

The history of
European Union:
56 year of its history

Many people think that the EU is just about money - a club for the rich countries to have a convenient trading zone. But if we think of the first purpose of the EU, we will see that it started with political origins.

Timeline:

1946: Churchill proposed "federation of European states"

1951: Six countries signed the treaty of the coal and steel union: France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg

1958: All six signed the Rome treaty and thereby created the EEC (European Economic Community)

1992. Began with Maastricht treaty, EEC has changed its name to the EU - the European Union

2002: The EURO became the new money of the cooperating E.U. countries.

Post-war Europe:

In 1946 the former British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, suggested some kind of cooperation among the European countries. The biggest challenge was political cooperation. If Europe would be controlled by a single organization, all of the countries would have to give away a part of their sovereignty. European countries were not ready for that in 1940's. So Churchill's idea of a "federation of European states" was put aside.

Coal and Steel:

The idea of the EU came to the world through the political work of two politicians, Robert Schumann and Jean Monet. In May 1950 they suggested that Germany and France should pool their coal and steel resources. The brilliant idea of Monet and Schumann was that if Germany and France could control each others access and use of coal and steel neither of the two countries would ever be able to produce weapons and get ready for a new war. Of course avoiding another war was on the top of the political agenda in postwar Europe, so the initial purpose of the EU can be traced to a truly political wish: PEACE.

In 1951 Six countries signed the treaty of the coal and steel union: France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg.

The Rome treaty:

In 1957 the six member states of the Coal and Steel Union started to regulate cooperation in agriculture, industry and trade. They were prepared to give away a limited amount of sovereignty in these areas in order to get shared power of decisions. All six signed the Rome treaty and thereby created the EEC (European Economic Community) in 1958. The duty on agricultural and industrial articles was removed among the member countries and they had a common duty on goods from countries outside the EEC. In 1962 the countries of the EEC introduced a common policy on agriculture because they hoped to be self-sufficient with agricultural commodities. Slowly the economic integration lead to a political integration as well.