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Treaty of Lisbon Clears the Way for a More Efficient, More Democratic, and More Secure European Union

On October 2, 2009, Irish voters went to the polls for the second time in a referendum to determine the fate of the Treaty of Lisbon. After receiving assurances from the EU on areas of concern – including social and ethical issues, corporate tax rates, military neutrality, and representation on the European Commission – more than 67 percent of Irish voters endorsed the Treaty. All Member States have now democratically approved the Lisbon Treaty, either by popular or by parliamentary vote, as determined by each individual Member State; the Czech Republic is the only country still in the process of finalizing ratification.

Originally signed by all 27 EU Member States on December 13, 2007, the Treaty of Lisbon modernizes the EU's operations, reinforces its capacity to take action, enhances democratic processes within the EU, and gives the EU a single voice in external relations. It improves the EU's ability to partner with others, including the U.S., to address global and regional concerns.

More than a half century after the formation of the European Communities, the precursor to today's EU, membership has grown from six to 27 countries. The programs and procedures that were designed for a much smaller EU – and one that was not facing

today's global challenges of climate change, a global recession, or international cross-border crime – no longer suffice. The Treaty of Lisbon results from years of discussions among Member States about the best way to prepare for the challenges of the 21st century.

The Treaty of Lisbon increases the operational efficiency of the EU and its institutions, addresses citizens' priorities, gives them a greater say in European policies, and legally guarantees citizens' fundamental rights. The treaty also designates a new high-level foreign policy official to boost the EU's global profile and presence and strengthen coherence in external actions, including diplomacy, security, trade, and humanitarian aid.

The Lisbon Treaty amends the EU's two current core treaties, the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community. The amendments end the current distinction between the European Union and the European Community, providing the EU with a single legal personality which will enable the Union to conclude international agreements and join international organizations. The Lisbon Treaty also establishes a clear division of labor between the European and national levels and protects the rights of each Member State, especially in sensitive areas such as taxation and defense.



Why Lisbon?

The Treaty of Lisbon is designed to make the EU:

- **More efficient**, through simplified decision-making and a new full-time President of the European Council who will serve for a term of two and a half years, renewable once.
- **More democratic**, by offering a stronger say for national parliaments and the European Parliament, simpler voting in the European Council, a Citizens' Initiative allowing EU citizens to petition for legislation, and the legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- **More transparent**, through a clear division of responsibilities between European and national authorities and public deliberations by the Council of the EU on legislative matters.
- **More united** and visible on the world stage, thanks to the new inter-institutional High Representative for the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/European Commission Vice-President, and a single legal personality allowing the EU to act as one when signing international agreements.
- **More secure**, through easier, faster decision-making and more cooperation in areas like terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, climate change and energy security.

Landmarks in European Integration

1951	Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community.
1957	Treaties of Rome establishing the European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy Community.
1986	Single European Act.
1992	Treaty of Maastricht.
1997	Treaty of Amsterdam.
2001	Treaty of Nice.
2007	Treaty of Lisbon is signed by the 27 Member States.
2007–2009	Treaty of Lisbon obtains parliamentary approval in 26 out of 27 Member States.
October 2, 2009	Successful referendum in Ireland.

Sharing and Clarifying Responsibility between the EU and Member States

The Lisbon Treaty defines the limits of the EU's powers more clearly than before, and clarifies which powers belong to the EU, which powers belong to the Member States, and which powers are shared. The EU is only able to exercise those powers that have been conferred on it by the Member States; all other powers continue to rest with the individual countries that make up the EU.

- The EU has exclusive jurisdiction over areas such as antitrust rules, monetary policy of the euro area, and trade.
- Member States have primary responsibility in fields such as health care delivery, education, and industry.
- The EU and the Member States share jurisdiction over areas such as the internal market, agriculture, transport, the environment, and energy.

The Lisbon Treaty also reaffirms and updates many of the economic provisions included in earlier EU treaties, and includes a number of important new fields, encompassing security and defense, and justice and crime.

Economic Policy

The euro is now the currency of 16 Member States, and the Treaty of Lisbon confirms the commitment to achieving Economic and Monetary Union with the euro as the EU's currency.

The Treaty also formalizes the position of the European Central Bank by making it an institution of the European Union.

Security and Defense Policy

The Lisbon Treaty more clearly defines the EU's role in the area of common foreign and security policy. To date, missions which the EU has undertaken outside its own territory have been for the purpose of peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and strengthening international security and the rule of law. The Treaty of Lisbon extends the EU's role to include disarmament operations, military advice and assistance, and helping to restore stability after conflicts.

By ratifying the Lisbon Treaty, Member States agree to make available to the EU the civil and military capability necessary to implement a common security and defense policy. Decisions on defense issues will continue to need unanimous approval of the 27 EU Member States.

The Treaty of Lisbon also defines the role of the European Defense Agency; provides for enhanced cooperation between Member States in the area of defense; and introduces a voluntary solidarity clause when a Member State is the victim of a terrorist attack or a natural or man-made disaster.

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“[With the Lisbon Treaty]...we will have the tools needed to deliver a Europe fully grounded in a firm democratic basis, a Europe with the right mix of institutions to realize change, and a Europe able to play its full role on the global stage.”

— José Manuel Barroso,
President of the European Commission

Justice and Crime

The Lisbon Treaty contains important new provisions strengthening the EU's ability to fight international cross-border crime, illegal immigration, and trafficking of people, arms and drugs. It provides for greater transparency, a strengthened role of the European Parliament and the Court of Justice, and more efficient decision-making processes, while respecting the different legal systems and traditions of Member States.

The Lisbon Treaty recognizes the rights, freedoms, and principles set out in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights and makes the Charter legally binding.



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The EU's Aims and Values

The Lisbon Treaty clearly sets out the European Union's aims and values of peace, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, equality, rule of law and sustainability.

The Treaty of Lisbon pledges that the European Union will:

- Offer citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers
- Work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, with a high level of protection of the environment
- Combat social exclusion and discrimination and promote social justice and protection
- Promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States
- Remain committed to economic and monetary union with the euro as its currency
- Uphold and promote the European Union's values in the wider world and contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the earth, solidarity and respect among peoples, free and fair trade, and the eradication of poverty
- Contribute to the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as the strict observance and development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter

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