Headquarters: 2, rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.
Website: http://www.oecd.org.
Secretary-General: Donald J. Johnston (Canada).

Publications. Activities of OECD (annual); The Agricultural Outlook 1997-2001 (annual); Energy Balances (quarterly); Energy Technologies for the 21st Century; Ethics in the Public Sector; Financial Market Trends (3 a year); Foreign Trade Statistics (monthly); Globalisation of Industry; Higher Education Management (3 a year); Main Developments in Trade (annual); Main Economic Indicators (monthly); Microfinance for the Poor?: OECD Observer (bi-monthly); OECD Economic Outlook (2 a year); OECD Economic Surveys of Member Countries (annual); OECD Employment Outlook (annual); Oil, Gas, Coal and Electricity Statistics (quarterly statistics); Quarterly Labour Force Statistics: Science, Technology, Industry Review (2 a year); Short-term Economic Indicators: Transition Economies (quarterly).

Further Reading

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

Origin. The Union is founded on the existing European communities set up by the Treaties of Paris (1951) and Rome (1957), supplemented by revisions, the Single European Act in 1986, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union in 1992, and the draft Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997.

History. On 19 Sept. 1946, in Zurich, Winston Churchill called for a ‘united states of Europe’. Two years later, the Congress of Europe (the meeting in The Hague of nearly 1,000 Europeans from 26 countries calling for a united Europe) resulted in the birth in 1949 of the Council of Europe, a European assembly of nations whose aim (Art. 1 of the Statute) was: ‘to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage’.

On 18 Apr. 1951, subsequent to a proposal by the French foreign minister Robert Schuman (Schuman Declaration), Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The treaty provided for the pooling of coal and steel production and was regarded as a first step towards a united Europe. Encouraged by the success of the ECSC, plans were laid down for the establishment of 2 more communities. The European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) were subsequently created under separate treaties signed in Rome on 25 March 1957. The treaties provided for the establishment by stages of a common market with a customs union at its core, the approximation of economic policies, and the promotion of growth in the nuclear industries for peaceful purposes.

To this end, Euratom was awarded monopoly powers of acquisition of fissile materials for civil purposes (it is not concerned with the military uses of nuclear power). Subsequently, the various powers of the 3 communities (ECSC, EAEC, EEC, sometimes referred to collectively as the European Community or EC) were transferred by a treaty signed in Brussels in 1965 to a single Council and single Commission of the European Communities, today the core of the EU. The Commission is advised on matters relating to EAEC by a Scientific and Technical Committee.

Single European Act. The enlarging of the Community resulted in renewed efforts to promote European integration, culminating in the signing in Dec. 1985 of the Single European Act. The SEA represented the first major revision of the Treaties of Rome and provided for greater involvement of the European Parliament in the decision-making process.

Maastricht Treaty on European Union. Further amendments were agreed at the Maastricht Summit of Dec. 1991 in the draft Treaty on European Union whereby moves to a common currency were agreed subject to specific conditions (including an opt-out clause for the UK) and the social dimension was recognized in a protocol (not applicable to the UK) allowing member states to use EC institutions for this purpose. Ratification by member states of the Maastricht Treaty proved unexpectedly controversial. In June 1992, the Danish electorate in a referendum voted against it, then reversed the decision in a second referendum in May 1993. Ratification was finally completed during 1993, with the UK ratifying on 2 Aug., and the European Union (EU) officially came into being on 1 Nov. that year.

Further Enlargement. On 16 July 1997, Jacques Santer presented Agenda 2000, the European Commission's detailed strategy for consolidating the Union through enlargement as far eastwards as the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. It recommended the early start of accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia under the provision of Article 0 of the Maastricht Treaty whereby 'any European State may apply to become a member of the Union' (subject to the Copenhagen Criteria set by the European Council at its summit in 1993). The first accession could be as early as 2001 though Agenda 2000 assumes 2003 to be more likely.

Meanwhile, other central and eastern European applicants (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia) enjoy associate agreements to help speed up their preparations for membership. Applications to join the EU have been received by Cyprus (already favourably received), Turkey, Malta and Switzerland, and the Prince of Liechtenstein has made it known that he wishes his government to apply.

Objectives. The ultimate goal of the EU is 'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen'. Priorities include the implementation of the Treaty of Amsterdam (new rights for citizens, freedom of movement, strengthening the institutions of the EU, employment); economic and monetary union; further expansion of the scope of the Communities; implementation of a common foreign and security policy; and development in the fields of justice and home affairs.

Members. As at Jan. 1998: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Structure. The institutional arrangements of the EU provide for an independent policy-making executive with powers of proposal (European Commission), various consultative and advisory bodies, and a decision-making body drawn from the Governments (Council of Ministers).

Website: http://www.europa.eu.int.

1. European Commission consists of 20 members appointed by the member states to serve for 5 years. The President of the Commission is selected by a consensus of prime ministers and serves a 5-year term. In addition to its power of proposal, the Commission acts as the EU executive body and as guardian of the Treaties. In this it has the right of initiative (putting proposals to the Council of Ministers for action) and of execution (once the Council has decided); and it can take the other institutions or individual countries before the European Court of Justice should any of these renge upon its responsibilities. Decisions on legislative proposals made by the Commission are taken in the Council of the European Union. Members of the Commission swear an oath of independence, distancing themselves from partisan