International Relations – The EU

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

International Relations – The EU

By 1945, Europe was in a bad way with 25 million refugees, and commerce, industry and transport almost completely destroyed. In 1948, the governments of Belgium (be), the Netherlands (ne) and Luxembourg (lux) formed the Benelux Union with the aim to more closely integrate the three countries via people, capital and goods. That same year, 16 states set up the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) to oversee the distribution of Marshall Aid as provided by the US to help rebuild Western Europe. Also that year, the Council of Europe was formed. It contained nominees from national parliaments and met three or four times a year at Strasbourg. They were simply a debating forum where politicians from different countries could exchange ideas. In 1951, France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) whereby they agreed to pool their coal and steel industries. In March 1957, the six ECSC members signed the Treaty or Rome. This established the European Economic Community (EEC) which was a common market thereby allowing free movement of capital, labour and goods between the member states. A Common Agricultural Practice (CAP) and a Common Transport Policy (CTP) were implemented. Structures such as the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice was established. In January 1973, Britain, Denmark and Ireland joined the EEC, Greece joined in 1981, Spain and Portugal joined in 1986 and Austria, Finland and Sweden joined in 1995. The Maastricht Treaty, or the Treaty of the European Union came into effect in November 1993. The treaty aimed to increase co-operation and integration between member states, particularly through the implementation of the common currency – euro. Since 1993, the community has been called the European Union. The EU created a vast new market, with increasing trade and shared resources.

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