

## Treaty of Maastricht

Came into force 1 November 1993

### New governance

Before, most decisions were made through the institutions of the European Community. Under the treaty, a number of areas will be handled between governments.



The new governance framework is characterised as having three pillars:

- The European Community.
- Common Foreign and Security Policy
- Justice and Home Affairs

The European community pillar continues to do its business on a community basis, that is, through the supra national institutions of, principally, the Commission, the Parliament, the Council and the Court of Justice.

The other two pillars do their business on an intergovernmental basis.

The pillar of Justice and Home Affairs covers law enforcement, criminal justice, asylum and immigration.

### New powers for the Parliament

A new process for making laws gives more powers to the Parliament. Parliament will have powers of co-decision, including the right of veto, in the major sectors of internal market legislation, consumer protection and the environment.

### Paving the way for the single currency

Criteria have been defined for economic convergence among Member States, paving the way for the introduction of the single currency. These relate to inflation, government finance, exchange rate and long term interest rates.

The timetable for the introduction of the currency begins with the fixing of exchange rates. The change over to the new currency will be on either December 31, 1997 or January 1, 1999.

### New institutions

Among the new institutions established are:

- The Office of the European Ombudsman to handle citizen complaints
- The Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee acting in an advisory capacity to the Commission and the Council
- The European Investment Bank
- The European Central Bank, the institution charged with managing the single currency
- The Committee of Permanent Representatives within the Council of Ministers, responsible for preparing the work of the Council.

## Subsidiarity

The concept of subsidiarity has been agreed that limits the powers of the European Union. The concept is set out in the Treaty as follows:

‘The Community takes action in areas that do not fall within its exclusive competence only if and in so far as the objectives of the action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States.....’.

## Citizens of Europe

The Treaty establishes the status of Citizenship of the Union with the rights to

- Move freely within the Community subject to Community laws requiring health insurance and no requirement for social assistance
- Vote and stand as a candidate in local and European elections in any Member State based on residency
- Protection in a non EU country by the consular authorities of any Member State that is represented in that country
- Bring complaints about maladministration before the European Ombudsman

For full text of the treaty see

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002M/pdf/12002M\\_EN.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002M/pdf/12002M_EN.pdf)