



**European  
Community**

# PRESS RELEASE

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICE**

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May 6, 1970

## A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF EUROPE SINCE 1945

1945           At the end of the Second World War, Western Europe lay in ruins. It faced two fundamental questions. One was economic: how could the material destruction be repaired? The second was political: how could Europe recover political strength and stability?

1946           A response to the political question was heard in 1946 when, in Zurich, Winston Churchill stressed the need to build a "United States of Europe."

1947           The promise of economic recovery for Europe came from the United States with the Marshall Plan proposal in 1947. The only condition attached to American aid was that Europe itself organize the recovery. To do this, European nations formed the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OEEC), and later the European Payments Union.

1948           At a meeting held at The Hague in 1948, Europe's political leaders advocated the establishment of a European Parliament as a step to the political union of Europe. Ten European countries in 1949 agreed to form the Council of Europe. Despite ambitious aims, the Council of Europe lacked an institutional structure with decision-making powers. It soon became merely a diplomatic sounding board for its members.

The Schuman Declaration - Point of Departure

1950           On May 9, 1950, Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister, read to representatives of the world press a proposal from his government, a proposal described by Walter Lippman as the most audacious and constructive since the war. This blueprint for the future integration of Europe, drafted by Jean Monnet only a few days earlier, became known as the "Schuman Plan".

          Its aim was to reconcile France and Germany within a European Federation. Its method was to create de facto economic solidarity among Europeans by pooling basic production, beginning with a European authority for coal and steel.

1951           On April 18, 1951, less than one year after Schuman's declaration, six European countries - Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands - signed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) Treaty in Paris.

1952           The parliaments of the six countries ratified the Treaty and thus created the first European institutions with federal characteristics. The executive branch of the E.C.S.C. was independent of governments, and its decisions not subject to veto. It established a "common market" for coal and steel, administered Europe's first effective anti-trust law, carried out Europe's first labor resettlement and "trade adjustment" policy, and levied the first European tax.

1954           After unsuccessful attempts to establish a European political Community and a European Defense Community in 1954, Europeans turned back to the economic road to integration. Europe's economic weakness contrasted vividly with the economic strength of the two continental

giants, the U.S.A. and the USSR, whose political policies largely dominated the world.

1955           Another step toward unification was taken at Messina, in June 1955, when, under the chairmanship of Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak, a committee was instructed by the six Community countries to examine the possibilities of general economic union and joint development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

1956           As a result of the Spaak Committee Report, negotiations for drafting two treaties opened in Brussels in 1956. The Treaties  
1957           were signed on March 25, 1957, in Rome, where the Ministers of the six countries formally established the European Economic Community (Common Market) and European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

1958           Provisionally located in Brussels, the Community's institutions began their work, consisting of setting up a customs union and shaping common economic policies for the whole Community.

1959           On the first of January 1959, the first cuts in the custom duties for goods traded between the member countries were carried out.

1960           In 1960, the Six took the first steps towards bringing national tariffs on imports from non-member countries into line with a common external tariff.

1961           In the course of 1961, steps were made to free the movement of men, firms, and services throughout the six member states. The Community also moved into the more difficult phase of working out common policies, especially in the spheres of agriculture, competition, transport, and trade with the rest of the world.

Hand in hand with the internal development of the Community,

external affairs loomed larger in its activities: the first association agreement was signed with Greece; applications for full membership in the Community were presented by Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway.

1962 President Kennedy proposed the Trade Expansion Program and an "Atlantic Partnership."

1963 Formal association links for aid and trade were forged with 18 independent African countries and with Turkey.

The Community signed its first trade agreement (with Iran).

A sudden veto by France in January 1963 ended membership negotiations with Great Britain and precipitated the Community's first political crisis.

1964 On May 4th, negotiations opened in Geneva under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) aimed at cutting tariffs by 50 per cent on goods traded among the 72 GATT members. The Six adopted the first Community plan to combat inflation and, to secure growth equilibrium, drew up its first five-year economic program. The free movement of workers throughout the Community became effective with the abolition of the priority given to national workers on the national employment markets.

1965 In the first half of the year 1965, the customs union was well under way, agricultural policy was making progress, the merger of EEC, Euratom, and ECSC Community Executives was decided, and other decisions were being taken in a number of fields. At midnight on June 30, 1965, a second major crisis broke. France sought to modify the role of the Commission and abandon majority voting on matters which a government considered vital to national interests. The other five members refused. Consequently, France boycotted

the Council of Ministers and other Community institution meetings for seven months.

1966           The 28th and 29th of January 1966, the Foreign Ministers of the Six, after having "agreed to disagree" on disputed issues raised by France, decided to resume normal work in Community institutions.

              In July 1966, the six agricultural ministers adopted the basic principles and fixed common prices to be applied throughout the Community for major agricultural product groups.

1967           On May 11, Britain renewed its application for Community membership. Four days later, The Kennedy Round -- wherein the European Community spoke with one voice on trade affairs -- was concluded.

1968           On July 1, 1968, a full customs union was established, providing free trade for agricultural and manufactured products throughout the Community.

1969           The Community's partnership with Africa was confirmed through renewal of the second Association Treaty with 18 independent African countries.

              Following a summit meeting in The Hague between the Six Governments in early December, the Community was given a new impetus. Main objectives were fixed and a timetable set for: a monetary union, full economic union, and the strengthening, and enlargement of the Community.

1970           The Council of Ministers gave shape to The Hague meeting proposals including a decision to strengthen the budgetary role of the European Parliament.