

Timeline 1945–2019



The European Union

8 May 1945

The war ends

Germany's unconditional surrender ends World War II in Europe.

5 June 1947

Marshall Plan

The Marshall Plan "European Recovery Program" endorses economic co-operation among European countries.

4 April 1949 NATO

Twelve countries form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance under the leadership of the United States.

19 June 1946

Churchill's proposal

In Zurich, Britain's former Prime Minister Winston Churchill proposes the founding of the United States of Europe.

5 May 1949 Council of Europe

Ten countries found the Council of Europe. It is an autonomous body with 47 members (2019). This Council, however, does not constitute the founding of the future European Union.

1951–1957

Six founding member states

In the 1950s, Belgium, West Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands sign three treaties that establish the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC, or Euratom). The six founding member states form the nucleus for the gradual development of the European Union.

THE NETHERLANDS

BELGIUM

LUXEMBOURG

FEDERAL
REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY

ITALY

FRANCE



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to
HU

RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 RIGHT to LIFE
- 2 PROHIBITION of TORTURE
- 3 PROHIBITION of SLAVERY and FORCED LABOUR
- 4 RIGHT to LIBERTY and SECURITY
- 5 RIGHT to a FAIR TRIAL
- 6 NO PUNISHMENT without LAW
- 7 RIGHT to RESPECT for PRIVATE and FAMILY LIFE
- 8 FREEDOM of THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE and RELIGION
- 9 FREEDOM of EXPRESSION
- 10 FREEDOM of ASSEMBLY and ASSOCIATION
- 11 RIGHT to MARRY
- 12 RIGHT to an EFFECTIVE REMEDY
- 13 PROHIBITION of DISCRIMINATION
- 14 DEROGATION in TIME of EMERGENCY

3 September 1953 Convention on Human Rights

The "European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" enters into force after ratification by the members of the Council of Europe.

1956 Uprisings

Democratic uprisings in Hungary and Poland, both part of the communist-governed Eastern Bloc, are violently suppressed.

PARIS

23 October 1954 Paris Agreements

West Germany is accepted as a member of NATO and of the newly created Western European Union following the failure of the European Defence Community ("Paris Agreements").



4 January 1960 Trade

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is set up as a counterbalance for countries that have not joined the EEC.

1951-1972 Six founding members

PRESSION

Y
N
NCY

UNITED KINGDOM

IRELAND

DENMARK

God morgen

DIA DHUIT

Jhell

1 January 1973 First expansion

The United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark join the European Community. Negotiations also pave the way for Norwegian membership, but the proposal is rejected by Norwegians in a popular referendum held on September 25, 1972.

1 March 1972

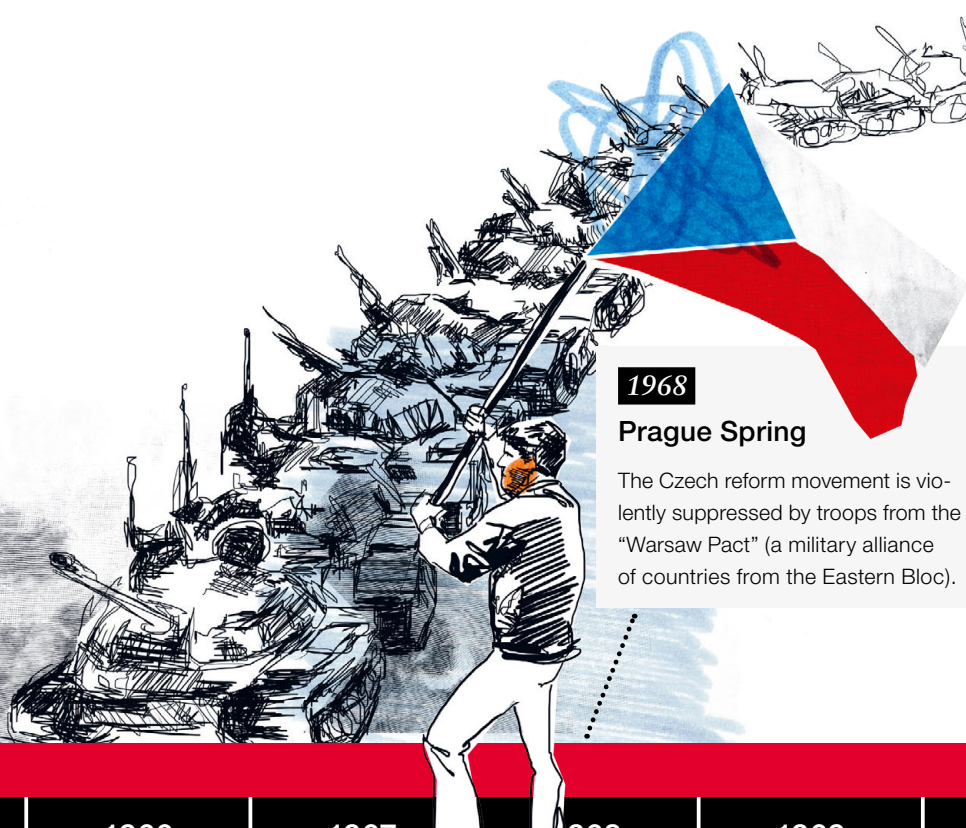
InterRail

Several European railroad companies offer a cheap one-month lump-sum ticket for young people to explore Europe by train. As from 2017, 18-year-old Europeans can apply to the EU for free travel through Europe.

1968

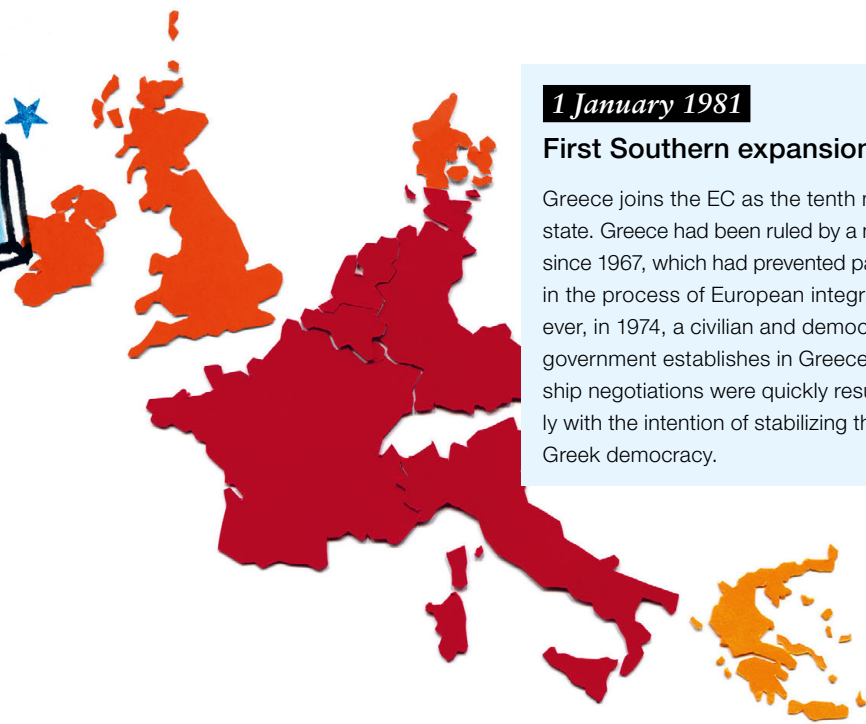
Prague Spring

The Czech reform movement is violently suppressed by troops from the "Warsaw Pact" (a military alliance of countries from the Eastern Bloc).



ENOMENH EYPOTH

Kalimera!



1 January 1981

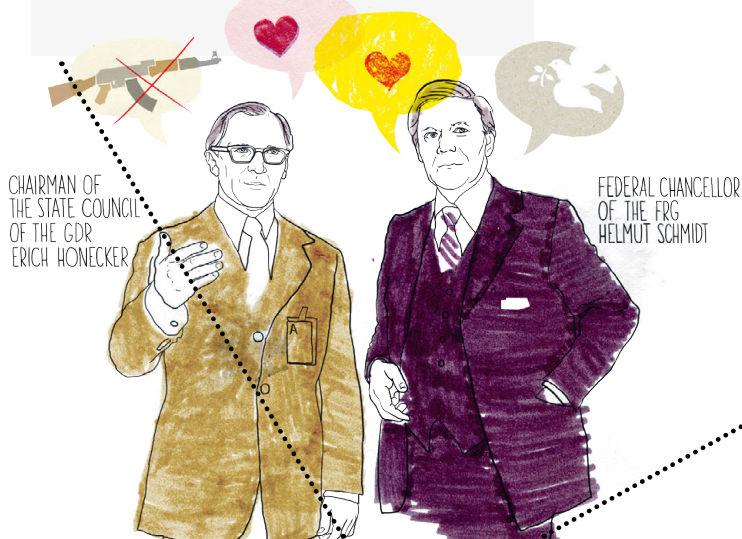
First Southern expansion

Greece joins the EC as the tenth member-state. Greece had been ruled by a military junta since 1967, which had prevented participation in the process of European integration. However, in 1974, a civilian and democratic government establishes in Greece. Membership negotiations were quickly resumed, partly with the intention of stabilizing the young Greek democracy.

GREECE

1 August 1975 Helsinki Accords

33 states from Western and Eastern Europe, the United States and Canada sign the Helsinki Accords, the final document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The signatories pledge to guarantee human rights, uphold the self-determination and non-discrimination of all peoples, renounce the use of violence, respect the inviolability of national borders, and pursue the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

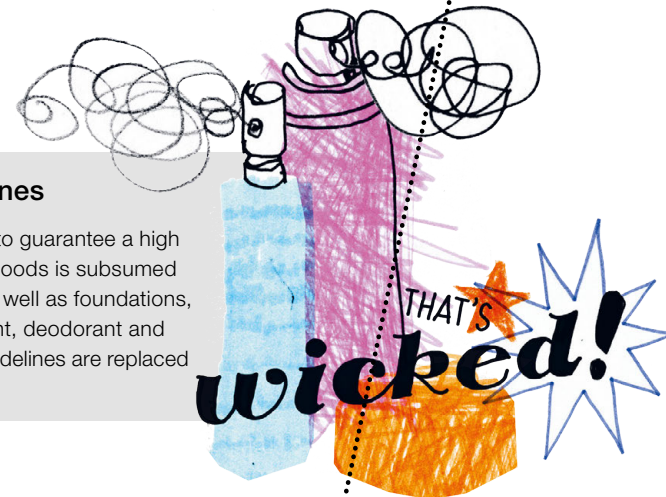


CHAIRMAN OF
THE STATE COUNCIL
OF THE GDR
ERICH HONECKER

FEDERAL CHANCELLOR
OF THE FRG
HELMUT SCHMIDT

27 July 1976 Cosmetics guidelines

The EC Cosmetics guidelines are designed to guarantee a high level of health protection. A large variety of goods is subsumed under the term "cosmetics": facial masks as well as foundations, powder and soap, perfume, bath supplement, deodorant and depilation products. On July 11, 2013, the guidelines are replaced by the European Cosmetic Directive.



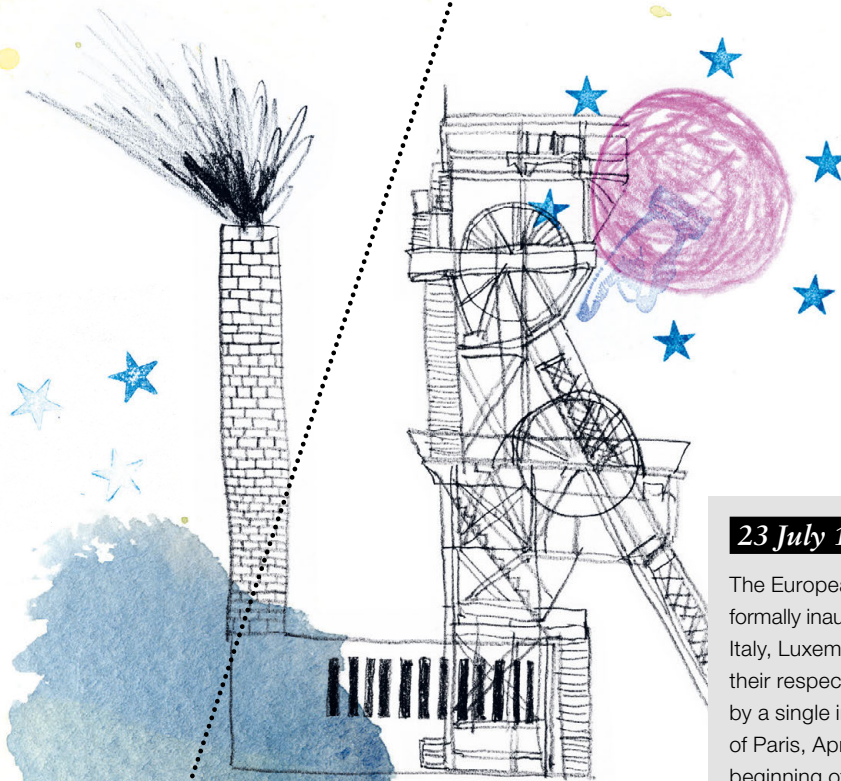
1973-1980 Nine member states

Klebefläche

1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953

"We must build
a kind of
United States
of Europe."

WINSTON CHURCHILL

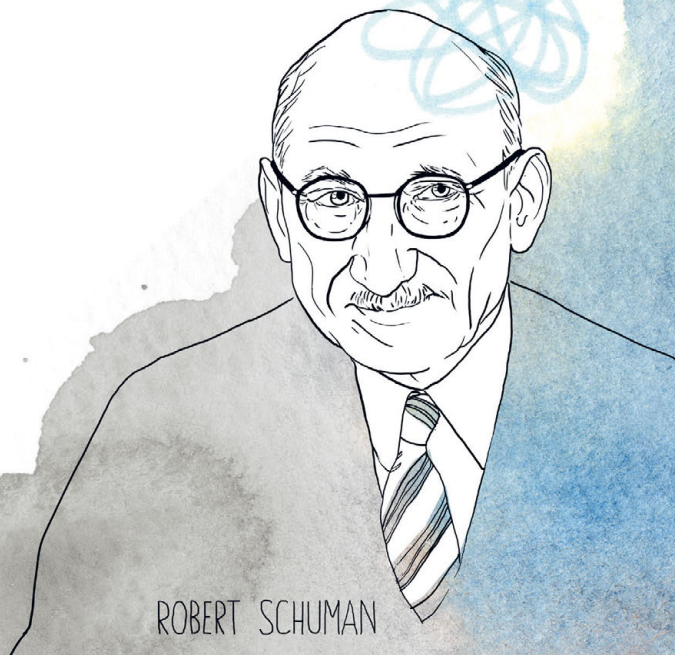


23 July 1952 ECSC Treaty

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) is formally inaugurated. Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands agree to have their respective coal and steel industries supervised by a single independent regulatory authority (Treaty of Paris, April 18, 1951). The agreement marks the beginning of Europe's first supranational organization.

9 May 1950 Schuman Plan

The entire German and French coal and steel production is to be governed by a common regulatory body which is independent of the national states and can make its own decisions ("supranationality", see: July 23, 1952). Schuman's idea is based on the conviction that economically interdependent states will strive to maintain peace and resolve disagreements by non-violent means. The Schuman Plan was intended as the first step towards a more unified Europe and is often described as the "birth certificate" of the European Union. May 9 is now celebrated as "Europe Day".



ROBERT SCHUMAN





30 August 1954

European Defence Community fails

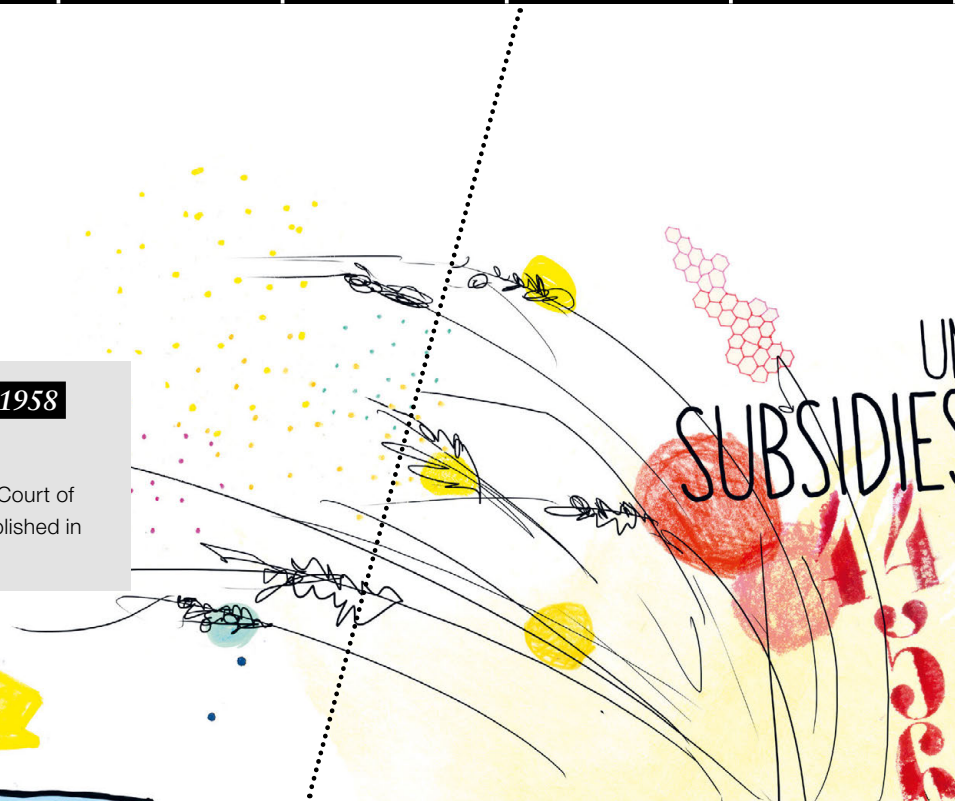
After the outbreak of the Korean War, the United States demand military support from Germany. France is opposed to German rearmament and proposes the integration of European military forces (including a rearmed German military). In 1954, the six founding member states sign a treaty that aims to establish a European Defence Community (EDC). On August 30, the plan fails when the treaty is rejected by the French National Assembly.



7 October 1958

Judiciary

The European Court of Justice is established in Luxembourg.



14 January 1962

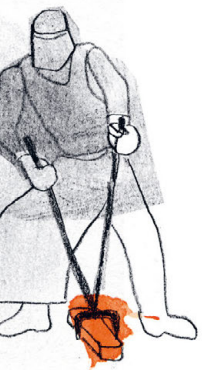
Common Agricultural Policy

A common agricultural market is instituted to secure adequate income levels for farmers, steady food supplies, and appropriate prices for consumers. Guaranteed prices are established for agricultural products. If market prices drop, the European Community agrees to purchase food at pre-set price levels. Tariffs and export subsidies protect European agriculture against competition on the global markets.

25 March 1957

Treaty of Rome

Six founding member states (see: 1951) sign treaties that establish the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC). Economic integration is driven by the idea of a single European market. The signatories agree on a common customs area and on the free flow of goods, people, services and capital within their borders. The European Atomic Energy Community aims to develop a European nuclear industry to meet rising energy demands and to reduce dependency on foreign oil imports.



~~customs~~

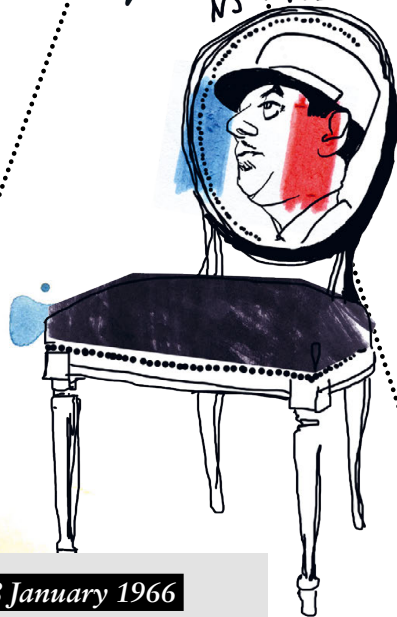
EEC

ECONOMY

ATOM

EURATOM

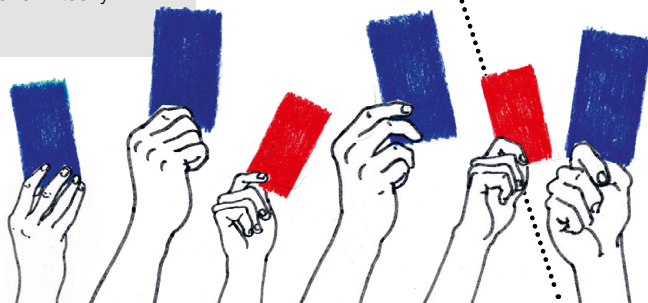
Where is HE?



1 July 1965–28 January 1966

“Empty chair politics”

The French President, Charles de Gaulle, rejects reform proposals to finance the Common Agricultural Policy. France absents itself from all meetings of the Council of Ministers, thus rendering European institutions virtually inoperative.



28/29 January 1966 Luxembourg compromise

The crisis of the EEC – a result of the French “empty chair politics” in the Council of Ministers – ends with the “Luxembourg compromise”. From now on, the Council of Ministers can reach decisions by simple majority vote unless a country submits a veto based on “vital national interests”.

1 July 1968 European Customs Union

The last tariffs within the European Community are abolished (originally planned for December 31, 1969). A common customs code is introduced for the EC borders.

1 July 1967 European Community

The Merger Treaty enters into force on April 8, 1965. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) are combined to form the European Community (EC). All three unions are subsumed under a single Council of Ministers and under the EC Commission.

ECSC
+ EEC
+ EURATOM =



Purit
spirits monopoly act

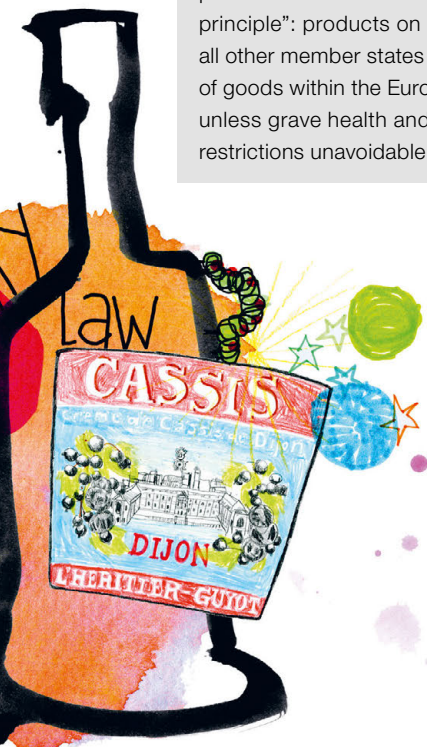
28 February 1975

First Lomé Convention

The EC signs a cooperation agreement with 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific states in Lomé (Togo). It establishes financial support programmes and tariff-free access to European agricultural markets. Development cooperation of the EU is expanded to include 79 ACP states (Cotonou Agreement signed in Benin in 2000 and valid until 2020).

20 February 1979 Cassis-de-Dijon verdict

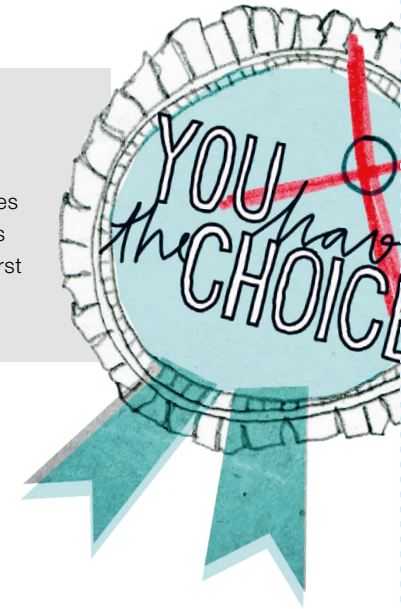
The German grocery chain "Rewe" sues against restrictions that prevent the import of French cassis (a blackcurrant liqueur) from Dijon. The European Court of Justice overturns the import prohibition. The verdict leads to the so-called "Cassis-de-Dijon principle": products on sale in one EU country can also be sold in all other member states without restrictions. The free movement of goods within the European economic area cannot be restricted unless grave health and environmental concerns make such restrictions unavoidable.



7-10 June 1979

First European elections

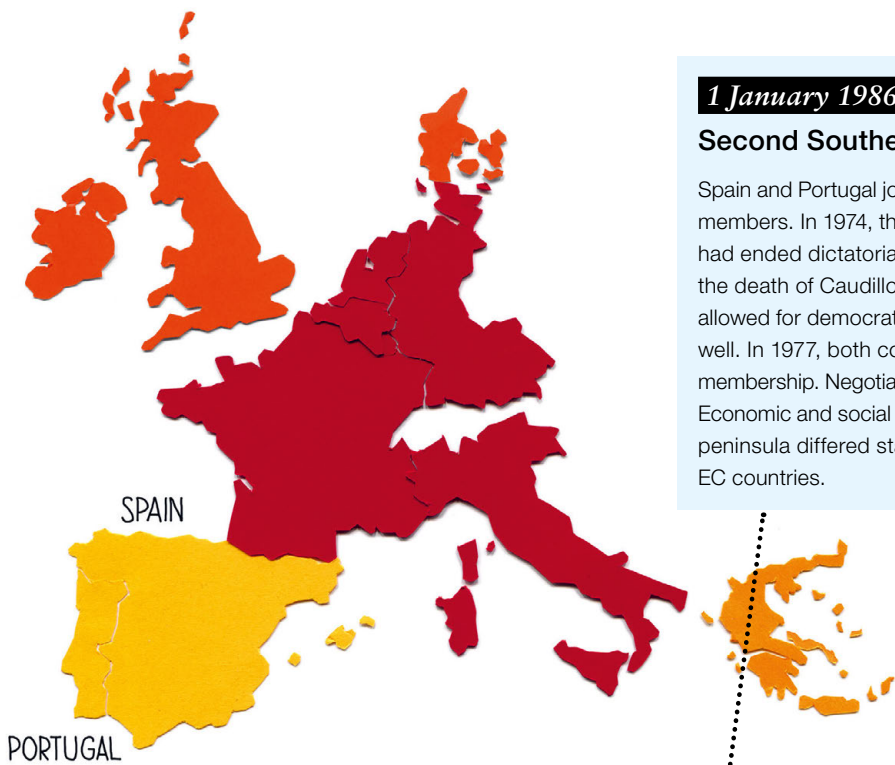
Citizens of the nine EC member states are called on to elect representatives to the European Parliament for the first time. The parliament is the only EU organ elected directly by the people.



13 March 1979 European Monetary System

The European Monetary System (EMS) enters into force. Its aim is to ensure stable exchange rates among EC (with the exception of UK). The EMS also introduces the European Currency Unit (ECU) as the unit of account within the European Community.

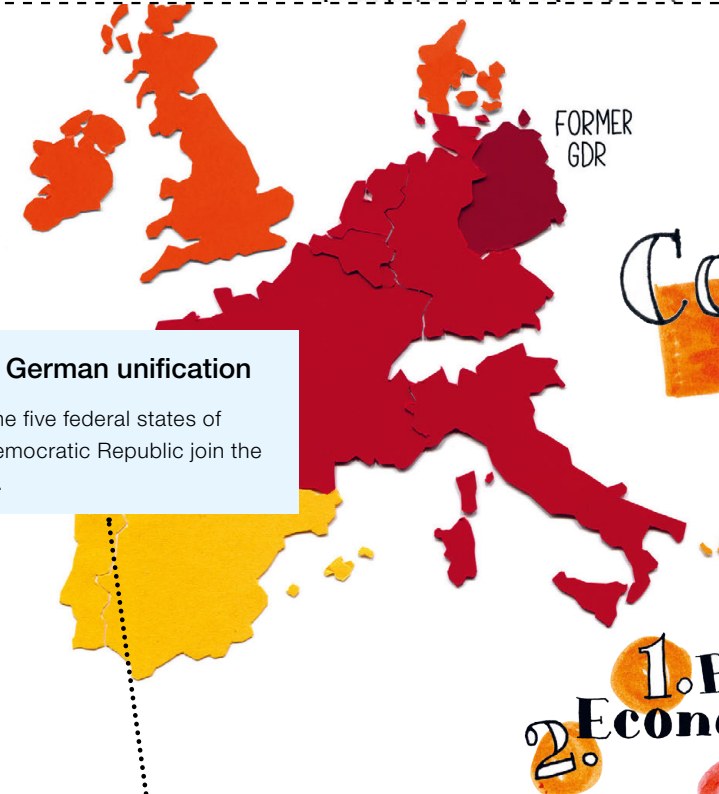




1 January 1986

Second Southern expansion

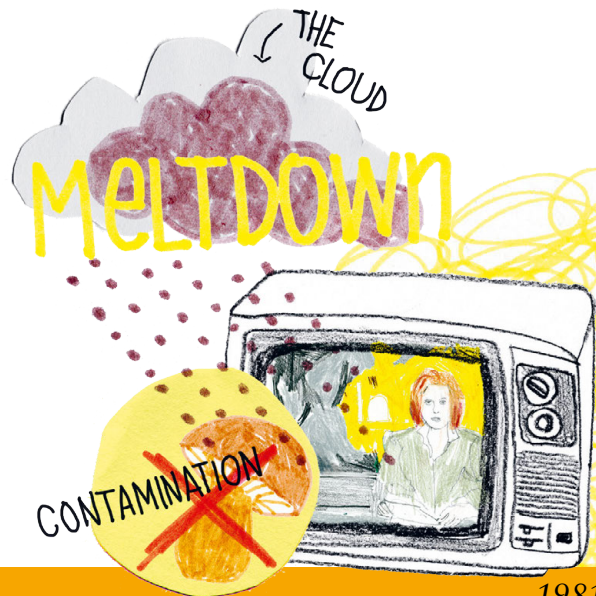
Spain and Portugal join the EC. It now has twelve members. In 1974, the "carnation revolution" had ended dictatorial rule in Portugal. In 1975, the death of Caudillo Francisco Franco had allowed for democratic development in Spain as well. In 1977, both countries requested EC membership. Negotiations were long and difficult: Economic and social conditions on the Iberian peninsula differed starkly from those in "old" EC countries.



3 October 1990 German unification

Germany is unified. The five federal states of the former German Democratic Republic join the European Community.

1. P
2. Econ



26 April 1986

Chernobyl catastrophe

A reactor at the Soviet nuclear plant in Chernobyl explodes. Large parts of Europe are subsequently exposed to higher levels of radiation.

9 November 1989

Fall of the Berlin Wall

The Berlin Wall falls. It was a symbol of the division of Europe.



1981-1994 Twelve member states

1982 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992

Copenhagen

21–22 June 1993 Copenhagen criteria

The European Council agrees on specific membership criteria during a conference in Copenhagen. Membership candidates must demonstrate a stable democratic order, rule of law, and a competitive and market-based economy. They must also accept the full body of existing European law – called “acquis communautaire” – and incorporate it into domestic law.

Politics
omy
Justice

1 January 1995

Northern expansion

Finland, Sweden and Austria join the European Union. The only remaining Western European countries without EU membership are Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and several small enclaves.

17 July 1995 Srebrenica massacre

8,000 men and boys are massacred by the Serbian army near the Bosnian town of Srebrenica. The massacre is widely seen as the most serious war crime in Europe since the end of World War II.

24 March 1999 War in Kosovo

NATO launches air strikes against Serbian troops to protect the Albanian population of the Kosovo region. The military campaign is not sanctioned by a UN mandate.

11 September 2001 9/11

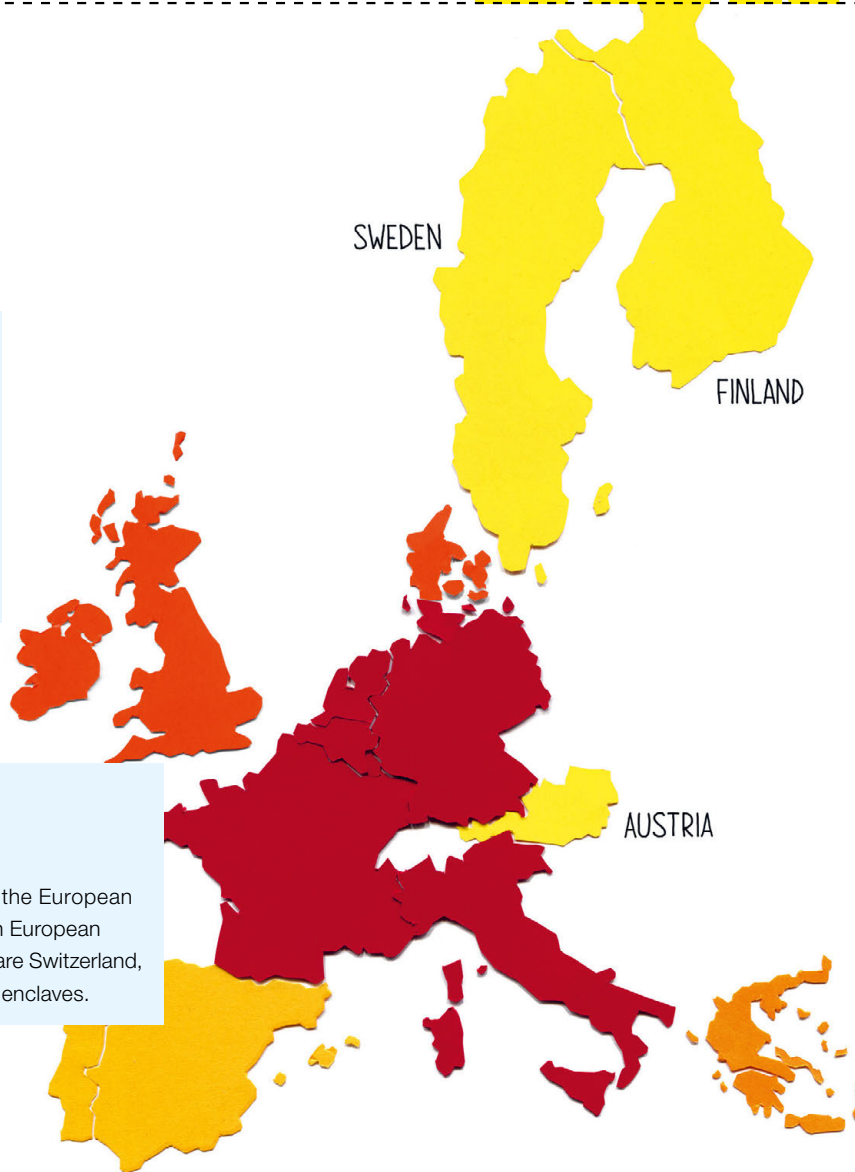
Terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and on the Pentagon in Washington spark international outrage and lead to a wave of support for the United States.

20 March 2003 Iraq war

The (second) Iraq war under the leadership of the United States and Britain divides European allies. The EU countries do not agree on the question of military support for the Iraq war, and thus cannot find a common voice in matters of foreign and security policy.

11 March 2004 Terror attacks in Madrid

Islamist Al Qaeda terrorists from Morocco launch a bomb attack on the Atocha train station in Madrid. 191 people die during the attack and 2,051 are injured.



1995–2004 15 member states

1993

1994

1995

1996

1997

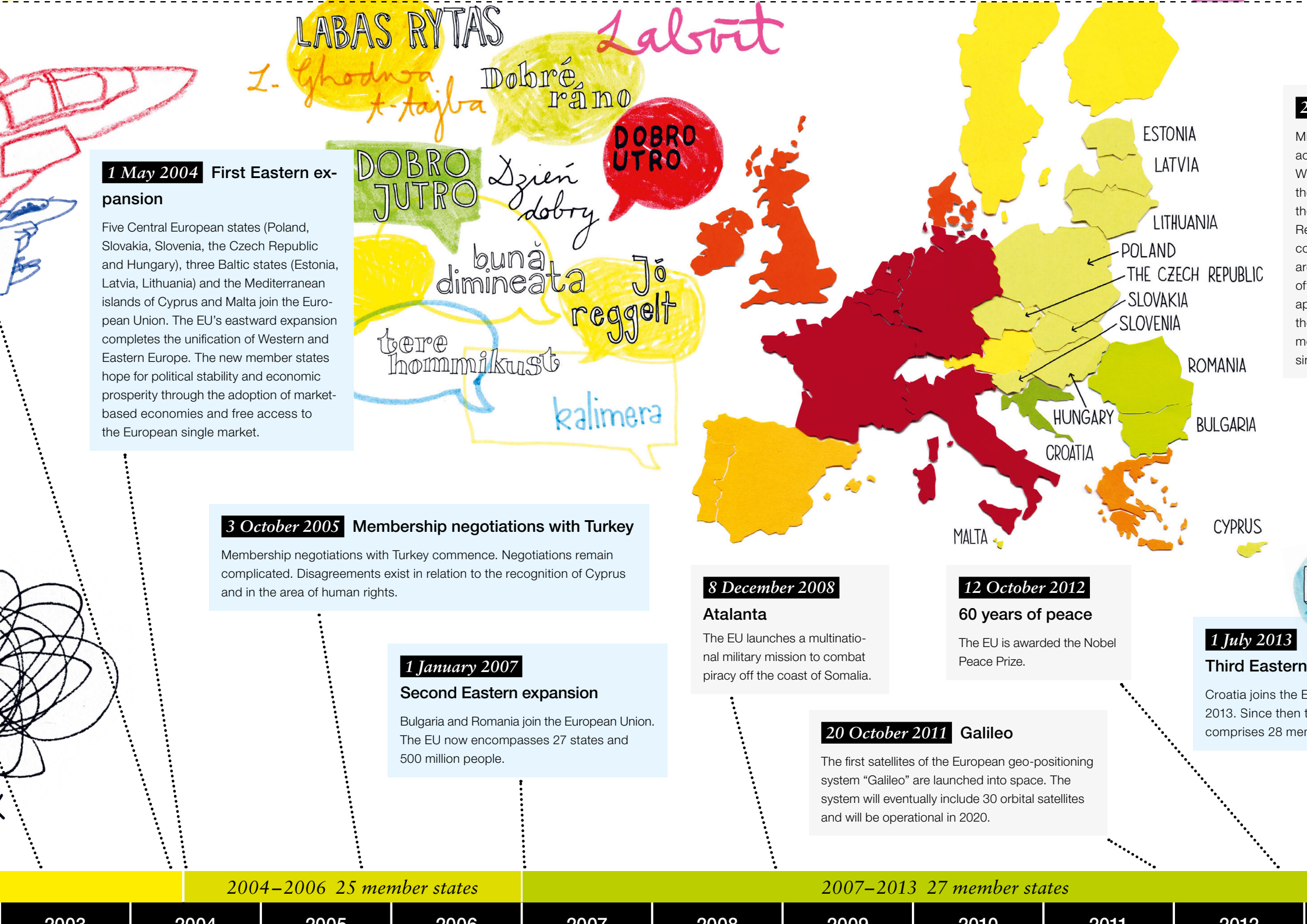
1998

1999

2000

2001

2002



2015 Refugee migration

Millions of people enter Europe, travelling across the Mediterranean Sea or the eastern Balkans. Most of them are fleeing the war in Syria and the terror spread by the "Islamic State". According to European Law ("Dublin III Regulation"), an asylum seeker has to apply for asylum in the first EU country that is entered. But since a number of member states, e.g. Greece, are overburdened by the number of migrants, Dublin III Regulations are sometimes no longer implemented. Roughly one million individuals seek refuge and apply for asylum in Germany in 2015. So far, no agreement could be reached between the EU member states on how to coordinate the allocation. The EU signs an agreement with Turkey on March 18, 2016, aimed at reducing the number of refugees crossing the Turkish border into Europe.



25 May 2018 Common data protection

The deadline expires for implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) signed in 2016. The Regulation aims to establish common standards of data protection throughout the EU and enhance the privacy rights of internet users. Large corporations, such as those from the US, now have to abide by these regulations when providing services within the EU.

23 June 2016 The Brexit referendum

The United Kingdom electorate vote on whether to leave or remain in the EU. This results in a majority of 51.9% in favour of leaving ("Brexit"), in line with Article 50 of the EU treaty. On June 29, 2017, the UK government applies to leave the EU. Membership is due to end after two years. However, this deadline passes with no agreement reached in the UK concerning future relations with the EU. As a result, Brexit is postponed shortly before the deadline is reached.



13 November 2015 Terrorist attacks in Paris

130 individuals are killed and 683 injured during six simultaneous terrorist attacks at several sites in Paris. EU countries assure France of their support in the war on terror in line with CSDP (part of CFSP). Following "Islamic State's" claim of responsibility for the attacks, military operations against the organization are intensified.



BOG!

expansion

EU on July 1,
the EU
member states.

— Legend

Colours:

- light blue = States joining or leaving the EU
- grey = stages of integration of the EC and the EU (common policies, treaties and their content/aims/consequences)
- light grey = additional European institutions or important events

Abbreviations:

- ACP = African, Caribbean and Pacific states
- CAP = Common Agricultural Policy
- CFSP = Common Foreign and Security Policy
- CSDP = Common Security and Defence Policy
- CSCE = Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
- EAEC/Euratom = European Atomic Energy Community
- EC = European Community
- ECB = European Central Bank
- ECJ = European Court of Justice
- ECSC = European Coal and Steel Community
- EDC = European Defence Community
- EEC = European Economic Community
- EFTA = European Free Trade Area
- EMS = European Monetary System
- ESM = European Stability Mechanism
- EU = European Union
- IMF = International Monetary Fund
- NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- PESCO = Permanent Structured Cooperation
- PJCCM = Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters
- SEA = Single European Act
- UN = United Nations
- WEU = Western European Union

since 2013 28 member states

2013

2014

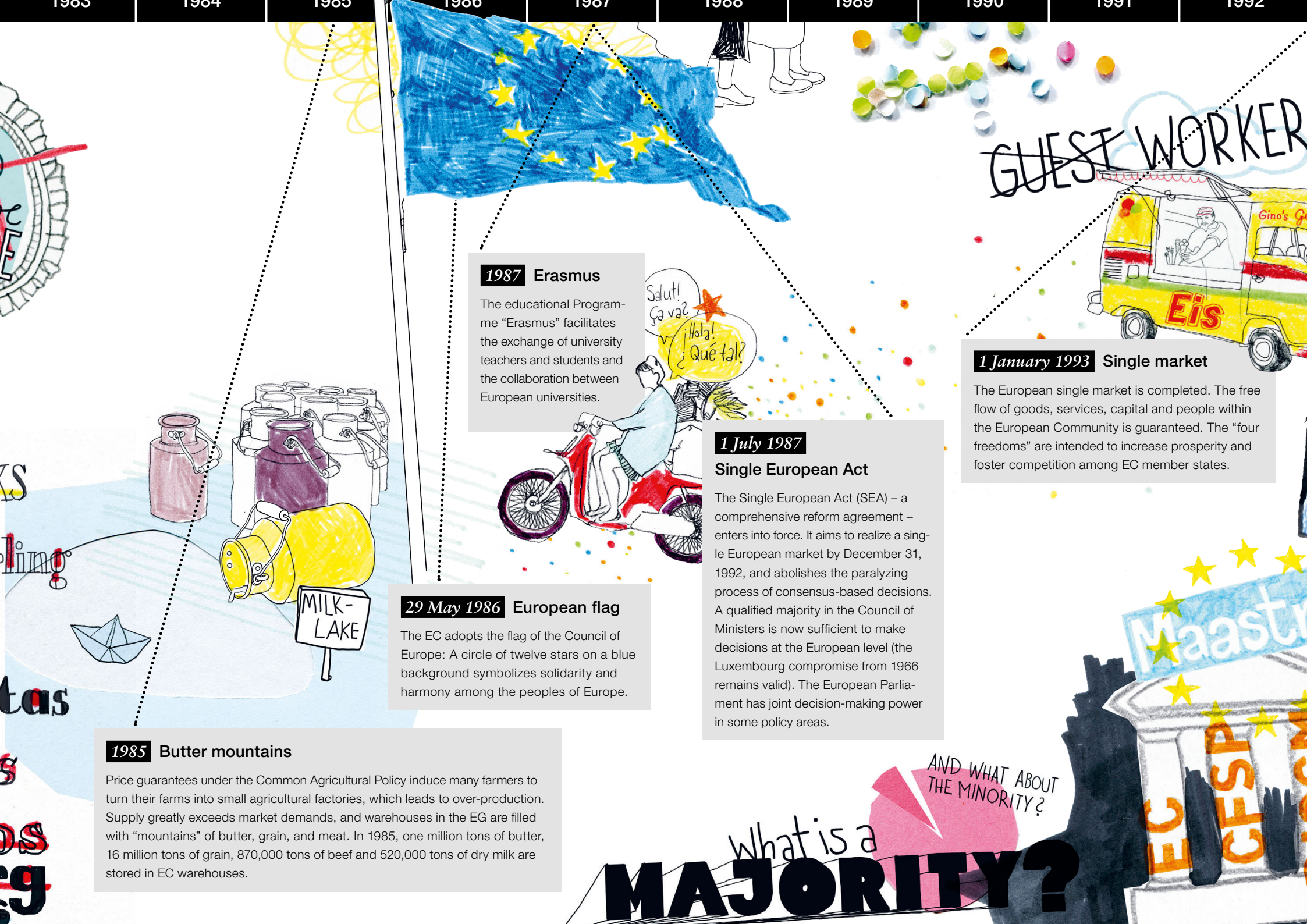
2015

2016

2017

2018

2019



1987 Erasmus

The educational Programme "Erasmus" facilitates the exchange of university teachers and students and the collaboration between European universities.



GUEST WORKER



1 January 1993 Single market

The European single market is completed. The free flow of goods, services, capital and people within the European Community is guaranteed. The "four freedoms" are intended to increase prosperity and foster competition among EC member states.

1 July 1987

Single European Act

The Single European Act (SEA) – a comprehensive reform agreement – enters into force. It aims to realize a single European market by December 31, 1992, and abolishes the paralyzing process of consensus-based decisions. A qualified majority in the Council of Ministers is now sufficient to make decisions at the European level (the Luxembourg compromise from 1966 remains valid). The European Parliament has joint decision-making power in some policy areas.

29 May 1986 European flag

The EC adopts the flag of the Council of Europe: A circle of twelve stars on a blue background symbolizes solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe.

1985 Butter mountains

Price guarantees under the Common Agricultural Policy induce many farmers to turn their farms into small agricultural factories, which leads to over-production. Supply greatly exceeds market demands, and warehouses in the EG are filled with "mountains" of butter, grain, and meat. In 1985, one million tons of butter, 16 million tons of grain, 870,000 tons of beef and 520,000 tons of dry milk are stored in EC warehouses.



What is a
MAJORITY?

AND WHAT ABOUT
THE MINORITY?





26 March 1995 Schengen Agreement

The Schengen Agreement enters into force almost a decade after negotiations concluded on June 14, 1985, in Schengen, Luxembourg. Border controls are abolished between the Benelux countries, Germany, France, Spain and Portugal. Control of the exterior borders of the Schengen area is unified and increased, police cooperation expanded. Today, the Schengen area includes all EU member states (with the exception of the UK and Ireland) and Norway, Iceland and Switzerland.



WE USED TO HAVE
A LONG WAIT AT
THE AUSTRIAN BORDER.
TIME FOR A SANDWICH
AND SOME LEMONADE.

1 November 1993 Maastricht and the EU

The Maastricht Treaty enters into force and establishes the "European Union". It is based on three pillars: the European Community (EC), a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (PJCCM). The most important aspect of the treaty is the decision to institute the Euro as a single currency. The treaty also introduces the idea of European citizenship with rights of residence and the right to vote in municipal and European elections. Additional agreements aim to increase the effectiveness of the EU in foreign policy matters and to intensify cooperation between EU member states.

1 July 1999 Europol

The European Police Office (Europol) becomes operational. Its goal is to coordinate national police authorities to make the fight against international organized crime more effective.

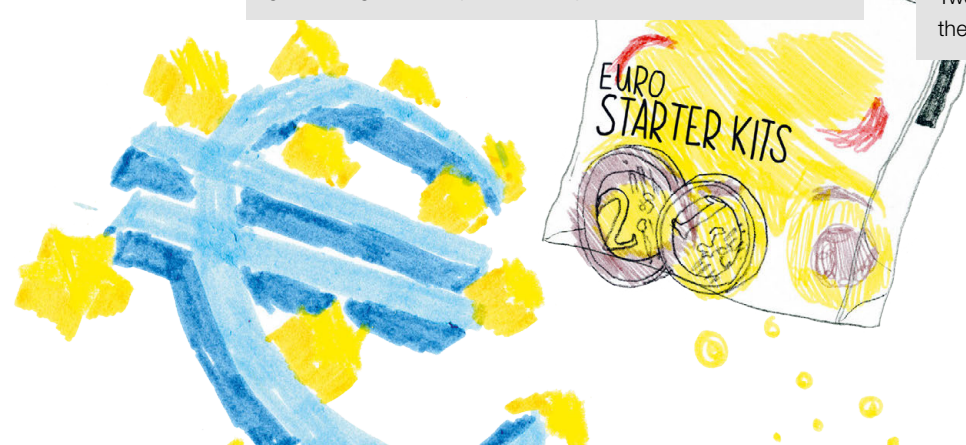


1 May 1999 Amsterdam Treaty

The Amsterdam Treaty enters into force. It forms the basis for institutional reforms of the European Union and paves the way for the addition of new EU members.

1 January 1999 Eurozone

The economic and currency union is officially established. Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Spain agree to introduce the Euro as their official currency. The European Central Bank (ECB) is established in Frankfurt. Its primary goal is to guarantee price stability within the Eurozone.



THE HIGH
REPRESENTATIVE
FOR
FOREIGN
AFFAIRS
AND
SECURITY POLICY



JAVIER
SOLANA
1999-2009

MORE
POWER
TO PARLIAMENT

1 January 2002 Euro cash

The introduction of Euro coins and bank notes completes the Eurozone project. Twelve EU countries now use the Euro as their sole official currency.

The Treaty of Nice enters into force. Its most important provisions: The composition of the European Commission changes, and votes are weighted differently within the Council of Ministers (starting in 2004).

The European Constitution fails

The “Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe” was signed in Rome on October 29, 2004, by the heads of state of the EU. The constitution was drafted with the aim of making the enlarged union more effective, more transparent and more attuned to its citizens. However, popular referenda in France and the Netherlands reject the treaty. The European Council reaches a solution to the “ratification crisis” in June 2007: Many provisions of the proposed constitution are included in a new reform treaty (see: December 1, 2009).

Lehman Brothers collapses

The collapse of the US investment bank Lehman Brothers sends shock waves through the global financial system. The bursting of the American “housing bubble” sparks a global financial and economic crisis. EU members negotiate rescue packages to aid banks that are deemed “too big to fail”.

The Treaty of Lisbon enters into force. After the failure of the European constitutional project, the new treaty is intended to make the European Union more efficient, more democratic and more attuned to its citizens. The European Parliament is strengthened and voting rules are changed. European laws will require a "double majority" (i.e. support from a majority of member states and from the population) as from 2014. A "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy" and a President of the European Council begin their inaugural terms.

ECB bond purchase

The European Central Bank decides to purchase treasury bonds from crisis-stricken countries within the Euro zone to prevent sovereign defaults by keeping interest rates low. In September 2012, ECB President Mario Draghi announces that the ECB is willing to purchase as many treasury bonds as necessary to maintain the Euro.

Greece is in danger of defaulting on its debt. It becomes the first EU country to be given financial assistance (110 billion Euros). Ireland, Portugal and Spain also request assistance from the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). EU finance ministers decide on emergency spending ("rescue funds") for indebted countries to protect the stability of the Euro and prevent a break-up of the Eurozone.

1. "EU FOREIGN MINISTER"
FEDERICA MOGHERINI
(SINCE 2014)

110 billion



23 January 2012 European Stability Mechanism

After passing several rescue packages in 2010, the countries of the Eurozone agree on a permanent European Stability Mechanism (ESM). It guarantees credit at low interest rates for struggling Eurozone countries as long as they satisfy certain austerity measures.

9 December 2011 Fiscal pact

In response to the ongoing debt crisis, EU members (without the UK and the Czech Republic) agree on a fiscal pact. They pledge to balance budgets in 2013 (i.e. budget deficits will be reduced to zero). The European Commission will supervise debt reduction efforts.

15 June 2017

Revocation of "roaming"

Within the EU, additional "roaming" charges are abolished for mobile connections made from abroad to the home country or other EU countries.

11 December 2017 Military cooperation

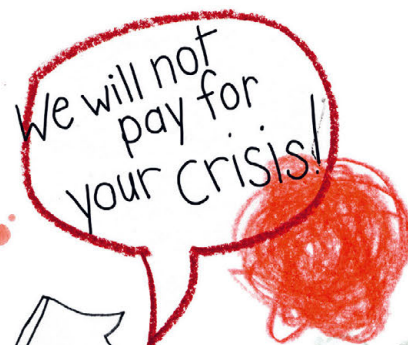
25 EU member states agree on a "Permanent Structured Cooperation" (PESCO) in the area of defence. The aim is to increase military cooperation, implement joint armaments projects and enhance the ability to react to crises.

2017/2018 Legal proceedings against member states

On December 22, 2017, the EU Commission initiates legal proceedings against Poland on the basis that the reforms of the judicial system are in breach of the principles of the rule of law and the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary.

On September 12, 2018, the EU Parliament introduces proceedings against Hungary. The curtailment of freedom of expression, restrictions of non-governmental organizations and weakening of the powers of the judiciary by the government of President Orbán are considered to be a threat to the rule of law.

Depending on the outcome, these countries could face fines or a suspension of EU voting rights.



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Note:

This timeline does not claim to be comprehensive. It is the result of careful research and represents the most important events related to the European Union.

