

European Union

Politics and government of the European Union

Three pillars

Pillar I: European Community

Pillar II: Common Foreign and Sec. Policy

Pillar III: Police and Judicial Cooperation

Political Institutions

Commission

President (José Barroso)

Barroso Commission

Council of Ministers & European Council

Presidency (Finland)

Parliament

President

MEPs

Constituencies

Elections

Party groups

Committees

Judiciary

Court of Justice

All the members

Court of First Instance

Civil Service Tribunal

Patent Tribunal

Auditing Finances of European Union

European Court of Auditors

Advisory bodies

Economic and Social Committee

Committee of the Regions

Financial bodies

European Central Bank

European Investment Bank

European Investment Fund

Decentralised bodies

Agencies of the EU

Law

Acquis communautaire

Procedure

Treaties

Regulations - Directives - Decisions

Recommendations - Opinions

EU-related topics

Economic and Monetary Union

Enlargement

Foreign relations

Pan-European political parties

Table of affiliated parties by country

Party affiliations on the Council

Founding treaties

European integration is at present based on four founding treaties:

- The **Treaty of Paris**, establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, which was signed on 18 April 1951, entered into force on 23 July 1952 and **expired** on 23 July 2002.
- The Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)
- The Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), which was signed - along with the Euratom Treaty - in Rome on 25 March 1957, and entered into force on 1 January 1958. These two Treaties are often referred to as the

"Treaties of Rome". When the term "**Treaty of Rome**" is used, only the EEC Treaty is meant.

- The **Treaty on European Union**, signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992, entered into force on 1 November 1993. It changed the name of the European Economic Community to simply "the European Community" and introduced new intergovernmental structures to deal with the aspects of Common Foreign and Security Policy and "Justice and Home Affairs". The structure formed by these so-called Three Pillars is the **European Union**, whose scope was now more overtly political as well as economic.

Amending treaties

At times there have been far-reaching reforms bringing major institutional changes and introducing new areas of responsibility for the European institutions:

- The **Merger Treaty**, signed in Brussels on 8 April 1965 and in force since 1 July 1967, provided for a Single Commission and a Single Council of the then three European Communities.
- The **Single European Act**, signed in Luxembourg and The Hague in February 1986, and entered into force on 1 July 1987, provided for the adaptations required for the achievement of the Internal Market (over which later was formed the European Economic Area).
- The **Treaty of Amsterdam**, signed on 2 October 1997, entered into force on 1 May 1999.
 - Its purpose was to simplify decision making in addition to further integrating the Common Foreign and Security Policy concept. It also added new provisions on social policy and employment and integrated the Schengen Agreement.
 - It amended and renumbered the EU and EC Treaties. The articles of the Treaty on European Union (the Maastricht Treaty), identified in that document by letters A to S, were changed into numerical form. Consolidated versions of the EU and EC Treaties are attached to it.

- The **Treaty of Nice**, signed on 26 February 2001, entered into force on 1 February 2003.
 - It readied the EU for further enlargement, setting a cap on the number of MEPs (732) and the European Commission (25). The latter provision meant that larger countries which had previously nominated two commissioners would in future only have one.
 - Qualified Majority Voting was again extended to more areas, abolishing the national right to veto in some areas. A concept of "enhanced co-operation" was introduced for countries wishing to forge closer links in areas where other states disagreed.

Accession treaties

Main article: Enlargement of the European Union

The founding treaties have also been amended (in a more limited fashion) whenever new member states acceded:

- **1973**: Acts of Accession of Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom, signed in Brussels on 22 January 1972. (Norway refused to ratify and did not join the EU.)
- **1981**: Act of Accession of Greece, signed in Athens on 28 May 1979.
- **1986**: Acts of Accession of Spain and Portugal, signed in Madrid and Lisbon on 12 June 1985.
- **1995**: Acts of Accession of Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway, signed in Corfu on 24 June 1994. (Norway again failed to ratify.)
- **2004**: Treaty of Accession 2003 signed in Athens on 16 April 2003 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia).
- **2007** : Treaty of Accession 2005 signed in Luxembourg. Treaty not yet ratified by all Member States.

Budgetary treaties

Lastly there have been two budgetary treaties:

- The **Budgetary Treaty of 1970** (more fully the "*Treaty amending Certain Budgetary Provisions of the Treaties establishing the European Communities and of the Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities*"), signed in Luxembourg on 22 April 1970, gave the European Parliament the last word on what is known as "*non-compulsory expenditure*". It came into force on 1 January 1971.
- The **Budgetary Treaty of 1975** (more fully the "*Treaty amending Certain Financial Provisions of the Treaty establishing the European Communities and of the Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities*"), signed in Brussels on 22 July 1975, gave the European Parliament the power to reject the budget as a whole, and created the European Court of Auditors. It came into force on 1 June 1977.

European Constitution

The European Constitution seeks to consolidate, simplify and replace the existing set of overlapping treaties. It was signed on 29 October 2004 and is due to come into force on 1 November 2006, conditional on its ratification by all member states, many of which are holding a referendum on the issue.

The French, on May 29th 2005, then the Dutch on 1st June 2005 rejected the treaty therefore probably spelling the death of the constitution. If the Constitution fails to be ratified by all member states, the EU will continue to work on the basis of the current treaties as described above.