

The European Union

The European Union was founded to boost trade, political and social co-operation between its members.



The Treaty of Rome was signed in Rome on 25th March 1957 and it is considered as the foundation act of the European Community as it established the **European Economic Community (EEC)**. The Treaty was signed by France, Germany, Italy and Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg) to create a common market between states.

On 7th February 1992, the members of the European Community met in Maastricht (Netherlands) to sign the **Maastricht Treaty** or **The Treaty on the European Union** which founded the **European Union** and its main structure. The Treaty was then reinforced on 1st November 1993, in Maastricht, where the *European Council* met. The treaty expanded the competences of the EEC/EU and led to the creation of the European currency, the **Euro (€)**.

On 13th December 2007, the member states signed the **Lisbon Treaty**, which came into force in 2009 and amended the Maastricht Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty established a more centralised leadership and a simplified process for enacting new policies in foreign affairs.

The members that today compose the EU are 27, as UK decided to leave the European Union with a national referendum about *Brexit* (abbreviation for British exit) on 23rd June 2016 that approved the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from EU starting from 31st January 2020.



On 1st January 1999, eleven European decided to enter the **Economic and Monetary Union**. The national currencies of these countries turned into a single currency, the **Euro**. The notes and coins for the old currencies, however, continued to be used until new notes and coins were introduced on 1st January 2002.

Today, 19 of the 27 EU member states form the **Eurozone**.

EU States	Year of entry	Currency
Belgium	1958	€
France		€
Italy		€
Germany		€
Luxemburg		€
Netherlands		€
Denmark	1973	Danish kroner
Ireland		€
United Kingdom (exit 31 st January 2020)		British pound
Greece	1981	€
Portugal	1986	€
Spain		€
Austria	1995	€
Finland		€
Sweden		Swedish krona
Cyprus		€
Czech Republic	2004	
Estonia		€
Hungary		Hungarian forint
Latvia		€
Lithuania		€
Malta		€
Poland		Polish zloti
Slovakia		€
Slovenia		€
Bulgaria		2007
Romania	Romanian leu	
Croatia	2013	Croatian kuna



1 Fill the chart below with the following events in the correct chronological order. Complete it with the correct date.
 The birth of the Economic Monetary Union ■ The Treaty of Lisbon ■ The treaty of Maastricht ■ The introduction of Euro coins and notes ■ The referendum on Brexit ■ The Treaty of Rome

Event	Date
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	



2 Read this text and say if the sentences are true or false. Correct the false ones.

Brexit

Brexit is an abbreviation for “British exit”, referring to the referendum on June 23rd 2016 when the UK decided to leave the European Union. The results were surprising and alarmed global markets, causing the British pound to fall to its lowest level against the dollar in 30 years. Former Prime Minister David Cameron, who called the referendum and campaigned for the U.K. to remain in the EU, announced his resignation the following day. Theresa May, who replaced Cameron as leader of the Conservative Party and prime minister, stepped down as party leader voluntarily on June 7th, 2019 after strong pressure to resign and because her effort to negotiate the deal between the EU and the House of Commons failed three times. The following month, Boris Johnson, a former Mayor of London, foreign minister, and editor of *The Spectator* newspaper, was elected prime minister.

Johnson, a hardline Brexit supporter, campaigned to leave the EU by the October deadline “do or die” and said he was prepared to leave the EU without a deal. U.K. and EU negotiators agreed on a new divorce deal on Oct. 17th.

The UK was expected to leave the EU by Oct. 31st, 2019, but the UK Parliament asked the government for an extension to the deadline and also delayed a vote on the new deal. Boris Johnson then called for a general election. In the December 12th election, the third general election in less than five years, Johnson’s Conservative Party won a huge majority of 364 seats in the House of Commons out of the 650 seats. This was possible even if the Conservative Party had won only 42% of the vote because their opponents were fractured into several different parties.

Brexit took place at 11pm Greenwich Time, Jan. 31st, 2020

Adapted from: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brexit.asp>

1. The results of the 2016 referendum on Brexit did not frighten the global market.
2. After the vote, the British pound raised up to its highest level against the dollar.
3. Prime Minister Cameron held a campaign to remain in the EU.
4. Boris Johnson replaced David Cameron as Prime Minister.
5. Theresa May was the leader of the Labour Party.
6. Boris Johnson was a former mayor of London.
7. Boris Johnson was a strong Brexit supporter.
8. On December 2019, the U.K. Conservative Party won the elections.



3 Answer the questions.

1. What was the original intention behind the idea of the European Union?
2. Which were the states that signed the Treaty of Rome?
3. What did the Lisbon Treaty establish?
4. Which was the treaty that founded the fundamental structure of the EU?
5. How many countries originally entered the Economic Monetary Union?