


The signing of the Treaty on European Union

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The signing of the Treaty on European Union

The Treaty on European Union was the outcome of two Intergovernmental Conferences (IGC) held in Rome in 1990, one devoted to Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the other to Political Union. The first meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the Twelve held in Rome on 27 and 28 October 1990 provided the outlines of a Treaty on EMU and a Treaty on Political Union. On 14 and 15 December 1990, the Rome European Council, attended by the representatives of the governments of the Twelve, officially inaugurated the two conferences, which were tasked with amending the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC). They were to be held under the Luxembourg Presidency and then under the Dutch Presidency.

It was finally decided that the two parts negotiated separately should be combined into a single Treaty on European Union. Under the Dutch Presidency, the Maastricht European Council of 9 and 10 December 1991 finalised the Treaty, after final legal adaptations and negotiations among experts. On 3 February 1992, the Treaties establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were also amended.

Although Portugal had succeeded the Netherlands to the Presidency of the Council of the European Communities, the Dutch managed to ensure that the Treaty on European Union was signed at the border town of Maastricht on 7 February 1992 by the Foreign and Economic Affairs or Finance Ministers of the Twelve. A total of 17 protocols and, in a Final Act, 33 political declarations were annexed. The Treaty was initially scheduled to come into force on 1 January 1993 at the earliest, provided it had been ratified by all the European Community Member States. Ratification by parliaments or by referendums, however, proved more difficult than envisaged, and the Treaty of Maastricht did not come into effect until 1 November 1993.