



50 years of the European Union

25 March 2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome. A review of the past 50 years reveals an unprecedented success story. We, the people of Europe, are proud of what we have achieved. What began as the EEC on 25 March 1957 has grown into a union of 27 Member States which, after so many painful years of war, expulsion and suffering, now unites the European continent in peace and ensures a level of prosperity and stability previously unknown in the history of this continent.

(Frank-Walter Steinmeier,
Federal Foreign Minister)



Beginnings – war and peace in Europe



For centuries, Europe was the scene of war

Consequences of the Second World War

Approx. 55-60 m. dead, 35 m. wounded, 3 m. missing

Massive destruction of infrastructure and living areas

Approx. 1500 bn. dollar costs

Only in the wake of the catastrophic Second World War could the idea of a united Europe take root.
The two most important aims were:



Peace – no more wars in Europe



Reconstructing the devastated continent

The Schuman Plan – a cornerstone of European integration

9 May 1950: The French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposes that France and Germany integrate their coal and steel industries. The idea is today considered a cornerstone of the EU, and 9 May is celebrated as "Europe Day" every year. The Schuman Plan aims to achieve:



Economic unity in western Europe



Long-term peace through shared control of coal and steel, the key industries of the time

18 April 1951: Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Netherlands sign the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)



Robert Schuman



Founding the ECSC

The Treaties of Rome

25 March 1957: The six founding members of the ECSC sign the Treaties of Rome:



European Economic Community (EEC):
Aim: Common market (customs union, common external trade policy)



European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM):
Aim: Rules for the civilian use of nuclear and atomic energy policy

This act of European integration was undertaken by six founder states in the west of the divided continent. Having lost the war, Germany and Italy hoped that European integration could bring them back into the family of sovereign states. France, the victorious power, hoped to lead the ambitious integration project under President de Gaulle. The Benelux countries were open economies by tradition and had benefited from economic integration. As a victim of German aggression, they were particularly interested in the idea of creating a community of peace and stability through economic ties.



Signing of the Treaties on 25 March 1957

1967: The European Community (EC) is founded through the merging of the ECSC, EEC and EURATOM

The European internal market

The European internal market means:

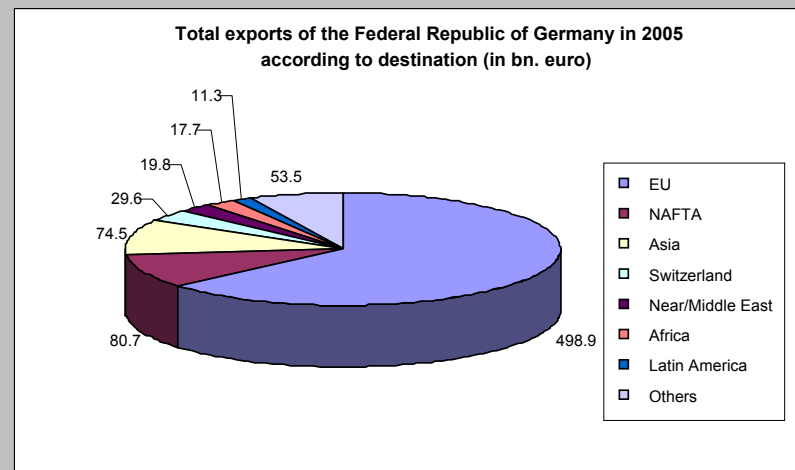
- ✦ Removal of economic and trade barriers between the Member States
- ✦ Abolishing passport and customs controls at most EU internal borders
- ✦ Free movement of goods, persons, services and capital (the 4 freedoms)

What are the benefits of a single market?

- ✦ The internal market allows for free trade, thus promoting economic growth and creating jobs

- ✦ With around 450 million consumers, the EU is the largest economic area in the world (in terms of national product)

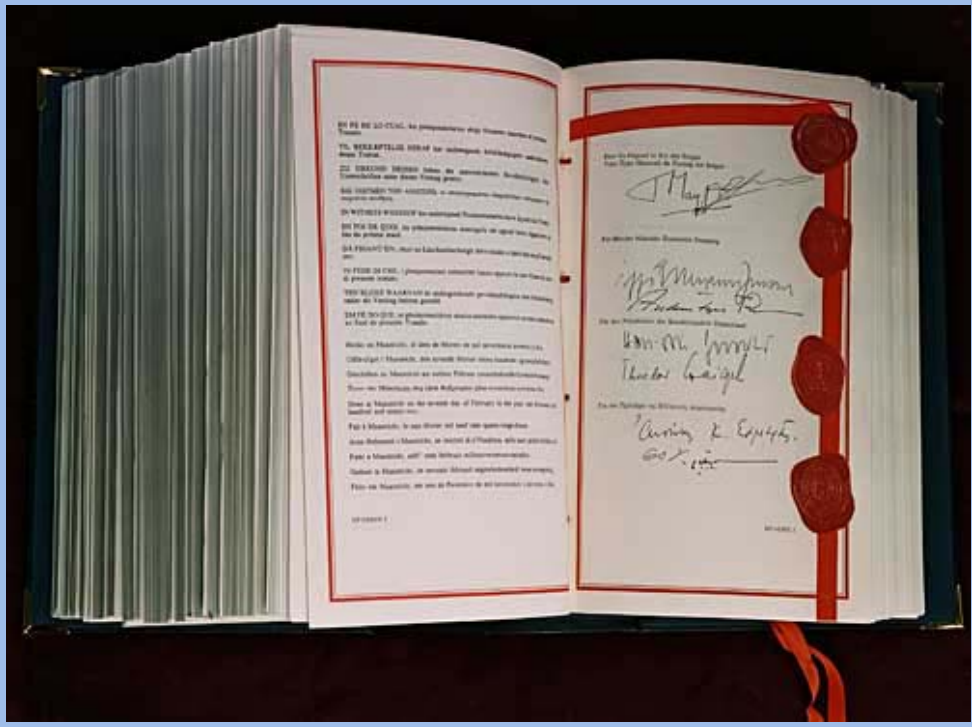
The EU has brought Germany huge benefits: as the world's leading exporter, the German economy is particularly dependent on good trade relations. What many do not realize is that 63% of German exports are to other Member States. Germany therefore benefits more than almost any other country from the EU.



(Source: German Federal Statistics Office)

The Maastricht Treaty

1992: The European Community becomes the European Union (EU)



Excerpt from the Maastricht Treaty

With the Maastricht Treaty (or EU Treaty) the 12 EC states of the time agreed to intensify economic cooperation and introduce a common currency, the euro.

Two new areas of activity were established:

- The Common Foreign and Security Policy ("second pillar")
- Justice and Internal Affairs Policy ("third pillar")



The euro – a common currency for Europe

- ★ 1992: The EU decides to introduce a common European currency (Maastricht Treaty)
- ★ 2002: The euro replaces national currencies in twelve of the fifteen Member States of the time (not in Denmark, Sweden or the UK)
- ★ 2007: Introduction of the euro in Slovenia
- ★ With a population of more than 300 million, the EU is one of the largest monetary areas in the world
- ★ The euro is also to be introduced in the new Member States once economic and structural requirements have been fulfilled
- ★ The common currency offers many advantages for individuals and businesses alike: more flexibility when travelling, no more commission fees when changing money. German businesses save around 10 billion euro every year, simply because they no longer need to be insured against currency fluctuations





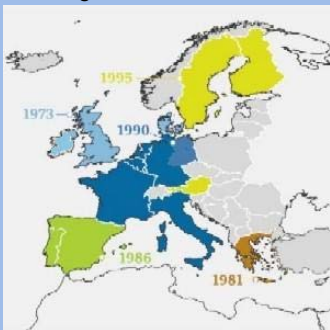
The stages of European enlargement

The EU in its 1957 borders



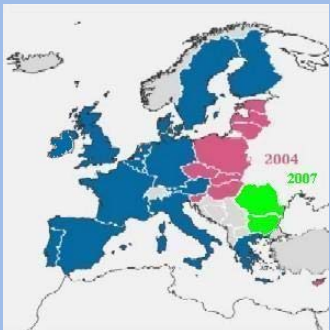
- ★ Belgium
- ★ France
- ★ Germany
- ★ Italy
- ★ Luxembourg
- ★ Netherlands

The enlargements from 1973 to 1995



- ★ 1973: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom
- ★ 1981: Greece
- ★ 1986: Portugal and Spain
- ★ 1995: Austria, Sweden and Finland

The enlargements of 2004 and 2007



- ★ 2004: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia
- ★ 2007: Bulgaria and Romania

Institutions of the European Union

European Court of Justice

European Council
27 Heads of State and Government and the President of the Commission

European Court of Auditors

Council of the European Union
(Council of Ministers)
27 Ministers

European Commission
27 Members



European Parliament

- ✦ **European Council:** establishes general political guidelines
- ✦ **Council of the European Union:** passes laws in cooperation with the Parliament
- ✦ **European Commission:** proposes legislation (right of initiative); administers the budget; monitors execution of all European agreements

- ✦ **European Parliament:** is directly elected by the European citizens; shares legislative powers with the Council; adopts the budget; controls EU activities
- ✦ **European Court of Justice:** safeguards Community law; resolves disputes between Member States, EU institutions, companies and private individuals
- ✦ **European Court of Auditors:** oversees the execution of the European budget plan

Draft European Constitution



It was drawn up by the Constitutional Convention (two thirds parliamentary representatives, one third government representatives) chaired by former French President Giscard d'Estaing.



29 October 2004: Official signing of the "Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe" by the EU Heads of State and Government in Rome



To enter into force, the Treaty must be approved by the national parliaments or, in cases where a referendum is required, the populations of the individual Member States. This has not yet happened.



18 states have ratified the Treaty thus far:

Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Greece, Slovakia, Spain, Austria, Germany, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Romania and Bulgaria



The people of France and the Netherlands voted against the Constitutional Treaty in referenda in 2005.



The other Member States have postponed the ratification process.

The Constitutional Treaty envisages the following:

Institutional reforms

- The Council is in future to make decisions on the basis of a "double majority", i.e. a qualified majority will require 55% of states representing 65% of the EU population. A blocking minority will require at least four states.
→ **facilitates constructive majorities and militates against blocking minorities**
- Appointment of a full-time President of the European Council
→ **strengthens continuity of Union activity**
- New post of Union Minister for Foreign Affairs
→ **strengthens foreign policy**

Greater integration in justice and home affairs

- Introduction of joint protection of EU external borders
- Facilitating cross-border police cooperation (strengthening Europol)
- Improving cross-border prosecution (expanding Eurojust)
→ **easier and more effective development of an area of freedom, security and justice**

Democracy and transparency

- Extending the role of the European Parliament
- Direct participation of national parliaments in the European legislative process
- Incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Clear division of competencies between Union and Member States
- Simplified procedures
- More systematic methods and clearer labelling of EU legislative instruments
→ **strengthening democracy and being more responsive to citizens**

EU Charter of Fundamental Rights



I – Dignity

includes right to life; prohibition of death penalty; right to integrity; prohibition of torture; prohibition of slavery and forced labour



II – Freedoms

includes protection of personal data; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression; freedom of assembly; freedom of the arts and sciences; right to education; right to property; right to asylum



III – Equality

includes prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of gender, skin colour, religion, sexual orientation or similar, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity; equality between men and women



IV – Solidarity

includes protection in the event of unjustified dismissal; fair and just working conditions; prohibition of child labour; social security and social assistance; health care; environmental protection; consumer protection



V – Citizens' rights

includes the right to vote and stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament and at municipal elections; right of access to documents; freedom of movement and of residence



VI – Justice

includes the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial; presumption of innocence; principles of legality and proportionality of criminal offences and penalties

The European Union's areas of activity

- Common Foreign and Security Policy
- Justice and Home Affairs
- Structural policy
- Internal market
- Monetary policy
- Common Agricultural Policy
- Common Fisheries Policy
- Environmental policy
- Transport policy
- Energy policy
- Research
- Education
- Cultural policy
- Employment and social affairs



Example: Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)

Aims include:

Preserving peace in the world

Promoting international security

Advocating democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights

Strategies include:

European Security Strategy

Cross-border cooperation in combating organized crime

Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Action plan to combat radicalization and recruitment into terrorism

Stabilizing the Western Balkans (including a civilian mission in Kosovo)

Further EU responsibilities in the area of external relations

Humanitarian aid

Europe is the largest contributor of humanitarian aid in the world. It aims to protect the lives of people affected by natural disasters, conflicts and civil wars

Human rights

Respect for human rights is an integral part of trade and cooperation agreements with third countries and a requirement for EU accession

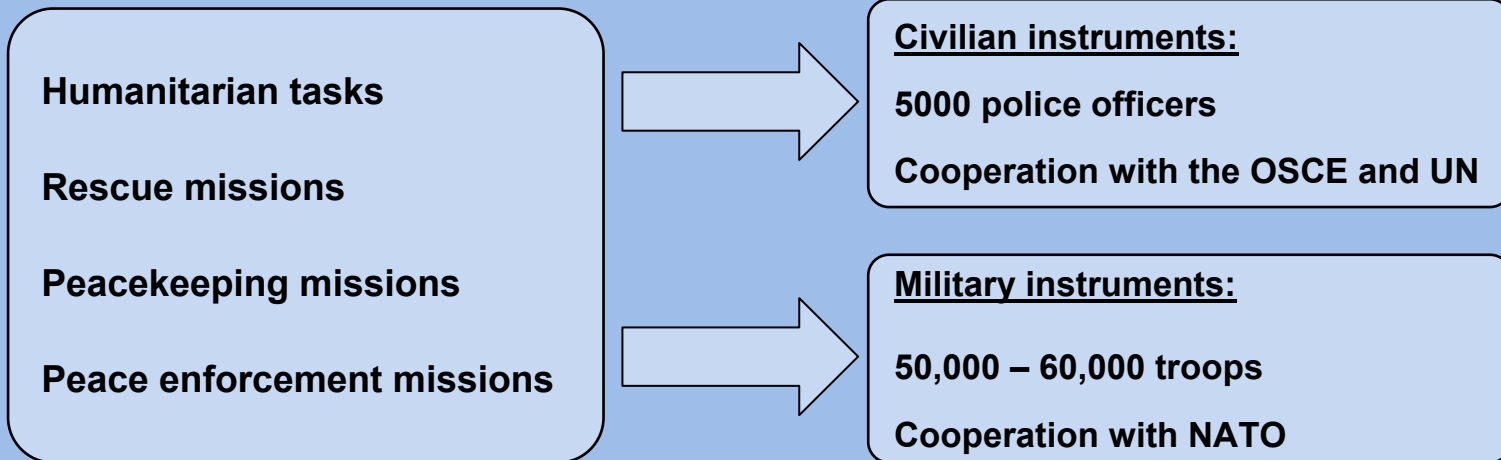
Election assistance and observance

Through assisting and observing elections, the EU helps to promote democracy

Development aid

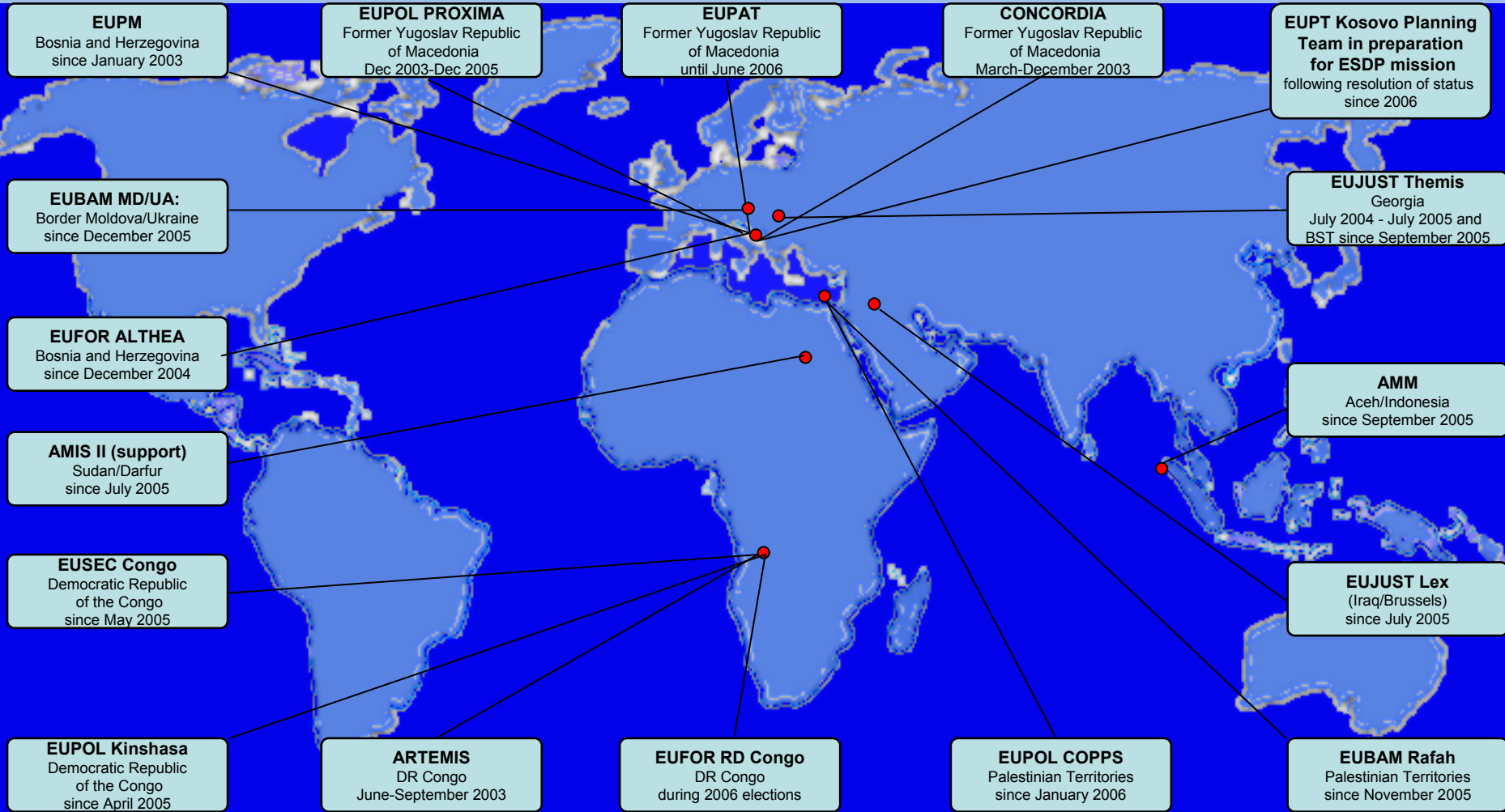
The EU is the largest contributor of development aid in the world:
→ technical and financial assistance
→ support for programmes in the fields of infrastructure, health and education

The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – a part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy



ESDP – Operations and missions since 2003

(Last updated 25 August 2006)



+ Observer mission at the Ukraine/Moldova border since December 2005

Example: Environmental policy

★ Protecting the environment requires joint action

★ **Growing importance:** since 1972 there have been more than 300 European legal acts in the field of environmental protection, such as the Directive on national emissions ceilings for certain pollutants

★ **Objectives and measures:**

- Preserving and protecting the environment → e.g. environmental action programmes
establishing priorities of EU environmental policy
- Protecting human health → e.g. directives safeguarding air and water quality
- Responsible use of natural resources → e.g. promoting energy efficiency and energy-saving
→ e.g. promoting new and renewable forms of energy
- The EU is the world's largest producer of environmentally-friendly electricity
- International measures to combat regional and global environmental problems → The EU made a considerable contribution to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol

Example: Research, education and culture



Research

- Creating a European Research Area
- Improved coordination of research activities
 - Financing research through the EU Framework Research Programme
 - Strengthening the scientific and technological base of European industry as well as boosting growth and competitiveness
- Europe is at the cutting edge of international research in the fields of chemistry, physics, pharmacy, space travel, telecommunications and transport



Education

- Creating a European area for lifelong education and training as well as promoting mobility and language learning by means of:
 - The Comenius programme to support school partnerships
 - The Erasmus programme, the largest university exchange programme in the world
 - The Leonardo da Vinci programme to promote vocational training and international qualifications



Culture

- Cultural diversity and preserving cultural heritage
- Protecting the languages, customs and traditions of individual regions, e.g. by promoting linguistic diversity:
 - The EU has 23 official languages – all citizens can address EU authorities in their own language
- Cultural exchange and supporting cultural activity
 - for example through the MEDIA programme to promote European films

