

European Union Politics Timeline

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	Civil war breaks out in Greece between communist insurgents and the centre-right royalist government. It is the first communist insurgency since the end of the Second World War. 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	
February	British government tells the US administration that it cannot continue aid to Greece and Turkey.
March	US President Harry Truman asks the US Congress for \$400 million in aid to Greece and Turkey. He justifies this through what becomes known as the Truman Doctrine: that it is the role of the US to aid 'free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures'. The Treaty of Dunkirk is signed by Britain and France, creating a defensive alliance against German aggression.
June	US Secretary of State George Marshall announces the European Recovery Programme, better known as the Marshall Plan. The Plan allocates \$13 billion in financial and food aid to assist the reconstruction of Europe, combat the threat of communism and promote trade with the US. Financial aid provided Europe with a convertible currency need for them to buy American goods, and gave the Americans a tool with which to pressure European states to lower their trade barriers. States in the Soviet sphere of influence decline Marshall Plan aid.
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 co-operation and coordination.
1948	
January	A customs union among the Benelux states begins operation. The Netherlands–Belgium–Luxembourg 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.

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March	<p>The Treaty of Brussels is signed by Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, creating a defensive alliance against possible future German aggression.</p> <p>The Soviets walk out of the Four-Power Council of Foreign Ministers in Berlin (the Allied Control Council) in protest at the merging of the British and American occupation zones. The Soviets disagree with the British and Americans on the degree of political centralization of Germany and the running of economic affairs.</p>
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

April	<p>The North Atlantic Treaty is signed in Washington DC, setting up NATO. The signatories, Britain, Belgium, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the US, and Canada, commit themselves to their collective defence.</p> <p>On 28 April 1949 the International Authority for the Ruhr (IAR) is established by Britain, the US, France, and the Benelux states (Belgium, the Netherlands, & Luxembourg) to supervise German coal and steel production and allocate German coal. Following the Petersberg Agreement of November 1949, West Germany becomes a signatory.</p>
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 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
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	the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).
June	The Korean War begins. American troop commitments in Korea mean that the US has fewer resources to devote to the defence of Europe, leading the Americans to support the re-arming of Germany.
October	The Pleven 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 adopts the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR creates the European Court of Human Rights.
1951	
March	Germany baulks at provisions in the Treaty of Paris that would prevent the re-emergence of coal and steel cartels. The French are unwilling to negotiate on this point because they see decartelization as essential to preventing the development of a centralized and militaristic regime in Germany, which would be threatening to French security. The Germans finally agree to these terms after the Americans give Germany an ultimatum to either accept the Schuman Plan to create the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) or to face American attempts to break up German coal cartels. This proves to overcome German resistance to the Schuman Plan.
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 Pleven 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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May	A common market in coal and steel is established.
September	The European Convention on Human Rights, adopted by the Council of Europe, 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.
May	Governments agree to the Spaak Report.
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

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	occupy Port Said, but are forced to withdraw their troops in the face of opposition from the US. This crisis highlights France's weakness as a unilateral actor in the new world order and so strengthens French support for European integration.
1957	
March	Completion of the Messina negotiations. France insists on the inclusion of agriculture as a separate chapter in the treaty, special treatment of its overseas colonies and sectoral integration in atomic energy. European co-operation in the development of a civilian nuclear energy programme would subsidize French development of its military nuclear weapons programme. While other member states are reluctant to support this, they agree in order to secure French support for the Treaty. Italy, meanwhile, extracts a concession through the inclusion of provisions to address regional inequalities.
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 customs union among the member states, while Euratom is to promote joint development of nuclear energy.
May	Paul-Henri Spaak becomes Secretary General of NATO.
July	The Treaty of Rome is ratified by parliaments in Germany, France, and Italy. In all of these countries the Treaty is ratified by a clear majority—the greatest opposition is in France, where the National Assembly approves the Treaty by a vote of 342 to 239.
October	The Treaty of Rome is ratified by an overwhelming majority by the parliament in the Netherlands.
November	The Treaty of Rome is ratified by the parliaments of Luxembourg and Belgium, where the vote passes with an overwhelming majority.
1958	
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).
October	The European Court of Justice is established in Strasbourg.
November	Gaullists win the elections to the National Assembly in France.

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December	Charles de Gaulle is elected as French President, winning 78.5% of votes and securing his mandate to lead the country.
1959	
January	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.
September	Negotiations for association with Greece and Turkey begin.
1960	
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 a 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.
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.
September	The legislation creating the European Social Fund (ESF) enters into force.
December	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) supersedes the Organization for Economic Co-operation (OEEC).
1961	
February	At the proposal of French President Charles de Gaulle, the Paris summit agrees to set up a committee under Christian Fouchet to review co-operation to coordinate foreign and defence policies among member states. The Fouchet plan is essentially intergovernmental and intended to operate outside the control of the supranational institutions such as the Commission, the Parliament, and the European Court of Justice.
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.
December	The Commission convenes its first conference on European regional policy.
1962	
March	The European Parliamentary Assembly changes its name to the European Parliament (EP).
April	Norway submits its first application to join the European Economic Community

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	(EEC). In the same month, the foreign ministers of the EC reject the plans for a 'Union of States' proposed by Christian Fouchet that would have created political co-operation in an intergovernmental framework. The other states do not wish to cede control over their foreign policy and fear that the proposed Union of States would subordinate the supranational EEC to an intergovernmental political union dominated by France.
July	The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is introduced, with a system of common prices agreed at the Stresa Conference.
December	The Nassau agreement is reached between British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and American President John F. Kennedy. Under the agreement, the US will sell Polaris nuclear missiles to Britain in return for providing the US with a military base in Britain. The missiles are to be used for the defence of NATO countries. Kennedy extends the offer of Polaris missiles to France. France rejects the offer and Britain and the US sign the agreement in January, 1963. The Nassau agreement exacerbates the growing rift between France and Britain. The French resent the close Anglo-American relationship and fear that it will both allow American interference in European affairs and undermine French influence in Europe.
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'. The Treaty, which comes into force on 1 July 1967, signifies the eclipse of limited, sectoral integration, represented by the ECSC and Euratom, by the broader, multi-sectoral form of integration represented by the EEC.
July	The 'Empty Chair Crisis' begins after the French foreign minister withdraws the French Permanent Representative from the Council of

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	Ministers. This French boycott is in protest against the 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. To the French, these combined developments represented an unacceptable shift toward supranational influence in the EEC. The French boycott of the Council brings the work of the EEC to a halt.
1966	
January	The Luxembourg compromise ends the French boycott of the Council of Ministers, six months after it began. The Luxembourg compromise represents a move toward increased intergovernmentalism in order to resolve the Empty Chair Crisis—the French boycott of Council of Minister meetings which arose out of French objection to increasing supranationalism in the European Economic Community (EEC). The Luxembourg 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 are 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 blocks agreement on opening negotiations with the applicant states, vetoing 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 and a common external tariff is established.
December	The Commission produces the 'Mansholt Plan' for restructuring EC agriculture. The plan, named for Agricultural Commissioner Sicco Mansholt, proposes grants and offers of retraining to encourage farmers to leave agriculture and to increase the size of farms. It also uses price cuts to attempt to force inefficient farmers to leave the sector. The Mansholt Plan is met with fierce opposition from European farmers. The French government accepts the plan but wants to retain national control over implementation. The German government, facing an election in 1969, decide not to support the plan in its current form.
1969	
April	A military coup in Greece leads to the suspension of democratic institutions and the eventual cancellation of the Association Agreement

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	with the European Economic Community (EEC). 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.
June	Georges Pompidou is elected president of France.
December	The Hague Summit is held to re-launch European integration. At the request of the French, the summit focuses on three aspects of integration: completion; widening; and deepening. Completion refers to settling some unfinished business on the EC's agenda. One of these was the financing of the EC—the issue that had previously triggered the empty chair crisis. 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. The Werner Committee, chaired by Luxembourg Prime Minister Pierre Werner, is launched to study monetary union. The Hague Summit revives political cooperation by establishing a political committee, chaired by Etienne Davignon. 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.

1970

April	After reaching agreement on the issue at the Hague Summit, the member states sign a 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. The 1970 treaty achieved the budgetary transition, giving the EC greater independence.
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.
July	Franco Malfatti becomes President of the European Commission.
October	The Davignon Report on European political co-operation is published. It recommends closer consultation on foreign policy issues to allow the Community to speak with a single voice. In the same month, the Werner Report on economic and monetary union is also published. It advocates a path toward economic and monetary union that is a compromise between the French and German positions, proposing a coordination of economic policies together with the coordination of exchange rates within a narrow band of fluctuation—the 'snake in the tunnel'. The Werner Report also recommends the use of grants to assist member states in keeping their currency within the band. The plans for economic and monetary union follow a decade of monetary instability that had threatened the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) system of common prices and introduced considerable exchange risk into the common market.

1971

January	The second Yaoundé Convention is signed. It does not fundamentally alter the
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	aid and trade provisions of the first Yaoundé Convention.
March	Farmers demonstrate in Brussels against the Mansholt Plan. The Council of Agricultural Ministers subsequently agree a modified version of the Plan. The Council of Ministers also agree to a form of economic and monetary union. Also in March, the member states decide in principle to proceed with a three-stage plan for economic and monetary union, which will develop over a ten-year period.
June	The Commission recommends to the Council that state aid be made more transparent and distinguish between aid to the economic centre and periphery. This is an early contribution to the development of regional policy in the EC.
August	The end of the US dollar's convertibility into gold marks the collapse of the Bretton Woods international monetary system. The US dollar is allowed to float. This is closely followed by the collapse of the first experiment with European monetary union.
October	The Council endorses the Commission's recommendations that state aid be targeted to poorer regions.
December	Smithsonian agreements on an international monetary regime to replace Bretton Woods.
1972	
January	Completion of membership negotiations with Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway; Accession Treaties signed.
March	Sicco Mansholt becomes President of the European Commission.
	The European Parliament accepts Commission proposals for creation of EC regional policy.
	Member States agree to the 'snake in the tunnel' system of EC monetary coordination. This introduces a system where the EC currencies are allowed to fluctuate within a band of 2.25% against each other (the snake), within a 4.5% margin of fluctuation against the US dollar (the tunnel).
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.
June	The British Pound is withdrawn from the 'snake in the tunnel'.
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	
January	François-Xavier Ortoli becomes Commission President. In its first enlargement (known as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) enlargement), the EC expands to include Britain, Denmark, and Ireland.
February	After devaluation of the US dollar leaves Italy unable to compete against cheap US imports, Italy is forced to leave the 'snake in the tunnel'.
May	The 'Thomson Report' on regional problems is presented to the Council of Ministers. The report argues that regional disparities hamper the completion and operation of the single market and monetary union and limit economic

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	growth.
July	The Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) is formed. Representatives from 35 states, including East and West European states, the USSR and the US meet in Finland to begin talks aimed at reducing Cold War tensions and promoting regional stabilization.
September	The Federal Republic of Germany joins the United Nations (UN). From this point, all EC member states are UN members.
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.
November	The EC releases its first joint statement on the Middle East. OPEC lifts its embargo on oil exports to the EC as a result, but the effects of high oil prices continue.
1974	
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. Conservative leader Edward Heath is forced to concede defeat after the Ulster Unionists will not support his attempts to form a government. Wilson campaigned on promises to renegotiate the British terms of entry of the EC.
May	In Germany, Chancellor Willy Brandt resigns in the wake of allegations that a senior member of his staff was an East German spy. Brandt's Finance Minister, Helmut Schmidt becomes the new Chancellor and leader of the SPD-FDP coalition government. In France, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing defeats Francois Mitterand in the Presidential elections.
July	Turkey invades Cyprus.
October	Harold Wilson wins a slim majority in a second British general election in 1974.
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.
1975	
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

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	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. Under the previous 1970 Budgetary Treaty, the European Parliament (EP) had the last word on non-compulsory expenditures. In the same month, France rejoins the currency 'snake in the tunnel'.
August	Representatives from 35 participating states sign the 'Final Act' at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki. The signatories include the states of Western Europe and the Warsaw Pact countries, the USSR, Canada, and the US. The Final Act addresses issues of security, scientific and environmental cooperation and humanitarian co-operation.
1976	
January	The Commission issues a critical opinion to the Council on the Greek membership application. It notes that its economic and agricultural underdevelopment and its relations with Turkey pose obstacles to its EC membership.
April	France leaves the currency 'snake in the tunnel' for the second time.
July	Re-opening of Greek accession negotiations.
1977	
January	Roy Jenkins, a British Labour politician and former British Chancellor of the Exchequer, becomes the sixth President of the European Commission.
March	Portuguese application for membership of the EC.
July	Spanish application for membership of the EC.
October	In a lecture at the European University Institute in Florence, Commission President Roy Jenkins calls for a renewed attempt at monetary union in order to combat unemployment and inflation in Europe.
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.
December	The Bremen European Council agrees to create the EMS. It uses an Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) based on the principle of fixed but adjustable exchange rates that are to remain within a narrow band in relation to the European Unit of Account (ECU), a weighted average of EC currencies.
1979	
February	Accession negotiations open with Spain. Spain applied for membership in 1977 following its democratic transition.
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. While the Greek accession process had started with its Association Agreement in 1961, this was halted following

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	its military coup of 1967. Military dictatorship ended in 1974 and the Greek EC membership application was revived in 1975.
June	The first direct elections to the European Parliament (EP) are held from 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.
December	The USSR invades Afghanistan. This crisis underscores the need for a coordinated EC foreign policy.
1980	
March	The Second Lomé Convention comes into effect between the EC and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. At the insistence of the British and Dutch governments, it introduces human rights conditions to the aid and trade package. The Sysmin facility provides an income guarantee mechanism for mineral exporters.
May	The Council instructs the Commission to develop proposals on reform of the budget to resolve the crisis generated by British demands for a budget rebate.
June	The EC makes the Venice Declaration on the Middle East, the Euro–Arab dialogue, Lebanon and Afghanistan. It recognizes the right of Palestinians to a homeland.
December	The second stage of the European Monetary System (EMS) scheme, the establishment of the European Monetary Cooperation Fund, is postponed indefinitely.
1981	
January	Gaston Thorn, the former prime minister and foreign minister of Luxembourg, becomes President of the European Commission. Greece joins the EC and becomes its 10th member state.
May	François Mitterand defeats Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in the French presidential elections.
October	The London Report on European Political Co-operation (EPC) is published. The London Report calls for member states to consult each other and the Commission when foreign policy matters affect other member states and leads to the establishment of a permanent secretariat to support EPC. The German Deutschmark and the Dutch guilder are revalued; the Italian lira and the French franc are devalued.
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' emphasizes 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

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	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.
May	Spain joins NATO.
June	European Monetary System (EMS) currencies are realigned. The French socialist government agrees to reform its domestic economic policies and to retreat from its attempts to reflate the economy.
October	In Germany the SDP–FDP coalition under Helmut Schmidt collapses and the CDU/CSU–FDP form a coalition government with Helmut Kohl as the Chancellor.
1983	
March	There is a further realignment of European Monetary System (EMS) currencies. Helmut Kohl's CDU/CSU–FDP coalition government is re-elected in Germany.
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 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.
March	A system of quotas for dairy products is agreed as part of reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).
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. It introduces an emphasis on rural development and food security and a shift toward private investment.
1985	
January	Jacques Delors, a French socialist politician and former French economics and finance minister, becomes President of the European Commission. 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

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	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.
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. The White Paper is the result of entrepreneurial action by the Commission, as well as lobbying by European business interests and the EP. The Milan European Council agrees the '1992 programme'. The Summit also discusses the Dooge Report on plans to create a European Union and decides to convene an Intergovernmental Conference to discuss treaty reforms. Belgium, France, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands support this initiative. Britain, Denmark, and Greece are opposed but are outvoted. At the same summit, the Portuguese and Spanish Accession Treaties are signed.
December	The Single European Act is agreed in principle by heads of government at the 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. The Danish parliament rejects the draft of the Single European Act (SEA). The Danish government calls a referendum on the SEA.
February	On 17 February the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland sign the SEA in Luxembourg. 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.
September	Trade ministers agree to start the Uruguay round of trade negotiations.
1987	
January	In Germany, Helmut Kohl's government is re-elected.
April	Turkey applies for EC membership.
May	Spain agrees to join the European Monetary System (EMS).
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.
November	Portugal joins the EMS.
1988	
February	The Brussels European Council agrees to the Delors I package, a budgetary reform package designed to limit spending. The package doubles structural fund spending by 1993 in order to assist poorer regions in the EC in the

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	completion of the single market and places legal limits on increases in spending on agricultural support.
June	The Hanover European Council establishes a committee of central bankers and technical experts, chaired by Commission President Jacques Delors, to propose measures necessary to further develop monetary union. The same month, the Council, the Commission, and the European Parliament (EP) sign an inter-institutional agreement aimed at improving budgetary discipline. The agreement ties budget increases to Community GNP growth rates and sets upper ceiling for budgetary increases.
July	Jacques Delors makes a speech to the EP in which he predicts that in ten years time 80% of economic legislation will be directed from Brussels. This infuriates British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.
September	In a speech to the College of Europe (the 'Bruges speech'), Margaret Thatcher marks out the limits of her vision of integration, warning that 'we have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels'.

1989

January	The reformed structural funds, with new policy principles agreed during 1988, come into operation. Structural fund spending now operates on the principles of concentration of the funds on areas of need, defined by objective criteria, multi-annual programming, partnership with national and regional authorities, and additionality, guaranteeing the EC funds will supplement and not replace national funding. Also in January, the Commission sets up a steering group to revive the 'social dialogue' between representatives of employers and trade unions.
March	The European Parliament (EP) adopts a resolution calling for 'fundamental social rights'. This gives further impetus to the development of the Social Charter.
June	The Delors Report on monetary union is accepted by heads of government at Madrid European Council. The Madrid summit also emphasizes the importance of developing social policies alongside development of the single market and monetary union, and declares a commitment to developing environmental policies. The third direct elections to the EP are held.
July	Austria applies for EC membership.
September	Start of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. As Hungary opens its borders, thousands of East Germans leave for the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).
November	East Germans cross into West Berlin. The Berlin wall is subsequently dismantled.
December	The Strasbourg European Council sets up an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to consider institutional changes necessary for completing monetary union. The Council also adopts the text of the European Social Charter. Britain does not sign. The fourth Lomé Convention is signed. This agreement emphasizes the principle of partnership between the EC and African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries and attaches further environmental conditions to aid.

1990

March	The European Parliament (EP) calls for the development of a federal political union.
July	Stage I of Economic and Monetary Union begins. This involves the freeing of capital controls and is scheduled for the period 1990–1993.

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	Cyprus and Malta apply for EC membership. In Germany, the German Treaty on the creation of a Monetary, Economic and Social Union enters into force. The German Deutschmark replaces the East German mark and the currencies are converted on a one-to-one basis, a move that is intended to prevent a mass exodus of East Germans to the former Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).
August	Iraq invades Kuwait. The EC condemns this action and imposes economic sanctions against Iraq. The member states agree that in the event that an EC member state must close its embassy in Kuwait, the embassies of other EC countries will provide services for that state's citizens.
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.
December	The Rome European Council launches the two Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs) on political union and monetary union.
1991	
January	Negotiations begin in the Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs) on political union and monetary union.
April	Under the Luxembourg presidency of the European Council, a draft Treaty on European Union is introduced. It proposes strengthening the powers of the European Parliament (EP), extending the activities of the European Community and introduces a three-pillar structure for the European Union, dividing Community activities from areas of intergovernmental co-operation. The first pillar is to be the Community pillar, and the second and third pillars to be the intergovernmental areas of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs. Negotiations on the Treaty on European Union (TEU) now proceed on the basis of this draft text.
June	Start of the conflict between federal Yugoslav army and Slovenian separatist forces. Spain and Portugal join the Schengen area.
July	Agriculture Commissioner Ray MacSharry introduces his proposals for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). His proposals include lowering the prices for cereals and beef, replacing production subsidies with direct payments, structural reform through encouraging retirement of farmers and the introduction of environmental measures. Sweden applies for EC membership.
November	The EC imposes sanctions on Yugoslavia.
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,

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	Spain, Ireland, and Portugal. A chapter on social policy is annexed to the TEU as a separate protocol.
1992	
January	The Badinter Commission, a group of jurists responsible for arbitrating disputes over recognition of states, gives support for recognition of Macedonia and qualified support for Croatian independence. Germany had already announced its recognition of Croatia in December 1991.
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	Agricultural ministers agree to Ray MacSharry's proposed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms. The reforms would cut cereal prices by 29% over three years and introduce structural measures to reduce the size of the agricultural workforce and environmental provisions. In the same month, 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.
September	On 'Black Wednesday', 16 September, Britain is forced to withdraw from the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). Two successive interest rate hikes by Chancellor Norman Lamont fail to bolster the value of the pound in the face of speculative attacks by currency traders. On 20 September French voters marginally approve the TEU in a referendum, with 51.05% supporting the Treaty.
November	Blair House agreement between the EU and the US on trade in agricultural goods (mostly oilseed subsidies) paves the way for the completion of the Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations. In the same month, Norway makes its third application for EC membership. Greece joins the Schengen area.
December	Swiss referendum rejects membership of the European Economic Area (EEA). The Swiss government subsequently withdraws 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.
March	Bulgaria signs a Europe Agreement.
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'.
August	The Exchange Rate Mechanism's (ERM) 'narrow bands' have to be widened

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	to 15% to allow it to survive.
November	The Maastricht Treaty comes into force on 1 November. The European Union (EU) is established.
December	EU monitors observe Russian elections. The Council adopts a decision to establish a code of conduct for transparency. This leads the Council and Commission to include provisions in their rules of procedures to access to documents.
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. The EEA member states have a right to be consulted by the Commission on new Community legislation, but they do not have a vote in the Council of Ministers. EEA member states must incorporate Community legislation relating to the EEA agreement into their own domestic legislation. Also this month, the reforms of the structural funds agreed in 1993 come into effect.
February	The Greek government refuses the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia access to the port of Salonika.
April	Hungary and Poland apply for EU membership. Austria joins the Schengen area.
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%. The Party of European Socialists hold a plurality of seats in the EP. In the same month, the Corfu European Council agrees to extend internal market to energy and telecommunications.
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. Jacques Santer, a former prime minister of Luxembourg and member of the Christian Social People's Party becomes President of the European Commission. Also in January, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is created, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) becomes the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
March	A 'Stability Pact' is signed by 52 states from western and eastern Europe in an attempt to stabilize the political and security situation in eastern Europe. The Schengen Agreement comes into force on 26 March, removing internal border controls among France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and the Benelux countries.
June	Romania and the Slovak Republic apply for EU membership.
October	Latvia applies for EU membership. The Council adopts a Code of

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	Conduct that provides public access to Council proceedings when it is acting in a legislative capacity.
November	The Barcelona conference launches the process that leads to the 'Euro-Med' agreements between the EU and North African and other states bordering the Mediterranean. The same month, Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler introduces his proposals for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); they are subsequently incorporated into <i>Agenda 2000</i> . Estonia applies for EU membership.
December	The 'New Transatlantic Agenda' is agreed between the EU and the US. Also this month, the Madrid European Council confirms the Copenhagen criteria and decides on the 'Euro' as the name for the single currency. This is Germany's preferred name for the currency. The French supported naming the currency the 'Ecu'. Lithuania and Bulgaria apply for EU membership.
1996	
January	The Czech Republic applies for EU membership.
February	A Euro-Med association agreement is signed with Morocco.
June	Slovenia applies for EU membership.
March	An Intergovernmental Conference to review the Treaty on European Union (TEU) officially opens in Turin.
September	The Commission requests that member states extend its mandate in international trade negotiations to cover trade in services. This request is refused by member states.
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.
1997	
March	The 40th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome is celebrated in Rome.
June	The Amsterdam European Council agrees on the terms of Treaty of Amsterdam, including to supplement the stability pact with a growth and employment pact. All EU member states commit to the 'Petersberg tasks' as agreed by Western European Union (WEU) members in June 1992.
July	Publication of Commission's <i>Agenda 2000</i> on eastern enlargement and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and structural funds.
October	The member states of the EU sign the Treaty of Amsterdam. The Treaty abolishes more national vetoes, formalizes the Social Chapter and the Schengen agreement and moves some aspects of Justice and Home Affairs to the first pillar.
November	A special 'jobs summit' is held in Luxembourg to work out the principles of the 'co-ordinated strategy for employment' agreed at Amsterdam in June. Effectively the 'Luxembourg process' is the first example of the 'Open Method

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	of Co-ordination' (OMC).
1998	
February	Europe Agreements enter into force with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.
March	Opening of accession negotiations with Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia. Greece enters the Exchange Rate Mechanism (EMS). The Commission recommends that 11 states are ready to proceed to adopt the Euro at its introduction on 1 January 1999.
May	A special European Council meeting is held in Brussels to launch the single currency. Wim Duisenberg is chosen to be first President of the European Central Bank (ECB). The Dutch banker is the preferred candidate of Germany. France agrees to the appointment after agreement is reached that Duisenberg will step down half way through his term to be succeeded by Jean-Claude Trichet, the favoured French candidate.
December	At the Vienna European Council meeting, member states decide to undertake further convergence of employment policies and develop plans to create an area of Freedom, Security, and Justice. At the end of a bi-lateral summit at St Malo in France, French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair announce their support for the development of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).
1999	
January	Stage III of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) is launched. The Euro comes into operation, although national notes and coins remain in circulation until 2002. 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.
February	Negotiations over the <i>Agenda 2000</i> proposals for agriculture begin.
March	The Santer Commission resigns after the revelation of fraud, nepotism, and mismanagement. Spaniard Manuel Marin becomes interim president of the Commission. The same month, the Berlin European Council agrees on the <i>Agenda 2000</i> reforms designed to prepare the Union for enlargement. This includes a financial perspective for 2000–2006, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and structural funds. The European Council nominates Romano Prodi as the next President of the Commission.
May	The Amsterdam Treaty enters into force on 1 May. Romano Prodi, a former Italian Prime Minister, becomes President of the Commission.
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 recognizes Turkey as an applicant country. The Council adopts the 'headline goal' of creating a European Rapid Reaction Force by the end of 2003.
2000	
February	An Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) is launched to discuss reforms left

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	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.
March	The institutions of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) begin provisional operation. The same month, a special European Council held in Lisbon agrees to a new EU strategy on employment, economic reform, and social cohesion, and makes a commitment to turn the EU into 'the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world' by 2010. This becomes known as the 'Lisbon Agenda'.
June	The Cotonou Agreement is signed as a successor to the Lomé Convention. It introduces reciprocal trade agreements which require the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries to open their markets to EU goods and it contains a number of political, social, and environmental objectives. The same month, Greece gains approval to join the single currency.
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. Denmark rejects the plan to introduce the Euro as the national currency in a referendum by 52.08% 'no' votes.
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%.
September	Terrorist attacks in New York and WashingtonDC. Following this, the European Council votes to support the US and to develop an EU response to the terrorist attacks.
November	In the face of protests from other member states, a planned tri-lateral meeting in London between Blair, Chirac, and Schmidt, to co-ordinate their countries' responses to the September terrorist attacks, has to be widened to include the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Belgian Presidency of the Council, and the leaders of Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands.
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	Citizens start using Euro notes and coins in the twelve participating member states. Euro notes and coins are introduced in the 12 member states of the EU on 1 January. Meanwhile, 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. Also this month, national notes and coins leave circulation in Eurozone countries as the period

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	of dual circulation of Euro and national currencies comes to an end. The Euro becomes the sole currency.
May	The EU ratifies the Kyoto Protocol.
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 after the government secures assurances on its military neutrality. 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. Also this month, the Commission recommends concluding accession negotiations with Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Cyprus, and Malta, paving the way for their accession in May 2004.
December	US President George W. Bush identifies an 'axis of evil' that includes Iraq, North Korea, and Iran. This frustrates European efforts at engaging North Korea and Iran in a constructive dialogue.
2003	
February	The Treaty of Nice enters into force on 2 February.
March	A coalition of states led by the US and Britain invades Iraq. France and Germany condemn the invasion, prompting US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to remark that Germany and France are 'problems' in the current crisis and represent 'Old Europe'. This highlights growing foreign policy divisions within Europe, where Britain, Spain, Italy, and Poland supported the war in Iraq. Referendums on EU membership are held in Malta and Slovenia which approve EU membership by votes of 53.6% and 89.6% respectively. Meanwhile in March, an EU force replaces the NATO stabilization force in Macedonia.
April	The European Parliament (EP) assents to the accession of ten new member 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	The Council of Ministers reaches agreement on the final decoupling of agricultural payments from production. The same month, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing presents the draft EU Constitution to the European Council. 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.
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.
November	Jean-Claude Trichet replaces Wim Duisenberg as President of the European Central Bank (ECB). In the same month, Eurozone heads of government decide not to impose sanctions on France and Germany for breaching the rules of the stability pact. Germany and France had breached the growth and stability pact's budget deficit ceiling of 3% of GDP for three years running. This decision of the member states undermines the credibility of the pact and creates tensions between large and small member states.

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December	The proposals of the Constitutional Convention 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	
February	The Commission outlines its proposals for the operation of the structural funds in the period 2007–2013.
March	Terrorist bombings in Madrid kill nearly 200 people and wound over 2000. Three days later, a new Spanish government is elected, led by Jose Luis Zapatero. He announces a U-turn in Spanish foreign policy toward 'Old Europe', distancing itself from the US and disengaging from Iraq and strengthening its ties with France and Germany.
April	Adoption of an Internal Market Strategy to improve transposition of EU agreements into national law.
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 turnout of 63%. The group of the European People's Party–European Democrats win a plurality of seats. The European Council nominates Portuguese Prime Minister José Manuel Durao Barroso as the next President of the Commission. 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. The same month, former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok delivers to the European Commission a report of the High Level group on the Lisbon Agenda. The 'Kok Report' concludes that progress on the Lisbon Agenda has been disappointing due to poor co-ordination and lack of focus. The report recommends a renewed focus on the core issues of economic growth and job creation.
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%.
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. The two states could join the EU on 1 January 2007 as long as they continue to make progress toward implementation of the <i>acquis</i> and fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria. The Commission reserves the right to delay Bulgarian and Romanian membership of the Union until 2008 if the countries do not make progress.

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May	On 29 May, French people vote to reject the Constitutional Treaty by almost 55% in a legally binding referendum. Turnout levels are approximately 70%.
June	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' and the ratification process comes to a halt. 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.
July	In a national referendum on 10 July, Luxembourg votes to approve the Constitutional Treaty. All Luxembourg parliamentary parties support the 'Yes' campaign and 56% of the electorate vote in favour (voting in Luxembourg is compulsory). The 'No' campaign is supported by a mixed group of interests including left-wing groups opposed to globalisation and far-right supporters.
October	Accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia begin.
December	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is granted candidate status.
2006	
June	The European Council summit on 15–16 June calls on the incoming German Presidency to develop proposals to end the constitutional impasse.
December	On 5 December, the Finnish Parliament ratifies the Constitutional Treaty. On 12 December, the Services Directive is adopted by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.
2007	
January	On 1 January, Romania and Bulgaria join the European Union and Slovenia adopts the Euro.
March	On 25 March, the EU marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome.
July	On 23 July an IGC is launched to consider the content of the proposed 'Reform Treaty'. Negotiations proceed on the basis of a 'draft mandate' which had been presented in June by the then German Presidency of the EU. It proposes that instead of consolidating and replacing the existing treaties—the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty Establishing the European Community (TEC)—that they be amended to incorporate most of the provisions of the Constitutional Treaty. However, the more controversial elements of the Constitutional Treaty are to be removed. These include the term 'constitution', an article referring to symbols of the Union (including the EU anthem and the Union flag) and references to an 'EU Minister' for foreign affairs. The EU's legal instruments are also to remain as regulations, directives, and decisions and are not to be replaced by the terms 'law' and 'framework laws'.
October	On 18–19 October the text of the new Treaty is agreed in Lisbon at a European Council meeting. It aligns broadly with the proposals which had been presented by the German Presidency. Sticking points had included the Polish government's position over various institutional changes (in particular relating to blocking minorities in the Council of Ministers) and UK and Irish opt-outs in justice and home affairs. These are eventually overcome. Although many of the controversial aspects of the Constitutional Treaty are removed, the vast majority of its provisions are retained in the Lisbon Treaty. The treaty fundamentally restructures the EU's governing architecture by removing the three-pillar structure that had been established by the Maastricht Treaty.

European Union Politics Timeline

	CFSP and JHA become more integral aspects of the EU, two new high profile positions are created (President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy), QMV is extended into new policy areas, the budgetary powers of the EP are strengthened and its co-decision powers expanded. Other institutional reforms include a reduction in the size of the European Commission, some enhancement of the powers of the ECJ, the Charter of Fundamental Rights becomes 'solemnly binding' and national parliaments are allotted a greater role in responding to Commission proposals. The treaty also provides for additional policy competences for the EU in areas such as civil protection, tourism, and sport.
December	On 13 December, the 27 Heads of State and Government of the EU sign the Lisbon Treaty in Lisbon. On 21 December, the Schengen Area is extended to include Estonia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This entails the removal of controls at internal land and sea borders between these countries and the other 15 member states.
2008	
January	On 1 January, Cyprus and Malta adopt the Euro.
June	Ireland is the only EU member state to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. On 8 June, the Irish people reject the Lisbon Treaty with a vote of 53.4% against (from a turnout of 53.1%). A range of factors are suggested to explain the 'No' vote, including a lacklustre 'Yes' campaign, an unpopular Prime Minister (who was advocating a 'Yes' vote) and allegations of a misleading 'No' campaign. The concerns voiced by 'No' voters include fears about the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on Irish neutrality, abortion, possible conscription to an EU army, and the loss of a European Commissioner. At a European Council Summit (19–20 June), EU leaders urge member states to continue with the ratification process for the Lisbon Treaty.
September	On 1 September, during an Extraordinary European Council, EU leaders condemn Russia's 'disproportionate reaction' in Georgia following the outbreak of conflict there. The European Council strongly objects to Russia's unilateral decision to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and indicates its willingness to commit itself, including through a presence on the ground, to support every effort to secure a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia.
October	European leaders call for an overhaul of the global financial system and are part of the G20 meetings that agree a common approach to the global financial crisis (which had struck the global economy in late 2008).
November	On 20 November, EU Agriculture Ministers reach a political agreement on the Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Among a range of measures, the agreement abolishes arable set-aside, increases milk quotas gradually leading up to their abolition in 2015, and converts market intervention into a genuine safety net. Ministers also agree to increase modulation, whereby direct payments to farmers are reduced and the money transferred to the Rural Development Fund.
December	On 3 December, the EU announces the creation of an 'Eastern Partnership' with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The partnership foresees a substantial upgrading of the level of political engagement between the EU and the former Soviet states. This includes the prospect of a new generation of Association Agreements, integration into the EU economy, easier travel to the EU for citizens providing that security requirements are met, enhanced energy security arrangements, and increased financial assistance.

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	<p>On 15 December, Montenegro submits an application for EU membership. Following the Irish rejection of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Council summit (11–12 December) provides Ireland with reassurances over areas of concern. EU leaders agree that provided the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force, a decision will be taken, in accordance with the necessary legal procedures, to the effect that the Commission shall continue to include one national of each member state. Other guarantees in relation to taxation, neutrality, ethical issues and workers' rights are also agreed. In response to these reassurances, the Irish government commits to seeking ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon before the end of 2009.</p> <p>In a landmark decision in mid-December 2008, EU leaders and the European Parliament approve a comprehensive package of greenhouse gas emission-cutting measures. The plan aims to reduce greenhouse gases by at least 20% by 2020 (compared with 1990 levels), raise renewable energy's share of the market to 20%, and cut overall energy consumption by 20% (compared with projected trends). Within the drive for more renewable energy, it was agreed that 10% of fuel for transport should come from biofuels, electricity, or hydrogen.</p>
2009	
January	On 1 January, Slovakia adopts the Euro.
April	On 28 April, Albania submits an application for EU membership.
June	<p>Elections to the European Parliament (EP) are marked by a record low turnout of 43%. The group of the European People's Party–European Democrats emerges with the largest number of seats.</p> <p>On 18 June, the European Council unanimously backs José Manuel Barroso for a second five-year term as President of the European Commission. EP approval follows in September (see below).</p> <p>On 30 June, the German Constitutional Court rules that the Lisbon Treaty is compatible with the German Constitution (Basic Law). However, the court places restrictions on further transfers of powers.</p>
July	On 16 July, Iceland submits an application for EU membership to the Council of Ministers. The Icelandic application follows a vote in the national parliament, the Althingi, which narrowly votes in favour of applying for EU membership (33 votes to 28, with two abstentions). This decision follows the financial crisis of 2008–2009, in which Icelandic banks and the Icelandic economy suffered badly.
September	On 16 September, the European Parliament votes in favour of a second five-year term for European Commission President José Manuel Barroso.
October	On 2 October, in a second referendum, the Irish people vote in favour of the Lisbon Treaty. The 67.13 per cent vote in favour (from a turnout of 59 per cent) is largely explained by deteriorating economic circumstances, a more effective 'Yes' campaign and reassurances from the EU in relation to the retention of a European Commissioner and legally binding 'guarantees' that the treaty will not affect Irish neutrality, taxation, and 'family' issues such as abortion.
November	<p>The Czech Republic is the last EU member state to ratify the Lisbon Treaty. It does so on 3 November following a ruling by the Czech Constitutional Court. The court deems that the treaty is in line with the country's constitution, thus removing the final obstacle to its full ratification and implementation.</p> <p>Later that month, appointments to the posts of President of the European Council and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy are announced. Former Belgian Prime Minister and Christian Democrat, Herman Van Rompuy, becomes the first President of the European Council. Catherine Ashton, member of the British Labour Party and briefly</p>

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	Commissioner for Trade, becomes the first High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Neither figure had a particularly high profile. There was a widely held view that low profile and less powerful individuals were appointed to limit the prospects for challenges to the authority of the national governments within the EU. Both individuals take up their posts on 1 December.
December	The Treaty of Lisbon enters into force on 1 December. On 22 December, Serbia submits an application for EU membership.
2010	
February	On 10 February, the new European Commission (for the period 2010–2014) headed by President José Manuel Barroso takes office. This follows a vote the previous day by the European Parliament approving the appointment of the new College. MEPs cast their votes following a series of oral hearings with the Commissioners designate.
March	On 3 March, the European Commission launches a consultation on the <i>Europe 2020</i> Strategy. The strategy is focused on achieving growth by creating a smart, sustainable, and inclusive EU economy. This involves setting targets on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy—to be reached by 2020.
May	On 9 May, and in response to the dire economic situation in Greece, which threatens the stability and credibility of the Euro, the EU and International Monetary Fund (IMF) agree financial assistance of €110 billion to Greece over three years. In exchange, Greece is required to implement a programme of public sector reform leading to cuts in public spending and increases in tax revenue.
June	On 17 June, the European Council approves the <i>Europe 2020</i> Strategy and agrees five EU-level targets. On the same day, the European Council agrees to open accession negotiations with Iceland. This follows a recommendation from the European Commission which judges Iceland to be ready to undertake the requirements of EU membership. The following month accession negotiations with Iceland are formally opened at the first intergovernmental conference between the EU and Iceland held in Brussels.
November	An EUI–IMF support package is agreed for Ireland.
December	The enhanced cooperation procedure introduced by the 2007 Lisbon Treaty is used for the first time. The enhanced cooperation procedure allows groups of EU member states to cooperate with each other, as opposed to seeking cooperation amongst all 27 member states. This enhanced cooperation procedure pertained to the rights of international couples living within the EU to choose which country's rules apply if they decide to separate. Accession Treaty (for Croatia's admission to the EU) is signed.
2011	
January	Estonia adopts the euro bringing the total number of countries in the euro area to 17.
May	An EU–IMF support package is agreed for Portugal.
June	EU leaders adopt the Europe 2020 targets at a European Council. The joint transparency register for lobbyists in the EU is launched by the European Commission and the European Parliament. This unites the separate registers of these two institutions. The European Commission proposes the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the period 2014–20 (this seven-year budgetary framework was formerly known as the 'financial perspective'). It constitutes a political as well as a financial framework as it sets out political priorities for EU spending. Accession negotiations with Croatia conclude. Croatia is set to join the EU in

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	2013 as the 28th member state.
July	Euro area countries sign a treaty for the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). This financial institution was designed to provide temporary financial assistance to euro area member states that require support, replacing the European Financial Stabilization Mechanism and the European Financial Stability Facility. At this time the ESM is authorized to lend up to €500 billion to euro area member states.
November	The Economic and Financial Affairs Council adopts a package of six legislative proposals (also known as the 'six pack') aimed at strengthening economic governance in the EU. It includes rules for more responsible management of banks.
December	At the European Council, the 17 euro area members and several other EU member states agree to a new 'Fiscal Compact'. The 'six pack' (comprised of five regulations and one directive) comes into force. It is a pack of legislative measures for strengthening EU and euro area governance. With respect to the fiscal element of the 'six pack', it strengthens the Stability and Growth Pact. Liechtenstein joins the Schengen area.
2012	
January	Croatia 66% votes 'Yes' to membership of the EU in an accession referendum. The country is set to accede to the EU on 1 July 2013. This will bring the number of EU member states up to 28.
February	A treaty to create a European Stability Mechanism (ESM) is signed. Based in Luxembourg, as required this institution will support euro area countries in a bid to safeguard financial stability. A second EU–IMF support package of €130 billion is agreed for Greece.
March	The European Council grants candidate status to Serbia. Herman Van Rompuy is re-elected as the President of the European Council. The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG) is signed by 25 member states (not including the Czech Republic or the UK). The fiscal part of the TSCG is known as the 'Fiscal Compact'. The Fiscal Compact commits the 25 member states to closer coordination of economic policies as well as the balancing of national budgets. It is decided that the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) will run concurrently for one year. This is to ensure there is sufficient financial support available to help larger euro area economies should it be required.
April	The Citizens' Initiative is launched. This enables citizens to propose EU legislation. One million citizens representing at least a quarter of EU member states can invite the European Commission to present a proposal in areas where the Commission has power to act.
June	At the European Council, EU leaders agree on the 'Compact for Growth and Jobs'. It includes €120 billion for investment in order to promote growth.
September	The European Central Bank announces an unlimited government bond-buying plan.
November	EU Budget talks amongst heads of state and government end without agreement on the EU's seven-year framework (2014–2020). National leaders will meet again in 2013 to continue negotiations.
December	The EU is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of six decades of 'the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights.' At the European Council, EU leaders decide, in principle, to create a 'single supervisory mechanism' (SSM), marking the first step towards implementing a banking union.

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Timeline

2013	
January	Ireland takes on rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. European Commission launches the European Year of Citizens. The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG) enters into force. Finance ministers agree in principle to the introduction of a financial transaction tax in 11 euro area countries.
February	Member States agree on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020, setting out the terms of the EU's annual budget.
March	Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union is ratified by the Croatian parliament.
April	Croatia elects first members of European Parliament.
May	The 'two-pack'—two regulations on economic governance in the euro area—is adopted, aimed at strengthening oversight of those countries' public finances.
June	EU leaders decide to open accession negotiations with Serbia, and confirm that Latvia will join the eurozone in 2014.
July	Croatia joins the EU. Lithuania takes on the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. European Parliament launches LIBE enquiry into electronic mass surveillance of EU citizens.
November	European Commission publishes the Annual Growth Survey 2013, inaugurating the 'European Semester' for economic policy co-ordination. Georgia and Moldova initial association agreements with the European Union. Ukraine's relationship with the EU is not settled, causing a crisis within the country.
December	European Border Council Surveillance System (EUROSUR) becomes operational, with cross-border crime, including human and drug trafficking, and irregular migration falling within its remit. European Council adopts the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020, to be implemented as of 1 January 2014. European Council holds a debate on the Common Security and Defence policy, the first time in five years that EU leaders have comprehensively discussed EU defence policy. European Council agrees in principle on the rules for dealing with struggling banks that would underpin a future banking union.
2014	
January	Greece takes over rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. Latvia becomes the 18th member of the euro area.
February	The president of the Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, is ousted by Parliament, following months of popular protest. The country's relationship with the EU and with Russia is a key issue.
March	The EU condemns as illegal a referendum held in Crimea by groups who want to join Russia. Organizers of the referendum claim that a move to join Russia was backed by 97% of voters. The EU does not recognize the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and it and the US impose travel bans and asset freezes on several officials from Russia and the Ukraine. The European Council meets to discuss the crisis in the Ukraine, and EU leaders meet with US president Barack Obama in Brussels a few days later to discuss international foreign policy and the crisis in Ukraine.

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April	<p>As the final part of the EU's banking union, the European Parliament adopts a set of rules on how to deal with banks in serious difficulty, protecting taxpayers from having to pay for their failure.</p> <p>Ahead of the European Parliament elections, political parties nominate their candidates for the post of Commission President.</p>
May	<p>European elections take place across the EU and 751 MEPs are elected, a third of whom challenge the mainstream pro-EU agenda. Voter turnout is 43.09%, compared with 43% for the 2009 elections.</p> <p>Presidential elections in Ukraine see victory for Petro Poroshenko with 54.7% of the vote. Poroshenko has long supported the country's pro-European movement and vows to 'bring peace to a united and free Ukraine'.</p>
June	<p>As part of the 'European Semester', the Commission makes recommendations to Member States on 2014–2015 national budgets and economic policies. G7 meets in Brussels with the crisis in Ukraine a core part of the agenda. Former Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker is nominated as President of the European Commission, with the support of 26 of the 28 EU governments.</p> <p>European Council grants Albania candidate status, and confirms that Lithuania will enter the eurozone in 2015. EU signs association agreements with Georgia, Moldova, and the Ukraine.</p>
July	<p>Italy takes on rotating presidency of the Council of the EU.</p> <p>Martin Schulz is elected as President of the European Parliament for a second term.</p> <p>European Parliament elects Jean-Claude Juncker as next President of European Commission.</p> <p>EU leaders meet in the European Council to discuss relations with Russia and the crisis in Gaza.</p>
August	<p>On 30 August, the new President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and the EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini, are appointed. EU leaders also discuss the weak economy and the situation in Ukraine, Gaza, and Iraq.</p>
September	<p>From 29 September to 7 October, the candidate commissioners as presented by incoming Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, are scrutinized by the European Parliament committees.</p> <p>On 29 September, the General Affairs Council adopts conclusions on the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.</p>
October	<p>On 20 October, the Foreign Affairs Council discuss joint strategies to contain the Ebola virus. Latest developments in Ukraine, Libya, Iraq, Syria, and the Middle East are also on the agenda.</p> <p>On 22 October, MEPs approve the new college of 27 Commissioners, as presented by its President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker, with 423 votes in favour, 209 against and 67 abstentions.</p> <p>On 24 October, EU leaders agree to the world's most ambitious 2030 climate energy policy. They also decide to increase EU financial help to €1 billion to fight Ebola and discuss the state of the European economy. Euro area leaders also meet in the Euro Summit format to discuss the euro area.</p>
November	<p>On 1 November, the Juncker Commission starts its term of office.</p> <p>On 26 November, the European Commission announces a €315 billion Investment Plan to get Europe growing again and get more people back to work.</p>
December	<p>On 15 December, the Foreign Affairs Council adopts a new strategy for Syria and Iraq.</p> <p>On 17 December, the European Parliament approves the draft EU budget for 2015 and a top-up of the 2014 one. The budget foresees €145.32 billion in</p>

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	commitments and €141.21 billion in payments for 2015, and an extra €4.25 billion to settle unpaid bills in 2014. At the first European Council chaired by Donald Tusk as President on 18 December, EU leaders discuss Europe's boosting investment, and the situation at its eastern borders.
2015	
January	On 23 January, the head of the ECB, Mario Draghi, unveils a new bond-buying plan. On 25 January, leftist leader Alexis Tsipras (Syriza) is elected new prime minister of Greece. On 29 January, the Foreign Affairs Council meets in an extraordinary session to discuss the latest escalation of violence in Ukraine. Peace negotiations between Ukraine, the rebels, Russia, and the OSCE collapse.
February	The Eurozone agrees a four-month extension to the Greek rescue package. Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France agree to end hostilities in eastern Ukraine at talks in Minsk.
April	The UK, France, Germany, US, Russia, and China conclude a framework with Iran regarding its controversial nuclear programme. On 23rd April, at a special meeting of the European Council, EU leaders agree on action in response to the 1800 lives lost in the Mediterranean as migrants attempt to reach Europe by boat. Resources for the EU's search and rescue in the central Mediterranean are tripled.
May	On 7th May, the Conservative party wins the UK general election and confirms that an 'in-out' referendum on membership of the EU will be held before the end of 2017.
June	On 18th June, Eurozone talks on the Greek debt crisis break down, leaving Greece with a full-blown banking crisis. On 30th June, Greece becomes the first country in the EU to default on its creditors as it fails to make €1.5bn payment to the IMF on time. Its second international bailout package expires on the same day.
July	On 5th July, a Greek referendum delivers a resounding 'no' vote against EC/ECB/IMF imposed austerity measures. However, on 9 July, Greece capitulates to demands from its creditors in return for a modest debt write-off. On 20 July, Greek banks reopen after three weeks of closure and the country receives a €7.2bn loan from the EU. Hungary starts to erect a razor-wire fence along its border with Serbia to halt an unprecedented flow of refugees and migrants seeking entry to the EU.
August	On 10 August, the EC approves €2.4bn in aid over six years to countries dealing with large numbers of refugees and migrants. On 20 August, Greece receives a third bailout loan of €86bn. Greek Prime Minister Tsipras resigns and calls a snap election seeking a new mandate to implement the third bailout. He is re-elected with 145 out of 300 seats.
September	German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel claims Germany is expecting one million asylum seekers in 2015, and calls for a 'common European effort' to tackle the crisis. EU leaders pledge at least €1bn in new funding to agencies aiding refugees.
November	On 5 November, the EU's executive Commission predicts that 3 million more migrants and refugees could arrive in Europe by the end of 2016. From 11–13 November, more EU countries begin erecting fences on their borders to clamp down on the number of migrants and refugees entering the country.

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	On 13 November, 130 people are killed in Islamist terrorist attacks on Paris.
December	On 22 December, the International Organization for Migration reports that over 1 million refugees and migrants have entered Europe in 2015.
2016	
January	On 22 January, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls warns that he sees the migration crisis as putting the entire EU project at risk, not only the EU's passport-free Schengen zone. On 25 January, EU leaders announce provisions for several EU states to prolong their temporary border controls for as much as two years in an attempt to stem the flow of refugees and migrants through Europe. By this point, Germany, Austria, France, Sweden, and Norway (a non-EU member) have imposed temporary border controls.
February	UK Prime Minister David Cameron agrees a draft deal aimed at keeping Britain in the EU. The deal includes an 'emergency brake' on migrant benefits and British exemption from the principle of 'ever closer union'. The deal is expected to pave the way for an in–out referendum in summer 2016. On 20 February, the referendum date of 23 June is set.
March	On 20 March, a controversial deal between the EU and Turkey, aimed to stem the flow of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, comes into effect. On 22 March, terrorist bombings at a metro station and airport kill 32 people. The attack is claimed by so-called Islamic State.
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	On 14 July, more than 80 people are killed in a terrorist attack in Nice, France. The following week, Germany sees four violent attacks.
December	On 5 December, Matteo Renzi announces his resignation as Italian Prime Minister after a defeat in a referendum to change the country's constitution. The result is seen as a victory for anti-establishment and right wing parties. Paolo Gentiloni is named as his successor on 11 December. On 19 December, 12 people are killed in a suspected terrorist attack on Christmas markets in Berlin.
2017	
January	On 3 January, Sir Ivan Rogers, British ambassador to the European Union, resigns three months before formal Brexit negotiations are set to begin. On 17 January, Antonio Tajani assumes office as President of the European Parliament.
March	On 29 March, the United Kingdom under Theresa May formally invokes Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union in a letter to the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, putting the UK officially on the path of exiting the EU by April 2019.
May	On 7 May, pro-EU centrist Emmanuel Macron wins France's presidential election confidently ahead of far-right rival Marine Le Pen.
June	On 1 June, President Donald Trump announces the U.S.'s intention to leave the Paris Climate Accord, of which the EU is a part, as soon as legally possible. On 8 June, the UK holds a snap general election resulting in Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservatives losing their majority. On 11 June, it is announced that Ukrainians can access the EU visa-free for short stays in what President Poroshenko calls a symbolic 'final breakaway'

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	<p>from Moscow.</p> <p>On 19 June, British Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, arrives in Brussels to begin negotiations for the UK's withdrawal from the EU with the EU Chief Negotiator, Michal Barnier. Brexit negotiations officially begin.</p> <p>On the same day, the Council extends the restrictive measures imposed on Crimea after the Russian annexation in 2014 for one more year.</p> <p>On 27 June, German Chancellor Angela Merkel calls on the US and the EU to resume negotiations on a free trade agreement (known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)) after the Trump administration gave clear signals of a willingness to relaunch talks.</p>
July	On 29 July, the European Commission launches an infringement procedure against Poland over parts of controversial judiciary reforms.
September	On 7 September, an independence referendum planned in the Spanish autonomous community of Catalonia is declared illegal by the Constitutional Court of Spain after a request from the Spanish government.
October	<p>On 1 October, the Catalan independence referendum is held despite the Spanish Constitutional Court's suspension. On 27 October, the Catalan parliament unilaterally declare independence from Spain to form a Catalan Republic. Catalonia as a separate state is not recognized by any country. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy dissolves the Parliament of Catalonia and schedules fresh Catalan elections.</p> <p>Eurostat releases positive findings on Eurozone growth, announcing that the economic growth rate in 2017 exceeded expectations at 2.5% and unemployment in September 8.9%, the lowest rate for nearly nine years.</p> <p>On 24 September, Germany holds its federal elections, with incumbent Chancellor Angela Merkel's CDU/CSU emerging victorious despite heavy losses. The far-right Eurosceptic AfD, previously unrepresented, becomes the third strongest party in the Bundestag. Months of difficult coalition talks follow.</p>
November	On 13 November, it is announced that European defence and foreign ministers have officially agreed to establish the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which is planned to allow countries to cooperate closely on security operation and military capacity. Frederica Mogherini describes the signing of the PESCO deal as a 'historic moment in European defence'.
December	<p>On 18 December, conservative Sebastian Kurz is sworn in as Chancellor of Austria in a coalition government with Heinz-Christian Strache, Chairman of the far-right Freedom Party. Kurz emphasizes strong connections to the Visegrád Group, particularly the Eurosceptic governments of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, arguing that Austria will serve as a bridge between Western and Central European nations within the EU.</p> <p>On 20 December, the European Commission launches proceedings under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union against Poland, saying that 'despite efforts for a constructive dialogue for 2 years, we have concluded that there is a clear risk of a serious breach of the rule of law in Poland'.</p>
2018	
January	<p>On 1 January, Bulgaria takes up the rotating six-month EU Council presidency.</p> <p>On 13 January, Portuguese Minister of Finance, Mário Centeno, takes office as President of the Eurogroup, and as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the European Stability Mechanism.</p>
February	On 2 February, Frontex launches a new EU border mission ('Operation Themis') to relieve Italy from receiving migrants from the Mediterranean Sea.

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	<p>On 3 February, a drive-by shooting occurs in the city of Macerata in Central Italy which leaves six African migrants seriously wounded. The case sparks anger and anti-immigrant sentiment ahead of the national elections.</p> <p>On 5 February, the trial of Salah Abdeslam, accused of the attempted murder of police officers as part of the November 2015 Paris attacks, begins in Belgium, with the accused refusing to answer questions.</p>
March	<p>On 4 March, Italy hold a general election. The centre-right alliance with Matteo Salvini's League as the main political force and the anti-establishment Five Star Movement led by Luigi Di Maio emerge victorious, with the centre-left coalition under Matteo Renzi coming third, resulting in a hung parliament and months of negotiations.</p> <p>On 14 March, Germany's second consecutive grand coalition government finally takes office following tense disputes.</p>
April	<p>On 8 April, Hungary's incumbent Prime Minister Victor Orbán secures a third consecutive term in office after winning a resounding victory in parliamentary elections.</p> <p>On 12 April, the European Parliament presents a report recommending the triggering of Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union against Hungary, citing serious violations of EU values.</p>
May	<p>On 16 May, EU leaders gather in Sofia for a summit to find a common path in the wake of the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. Donald Tusk voices extreme European discontent over the US decision.</p> <p>On 27 May, Austria's Chancellor Sebastian Kurz argues that Frontex border control agents should be allowed to operate in northern Africa to prevent further migration to Europe.</p>
June	<p>On 1 June, after three months of tense negotiations, Italy finally forms a novel coalition government featuring the Five Star Movement and the League, under M5S-linked independent Giuseppe Conte as Prime Minister.</p> <p>On the same day, the socialists come back to power in Spain under PSOE leader Pedro Sanchez, for the first time in seven years.</p> <p>On 18 June, the European Asylum Support Office releases data showing a 70% drop in asylum applications in Germany.</p> <p>On 29 June, EU leaders extend sanctions on Russia over the Ukraine conflict for six further months.</p>
July	<p>On 1 July, Austria takes over the EU Council presidency.</p> <p>On 2 July, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Interior Minister Horst Seehofer agree on a CDU/CSU migrant deal meant to prevent asylum seekers whose asylum procedures are the responsibility of other EU countries from entering Germany. The deal is met with criticism from German neighbour Austria, whose Chancellor Sebastian Kurz emphasizes the need to strengthen Europe's external borders.</p>