

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 cooperation 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.

1949

May 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.

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

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| | promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the coordination of social and legal practices in Europe. |
| 1950 | |
| May | 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). |
| October | The Plevin 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. |
| November | The Council of Europe draws up the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and opens it up for signature by member states. |
| 1951 | |
| April | 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. |
| 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 Plevin 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. |

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| 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. |
| 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. |

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1957

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| 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

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| 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. |
| 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

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| 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

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| 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. |
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| 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. |
| 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 | <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> |
| December | <p>The Hague Summit is held to re-launch European integration.</p> <p>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> |

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1970

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| April | 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. |
| June | After agreement on re-launching widening of the Community is reached at the Hague Summit, membership negotiations begin with Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway. |

1972

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| January | Completion of membership negotiations with Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway; Accession Treaties signed. |
| April | A French referendum on the EC enlargement results in a yes vote of 68.28% with a turnout of 60.27%. |
| May | 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. |
| September | Norwegian voters reject EC membership in a referendum with 53.5% of voters opposed to membership. |
| October | 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. 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. |

1973

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| January | The first enlargement of the EC takes place and the EC expands to include Britain, Denmark and Ireland. |
| 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

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| 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. |

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| 1975 | |
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| 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. |
| 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. |

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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.

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, Luxembourg, 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 interinstitutional 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). |
| 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. |

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| 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. |
| 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. |

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| 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. |
| 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. |

Timeline of the European Union

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| 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. |
| 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. |

Timeline of the European Union

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| 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. |
| 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. |

Timeline of the European Union

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| May | <p>On 29 May, French people vote to reject the Constitutional Treaty by 55% to 45% on a 70% turnout in a legally binding referendum.</p> <p>Bulgaria and Romania ratify the CT as part of their EU entry preparations.</p> |
| June | <p>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.</p> |
| July | <p>Luxembourg and Malta ratify the CT.</p> |
| October | <p>EU entry negotiations commenced with Croatia and Turkey.</p> |
| December | <p>The Council of Ministers agree EU candidate status for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.</p> |
| 2006 | |
| May | <p>Estonia ratifies the CT</p> |
| June | <p>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.</p> |
| December | <p>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.</p> |
| 2007 | |
| January | <p>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.</p> <p>Slovenia becomes the 13th country to adopt the Euro and join the Eurozone. It is also agreed that Malta and Cyprus will join the Eurozone on Jan 1st 2008.</p> |
| March | <p>50th 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.</p> |
| April | <p>The European Community becomes the first organisation to accede to the Hague Conference on Private International Law.</p> |
| June | <p>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.</p> |
| July | <p>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.</p> |

Timeline of the European Union

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| 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. |
| December | 27 member states gather in Lisbon to sign the Lisbon Reform Treaty which is the formal start necessary for the ratification process. All 27 member states must ratify the Treaty for it to come into force. |
| 2008 | |
| January | Slovenia, the first of the new member states, takes over the European Presidency |
| February | France ratifies the Lisbon Treaty. |
| March | The European Parliament celebrates 50 years since its first meeting (then as the European Assembly). |
| June | The Irish electorate reject the Lisbon Treaty in the Referendum in Ireland. This is not the first time for Ireland who also rejected the Nice Treaty in June 2001 (perhaps another month might be better?). The ratification process is thus thrown into doubt once again although it does continue in some countries. Thus far, 17 countries have ratified. The UK Parliament ratifies the Lisbon Treaty. |
| July | France takes over as EU President. |
| November | Sweden ratifies the Lisbon Treaty taking the number to 25 Member States with the Czech Republic to vote on it and Ireland having rejected it. |
| December | Following the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty and various discussions both within Ireland and with the French Presidency amongst others, EU ministers decide on a new roadmap for the Treaty at the Brussels summit. It is agreed that, in contrast to the agreement and text of the Treaty, a decision will be taken to allow each EU country to nominate a member of the European Commission with formal Treaty amendment taking place via the next accession Treaty amendments. The Irish government promised to hold a new referendum in exchange for the change and on guarantees of the Irish position on neutrality and abortion. |
| 2009 | |
| January | The Czech Republic assumes presidency of the Council for the first time. Slovakia adopts the Euro and becomes the 16th member of the Eurozone. |
| March | EU leaders meet for a summit in Brussels to discuss the economic crisis, also pledging 50 billion Euros in emergency funds for non-Eurozone members. |
| June | European Parliament elections see centre-right parties making significant gains. |
| July | Sweden assumes presidency of the Council. Iceland applies for EU membership. |
| September | Jose Manuel Barroso re-appointed as President of the European Commission for a second term. |
| October | Ireland ratifies the Lisbon Treaty after a second referendum. EU agrees a conditional deal designed to help fight climate change. |

Timeline of the European Union

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| November | <p>Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, signs the Lisbon Treaty, marking the final step in the treaties ratification.</p> <p>At a meeting of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy is appointed first permanent President of the EU Council and British Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.</p> |
| December | <p>The Lisbon Treaty enters into force.</p> <p>Serbia applies for EU membership.</p> |
| 2010 | |
| January | Spain takes over the Council Presidency. |
| February | The European Parliament votes to approve the 26 members making up the new Commission |
| July | Belgium takes on the 6 month presidency. |
| December | The enhanced co-operation procedure (contained in Arts 226-234 TFEU) is used for the first time to allow international couples living in the EU to decide which law should apply to them in the event of their separation. |
| 2011 | |
| January | <p>Hungary takes over for 6 months as the EU President.</p> <p>Estonia becomes the 17th member of the Eurozone by its adoption of the Euro. Three new European agencies commence operation: the European Banking Authority, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority, and the European Securities and Markets Authority.</p> |
| June | European Council reaches agreement that the accession negotiations for Croatian entry to the EU should be concluded by the end of the month and that Croatia should become the 28th EU member in 2013. |
| December | <p>Accession Treaty agreed by EU with Croatia and subject to ratification by all 27 member states and Croatia membership entry is set for 1st July 2013.</p> <p>European Council on economic stability took place to start the process of agreeing new treaties on economic and fiscal policies.</p> |
| 2012 | |
| January | A Fiscal Treaty was agreed to combat economic difficulties, with the notable exception of the UK and the Czech Republic. |
| February | The Economic Stability Mechanism (ESM) for the eurozone country members was signed. |
| March | The European Council grants candidate status to Serbia and re-elects Herman Van Rompuy as its President |
| October | The European Stability Mechanism (ESM) enters into force. |
| December | The European Union is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2012. The prize recognized the EU's contribution over six decades to the promotion of peace and reconciliation, democracy, and human rights. |

Timeline of the European Union

| 2013 | |
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| January | The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union enters into force. |
| July | Croatia joins the EU as the 28th member state. |
| October | A single supervisory mechanism for the oversight of banks and other credit institutions is adopted, establishing the first 'pillar' of Europe's banking union. |
| November | Georgia and Moldova sign association agreements with the EU. |
| 2014 | |
| January | Latvia becomes the 18th member of the Eurozone as it adopts the Euro as its official currency. Greece takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. |
| February | The crises in Ukraine flares up over Crimea and generally over its relations with the EU and Russia. |
| May | European elections take place across the EU and 751 MEPs are elected with a typically low turnout of 43.09%. |
| June | The EU hosts for the first time the G7 meeting of the world's leading industrialised countries (and not the G8 with Russia which had become the norm). Jean-Claude Juncker, former Luxembourg Prime Minister is nominated as President-designate of the Commission. Albania is granted candidate country status for future EU membership. Association agreements between the EU and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are signed. |
| July | Italy takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. Despite UK opposition, the European Parliament elects Jean-Claude Juncker as the next President of the European Commission. |
| August | Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of Poland, is appointed President of the European Council, and Federica Mogherini, the Italian foreign minister, is appointed EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. |
| September | With a possible consequence for overall EU membership, the electorate in Scotland voted "No" in a referendum on Scottish independence from the United Kingdom. The "No" side wins with 55.3% voting against independence. |
| October | The European Parliament approves the new college of 27 Commissioners, with 423 votes in favour, 209 against and 67 abstentions |
| November | New rules enter into force for voting in the Council of Ministers. In order to be adopted by qualified majority, a new law or other decision must now obtain in addition, a 'double majority' of both Member States and population. |
| December | Donald Tusk, former Prime Minister of Poland, replaces Herman Van Rompuy as the President of the European Council. |

Timeline of the European Union

2015

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| January | Latvia takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. Lithuania becomes the 19th member of the Eurozone as it adopts the Euro as its official currency. Greece elects the anti-austerity Party Syriza into a Coalition Government with the right wing Independent Greeks. |
| March | The European Council agrees to create an energy Union. |
| May | The UK elects a conservative majority Government with a manifesto commitment to hold an in/out Referendum on EU membership before the end of 2017. |

2016

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| January | The Netherlands takes over the 6 month rotating presidency of the EU Council. |
| June | On 23 June, the UK votes to leave the European Union by 52% to 48%. Prime Minister David Cameron resigns. After a short leadership contest, he is replaced as Prime Minister by Theresa May on 13 July. |
| July | Slovakia takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. |
| August | The European Commission reached a decision that Ireland granted undue tax benefits of up to €13 billion to Apple, which is considered to be illegal under EU state aid rules and allowed Apple to pay substantially less tax than other businesses. Ireland was ordered to recover the illegal aid. 27 heads of state or government meet to begin the process of dealing with the UK and the further development of an EU with 27 member countries, following the UK's decision to leave the Union. They agree on the Bratislava Declaration and Roadmap, setting out the objectives for negotiations. |
| October | After some considerable last minute delays, EU and Canadian leaders meet in Brussels and sign the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, also known as 'CETA'. |

2017

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| January | Malta takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. |
| February | The European Parliament votes in favour of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. CETA will enter into force when it is ratified by Canada and by the Member States' parliaments. |
| March | 27 member states of the European Council prepare for the celebration of the 60 th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome and on the 25th March indeed celebrate that anniversary. On the 29th, the UK triggers Article 50 TEU. The UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, notifies the European Council of the United Kingdom's intention to leave the European Union. This starts the UK's withdrawal process under Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. |
| June | Estonia takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. This is one month earlier due to the withdrawal of the UK from Council and European Council meetings. The EU celebrated 30 years of 'Erasmus' exchanges abroad which have so far benefited 9 million students and young persons throughout Europe. |

Timeline of the European Union

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| | <p>Roaming charges for using mobile phones were abolished. Citizens who travel within the EU are able to call, text and connect to the internet on their mobile devices at the same price as they pay at home.</p> <p>Mrs May loses her majority in Parliament in the UK General election and has to rely on the support of Northern Ireland's DUP - led by Arlene Foster to allow Mrs May to stay in power.</p> <p>The first round of Article 50 negotiations between the European Commission and the United Kingdom took place.</p> <p>½ of Crusoe on Mars 13th. The UK Government presents the formally called 'Great Repeal Bill' now officially entitled the European Union (withdrawal) Bill (https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0005/18005.pdf) to Parliament. This does two things essentially. First to repeal the 1972 European Communities Act and on the day of exiting the EU, to give UK legal effect to all existing EU law applicable in the UK on the day before exit.</p> |
| July | <p>On the 13th of July the UK Government presents the formally called 'Great Repeal Bill' now officially entitled the European Union (withdrawal) Bill (https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0005/18005.pdf) to Parliament. This essentially does two things. First to repeal the 1972 European Communities Act and on the day of exiting the EU, to give UK legal effect to all existing EU law applicable in the UK on the day before exit.</p> |
| September | <p>The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada entered provisionally into force and will enter into force fully and definitively when all EU Member States have ratified it.</p> |
| December | <p>The EU and Japan conclude a landmark free trade agreement. The Economic Partnership Agreement will open up the Japanese market of 127 million consumers to key EU agricultural exports and will increase EU export opportunities in a range of other sectors.</p> <p>EU-27 leaders agree that sufficient progress has been achieved on citizens' rights, the dialogue on Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the financial settlement. The report contains though only agreements in principle, with details to be worked out later but they also adopt guidelines to move to the second phase of negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU.</p> |
| 2018 | |
| January | <p>Bulgaria takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU.</p> |
| February | <p>The European Commission adopts a strategy for six partner countries in the Western Balkans to join the European Union, with Serbia and Montenegro as front-runner candidates that could be ready to join by 2025, although the Brexit issue may delay that date.</p> <p>The European Commission publishes the draft Withdrawal Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom.</p> |
| March | <p>The EU 27 leaders approved of the agreement reached by the negotiators on parts of the legal text of the Withdrawal Agreement, and adopted guidelines on the framework for a future relationship with the UK after Brexit.</p> <p>http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/33458/23-euco-art50-guidelines.pdf</p> |

Timeline of the European Union

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| April | <p>The European Court of Justice ruled https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2018-04/cp180049en.pdf that a 'wildcat strike' by flight staff following the surprise announcement by TUIfly of a restructuring did not constitute an 'extraordinary circumstance' that releases the airline from its obligation to pay compensation in the event of cancellation or long delay of flight.</p> <p>The European Union and Mexico reach a deal on a new trade agreement.</p> |
| May | <p>A customs agreement between the EU and New Zealand was agreed and entered into force. The agreement includes provisions which will enable the partners to prevent, investigate and combat breaches of customs rules. It has consequences for the UK, in that the UK after Brexit will have to negotiate its own individual Customs agreement with NZ and if under WTO rules, this will be subject to those restrictive rules.</p> <p>The EU introduced new rules on privacy, designed to ensure that personal information of individuals is protected no matter where it is sent, processed or stored, also outside the EU. Post Brexit, unless the UK adopts those or enacts its own, these rules will not apply in favour of UK citizens. The UK will either have to adopt those or create new similar ones for the UK and keep them line with any changes to them by the EU.</p> |
| June | <p>The EU Council of Ministers adopted a revision of EU aviation safety legislation, which includes EU-wide rules for civil drones of all sizes, to respect principles to ensure safety, security, privacy, data protection and environmental protection. Post Brexit, unless the UK adopts those or enacts its own, these rules will not apply in favour of UK citizens. The UK will either have to adopt those or create new similar ones for the UK and keep them line with any changes to them by the EU.</p> |
| August | <p>Austria takes over the Presidency of the Council of the EU.</p> <p>The rules adopted by the EU to ensure better protection for holidaymakers entered into force. They include stronger rights for consumers booking traditional package holidays and now rules also protect those who book other forms of combined travel. Post Brexit, unless the UK adopts those or enacts its own, these rules will not apply in favour of UK citizens. The UK will either have to adopt those or create new similar ones for the UK and keep them line with any changes to them by the EU.</p> <p>The EU and Japan signed a comprehensive trade deal, the most wide-reaching negotiated by the EU. It includes a strategic partnership agreement for enhanced cooperation across a range of areas, which was subsequently ratified in December 2018. The agreement has consequences for the UK, in that the UK after Brexit will have to negotiate its own individual Customs agreement with Japan and if under WTO rules, this will be subject to those restrictive rules.</p> <p>The EU and Japan also concluded an agreement which recognises each other's data protection systems as being 'equivalent' (the principle of equivalence is a well known concept in EU law).</p> <p>Within the EU, Greece concluded a stability support programme to consolidate and strengthen its place within the EU euro zone. The programme tackles the longstanding and structural issues in Greece that contributed its an economic crisis.</p> |
| September | <p>EU-27 leaders met to discuss migration and internal security and to review progress in the talks on the UK's withdrawal and the way forward.</p> |

Timeline of the European Union

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| | <p>EU rules which were adopted on the cross-border use of electronic identification such as ID cards, driving licences and bankcards came into force. The rules allow EU citizens and businesses to access online services even if they are from a different Member State. Post Brexit, unless the UK adopts those or enacts its own, these rules will not apply in favour of UK citizens. The UK will either have to adopt those or create new similar ones for the UK and keep them line with any changes to them by the EU.</p> |
| October | <p>The EU-27 leaders in the European Council meeting in Brussels, reviewed the state of negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU, expressing their view that, despite intensive negotiations, not enough progress had been achieved.</p> <p>The EU and Singapore signed three agreements of economic significance, increasing their political, trade, and investment relations. This has consequences for the UK, in that the UK after Brexit will have to negotiate its own individual agreements with Singapore and if under WTO rules, these will subject to those restrictive rules.</p> |
| November | <p>The EU-27 European Council leaders meeting in Brussels, confirmed the Brexit withdrawal agreement between the EU and the United Kingdom. They also approved an accompanying political declaration on future EU-UK relations.</p> <p>At the time of writing (March 2019, 14 days before Brexit), this had yet to obtain the agreement of the UK Parliament.</p> |
| December | <p>New EU rules provide that European consumers can shop online in the EU without being blocked or re-routed. Post Brexit, unless the UK adopts those or enacts its own, these rules will not apply in favour of UK citizens. The UK will either have to adopt those or create new similar ones for the UK and keep them line with any changes to them by the EU.</p> |
| 2019 | |
| | <p>In this year various anniversaries took place: 20 years of the €. 25 years of the single market and European Economic Area (EEA). 15 years from the 2005 enlargement. 10 years of the Lisbon Treaty. 10 years of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.</p> |
| January | <p>Romania takes over the EU Council Presidency.</p> |
| February | <p>A trade agreement between the EU and Japan entered into force. Businesses and consumers across Europe and in Japan become part of the largest open trade zone in the world.</p> <p>The formal notification by the Republic of North Macedonia of its new name, was transmitted to the EU. The newly-named country has been a candidate country for EU membership since December 2005.</p> |
| April | <p>The European Commission launched a debate to strengthen the rule of law in the EU setting out possible avenues for future action. The rule of law, which ensures that all members of a society – governments included – are equally subject to the law, under the control of independent courts, is one of the common values on which the European Union is founded. With the hindsight of the events unfolding in September 2020 this appears prescient.</p> |

Timeline of the European Union

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| | EU27 leaders and the UK agree to an extension to the Article 50 period to allow for the ratification of the withdrawal agreement until the 31st October 2019. |
| May | <p>Mobile Roaming charges are now strictly regulated with clear maximum tariffs.</p> <p>The EP election saw the highest turnout in 20 years.</p> |
| June | The European Union and the South American bloc Mercosur, (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), reach an agreement on trade after 20 years of negotiations as a part of a wider Association Agreement between the two regions. |
| July | A new Commission is elected with Ursula von der Leyen as the new Commission President. |
| October | <p>The European Council meeting in Brussels discussed the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. The EU-27 leaders endorsed the revised Withdrawal Agreement and approved the revised Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and the UK.</p> <p>EU27 leaders and the UK agreed to delay Brexit again and extend the Article 50 period until 31 January 2020. The UK's withdrawal could take place earlier, on 1 December 2019 or 1 January 2020, if the withdrawal agreement were ratified by both sides in time.</p> |
| November | <p>The EU-Singapore trade agreement entered into force.</p> <p>The European Parliament approved the new Commission of 26 Commissioners, as presented by President-elect Ursula von der Leyen, with 461 votes in favour, 157 against and 89 abstentions.</p> |
| December | <p>The new Commission takes office for 5 years.</p> <p>Charles Michel, former Prime Minister of Belgium, replaced Donald Tusk as the President of the European Council.</p> <p>The UK's general election was won convincingly by Boris Johnson's Conservatives with an 80-seat majority, paving the way for the passing of the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill.</p> |
| 2020 | |
| January | <p>Croatia became, for the first time, the president of the Council of Ministers for the first six months of 2020.</p> <p>The UK's EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill was enacted following Royal Assent.</p> <p>The Withdrawal Agreement and Protocol on Northern Ireland were ratified by both the EU and the UK as instruments of International Law.</p> <p>The European Parliament approved the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement by 621 votes in favour, 49 against and 13 abstentions.</p> <p>On 31st January, the UK exited the EU and entered into a transition period until the 31st December 2020.</p> |
| February | Future partnership negotiations between the EU and the UK were formally opened. |
| March | The worsening impact of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear with economies and society across the world shutting down in various states of lockdown. The attention and activities of all the EU institutions and member states were increasingly focused on measures to tackle the virus and its widespread and multifaceted consequences. |

Timeline of the European Union

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| | <p>The EU entered into an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Kazakhstan following ratification by all EU Member States and the European Parliament.</p> |
| April | <p>Amongst further measures to combat the worsening effects of the Covid pandemic, the Council adopted an amended EU budget, making an additional €3.1 billion available. The member states and other institutions also announced various aid packages and initiatives to ameliorate the worse effects of the pandemic.</p> <p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/04/22/covid-19-more-flexibility-for-deploying-eu-budget-money/</p> <p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43384/roadmap-for-recovery-final-21-04-2020.pdf</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_740</p> |
| | <p>The EU and Mexico concluded a new trade agreement.</p> |
| May | <p>Covid-19 continued to dominate EU activities and actions.</p> |
| July | <p>Germany assumed the six-month rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU under the slogan 'Together for Europe's Recovery'.</p> <p>24 new European Universities were added to the existing 17 that were formed in 2019. In total there were now 41 European Universities which together involve more than 280 institutions in Europe.</p> <p>The European Court of Justice annulled the 2016 Commission Decision that Ireland granted illegal State aid to Apple by providing tax breaks.</p> <p>https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2020-07/cp200090en.pdf</p> <p>The Council appointed the European prosecutors to the European Public Prosecutor's Office, expected to operate by the end of 2020.</p> <p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/07/27/eu-public-prosecutor-s-office-epo-council-appoints-european-prosecutors/</p> |
| August | <p>The comprehensive EU-Vietnam trade agreement entered into force, amongst other measures, ultimately scrapping duties on 99% of all goods traded between the two sides.</p> <p>The EU removed duty-free access to the EU market by Cambodia as a result of human rights concerns.</p> |
| September | <p>The UK published an Internal Market Bill which will permit the UK to derogate from some of its commitments agreed in the International Treaties with the EU (the Withdrawal Agreement and Protocol on Northern Ireland). This is later amended to take out the most offending clauses.</p> <p>In a referendum in Switzerland, voters overwhelmingly (61.7%) rejected a proposal to end an agreement with the EU on the free movement of people.</p> |
| October | <p>Taking the number of female Commissioners to a record 13, the Council appointed Mairead McGuinness as Ireland's replacement EU Commissioner.</p> |

Timeline of the European Union

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| November | <p>The European Commission made proposals to build a European Health Union to strengthen the EU's health security framework and to reinforce the crisis preparedness and response role of key EU agencies.</p> <p>The EU in space. The Copernicus Earth Observation programme launched Sentinel 6, a new satellite, as the first satellite to monitor sea levels from space as a part of information-gathering to help scientists track and prepare for the impact of climate change.</p> <p>The European Commission presented an EU strategy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) equality. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2068</p> <p>Maltese MEP Roberta Metsola was elected First Vice-President of the European Parliament.</p> <p>An agreement between the EU and China for mutual protection of geographical indications was given final approval by the Council. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/11/23/eu-china-council-gives-final-green-light-to-the-agreement-on-geographical-indications/</p> <p>The European Commission fined the pharmaceutical companies Teva and Cephalon €60.5 million for breaching EU competition law rules by agreeing to delay the market entry of a cheaper generic version of Cephalon's drug for sleep disorders, modafinil, after Cephalon's main patents had expired.</p> |
| December | <p>The first Covid-19 vaccines in the EU were rolled out in late December.</p> <p>The EU and the UK agreed a comprehensive Trade and Cooperation Agreement, running to over 1,200 pages with Annexes.</p> |
| 2021 | |
| January | <p>The UK completed the transition period to 31st December 2020 and is now, after 47 years membership, a third-party country in relation to the EU. Of importance to Higher Education institutions, staff, and most importantly students, is that they are all now excluded from the Erasmus student and educational exchanges.</p> <p>Portugal takes over the 6-month Council Presidency.</p> <p>As in 2020, Coronavirus has dominated EU events through to June when an EU Digital COVID Certificate was launched for seven countries and is set to be available in all 27 Member States as from 1st July. The technical system allows for the verification of Covid-19 certificates in a secure and privacy-friendly way to assure safety to travel. https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/timeline-eu-action_en https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/safe-covid-19-vaccines-europeans/eu-digital-covid-certificate_en</p> |
| June | <p>The 6-month grace period on border and customs check and formalities is due to end.</p> |