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Research Guide Series

The European Union

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European Union

The European Union was originally founded in 1951 as The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). These member nations were Italy, Belgium, France, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. The alliance was formed in reaction to the Second World War, and member countries hoped that greater political and economic cooperation would help maintain peace in the region. The European Coal and Steel Community soon realised the benefits and success of their collaboration, and began to co-operate together in other economic areas. In 1957 the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Economic Community (EEC) was formed. The main principle behind the European Economic Community was to make trade between member nations easier. In 1992 the Treaty of Maastricht was set up, which outlined co-operation between member states on new issues, such as defence and justice, and also established the European Union (EU). Since its establishment, the European Union's membership has dramatically increased, and today there are 27 member states, with several states as candidate and potential candidate countries. The European Union has not advanced as significantly in creating a common foreign and security policy, compared to the advances the alliance has made in forging a single currency and a single market. Since 1954 attempts have been made to unify policies and approaches to defence. However, many have failed and negotiations have often proved very difficult. However, in 1992 the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established, and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was formed out of the CFSP. Since its establishment, the ESDP has conducted the majority of its operations in the former Yugoslavia. The European Union acknowledges that negotiation between the 27 members' on the area of defence and security often proves difficult. However, member nations recognise the importance of making the CFSP a success, given the increasing threat of international terrorism.¹

This bibliography has been designed to provide a guide as to where to find information on the European Union. Please note that the list of references below is a selection of the more relevant titles and information on the subject. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive but is an introductory guide to some of the resources available.

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