

Timeline of the European Union

1945	
February	The Yalta summit is held between the US, the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Britain. They agree to divide post-war Europe into spheres of interest.
May	The surrender of Germany ends the war in Europe.
September	The surrender of Japan finally brings an end to the Second World War.
1946	
September	Winston Churchill delivers his Zurich speech, in which he calls for a 'United States of Europe' led by France and Germany, and supported by Britain, the US and the USSR. His speech called for the creation of a Council of Europe.
December	The European Union of Federalists is formed from resistance movements.
1947	
July	European states meet in Paris to set up a body to administer Marshall Plan aid, the Committee for European Economic Co-operation (CEEC). It was founded with 15 members, including the US and Canada. The organization's role is to coordinate economic decisions and management, oversee Marshall Plan aid and encourage trade liberalization. The creation of the CEEC is significant because it represents early efforts to create a supranational organization for economic co-operation and coordination.
1948	
January	A customs union among the Benelux states begins operation. The Netherlands-Belgium-Luxemburg Customs Convention was agreed in 1944. It creates a common external tariff and abolishes internal tariffs. This is accompanied by monetary union, which fixes exchange rates among the countries.
April	The Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) replaces the Committee for European Economic Co-operation (CEEC) as the body that administered Marshall Plan aid and coordinated economic decisions and management in Europe. Because European states are wary of ceding control over economic management to a supranational body, the OEEC does not develop into a major force driving economic integration in Europe.
May	The European Congress, organized by the European Union of Federalists, is held in The Hague. The Congress is launched with the aim of developing economic and political union in Europe to guarantee its future security and many delegates are hopeful the Congress will lead to the development of a constitution for a federal Europe. While it does not result in the development of European organization along federal lines, it does lead to the eventual creation of the Council of Europe.

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1949	
May	<p>The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) is established through the adoption of the Basic Law, the constitution of the FRG. The Basic Law had been drafted by a Parliamentary Council led by Konrad Adenauer, who would later become Chancellor.</p> <p>The Council of Europe is established as a result of the Congress of Europe, held the previous year. While the Congress had failed in its attempt to draft a European constitution, it did agree on the creation of the Council. The Council's aim is to 'achieve a greater unity between its Members for the purpose of safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles which are their common heritage, and facilitating their economic and social progress'. The Council is a strictly intergovernmental body, with a mandate to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the coordination of social and legal practices in Europe.</p>
1950	
May	<p>French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman presents a plan to integrate coal and steel production in France, Germany and other member countries, hereafter known as the 'Schuman Declaration'. The intention is to make war between two countries 'not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible'. The Schuman Plan proposes pooling coal and steel resources under the management of a supranational body, the High Authority. In addition to managing production, the High Authority will also coordinate the modernization of the coal and steel industries. It is intended that the plan will lead to further co-operation in economic development. The Schuman Plan forms the basis for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).</p>
October	<p>The Pleven Plan for a European Defence Community (EDC) is launched in response to American requests for Europe to take more responsibility for meeting its defence needs. It called for the creation of a European Army under a pooled command and proposed the creation of a Commission, Council and Assembly.</p>
November	<p>The Council of Europe draws up the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and opens it up for signature by member states.</p>
1951	
April	<p>France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg sign the Treaty of Paris, establishing the ECSC. The ECSC is the creation of Robert Schuman, who set out its blueprint in the 1950 Schuman Plan, and Jean Monnet. The Treaty establishes a common market for coal and steel, administered by the High Authority, a supranational body. The Treaty also created an intergovernmental Council of Ministers, an advisory European Parliamentary Assembly and a Court of Justice. The ECSC seeks to remove barriers to the internal market for coal and steel, manage the modernization of production and prevent the re-emergence of cartels. It is anticipated that the ECSC will lead to further economic integration among its member states.</p>

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1952	
May	The six European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) member countries sign the European Defence Community Treaty in Paris. The European Defence Community (EDC) has its roots in the 1950 Pleven Plan and is an attempt to address the 'German question'—how to provide for European security needs in the face of a growing communist threat and re-arm Germany in such a way as to not threaten French security. The EDC allows for the creation of a German army that is constrained by being part of a European army under joint command. Jean Monnet is a key architect behind the EDC. The EDC treaty enters a lengthy and ultimately unsuccessful ratification stage.
July	The Treaty of Paris enters into force and the ECSC begins operation. Jean Monnet becomes President of the High Authority of the ECSC.
1953	
March	A draft Treaty for a European Political Community (EPC) is adopted by the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), but it is never signed nor ratified. Plans for the EPC are developed in response to arguments by the Italian government that plans for the EDC include provisions for some form of political steering and political cooperation on foreign policies.
September	European Convention on Human Rights, adopted by the Council of Europe and ratified by sufficient number of states, comes into force.
1954	
August	The French National Assembly fails to ratify the European Defence Community Treaty, leading to the collapse of the European Political Community.
October	The Treaty creating the Western European Union (WEU) is signed. This treaty extends the defensive alliance created by the Treaty of Brussels to also include Italy and Germany. The WEU has a Council of foreign and defence ministers, a secretariat and an assembly.
November	Disappointed by the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC), Monnet announces that he will not stand for a second term as President of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).
1955	
April	In the aftermath of failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) and European Political Community (EPC), Jean Monnet contacts influential politicians from the Benelux countries to discuss plans to revive European integration—he launches discussions with these politicians rather than the French because it was French opposition that led to the failure of the EDC. Two influential proposals develop from these discussions. Paul-Henri Spaak, the Belgian foreign minister, circulates a memorandum to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) that proposes extending sectoral integration to nuclear energy and to transport. This idea later forms the basis of the creation of Euratom (European Atomic Energy Community). The Dutch foreign minister Jan Beyen produces a memorandum on behalf of the Benelux states that proposes the creation of a general common market.

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May	In response to the Spaak and Beyen memorandums, the Assembly of the ECSC decides to relaunch integration and calls for a conference of foreign ministers to be held in Messina, Italy to discuss sectoral integration and the creation of a common market. Also this month, the signing of the State Treaty between the four powers and Austria ends the occupation of Austria.
June	A conference in Messina, Italy, is held to discuss the development of a common market and further sectoral integration. The governments agree to set up a committee chaired by Belgian foreign affairs minister Paul-Henri Spaak to explore the idea of further sectoral integration and the development of a common market. The Spaak Committee is created.
October	Jean Monnet sets up the Action Committee for the United States of Europe, a political lobby group consisting of politicians and trade unions. Its aim is to secure broad political support for the integration plans agreed at Messina.
1956	
March	The Spaak Report on the creation of a common market is published. It recommends the creation of a common market as well as sectoral integration in nuclear energy so that the high costs of research and development in what he sees as a vital sector can be shared by European states. This report forms the basis of the Treaties of Rome that will create the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom.
June	Start of the 'Messina negotiations' based on the Spaak Report.
October	USSR invades Hungary to put down anti-communist uprising. In the same month the Suez crisis begins. Israel, Britain, and France attack Egypt and occupy Port Said, but are forced to withdraw their troops in the face of opposition from the US. This crisis highlights France and the UK's weakness as a unilateral actor in the new world order and so strengthens support for European integration.
1957	
March	Completion of the Messina negotiations.
April	The Treaties of Rome (establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom) are signed. The six countries of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) set up the EEC and the Euratom. The EEC aims to create a custom union among the member states, while Euratom is to promote joint development of nuclear energy.
1958	
January	The Treaties of Rome come into force, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom. The EEC consists of the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, an advisory Parliamentary Assembly (later the European Parliament) and the European Court of Justice. Walter Hallstein becomes the first President of the EEC Commission, Louis Armand the first President of the Euratom Commission. A committee of permanent representatives (COREPER) is created to prepare the work of the Council of Ministers.
March	The European Parliamentary Assembly meets for the first time. Robert Schuman is elected as its president.

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June	The Fourth French Republic collapses; Charles de Gaulle becomes the first leader of the Fifth French Republic
July	Agriculture ministers, national experts and farm lobby groups meet at a conference in Stresa, Italy, to discuss the details of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Stresa Conference agrees on a principle of price supports for agricultural products. This means that when prices within the Community fall below an agreed price for agricultural products, the Community will intervene to raise the price by buying the commodity. When the price of imported goods falls below the agreed price, tariffs will be levied to make up the difference. The Stresa Conference also leads to the formation of a European agricultural lobby group, the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (COPA).
December	Charles de Gaulle is elected as French President, winning 78.5% of votes and securing his mandate to lead the country.
1959	
January	The European Court of Human Rights is established in Strasbourg. The creation of a customs union in the European Economic Community (EEC) begins. Customs duties within the EEC are cut by 10%, as part of a time frame that proposes an annual 10% reduction in tariffs and annual reductions in quotas. The deadline for the removal of all quotas is 1961. A Common External Tariff is introduced.
June	Greece applies for an association agreement with the EEC.
July	Turkey applies for an association agreement with the EEC.
1960	
January	Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK set up the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Like the European Economic Community (EEC), the EFTA aims to establish free trade area, but it does not resort to common external tariffs and supranational institutions. It is intended to create a counterbalance to the EEC.
May	The Council of Ministers agree to Commission proposals to accelerate the creation of a common market by removing internal barriers to trade and creating a common external tariff. This follows lobbying from business interests who are keen to see progress on the development of the common market. The Commission links progress on the common market to the creation of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Linking these issues creates momentum for developing the CAP, which is less widely supported policy than the creation of a common market. This leads to adoption of the main elements of the CAP, which comes into force in 1962.

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1961	
July	The Athens Agreement is signed between Greece and the European Economic Community (EEC). This creates the first accession agreement between the EEC and an outside state. The Agreement anticipates eventual Greek accession to the EEC and toward that end provides for the development of a customs union and harmonization of certain agricultural and tax provisions after a period of 22 years and the free movement of persons, services and capital after a period of 12 years.
August	Britain, Denmark, and Ireland apply for membership of the EEC, but French President Charles de Gaulle is sceptical about the British application.
1962	
April	Norway submits its first application to join the European Economic Community (EEC).
1963	
January	De Gaulle announces his veto of British membership of the European Economic Community (EEC), arguing that Britain's political and economic interests are incompatible with those of the EEC and that it lacks a commitment to European integration. This move is seen as a reflection of French fears that the close Anglo-American relations would lead to increased American influence in Europe if Britain becomes a member. The veto is also a response to concerns that British opposition could jeopardize the development of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that the French had fought hard for. De Gaulle's surprise announcement of his veto at a press conference is a change in tactics— he had first demanded that the British accept all terms of the <i>acquis</i> , without concessions. The French veto effectively brings to an end to accession negotiations that were underway with Norway, Denmark and Ireland.
July	The first Yaoundé Convention is signed in Yaoundé, Cameroon between the European Economic Community (EEC) and 18 African countries. The agreement provides the countries, mostly former French colonies, with a package of aid and preferential trade relations.
September	An Association Agreement is signed with Turkey. The Ankara Agreement, as it is known, aims to strengthen trade and economic relations and lead to the gradual development of a customs union.
1965	
April	The Merger Treaty is signed, agreeing to merge the institutions of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Economic Community (EEC), and Euratom into a single organization. The High Authority of the ECSC, the Commission of the EEC and the Commission of Euratom are merged into a single Commission, and the Merger Treaty creates a single Council of Ministers. The Community is now known as the European Community or 'EC' rather than the 'EEC'.

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July	The 'empty chair crisis' begins after the French foreign minister withdraws the French Permanent Representative from the Council of Ministers. This French boycott is in protest against the potential waning of intergovernmental influence in the EEC. The Commission proposed to introduce own-source funding for the EEC, replacing the system of funding through national contributions, and enhance the European Parliament's power of budgetary scrutiny. Moreover, the EEC was scheduled to move to qualified majority voting in a number of areas by January 1966 as part of the plan to complete the customs union. The French boycott of the Council brings the work of the EEC to a halt.
1966	
January	The Luxemburg compromise ends the French boycott of the Council of Ministers, six months after it began. The Luxemburg Compromise reinforces intergovernmentalism in the EEC through the following measures: first, it gives governments the right to veto proposals in the Council of Ministers if their national interests were at stake. This effectively halts the shift to majority voting that had been planned for January 1966 and consequently stalls integration. The compromise also seeks to limit supranationalism by keeping the EEC budget funded by national contributions and not from own resources and by limiting the political resources of the Commission.
1967	
May	Britain, Denmark, and Ireland make a second application for membership of the European Economic Community (EEC)
July	The Merger Treaty takes effect and The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the EEC and the Euratom is merged to form the European Community (EC). The Belgian Liberal politician Jean Rey becomes the first Commission President for all three communities (ECSC, EEC, Euratom). In the same month, Sweden applies for membership and Norway makes its second application for membership of the EC.
December	France vetoes the British membership application for a second time (along with those of Denmark, Ireland, Norway and Sweden).
1968	
July	The Customs Union of the EC is completed ahead of schedule.
1969	
April	A military coup in Greece leads to the suspension of democratic institutions and the eventual cancellation of the Association Agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC). French President Charles de Gaulle resigns after being defeated in a referendum on government reforms. The departure of de Gaulle changes the political climate in Europe, removing a source of opposition to further integration.

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December	<p>The Hague Summit is held to re-launch European integration. At the request of the French, the summit focuses on three aspects of integration: completion; widening; and deepening. The member states agree to grant the EC its own resources and grant limited budgetary oversight powers to the parliament. This replaces the system of national budgetary contributions to the EC. Deepening refers to progress on integration in new policy areas. Member states agree on the objectives of economic and monetary union and cooperation in foreign policy. Unlike his predecessor, Charles de Gaulle, the new French President, Georges Pompidou is not opposed to British membership of the EC and the member states agree on opening accession negotiations with Britain, Denmark, Ireland and Norway.</p>
1970	
April	<p>After reaching agreement on the issue at the Hague Summit, the member states signed a Budgetary Treaty that gives the EC financing from its own resources. The Treaty of Rome had originally provided that the EC would undergo a transition from funding the budget from member state contributions to funding by its own resources—the tariffs that EC member states collected on agricultural imports, the common external tariff and a percentage of VAT revenues. The French blocked this transition in 1965.</p>
June	<p>After agreement on re-launching widening of the Community is reached at the Hague Summit, membership negotiations begin with Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway.</p>
1972	
January	<p>Completion of membership negotiations with Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway; Accession Treaties signed.</p>
April	<p>A French referendum on the EC enlargement results in a yes vote of 68.28% with a turnout of 60.27%.</p>
May	<p>Irish voters accept EC membership in a referendum, with 83.1% of valid votes in favour of membership and 16.9% of votes against membership.</p>
September	<p>Norwegian voters reject EC membership in a referendum with 53.5% of voters opposed to membership.</p>
October	<p>At the Paris Summit, the member states agree to give a high priority to the development of regional policy and request the Commission to prepare a report on the issue. The member states reach agreement on the coordination of national regional policies and on the establishment of a regional development fund. The new member states, Britain, Denmark and Ireland, were included in these discussions.</p> <p>Also this month, Danish voters decide in a referendum to join the EC, with 63.4% of voters in favour of membership and 36.6% opposed.</p>
1973	
January	<p>The first enlargement of the EC takes place and the EC expands to include Britain, Denmark and Ireland.</p>

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October	The oil crisis begins. OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) raises the price of oil and announces production cuts. They introduce an embargo on oil exports to the Netherlands because of its support for Israel during the Yom Kippur war.
1974	
January	France is forced to leave the currency 'snake in the tunnel'.
February	A general election in Britain produces a Labour minority government led by Harold Wilson, who campaigned on promises to renegotiate the British terms of entry of the EC.
July	Turkey invades Cyprus.
December	The Paris summit agrees to direct elections to the European Parliament (EP) to be held on or after 1978, the creation of the European Council, and the creation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The latter is an important concession for British membership of the EC. Germany had been opposed to the creation of the ERDF, but Ireland and Italy threatened to boycott the summit unless the regional fund was established.
1975	
January	The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) comes into operation.
February	The First Lomé Convention is signed between the EC and 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific states. This aid and trade package replaces the Yaoundé Convention.
March	First European Council meeting is held in Dublin. Agreement was reached in the 1974 Paris summit to establish regular European Council meetings. The Dublin European Council grants Britain some reimbursement of its VAT contributions.
June	British Prime Minister Harold Wilson holds a referendum on continued British membership of the EC. During the election campaign in 1974, Wilson was highly critical of the accession terms negotiated by the government of Conservative leader Edward Heath and vowed to hold a referendum on continued membership. Voters endorse British membership by 67.23% 'yes' votes, with a turnout of 64.03%. In the same month, Greece lodges its application for membership of the EC, following its return to democracy. This re-establishes Greece's path to EC membership, which had been derailed after the suspension of its 1962 accession agreement following its 1967 military coup.
July	The member states sign the second budgetary treaty that amends the financial provisions of the EC. The Treaty creates the European Court of Auditors and increases the power of the EP by giving it the right to reject the budget as a whole.
1977	
March	Portuguese application for membership of the EC.
July	Spanish application for membership of the EC.

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1978	
June	Accession negotiations with Portugal begin. Portugal had applied for EC membership in 1977 following its transition to democracy.
July	The Bremen European Council agrees to pursue proposal from German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing for a 'zone of monetary stability in Europe'. This leads to the development of the European Monetary System (EMS). The Council decision to elect members of the European Parliament (EP) by direct universal suffrage comes into force.
1979	
March	The European Monetary System (EMS) begins operation. All the EC member states join the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) except for Britain, which allows the pound sterling to float on international currency markets.
May	The Greek Accession Treaty is signed.
June	The first direct elections to the European Parliament (EP) are held from June 7-10. Elections were originally planned for the autumn of 1978, but were postponed when the British had difficulty enacting national legislation for the elections. Overall, turnout is 63%. Six political groupings are formed for the first European Parliamentary elections: the Socialists, Christian Democrats, Liberals and Allies, European Progressive Democrats, European Conservatives and Communists and Allies.
November	At the Dublin European Council, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher demands a British budgetary rebate to reduce Britain's net contribution to the EC budget. Britain's contribution to the budget is high due to its relatively high levels of VAT receipts and agricultural imports coupled with a small farming sector which meant relatively lower levels of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments to farmers. No agreement is reached.
1980	
March	The Second Lomé Convention comes into effect between the EC and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.
1981	
January	Greece joins the EC and becomes its 10th member state.
November	German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Italian foreign minister Emilio Colombo submit to member states their plan for increasing political co-operation. The 'Genscher-Colombo Plan' emphasises greater foreign policy co-operation among member states and advocates movement toward eventual political union. The plan calls for a new European Charter to replace the treaties and form a constitution for the European Communities.

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1982	
February	Greenland withdraws from the EC after a consultative referendum. As part of the Danish realm, Greenland had become a member of the EC when Denmark joined. After being granted Home Rule, Greenland opted to leave the EC. It maintains special fishing rights set out in a protocol of the EC Treaty.
1983	
June	In response to the Genscher-Colombo plan, the Stuttgart European Council signs the Solemn Declaration on European Union, which calls for a strengthening of common policies in the Union, including increased qualified majority voting in the Council and the development of a European foreign policy.
1984	
February	The European Parliament (EP) approves the 'Spinelli Plan', a draft treaty on European Union, by 237 votes in favour and 31 votes against. The treaty was drafted by the EP's Committee on Institutional Affairs, with the Italian MEP Altiero Spinelli as rapporteur. Among its various proposals, the treaty recommended the adoption of the majority voting in the Council, co-decision in the EP, completion of the single market and monetary union and the development of a European foreign policy under the leadership of the European Council. The Parliament's treaty was largely ignored by national parliaments.
June	The Fontainebleau European Council settles the British budgetary dispute by increasing the EC's own resources and decreasing CAP expenditures. The Fontainebleau summit also confirms the member states' commitment to the goal of the completion of the single market and creates the Dooge committee to investigate institutional reforms necessary for completing the single market. The same month, the second direct elections to EP are held. The overall turnout is 61%.
September	The Dooge Committee is formed to study the issue of institutional reform in the European Community. The committee is chaired by former Irish foreign minister James Dooge.
December	The Third Lomé Convention is signed.
1985	
January	The first European passports are issued.
March	The Brussels European Council gives the Commission a mandate to produce a plan on the completion of the Single Market. The Dooge Report is released. The Dooge report recommends the creation of a European Union, with development of European foreign and security and defence policies, the creation of a single market and economic area and further integration in environmental, cultural and social policy areas. Institutionally, the Dooge report recommends further supranationalism: qualified majority voting, co-decision in the European Parliament (EP), fewer Commissioners and a strengthened executive.

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June	Jacques Delors submits the White Paper on the completion of the Single Market to the European Council meeting in Milan. The report, undertaken together with Commission Vice-President Lord Cockfield, recommends over 300 measures that would remove the remaining barriers to the free movement of people, goods, services and capital by a deadline of 1992.
December	The Single European Act is agreed in principle by heads of government at Luxembourg European Council. Also, the first Schengen agreement is signed between states that wish to abolish internal border controls. France, Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands sign the agreement.
1986	
January	Portugal and Spain join the EC, which completes the second round of enlargement, bringing the number of member states to 12.
February	On 17 February the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Portugal, Spain and Ireland sign the SEA in Luxemburg. Denmark will not sign the treaty until it has gained approval in a referendum, and Italy and Greece declare that they will not sign until the Danish outcome is known. On 27 February 56.2% of Danish voters approve the SEA in a referendum. The following day, the foreign ministers of Denmark, Greece and Italy sign the Treaty in the Hague.
May	The third Lomé Convention comes into force.
1987	
April	Turkey applies for EC membership.
July	Single European Act (SEA) comes into effect. It revises the Treaty of Rome and aims to create an internal market within the EC. Most significantly, it abolishes national vetoes in a number of policy areas relating to the single market.
1988	
June	The Council, the Commission and the European Parliament (EP) sign an inter-institutional agreement aimed at improving budgetary discipline. The agreement ties budget increases to Community GNP growth rates and sets upper ceiling for budgetary increases.
1989	
July	Austria applies for EC membership.
1990	
July	Cyprus and Malta apply for EC membership.
October	On 3 October the five German Länder of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) become part of the FRG—and part of the EC—with the re-unification of Germany. Margaret Thatcher reluctantly brings the pound into the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM).

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November	The second Schengen agreement is signed creating a single external border for immigration checks and leading to the adoption of common rules on asylum, visas and immigration. The agreement is scheduled to come into effect in 1995. Italy becomes a member of the Schengen countries.
1991	
July	Sweden applies for EC membership.
December	The Maastricht European Council agrees the principles of the TEU. The member states agree on a three stage plan for economic and monetary union. The first stage, already begun in 1990, was the freeing of capital markets in Europe. The second stage, scheduled to begin in 1994, is a process of economic convergence. The third stage is the establishment of a European Central Bank (ECB), fixing of exchange rates and adoption of a single currency. Member states agree that this will begin by 1997 if member states satisfy the economic criteria, or by 1999 at the latest. Both Denmark and Britain secure opt-outs from this third stage of monetary union. Politically, the Treaty extends qualified majority voting and establishes a three-pillar structure to promote cooperation in foreign and security policies and on asylum and immigration issues. The Cohesion Fund is established to assist Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal. A chapter on social policy is annexed to the TEU as a separate protocol.
1992	
February	The Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU) is signed by the member states and its difficult ratification process begins.
March	Finland applies for EC membership.
May	Switzerland applies for EC membership.
June	On 2 June, Danish voters reject the Treaty of Maastricht in a referendum, with 50.7% opposed to the treaty and 49.3% in favour. The turnout for the referendum is 82.90%. In the same month, the Petersberg Declaration of the Western European Union commits member states to allocate armed forces to peace-keeping and humanitarian tasks in Europe.
November	Norway makes its third application for EC membership.
December	Swiss referendum rejects membership of the European Economic Area (EEA). The Swiss government subsequently suspends its application for membership of EC. In the same month, Denmark successfully negotiated an agreement at the Edinburgh summit which allows four Danish opt-outs from the Maastricht Treaty, including the single currency.
1993	
February	Accession negotiations begin with Austria, Finland and Sweden.
April	Accession negotiations begin with Norway.
May	After Denmark negotiates opt-outs in the Edinburgh Agreement, Danish voters endorse the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in the second Danish referendum on the Treaty, with 53.8% of voters in support the second time around.

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June	The Copenhagen European Council meeting proposes that the countries of east and central Europe will be eligible for membership once they have fulfilled political criteria of stable institutions, rule of law, human rights and respect for minority rights, economic criteria of a functioning market economy and have adopted the <i>acquis communautaire</i> . These become known as the 'Copenhagen criteria'.
November	The Maastricht Treaty comes into force on 1 November. The European Union (EU) is established.
1994	
January	Stage II of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) begins. This involves the convergence of economic policies of member states with objective targets for debt, deficit, inflation and exchange rate fluctuation levels, known as the convergence criteria. In the same month, the European Economic Area (EEA) comes into effect, allowing goods, services, capital and people to move freely among the EU and the EEA members, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.
April	Hungary and Poland apply for EU membership.
June	In a referendum, 66.6% of voters in Austria support EU membership. The fourth direct elections to the European Parliament (EP) are held with an overall voter turnout of 56.8%.
October	EU membership is approved in Finland. In a referendum 56.9% of voters support membership.
November	In a referendum held on 13 November 52.8% of Swedish voters support EU membership. Later this month, Norwegian voters reject EU membership in a referendum, with 52.2% of voters opposed to membership and 47.8% in favour. Voter turnout is 88.6%.
1995	
January	Austria, Finland, and Sweden become members of the EU, bringing the number of member states to 15. Also in January, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is created, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).
March	An expanded Schengen Agreement came into force on 26 March, removing internal border controls among France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, the Benelux countries, Greece and Austria.
June	Romania and the Slovak Republic apply for EU membership.
October	Latvia applies for EU membership.
November	Estonia applies for EU membership.
December	Lithuania and Bulgaria apply for EU membership.

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1996	
January	The Czech Republic applies for EU membership.
June	Slovenia applies for EU membership.
December	The Dublin European Council agrees on the main principles of a growth and stability pact to support monetary union. The Council highlights the need for member states and the union to work together on growth and employment and to this end issues the Dublin declaration on Employment. The Dublin European Council also calls for an Intergovernmental Conference to examine treaty revision in order to make the Union more responsive to its citizens, to strengthen the capacity of the Union in justice and home affairs, particularly concerning visa, asylum and immigration policy, and to develop greater coherency of external policy. The Council calls for institutional reforms that will improve the EU's ability to take decisions and develop 'comprehensible, transparent and democratic procedures'. In the same month, Denmark, Sweden and Finland join the Schengen area.
1999	
January	The Socialist group in the European Parliament (EP) calls for a censure motion to dismiss the Santer Commission in the wake of fraud allegations. After the Christian Democrats withdraw their support for the motion, it is defeated by a margin of 232 votes in favour of censuring the Commission and 293 votes against. The European Parliament instead calls for an independent committee to investigate the fraud charges.
March	The Santer Commission resigns after the revelation of fraud, nepotism and mismanagement.
May	The Amsterdam Treaty enters into force on 1 May.
June	The fifth direct elections to the EP are held. The European People's Party-European Democrats win a plurality of the votes, with a voter turnout of 49.8%.
December	The Helsinki European Council agrees to open accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Slovakia, and also recognises Turkey as an applicant country.
2000	
February	An Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) is launched to discuss reforms left uncompleted after the Treaty of Amsterdam. These include the size and composition of the Commission, the weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers and Qualified Majority Voting.
June	The Cotonou Agreement is signed as a successor to the Lomé Convention.
September	In a referendum, Danish people vote to reject adoption of the Euro by a vote of 53% to 47%.
December	The Nice European Council agrees the Treaty of Nice and formally proclaims the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The Treaty proposes a series of institutional reforms to prepare for the upcoming enlargement of the Union.

Timeline of the European Union

2001	
January	Greece joins the single currency.
June	The Irish people reject the Treaty of Nice in a referendum, with 53.87% voting 'no' and an overall turnout of 34.79%.
December	The Laeken European Council adopts the Declaration on the Future of the European Union, which calls for the establishment of a convention to prepare the ground for a European Constitution for the next Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). The convention is to consist of representatives of member state governments, parliaments, the European Parliament, European Commission and governments and parliaments of accession countries, as well as representatives from the regions and the EU social partners. The Convention is asked to propose ways of creating a clearer division of competences, simplifying the treaties and enhancing democracy and transparency in the Union.
2002	
January	Euro notes and coins are introduced in the 12 member states of the EU on 1 January. Denmark, Sweden and Britain stay outside the Eurozone.
February	Convention on the Future of Europe begins its deliberations in Brussels, chaired by former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. The Euro becomes the sole currency in the 12 Eurozone countries.
July	The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) Treaty expires after 50 years in force.
October	Irish voters approve the Nice Treaty in a second referendum. The second referendum sees 62.89% of voters supporting the Treaty, with turnout of 49.47%, up almost 15 percentage points from the 2001 referendum.
2003	
February	The Treaty of Nice enters into force on 1 February.
March	Referendums on EU membership are held in Malta and Slovenia which approve EU membership by votes of 53.6% and 89.6% respectively.
April	The European Parliament (EP) assents to the accession of ten new member states and the Accession Treaty is signed by all states. The same month, Hungarians vote in a referendum to approve EU membership, with 83.76% of voters in support of membership.
May	Voters approve EU memberships in referendums held in Lithuania (89.95% in favour) and Slovakia (92.46% in favour).
June	In referendums in Poland and the Czech Republic, voters approve EU membership with support of 77.45% in Poland and 77.33% in the Czech Republic.
July	Valéry Giscard d'Estaing presents the draft EU Constitution to the European Council which approves it in principle for the member states to consider in more detail for the next European Council in December.

Timeline of the European Union

September	Swedish people vote to reject adoption of the Euro in a referendum with 55.91% 'no' votes and a turnout of 82.60%. Estonians vote in a referendum to approve EU membership, with 66.83% in favour. Later in the same month, 67% of voters support EU membership in a referendum in Latvia.
October	The Rome Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) convenes to consider the draft EU Constitution.
December	The proposals of the Constitutional Convention are presented to the European Council. The Council fails to reach agreement on the text of the Constitutional Treaty. While they agree to retain one commissioner per country, the member states fail to agree on the issue of extending Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) to social policy and taxation and on the weighting of votes under QMV. Spain and Poland insist on retaining the formula developed in the Nice treaty.
2004	
May	Ten new member states—with 74 million citizens—join the EU on 1 May. These include Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus and Malta. This fourth round of enlargement expands the EU to 25 member states. The population of the EU's 25 countries reaches 456 million.
June	Elections to the European Parliament (EP) are marked by a record low turn-out of 63%. The European Council meeting of 17-18 June agrees the text of the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe.
October	The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe is signed by the Heads of State and Government and the EU Foreign Ministers and enters its ratification stage.
November	The Barroso Commission is eventually approved by EP, following the resignation of controversial Italian nominee for the portfolio of Justice, Freedom and Security portfolio, Rocco Buttiglione. He is replaced by Franco Frattini. Lithuania ratifies the CT.
December	Heads of government agree to open accession negotiations with Turkey.
2005	
February	On 20 February, the Spanish people vote to approve the Constitutional Treaty in a consultative referendum. 77% of voters supported the Treaty, and 17% were opposed, with an overall low turnout level of 42%. Slovenia ratifies the CT.
April	Bulgaria and Romania sign Accession Treaties with the EU, paving the way for the 6th enlargement of the EU. The European Parliament (EP) gave its assent to accession earlier in the month. Greece and Italy ratify the CT.
May	On 29 May, French people vote to reject the Constitutional Treaty by 55% to 45% on a 70% turnout in a legally binding referendum. Bulgaria and Romania ratify the CT as part of their EU entry preparations.

Timeline of the European Union

June	Three days after the French people rejected the Constitutional Treaty, the Dutch people vote to reject the Constitutional Treaty in a consultative referendum. 61.6% of Dutch voters reject the Treaty. In the wake of the ratification failures in France and the Netherlands, the European Council of 16-17 June announces that the date of 1 November 2006, originally set for a report on ratification, is no longer tenable. The member states enter into a 'period of reflection'. The Treaty has already been ratified in Spain, Italy, Austria, Malta, Greece, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Cyprus. Ratification is indefinitely delayed in Ireland, Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Poland. Belgium, Cyprus and Latvia ratify the CT.
July	Luxembourg and Malta ratify the CT.
October	EU entry negotiations commenced with Croatia and Turkey.
December	The Council of Ministers agree EU candidate status for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
2006	
May	Estonia ratifies the CT
June	Austrian European Council reflects on the first year of reflection on the Constitutional Treaty and its ratification but no real progress was made apart from a vague commitment that the reflection period be extended and the ratification procedure be re-launched.
December	Finland Ratifies the CT. Entry negotiations with Turkey suspended in eight topic areas as a result of Turkey failing to open access to ports from EU Cyprus.
2007	
January	Bulgaria and Romania join the EU making 27 member states with a population of 485 million citizens. They have one EU Commissioner and one Judge each and up to 2009, Bulgaria has 18 EP seats and Romania 35. The voting figures in the Council are 10 for Bulgaria and 14 for Romania. Slovenia becomes the 13 th country to adopt the Euro and join the Eurozone. It is also agreed that Malta and Cyprus will join the Eurozone on Jan 1 st 2008.
March	50 th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome. Berlin European Council statement and re-commitment to the pursuit of European ideals and a new attempt to activate institutional reform either with a revised CT or a new document or set of documents to provide existing Treaty reform.
April	The European Community becomes the first organisation to accede to the Hague Conference on Private International Law.
June	European Council Summit meets in Brussels and agrees to abandon the Constitutional Treaty and to replace it with a Reform Treaty which will amend and rename the existing Treaty on European Union and the EC Treaty. Details to be worked out in an IGC and submitted to a further Summit in October in Lisbon.

Timeline of the European Union

July	Member state representatives meet in Brussels for the formal opening of the intergovernmental conference (IGC) on a draft reform treaty to amend the EU treaties.
October	After the usual extended behind the scenes horse-trading and posturing by member states, the European Council in Lisbon agree on the Reform Treaty to extensively amend the existing Treaties, renaming the EC Treaty as the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Treaty is agreed by all 27 members of the European Council. Formal signature by all 27 Governments will take place in December 2007, after which it is again up to each and every member states to ratify by either parliamentary process or Referendum, if considered necessary.