

60 YEARS OF THE ROME TREATY AND ITS ETERNAL LEGACY FOR THE EUROPEAN PROJECT

“The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of Member States, to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increase in stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living and closer relations between the States belonging to it.”

Article 2, Part 1 titled “Principles” of the Treaty of Rome

The Treaty of Rome was signed in the so-called *Eternal City* of Rome exactly sixty years ago, on **25 March 1957**. Together with the Treaty of Paris of 1951, the Rome Treaty is the most important legal basis for the modern-day European Union. This epoch-making document laid down the key foundations of the greatest integration of peoples and nations in European history that made Europe one of the most peaceful, prosperous, stable and advanced regions of the world.



Treaty of Rome Ceremony
Source: European Commission

The 60th Anniversary of the Rome Treaty is an important opportunity to remind ourselves of the original goals of European integration and the achievements the idea of united Europe has brought to our continent over the past six decades. The fundamental legacy of the Rome Treaty needs to serve the EU Member States as a recipe how to resolve the serious crises the EU is facing nowadays and reunite all Europeans for a common path towards an “ever closer union”.

A LESSON OF WAR CATASTROPHE AND THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS INTEGRATION

The idea of united Europe was born out of the ruins of the Second World War. The greatest and bloodiest conflict of human history took

sixty million human lives and devastated Europe beyond recognition in all aspects. In order to avoid any conflict among European nations in the future, the leaders of winning Allied powers considered several options for the post-war structure of Europe. General misery caused by the war cruelties and uncertainties brought up by commencing Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union

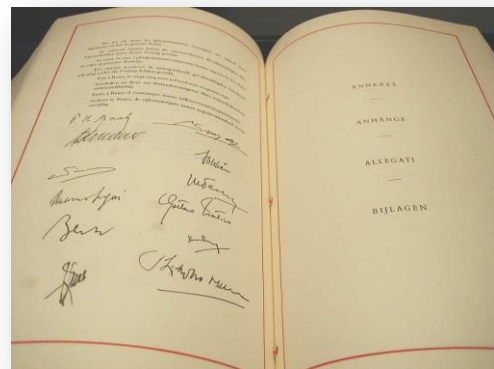
gave a significant unifying impetus to the European countries. In the late 1940s, the idea of a united Europe finally moved into its actual implementation at the political level; however, due to the division of Europe by the so-called Iron Curtain it concerned the Western European countries only. A united Western Europe appeared to be the only way how to resist the pressure from the USSR, overcome considerable economic difficulties and maintain social and political stability in the devastated continent that faced new dangers of the Cold War. Six countries – Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and West Germany – all with various internal problems, needs, priorities and goals thus decided to undermine their sovereignty, transfer some of their powers to a common political entity and decide about important political and economic issues together.

The **Schuman Declaration**, which was signed on 9 May 1950, is considered to be the first decisive step towards the integration of six European states. The plan de facto laid down the foundations for a unique European supranational organization that was not only aimed to remove the catastrophic causes of the Second World War but, more importantly, to gradually bound together all European nations in the pursuit of “ever closer union”. To put it concisely, six states opted for cooperation instead of past competition, discussions instead of disputes and integration instead of divisions that were at the roots of long centuries of the conflicts among European nations.

On the basis of this declaration, six countries signed the Paris Treaty and founded the **European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)** on 18 April 1951. The ECSC created a first limited common market for two products – coal and steel – through which six states kept strict surveillance and joint control over the coal and steel industries, two main industries necessary for armament. The war between them became not only morally unthinkable but also materially impossible.

FROM THE PARIS TREATY TO THE TREATY OF ROME

The international tensions that occurred in the autumn of 1956 by the Suez Crisis and Hungarian Revolution convinced the Western European governments to address their vulnerability in the economic and energy sector and strengthen the Community. The idea was to create a single economic area of trade in products and services over and above those already covered by the other treaties (ECSC and Euratom). This led to the decision to establish two new communities, one dedicated to the economic integration and the other focused on nuclear cooperation. The historic document known as the **Treaty of Rome** was actually composed of the two separate treaties – the **Treaty establishing European Economic Community (EEC)** and the **Treaty establishing European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)**. Both were signed in Rome on 25 March 1957 in the Capitole’s room of the Horaces and the Curiaces. The Treaties were ratified by national parliaments over the following months and they came into force on 1 January 1958. They have been amended on a number of occasions and they are still in force (in contrast with the Paris Treaty which expired in 2002, exactly 50 years after it came into effect).



Treaty of Rome
Source: European Commission

The Treaty of Rome was signed by a diverse group of visionary leaders who were united in the same target – to create a peaceful, united and prosperous Europe:

Kingdom of Belgium

Paul-Henri Spaak, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Jean-Charles Snoy et d’Oppuers, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Economic Affairs

Federal Republic of Germany

Konrad Adenauer, Federal Chancellor

Walter Hallstein, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Affairs Office

French Republic

Christian Pineau, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Maurice Faure, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Italian Republic

Antonio Segni, President of the Council of Ministers

Gaetano Martino, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Joseph Bech, President of the Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lambert Schaus, Ambassador

Kingdom of Netherlands

Joseph Luns, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Johannes Linthorst Homan, Director for European Integration at the Ministry for Economic Affairs

The Treaty of Rome aimed to strengthen the foundations of the integration and expand the fields of cooperation among six states. While the Treaty establishing Euratom extended the trade only to nuclear and fissile commodities with regards to the risk of nuclear war between USA and USSR, the EEC established the comprehensive common market that had no parallel anywhere in the world. In the Treaty, the signatory countries agreed to lay the foundations of a common market that was

supposed to improve and simplify the trade conditions and production of six Member States and serve as a step towards political integration. The Member States decided to gradually align their economic policies, dismantle all tariff barriers and customs duties between them, ensure balanced trade and fair competition, reduce economic and social differences between their regions, eliminate restrictions on international trade through a common trade policy and harmonize tax rules. Due to the extensive nature of this Treaty, the common market was set to be built up gradually over a transitional 12-year period – a customs union was achieved as the first, already in June 1968. The free movement of workers began to be applied from 1958 and the free movement of capital after 1969. The process of building a common market was completed in 1992.



Signing the Treaty of Rome
Source: European Commission

The Treaty establishing EEC also adopted a common agricultural policy, common trade policy and transport policy. It also allowed for the creation of other joint policies if the need arises in the future – this allowed the creation of joint environmental, regional, social and industrial policies in the 1970s as well as the establishment of many other common policies until today. The important goal was also to pool their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty and search for other European countries to join them in their efforts. The Treaty also established institutions – the

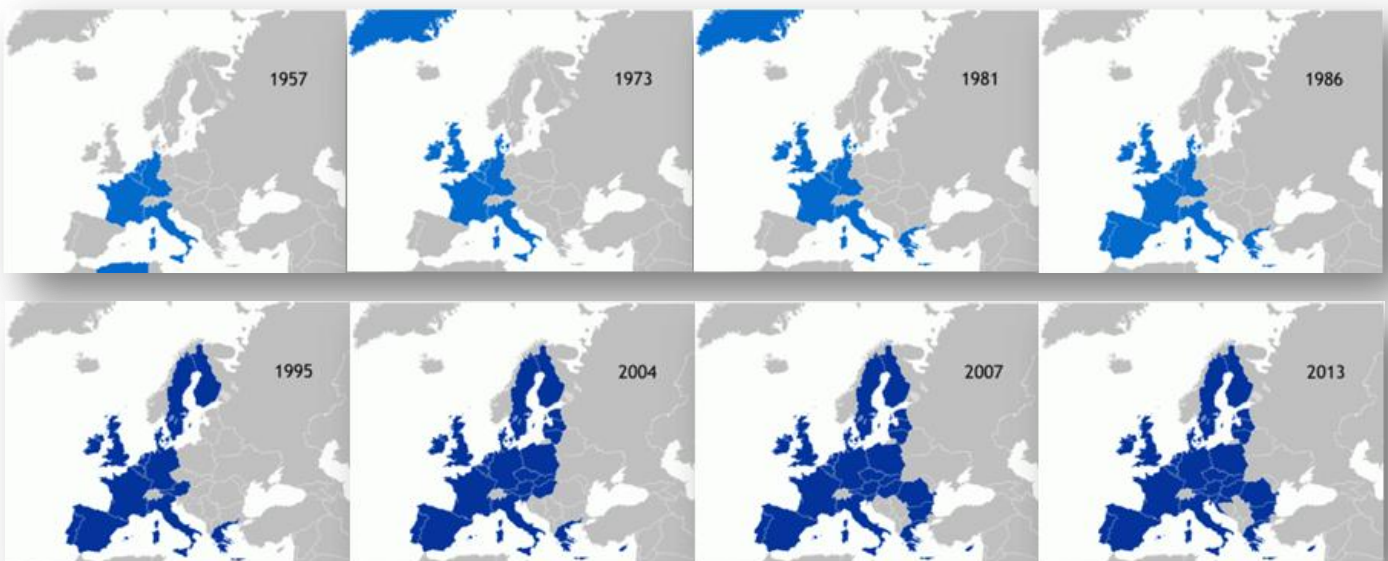
Council of Ministers, the Commission, the Parliamentary Assembly (today European Parliament) and the Court of Justice – and decision-making mechanisms which allowed to express both national interests and a joint vision. In this way, the signatories stated the political objective of a progressive political and economic integration of that day's and future Member States.

TREATY'S LEGACY

The Treaty of Rome has commenced a gradualist approach to building the EU based on the plan to gradually incorporate diverse economic sectors and establish supranational institutions with increasingly higher political competences. The Treaty has also started the process in which economic integration was paving the way to the long term objective, the political union. Hence, the document is considered to be one of the founding treaties of the European project that significantly deepened the cooperation between six European nations.

Since the Treaty of Rome, the vision of united Europe has captured other twenty-two European states and essentially Western European entity has been transformed into a pan-European organization. Three communities – ECSC, EEC and Euratom – were soon collectively and legally called the European Communities; later it was simplified to be known as the European Community (EC). In 1993, the European Community was transformed into the organization which we now call the European Union. The basic ideas of the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Rome are projected in the essence of the functioning of the European Union today.

The Founding Fathers did this significant job in the uncertain and dangerous time of the Cold War that is not far away from the political crisis we are experiencing nowadays. But now it is our turn to design the future. Today, the Member States have an obligation to demonstrate that the Union is of a real added value and all Europeans need to protect and enrich the fundamental achievements of European project.



60 years of European integration: Enlargement or “widening”
Source: European Commission

THE TREATY OF ROME LED TO THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF EUROPEAN PROJECT

GUARANTEE OF PEACE

The Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Rome commenced the longest period of peace in Europe's written history. For seventy years there has been no armed conflict among its members, which is very significant step forward for the continent marked by the centuries of wars. The European project has ensured that that military conflict among members is morally unthinkable and materially unfeasible. Nevertheless, the sacrifice of previous generations must never be forgotten – today's peace was hard-earned and must never be taken for granted.



Source: European Commission

DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

The European integration has strengthened the democratic regimes and the rule of law in all Member States. In 1957, only 12 of the present-day EU Member States were democracies – today, all 28 Member States are respected and high-advanced democratic states. The EU is thus the largest union of democracies in the world.

ENSURED HUMAN RIGHTS

The EU ensures the strict defence of human rights as well as civil, political, economic and social rights for all its citizens without exception. The EU countries also spread the respect for human rights into the world, especially in developing countries. Equality between women and men is also one of the EU's founding values.



ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY

Never before did most Europeans live on such high economic level as today. The EU membership brought an increased prosperity to all its members. The EU is one of the three largest global players for international trade (alongside USA and China), it is the world's largest exporter of manufactured goods and services, it is a global market leader for high-quality products and it is the biggest export market for around 80 countries. The EU is the world's largest source and destination of foreign direct investment. Average GDP per capita of the EU has been doubled in past twenty years and the euro is the second most important global reserve currency.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The EU is one of the most prosperous regions of the world. On key welfare indicators including poverty, inequality, health and quality of life, the EU member states are at the top of the world rankings. Without the EU, economically less advanced European states would not be able to reach so high economic growth and living standards on their own so quickly and efficiently. Thanks to the European social model there are the minimum standards for all citizens of the EU that cannot be lowered by the national governments.

FREEDOM AND OPENNESS

Freedom is one of the core values of the EU that provides citizens with freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information. In addition, Europeans enjoy four freedoms of free movement of goods, capital, service and people – thanks to them, EU citizens can live, study, work and retire anywhere within the EU. Travelling is also less bureaucratic and cheaper, roaming will be soon abolished and young Europeans can study and live in another country within the European exchange programs. As a result, Europe is the freest continent in the world.

EQUALITY AND SOLIDARITY

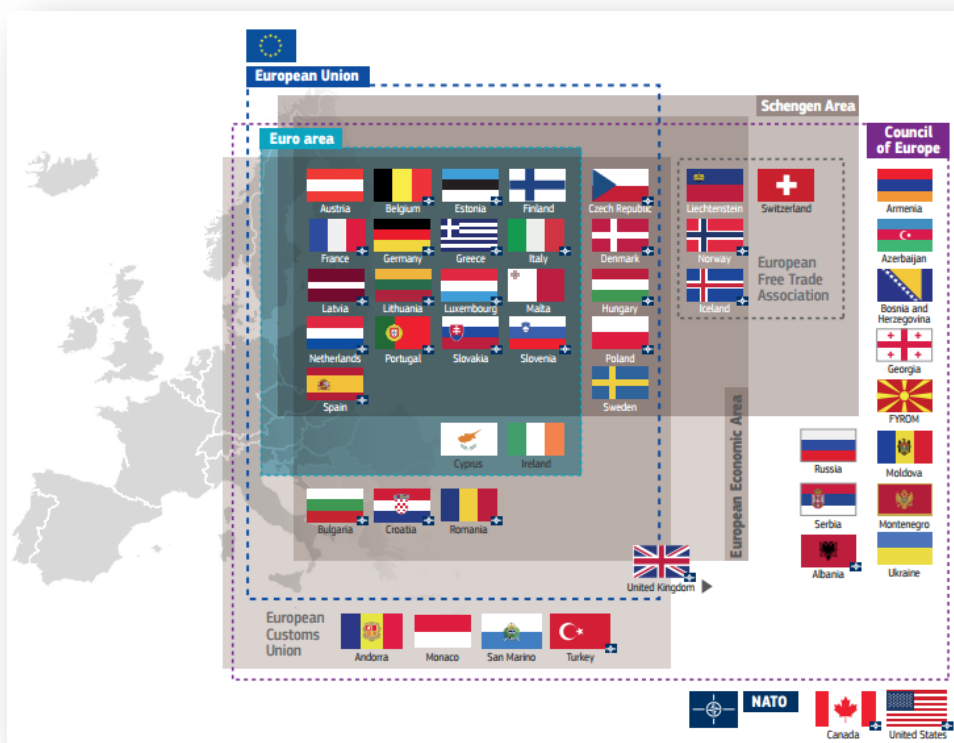
The EU has significantly helped to spread the ideas of solidarity, equality and cohabitation within all Member States within the Community. The European institutions' operation is also based on equality and solidarity. The EU has adopted a number of legislative initiatives on improving social, environmental and regional policies to reduce the disparities between richer and poorer states and regions. In ten EU Member States, EU funding accounts for more than 40 percent of total public investment.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

The EU enables the exchange of best practices, know-how and innovations in education, technologies, research and science among the EU member states. The EU also launches various programmes for research and invests millions euro to make our lives better, easier and happier. The EU is a world leader in research and innovation. Scientists, economists and authors from the EU have won the greatest number of Nobel Prizes in history for their contribution to general human advancement. In the fight against climate change, the EU has implemented a variety of projects for sustainable development and smart mobility.

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

The European states have stronger and much more decisive influence over the global affairs precisely thanks to the EU. Europe as a whole has much more decisive political voice and economic negotiating power vis-à-vis the USA, China or Russia. Without the EU, individual European states would not have necessary political influence, diplomatic capacity, economic mechanisms and industrial resources on the global stage.



60 years of European integration: Institutional integration or “deepening”
Source: European Commission

THE ROME TREATY – ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF THE EU

The European project has changed European continent for the better. Today, Europe looks as never before and Europeans enjoy the highest living standards ever. Together we are just not only stronger, more stable and decisive, but also more productive and prosperous than if we were divided.

Despite all these achievements and benefits of the united Europe, the survival of the European project is at stake nowadays. A number of severe problems such as terrorist threats, rise of populism, Brexit, massive migration and social and economic insecurity caused that the European project is currently experiencing the most serious crisis of legitimacy in its existence.

Hence, all pro-European and pro-democratic political forces in the EU need to use the fundamental legacy of the Rome Treaty for addressing the critical issues the EU is facing. In particular, the following steps are necessary:

I. EU has to respond to populism and political extremism resolutely

With populist movements arising throughout Europe, the EU has to return the trust of its citizens in EU's capacity to solve the current issues and to strengthen Europeans' trust in integration itself. Populist calls for the end of the EU are based on false claims and their political proposals are not the real solutions how to resolve the actual problems. The EU has to use all its mechanisms to explain Europeans that nation-states cannot face today's challenges, such as terrorism, migration or the negative impact of globalization, on their own. The EU has to respond to populism and political extremism much more decisively because populist political parties represent a very serious risk to peace, stability and prosperity of our continent.

II. EU has to take the result of the British referendum as a chance for democratic refoundation

For the first time, one of the Member States decided to leave the common project and this fact naturally brings many questions and uncertainties. The Britain's decision to leave the EU has to be a wake-up call and the opportunity for deeper integration of the EU-27. Although the UK will stay a close EU partner, the EU-27 needs to reach the best possible deal for the EU during the Brexit negotiations in order to prove the undeniable benefits of the European project to its citizens.

III. EU has to reinforce its security and defence system

The EU has to be able to guarantee safety for all its citizens. The Member States need to realize that they can be more secure if they create common institutions to guard the external borders and reinforce the existing framework for internal security. The EU needs to take steps towards full control of the external borders, better cooperation of intelligence agencies and fully operational Frontex. Europe also has to do more in defence cooperation and proceed towards deeper defence integration.

IV. EU has to provide more effective management of migration and refugee flows

With regards to continuing massive migration flows into the EU, the Member States have to reach a far-reaching new agreement towards effective migration management that will be designed upon each state's financial resources and absorptive potential. There is also a desperate need for the mechanism for better integration of migrants into the national systems of the EU member states as long as economic disenfranchisement is considered a chief ingredient of radicalization.

V. EU has to address social and economic insecurity and unemployment

Facing high unemployment rates and differences in living standards among European regions, the EU has to demonstrably guarantee economic and social prosperity for its citizens. It has to take steps for an active trade policy, investment support, re-industrialization and implementation of the European social model that secures the minimum social standards and observes social protection and social justice for all EU citizens.

VI. EU Institutions have to re-gain citizens' trust

EU Institutions have to work in more transparent, democratic and accountable way so they can solve problems much more effectively, re-engage with the citizens and regain general public's trust in European project. At the same time, the Institutions need to specifically clarify where they want to move the EU in the future.

VII. EU has to react to climate and environmental changes

Although the majority of Europeans still do not realize it, the climate change is one of the most serious and critical issues that endangers our world nowadays. The Member States need to pay more attention to the climate changes so we can secure safe and healthy environment for us and future European generations.

All Europeans need to bear in mind that the EU will be able to overcome these serious issues only in case of unity, peaceful coexistence and common approach of all Member States. The stakes are critically high and more than ever before Europeans need to stay united and faithful to its democratic principles. The EU is the only guarantee of peace, security, political stability and economic prosperity in Europe nowadays. The EU is simply the only option for our future and therefore we need to defend it and prevent populist politicians to destroy the values and pillars the European project has been built upon. The current EU's political representatives need to find courage of the Founding Fathers and move the EU-27 towards a kind of extensive and fruitful cooperation that has not been known before – as the Founding Fathers did on 25 March 1957. This is the essence of the *eternal* message of the Rome Treaty for the present and future of our continent.

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