

Fact sheet on Western European Union

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Constituent instrument of the Brussels Treaty Organisation (or Western Union)

Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence (Brussels Treaty)

Signed in Brussels on 17 March 1948

Entered into force on 25 August 1948

Constituent instrument of Western European Union (WEU)

Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence as amended by the Protocol Modifying and Completing the Brussels Treaty (Modified Brussels Treaty)

Protocol signed in Paris on 23 October 1954

Protocol entered into force on 6 May 1955

Nature: International legal agreement (multilateral treaty subject to ratification by the Member States)

Provisions of the Treaty on European Union concerning WEU

- Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992 (Article J.4 of the TEU) and revised by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam (Article J.7, now Article 17 of the TEU) then by the 2001 Treaty of Nice
- Declaration (No 30) on Western European Union, annexed to the Final Act of the Treaty of Maastricht
- Declaration (No 3) on Western European Union, annexed to the Final Act of the Treaty of Amsterdam
- Protocol on Article J.7 of the Treaty on European Union, annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam
- Protocol (No 11) on Article 42 of the Treaty on European Union, annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon of 13 December 2007
- Statement by the Ten on the dissolution of Western European Union, 31 March 2010

Member States

Founding Member States of Western Union:

- Belgium
- France
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- United Kingdom

Conditions for accession

Being a State

- inspired by the same ideals and animated by the like determination as the contracting parties (preamble to the Modified Brussels Treaty)
- having been invited to accede to the Brussels Treaty on conditions to be agreed between the contracting parties and the State so invited (Article XI of the Treaty)

General objectives

- To preserve the principles of democracy, personal freedom and political liberty, the constitutional traditions and the rule of law, which are their common heritage (preamble to the Treaty)
- To promote the unity and to encourage the progressive integration of Europe (preamble to the Treaty)
- To strengthen peace and security and promote unity and encourage the progressive integration of Europe and closer cooperation between the contracting parties and with other European organisations (Article VIII of the Treaty)

Specific objectives in the field of military cooperation

— To afford assistance to each other, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, in maintaining international peace and security and in resisting any policy of aggression
(preamble to the Treaty)

— If any of the contracting parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, to afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations
(Article V of the Treaty)

Specific objectives in the fields of economic, social and cultural cooperation

— To cooperate loyally and to coordinate their efforts to create in Western Europe a firm basis for European economic recovery
(preamble to the Treaty)

— To unite in order to promote the economic recovery of Europe
(Article I of the Treaty)

— To make every effort in common, both by direct consultation and in specialised agencies, to promote the attainment of a higher standard of living by their peoples and to develop on corresponding lines the social and other related services of their countries
(Article II of the Treaty)

— To make every effort in common to lead their peoples towards a better understanding of the principles which form the basis of their common civilisation and to promote cultural exchanges by conventions between the contracting parties or by other means
(Article III of the Treaty)

Activities

— Economic cooperation (activity taken over by the OEEC from 1948, then the OECD; the EEC from 1973, then the EC/EU)

— Social and cultural cooperation (activities transferred to the Council of Europe in 1960)

— Collective defence, exercised at operational level in the framework of NATO (from 1949)

— Determining and monitoring the scale of the forces of the Member States placed under the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) in peacetime on the mainland of Europe (Protocol No II to the Treaty)

— Control of armaments: definition of armaments not to be manufactured; definition of armaments to be controlled (atomic, biological and chemical weapons) and determination of the level of stocks allowed (Protocol No III to the Treaty)

— Consultation with regard to any situation which may constitute a threat to peace, in whatever area this threat should arise, or a danger to economic stability (Article VIII of the Treaty)

— Conflict prevention and crisis management tasks (1992 Petersberg Declaration), incorporated into the Treaty on European Union by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam (Petersberg tasks)

Bodies

Statutory bodies: Council (Article VIII of the Treaty), Assembly (Article IX of the Treaty), Secretariat-General (Article II of Protocol No IV)

Subsidiary bodies concerning armament:

— Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA) (1955–1985) (Protocol No IV)

— Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) (1955–1985)

— Western European Armaments Group (WEAG) (1993–2005)

— Western European Armaments Organisation (WEAO) (1996–2006)

Other subsidiary bodies:

— Planning Cell (1992–2001)

— Situation Centre (1996–2001)

— Military Staff (1998–2001)

— Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (1990–2001)

— Satellite Centre (1993–2001)

Material resources

- Permanent international staff (civil servants)
- Experts on mission for the organisation
- Financial contributions from the Member States

Official languages

French and English

Seat

Brussels (Secretariat-General, Council) (since 1 January 1993, previously London)
Paris (Assembly)

Legal personality

Yes (Article 3 of the Agreement on the Status of Western European Union)

Classification of the organisation

According to its composition: a regional organisation (Europe)

According to its areas of activity: a security organisation

According to its functions: a consultation organisation; a management organisation (provided services to the Member States until 2001)

According to its working method: an intergovernmental cooperation organisation

According to its type of cooperation: an operational cooperation organisation (joint actions in the framework of concrete operations until 2001); a residual cooperation organisation (since 2001); closure of the organisation in late June 2011.