History of european union

1945 -1959A peaceful Europe ??“ The Beginnings of CooperationThe European Union is set up with the aim of ending the frequent and bloody wars between neighbours, which culminated in the Second World War.

As of 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community begins to unite European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace. The six founders are Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The 1950s are dominated by a cold war between east and west. Protests in Hungary against the Communist regime are put down by Soviet tanks in 1956; while the following year, 1957, the Soviet Union takes the lead in the space race, when it launches the first man-made space satellite, Sputnik 1. Also in 1957, the Treaty of Rome creates the European Economic Community (EEC), or ??? Common Market??™. World War II from 1939 to 1945 saw a human and economic cost which hit Europe hardest. It demonstrated the horrors of war and also of extremism, through the holocaust, for example. Once again, there was a desire to ensure it could never happen again, particularly with the war giving the world nuclear weapons.

The countries of Western Europe failed to maintain their Great power status leaving two rival ideologically opposed superpowers. To ensure Germany could never threaten the peace again, its heavy industry was partly dismantled (See: Industrial plans for Germany) and its main coal-producing regions were detached (Saarland, Silesia), or put under international control (Ruhr area). With statements such as Winston Churchills 1946 call for a “ United States of Europe” becoming louder, in 1949 the Council of Europe was established as the first pan-European organisation. In the year following, on

9 May 1950, the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed a community to integrate the coal and steel industries of Europe – these being the two elements necessary to make weapons of warOn the basis of that speech, France, Italy, the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg) together with West Germany signed the Treaty of Paris (1951) creating the European Coal and Steel Community the following year; this took over the role of the International Authority for the Ruhr and lifted some restrictions on German industrial productivity. It gave birth to the first institutions, such as the High Authority (now the European Commission) and the Common Assembly (now the European Parliament). The first presidents of those institutions were Jean Monnet and Paul-Henri Spaak respectively.

After failed attempts at creating defence (European Defence Community) and political communities (European Political Community), leaders met at the Messina Conference and established the Spaak Committee which produced the Spaak report. The report was accepted at the Venice Conference (29 and 30 May 1956) where the decision was taken to organize a Intergovernmental Conference. The Intergovernmental Conference on the Common Market and Euratom focused on economic unity, leading to the Treaties of Rome being signed in 1957 which established the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) among the members. Brief History of European Integration (1945-1960) 1960 ??“ 1969The ??? Swinging Sixties??™ ??“ a Period of Economic GrowthThe EU starts its ??? common agricultural policy??™ giving the countries joint control over food production. Farmers are paid the same price for their produce. The EU grows enough food for its needs and farmers earn well. The unwanted side-effect is overproduction with mountains of surplus produce.

Since the 1990s, priorities have been to cut surpluses and raise food quality. The EU signs its first big international agreement ??” a deal to help 18 former colonies in Africa. By 2005, it has a special partnership with 78 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions.

The EU is the world??™s biggest provider of development assistance to poorer countries. Its aid is linked to respect for human rights by recipients. Brief History of European Integration(1960-1969) The two new communities were created separately from ECSC, although they shared the same courts and the Common Assembly. The executives of the new communities were called Commissions, as opposed to the “ High Authority”. The EEC was headed by Walter Hallstein (Hallstein Commission) and Euratom was headed by Louis Armand (Armand Commission).

Euratom would integrate sectors in nuclear energy while the EEC would develop a customs union between members. Throughout the 1960s tensions began to show with France seeking to limit supranational power and rejecting the membership of the United Kingdom. However, in 1965 an agreement was reached to merge the three communities under a single set of institutions, and hence the Merger Treaty was signed in Brussels and came into force on 1 July 1967 creating the European Communities. Jean Rey presided over the first merged Commission (Rey Commission). 1970 ??“ 1979A growing Community ??“ The First EnlargementDenmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom join the European Union on 1 January 1973, raising the number of member states to nine. The short, yet brutal, Arab-Israeli war of October 1973 result in an energy crisis and economic problems in Europe. The last right-wing dictatorships in Europe come to an end with the overthrow of the Salazar regime in Portugal in 1974 and the death of General Franco of Spain in 1975.

The EU regional policy starts to transfer huge sums to create jobs and infrastructure in poorer areas. The European Parliament increases its influence in EU affairs and in 1979 all citizens can, for the first time, elect their members directly. 1979: The road to the Euro begins. The European Monetary System (EMS) is introduced on the initiative of the Commission President Roy Jenkins setting Europe on the road towards the euro. The EMS is made up of the European Currency Unit (Ecu) and the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). The Ecu – originally a unit for the communitys internal budget – takes on some of the characteristics of a real currency and is used, for example, in travellers cheques and bank deposits.

It is also the denomination for the ERM – a system which gives national currencies a central exchange rate against the Ecu. Each currency can fluctuate above and below this rate within certain boundaries. All the communitys members apart from the UK join the ERM at this time.

In this year, Europeans vote in the first direct elections to the European Parliament. The 1979 European elections were parliamentary elections held across all then-9 European Community member states. They were the first European elections to be held, allowing citizens to elect 410 MEPs to the European Parliament, and also the first international election in history.

Seats in the Parliament had been allocated to the states according to population, and in some cases were divided into constituencies, but members sat according to political groups. In July, the 410 members were elected by universal suffrage.

At the time there were no rules on the system of election to be used. The United Kingdom used a plurality voting system for multiple small constituencies in England, Wales and Scotland but the other member states used proportional representation for fewer larger constituencies (usually the member state itself as a single constituency), albeit with different methods of seat allocation. The electorate took little interest but average voter turnout was 63%.

The lowest turn out was in the United Kingdom with 32. 2%: all others were above 50% apart from Denmark. Aside from Belgium and Luxembourg, where voting is compulsory, the highest turnout was in Italy with 84. 9%.

Brief History of European Integration (1970-1979) 1980-1989The changing face of Europe – the fall of the Berlin WallThe Polish trade union, Solidarnosc, and its leader Lech Walesa, become household names across Europe and the world following the Gdansk shipyard strikes in the summer of 1980. In 1981, Greece becomes the 10th member of the EU and Spain and Portugal follow five years later. In 1987 the Single European Act is signed. This is a treaty which provides the basis for a vast six-year programme aimed at sorting out the problems with the free-flow of trade across EU borders and thus creates the ??? Single Market??™. There is major political upheaval when, on 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall is pulled down and the border between East and West Germany is opened for the first time in 28 years, this leads to the reunification of Germany when both East and West Germany are united in October 1990. On Januart1, 1981 the European Community whixh consisted of nine countries (West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, The United Kingdom, Ireland and Danemark) was enlarged to ten members with the accession of Greece. The so-called second enlargement of the EC from nine to twelve countries is tentatively Scheduled to be completed in 1986 with the accession Portugal and Spain.

This second enlargement of the EC will result in a customs union with a larger population than the United States, totla exports higher than of the United States and a combined GNP also higher than that of the U. S. The formation and subsequent enlargements of the EC have always had the support of the U. S for both political and economic reasons. The second enlargement has the potential to further this goal if it produces faster economic growth in the region and reinforces democracy in Greece, Portugal and Spain. Membership of the EU reaches double figures when Greece joins. It has been eligible to join since its military regime was overthrown and democracy restored in 1974. Computers and automation are changing the way we live and work.

To stay in the forefront of innovation, the EU adopts the ??? Esprit??™ programme in 1984 as the first of many research and development programmes it has since funded. 1 January 1986 Spain and Portugal enter the EU, bringing membership to 12. 17 February 1986 Although customs duties disappeared in 1968, trade is not flowing freely across EU borders. The main obstacles are differences in national regulations. The Single

European Act of 1986 launches a vast six-year programme to sort these out. The Act also gives the European Parliament more say and strengthens EU powers in environmental protection. 15 June 1987 The EU launches the ??? Erasmus??™ programme to fund university students wishing to study for up to a year in another European country.

More than 2 million young people have benefited from this and similar EU schemes. EC citizens got their first European passports, the European flag is raised above the Commissions Brussels headquarters to the tune of Europes common anthem. The Single European Act, which modifies the Treaty of Rome is signed and comes into force the following year. It sets up a framework for the Single European Market by increasing the Commissions powers and introducing qualified majority voting for a number of issues.

The Single European Act, signed in Luxembourg and The Hague and came into force on 1 July 1987, was the first modification of the fundational treaties of the European Communities, that is to say, the Treaty of Paris in 1951 and the Treaties of Rome in 1957. Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, summarised the main objectives of the Single European Act in the following way: “ The Single Act means, in a few words, the commitment of implementing simultaneously the great market without frontiers, more economic and social cohesion, an European research and technology policy, the strengthening of the European Monetary System, the beginning of an European social area and significant actions in environment” These are the main changes that the Single European Act introduced : In the institutional field, it ratifies the European Council, that is to say, the periodical meeting of Head of State and Government, as the organism where major political negotiations take place among the member States and great strategic decisions are taken. The competences of the European Parliament were lightly reinforced. The main compromise agreed was to adopt measures guided to the progressive establishment of a common market over a period that would conclude on 31 December1992. This would mean an area without obstacles to free movement of goods, people, services and capitals. This ambitious goal, summed up in 282 detailed measures, was broadly reached in the foreseen term.

The common market became a reality. Different procedures were passed to coordinate the monetary policy of the member States, paving the way toward the objective of economic and monetary union. The Single Act included diverse initiatives to promote integration in the spheres of social rights (health and the workers security), research and technology, and environment. To achieve the objective of a greater economic and social cohesion among the diverse countries and regions of the Community, reform and financial support to the denominated Structural Funds, European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) was settled.

The road toward the Treaty of the European Union (1986-1992)The Single European Act entailed an important step forward in the integration process. The president of the Commission, Jacques Delors, was the main figure. This French socialist, not only promoted the economic and monetary union as a key element in the integration process, but tried to balance the advancements on free trade, that benefited managers directly, by proposing the passing of a Social Charter that would guarantee some social minimum standards to every European worker. The whole policy of Delors was against the stance of the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The conservative leader had played, alongside US President Ronald Reagan, a leading role in what had been denominated the neoliberal revolution: shrinking State intervention in economy and in social welfare, deregulation of whole economic areas, decreasing of worker unions influence, reduction of taxes… From the first half of the eighties, the Iron Lady had also claimed an out-and-out policy against any advancement in European integration, striving to reduce the British contribution to the EEC budget.

In a celebrated speech, pronounced at the College of Europe in Bruges (Belgium) on 20 September 1988, Margaret Thatcher summed up its eurosceptic view. The French politician had the advantage of being in that moment an observer of one of the most paramount event in the 20th: the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe -the old peoples democracies- whose symbol was the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. The collapse of communism peaked in 1991 with the Soviet Union break-up. That same year the disintegration of Yugoslavia brought the war again to our continent, after a long peace period from 1945. The first direct consequence caused by the collapse of communism in the EEC was the reunification of Germany in October 1990.

Henceforth, the German Federal Republic, with 80 million inhabitants and 30% of the GNP of the EEC, became a State that incontestably overpowered France and Great Britain in economic might. The power void created in Central and Eastern Europe with the collapse of communism and the break-up of the USSR, brought about a change in the political position of the EEC in our continent. It became an organisation that guaranteed stability amid an unstable Europe. In fact, the new democracies emerged from the communism collapse rushed to apply for beginning accession negociations with the Community. A last feature that we should keep in mind is the financial and monetary uncertainty that characterised that period. The Stock Exchange crash in 1987 and the problems of the European Monetary System that arose violently in 1992 -the Sterling Pound and the Italian Lira had to leave the EMS, and the Spanish Peseta and the Portuguese Escudo were forced to devaluation-, were major factors that impelled the European political leaders to take a decisive step in the march toward the European union.

All these elements underlie the great step ahead that the Treaty of the European Union signifies. In 1989, at Delors request, an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) was called to agree the definitive establishment of the monetary and economic union In 1990, another IGC was called to study the constitution of a political union. After almost three years of debate, in many cases confined to the high political spheres and without the transparency that the European public demanded, finally the European Council held in Maastricht on 9-10 December 1991, approved the Treaty of the European Union, popularly known as Treaty of Maastricht.

The Treaty was signed and came into force on 7 February 1992. The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) (The Treaty of the European Union) The Treaty of the European Union (TEU), also known as Treaty of Maastricht for having been signed in that Dutch town, constitutes a turning point in the European integration process. By Modifying the previous treaties -Paris, Rome and

Single European Act-, the initial economic objective of the Community, building a common market, was outstripped and, for the first time, a distinctive vocation of political union was claimed. The Treaty of Maastricht changed the official denomination of the EEC. Henceforth, it will be known as European Union. The term Union is used from the very beginning of the Treaty to clearly convey the advancement in a historical project.

This way, the article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union affirms: " This Treaty marks a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe…" The Treaty will have a structure based on three pillars, according to the artificial parlance created by those who devised and edited it. The metaphor used refers to a TEU made up as an Greek temple sustained by three pillars: the first pillar, the central one, alludes to the Community dimension and comprises the arrangements set out in the EC, ECSC and Euratom Treaties, i. e. Union citizenship, Community policies, Economic and Monetary Union, etc. the new pillars, the lateral ones, are not based on supranational competences as the previous one, but in the cooperation among the governments: the second pillar is the Common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and the third one refers to Police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

Which is the great difference between the so called community pillar and the new ones, based on intergovernmental cooperation Basically it has to do with the procedure of taking decisions and with the competences of the community institutions. Meanwhile in the community pillar decisions passed on a majority will be more and more a general rule, and the role of community institutions is essential; in the so called intergovernmental cooperation pillars decisions must be taken take by common consent and the Commission, the European Parliament or the Court of Justice have scarcely competences. With regard to the first pillar, the community one, the TEU introduces important changes: The institution of a Citizenship of the Union. The great step ahead: the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The introduction of an European currency, the Euro, was decided. It would take place following a three phase scheme: From 1990 to 31 December 1993.

Its objective would be a completely free circulation of capitals. From 1 January 1994 to 1 January 1999. The member countries must coordinate their economic policies in order to achieve some objectives, fixed quantitatively and known as convergence criteria: reduction of inflation and interest rates, control of government deficit and debt and respect of normal fluctuation margins provided for by the exchange-rate mechanism on the European Monetary system. The countries that reached those objectives could pass on to the third phase. During this phase, in the European Council held in December 1995 in Madrid, a definitive name was given to the new European unique currency, the euro.

From 1 January 1999 to 1 January 2002. Establishment of a European Central Bank (ECB), fixing of exchange rates and introduction of a single currency. The so called Euroland, countries that went through to the third phase in 1999, consisted of eleven countries: Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Germany, Austria, Ireland and Finland. Four countries: Greece, United Kingdom, Denmark and Sweden remained for different reasons out of Euro area. The Treaty of the Union instituted as one of the objectives of the Union the search of social and economic cohesion among the diverse regions and countries of the community. To achieve it, it was agreed that a denominated Cohesion Fund, created in 1994, would provide less developed regions and countries with financial aid focused on sectors as environment or transport infrastructures. The member States eligible to receive this aid were those whose GDP per capita was inferior to 90% of the Union average and comply with convergence criteria. The Cohesion countries were Spain, the most benefited state, Greece, Portugal and Ireland.

The TEU has also meant a noticeable advancement in the EU competences in fields as economic and monetary policy, industrial policy, Transeuropean networks and transport policy, educational networks, etc. In spite of this reforms, the common agricultural policy (CAP) still absorbed more than a half of the whole Union budget. As regards educational affairs, the TEU limited the Union role to promote intergovernmental cooperation. The European Union launched different programmes (Socrates, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci) to facilitate contacts and combined work among Euroepan students and teachers. Regarding the European Union institutions, the TEU introduced important changes: the Parliament increased its competences, the Ministers Council was denominated henceforth Council of the European Union, the Commission received the official name of Commission of the European Communities, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors and the Economic and Social Committee reinforce their competences, a Committee of the Regions was established, and, the founding of the European Central Bank was foreseen at the beginning of the third phase of the economic and monetary union. As far as the second pillar is concerned, the Common foreign and security policy (CFSP) allows to undertake common actions in foreign policy.

The European Council, where decisions must be adopted unanimously, agrees the principles and general orientations of the CFSP. The Treaty on European Union raised Western European Union (WEU) to the rank of an integral part of the development of the Union and commissioned it the mission of elaborating and implementing decisions and actions with defence implications. The raw reality, in the form of the conflict in former Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo) has shown that, unfortunately, the construction of a UE Common Foreign and Security Policy was still a long term objective. USA and NATO went on being the main actors in defence affairs, and the European States have still a very weak political will and capacity to carry out their own policy. The third pillar is based on Police and judicial cooperation (PJC) in criminal matters as terrorism, illegal immigration, asylum policy, drugs traffic, international crime, etc. The foundation of the Europol (European Police Office), embryo of a future European police, was one of the most outstanding changes in this sphere.

It is also necessary to point out that in 1990 the denominated Schengen Convention, that developed the Schengen Agreement, was signed so as to build an European Union without frontiers. The difficult ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht The ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht by the national parliaments was brimmed with difficulties. The symbolic year of 1992 was gloomed by three crisis that braked the pro-Europe impulse brought about by the signing in Maastricht of the TUE on 7 February 1992: Firstly, Europe went through a serious and deep economic crisis that caused governments and public opinion to focus on economic problems, seting aside the European construction; Secondly, there were serious monetary tensions that challenged the European Monetary System and the objective of the economic and monetary union (EMU); Thirdly, the EU appeared unable to implement a common foreign and security policy in the crisis of Yugoslavia, and kept powerless observing how war came back to our continent after many years of peace. In this conditions, the first ratification process took place in Denmark. The NO to the Treaty of Maastricht won in a referendum for a scarce difference of 50. 000 votes.

A eurosceptical wave extended to the other member countries. However, the ratifications of the Treaty were gradually taking place in the rest of the countries. In France, the YES won with a scarce 51. 4% of the votes in favour of the TEU.

Negotiation with Denmark started and the Copenhague government was granted with a special protocol, known, in the EU parlance, as opting out clause, that is to say, the possibility of not following the other members when the third phase of the EMU began -a similar clause got United Kingdom when TEU was signed- and in all defence matters. On 20 May 1993, Danish people approved in a referendum this agreement with 53. 8% of YES votes.

n spite of the difficulties that the Union was going through and the dramatic transformation of the world in those years, the candidatures to accesion to the EU continued being submitted to Brussels: Austria in 1989, Malta and Cyprus in 1991, Finland, Norway and Switzerland in 1992. This last country retired its candidature a few months later after a referendum. Negotiations with Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway began in 1993 and were quite easy due to the high economic development of those countries. The ratification of the Treaties was accomplished in 1994. However, Norwegian people rejected again the accession to the EU. The NO to the European Union won in a referendum with 52. 2% of the votes.

It was the second time that Norway refused to join the community. On 1 January 1995, the fourth enlargement of the EU took place with the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden. The Europe of the Fifteen was born.