP TRADING PARTNERS OF THE EU IN 2020->
https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_122530.pdf

Member States in the eurozone (using the € as currency), in the European Monetary Unión (exchange rate mechanism) and date of integration in European Unión

Country	Is the in the eurozone in 2009?	Is the in the EMU-2 in 2005?	EU Member State since the year
Austria	Yes (from 1999)	-	1995
Belgium	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Bulgaria	-	-	2007
Cyprus	2008	Yes	2004
Czech Republic	-	Yes	2004
Denmark	No, opted out in 1999	Yes	1973
Estonia	-	Yes	2004
Finland	Yes (from 1999)	-	1995
France	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Germany	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Greece	Yes (from 2001)	-	1981
Hungary	-	Yes	2004
Ireland	Yes (from 1999)	-	1973
Italy	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Latvia	-	Yes	2004
Lithuania	-	Yes	2004
Luxembourg	Yes (from 1999)	-	2004
Malta	Yes (from 2008)	Yes	2004
Netherlands	Yes (from 1999)	-	1959
Poland	-	Yes	2004
Portugal	Yes (from 1999)	-	1986
Romania	-	-	2007
Slovakia	-	Yes	2004
Slovenia	Yes (from 2007)	Yes	2004
Spain	Yes (from 1999)	-	1986
Sweden	No, opted out in 1999	Yes	1995
United Kingdom	No, opted out in 1999	No	1973
TOTAL	12	14	26

Enlargement is a dynamic process:

The biggest recent enlargement includes 10 new countries going from EU15 to EU25 from May 2004. Next enlargement to EU27 was in January 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania become Member States.

Currently (2015) Croatia is Member State and remain as candidates' countries, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.