
TERRITORIAL ORGANISATION

The European Union

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Origins of the European Union

After the Second World War (1939-1945), several European countries decided to create an international organisation with two **objectives**: to **consolidate peace** and to **compete economically** as a bloc with other world economies.

- In 1951, six European countries (**Belgium, France, Italy, West Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands**) created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).
- In 1957, they signed the Treaties of Rome, which established the **European Economic Community (EEC)**.
- Other European countries joined the EEC afterwards. For example, the United Kingdom and Ireland joined in 1973, and Spain in 1986.
- In 2016, the United Kingdom votes in a referendum to leave the EU. The United Kingdom left the EU definitively in December 2020 after long negotiations between the EU and the UK in order to set the economic conditions for the 'Brexit'.

From the ECC to the EU

- In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty came into force and the EEC became the European Union (EU).
- In 2002, the official European currency, the euro, came into circulation in the eurozone.
- In 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon came into force to reform the institutions of the EU. It established the Charter of Fundamental Rights for all EU citizens.

Challenges that the EU is facing

The European Union faces important challenges after the Brexit and COVID-19 crisis:

- Stop the spread of anti-European political parties.
- Establish a common immigration policy.
- Promote sustainable growth.
- Reduce internal differences.