EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The European Council

50 years
of summit meetings

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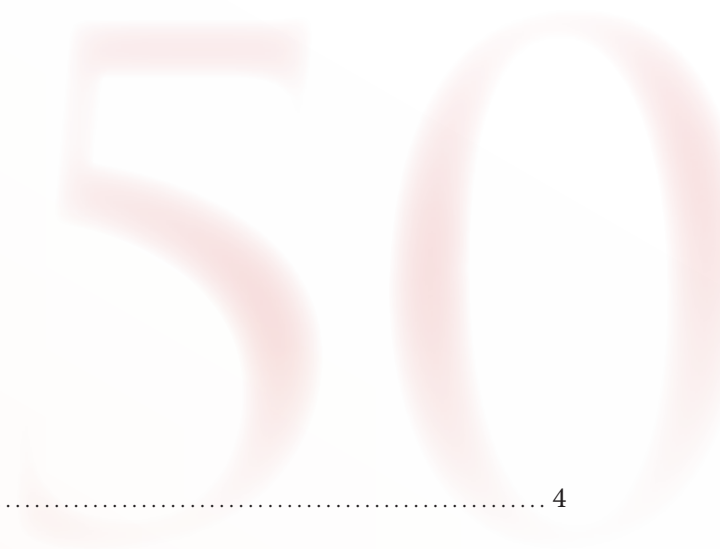http://www.consilium.europa.eu/infopublic

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Contents

Foreword

This booklet traces the origin and history of the European Council. It was produced as a supplement to the poster for the historical series (archives): 'The European Council — an institution at the summit of the European Union'.

Taking as its starting point the first summit meeting in Paris in 1961, it describes how the European Council developed in terms of how it operates, its role and mandate, up to the point where it became a fully fledged institution with the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon.

There is a complete list of all meetings of the European Council and all summit meetings since 1961 at the end of this booklet.

The booklet is aimed at academics and researchers but also at everybody with a particular interest in the history of European integration.

If you like, you can e-mail comments or suggestions to us at: dgf2.transparency@consilium.europa.eu.

Introduction

The Heads of State or Government of the six Member States of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) met on 19 and 20 February 1957 in Paris, at the invitation of the President of the French Council of Ministers, Guy Mollet, to iron out the remaining problems with the drafting of the future Treaties of Rome.

After the Treaties of Rome came into force, the idea of meeting at the top level was put forward again by President Charles de Gaulle. He went on to host the first summit meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the six Member States of the European Communities in February 1961 in Paris.

In its 50 years of existence since that first summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, the European Council has gradually developed from being an occasional event to its present status as an institution of the European Union. This anniversary spurs us to look back briefly over the history of this new institution, which from its beginnings has been at the centre of the major decisions taken by Member States about their integration. That story reflects that of the European Union as a whole: its policies and ambitions, its crises and progress.

Summit meetings

Held in **Paris** in February 1961, the purpose of the first summit was 'to seek the methods by which closer political cooperation could be organised' ([1]). The fact that it was at the level of Heads of State or Government made it possible to address big issues not provided for by the Paris and Rome Treaties, such as certain aspects of relations with third countries.

At the July 1961 **Bonn** summit, the Six explored the idea of deeper political cooperation and declared that: 'the Heads of State or Government […] have decided […] to hold at regular intervals meetings whose aim will be to compare their views, to concert their policies and to reach common positions in order to further the political union of Europe […]' ([2]).

However, during that period, developments towards a possible political union were faced with an unfavourable climate, marked in particular by the failure of the 'Fouchet plans' ([3]) of 1961 and 1962, the disagreements of 1963 and 1967 on the first enlargement and the 'empty chair' crisis of 1965 and 1966, when France did not participate in the meetings of the Council or of Council bodies.

In this climate, the Heads of State or Government stopped meeting until May 1967, when the **Rome** summit was the occasion for formal celebration of the 10th anniversary of the signing of the EEC and Euratom Treaties.

The summit at **The Hague** in December 1969, in which the Commission participated for the first time, saw the Community relaunched. The decisions taken at that summit opened the way to, among other things: the adoption of a decision that gave the Community its own

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[1]   Summit press release.

[2]   Official communiqué from the summit.

[3]   Christian Fouchet was the chairman of the committee set up by the February 1961 Paris summit to investigate problems concerning European cooperation and instructed by the Heads of State or Government at the July 1961 Bonn summit 'to submit to them proposals on the means which will as soon as possible enable a statutory character to be given to the union of their peoples' (official statement, Bonn, 18 July 1961).

financial resources; the launch of foreign policy cooperation (European political cooperation initiated by the first 'Davignon report'); and the accession of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. These steps forward were known collectively as 'completion, deepening and enlargement'. The three new members were invited to take part in the summit held in Paris in October 1972, although their official accession took place only in January 1973.

Work session, Paris, 9–10 December 1974

The beginnings of the European Council

Following the **Copenhagen** summit (December 1973), which made provision for summits to be held whenever necessary, the **Paris** summit of December 1974, hosted by President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, created the European Council.

'The need for an overall approach to the internal problems involved in achieving European unity and the external problems facing Europe' [4] was the basis for its creation. Thus the role given to the European Council was to provide political impetus in the Community and in political cooperation. Accompanied by foreign ministers, the Heads of State or Government would meet thereafter 'three times a year and whenever necessary' [5].

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Family photo, Dublin, 10–11 March 1975

[4]   Final communiqué of the Paris summit.

[5]   Ibid.

The European Council met for the first time in March 1975 in **Dublin**.

Although the European Council did not have any legal basis in the treaties, its role in moving the European project forward was confirmed in the 1980s, when Europe faced blockages in relation to its budget and to the issue of agriculture. Thus, the **Fontainebleau** European Council of June 1984 succeeded in unblocking the situation, adopting a package of measures addressing those fields. In addition, it asked an ad hoc committee [6] to 'make suggestions for the improvement of the operation of European cooperation in both the Community field and that of political [...] cooperation' [7].

The Committee's report was debated at the **Milan** European Council in June 1985, which decided by a majority to convene an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to revise the treaties, especially with regard to the way the Community institutions operated and to freedom of movement, and to draft a text on common foreign and security policy.

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[6]   The 'Dooge Committee', sometimes referred to as Spaak II, alluding to the committee set up by the Messina conference of 1955.

[7]   Conclusions of the European Council of Fontainebleau, Presidency conclusions.

The European Council in the treaties

The Single European Act

The results of the IGC's work were the focus of discussions at the **Luxembourg** European Council of December 1985, which achieved a political agreement that opened the way for the adoption of the Single European Act. The Act, which came into force on 1 July 1987, combined in a single document some changes to the Community treaties and a text on cooperation in the area of foreign policy.

The Single European Act gave the European Council a legal treaty basis, enshrining its existence and defining its composition: 'The European Council shall bring together the Heads of State or of Government of the Member States and the President of the Commission of the European Communities. They shall be assisted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and by a Member of the Commission. The European Council shall meet at least twice a year.'

Although its powers are not defined in the Single European Act, the European Council continues to contribute to the most important developments in the construction of Europe.

So it was with the moves towards the creation of economic and monetary union, in which a decisive role was played by a number of European Councils such as that of **Hanover** in June 1988.

The Treaty of Maastricht

The **Strasbourg** European Council of December 1989 set the launch of an IGC on economic and monetary union for December 1990. It was followed by the **Dublin** European Council in April 1990, which launched the preparations for an IGC on political union. Both IGCs began in the margins of the **Rome** European Council in December 1990. The **Maastricht** European Council in December 1991 achieved an agreement on the new Treaty, which would cover both these fields in the same text.

The Maastricht Treaty, which was signed on 7 February 1992, came into force on 1 November 1993 and created the European Union, based on an enlarged Community pillar, covering among other things the creation of economic and monetary union, and two new pillars:

common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs (JHA).

In addition, the Treaty addressed the European Council's role in interinstitutional relations. It formalised the practice by which the European Council was presided over by the Head of State or Government of the country holding the Presidency of the Council. Furthermore, in keeping with the increase in the European Parliament's powers, the Treaty provided that the European Council must submit a report to the Parliament following each of its meetings and an annual written report on the progress made by the Union.

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First European Council after the entry into force of the Single European Act, Copenhagen, 4–5 December 1987

Finally, the Maastricht Treaty began to clarify the powers of the European Council: 'The European Council shall provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and shall define the general political guidelines thereof.' The defining by the European Council of broad economic policy guidelines is an expression of this role.

The Amsterdam and Nice Treaties

After the **Turin** European Council of March 1996, which mandated the IGC to revise the Treaty, negotiations were given a new thrust by the special **Dublin** European Council of October of the same year. The outstanding issues were addressed at the **Amsterdam** European Council of June 1997. The Treaty could therefore be signed on 2 October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999.

The Treaty of Amsterdam defined the European Council's powers in relation to the CFSP: 'The European Council shall define the principles of and general guidelines for the common foreign and security policy, including for matters with defence implications. [It] shall decide on common strategies to be implemented by the Union in areas where the Member States have important interests in common.' Note in this context the important role played in these areas by the European Councils of **Pörtschach** (informal meeting, October 1998), **Cologne** (June 1999) and **Helsinki** (December 1999).

After the Amsterdam Treaty came into force, the extraordinary European Council of **Tampere** in October 1999, devoted to the establishment of an 'area of freedom, security and justice in the European Union', decided to implement a 'common EU asylum and migration policy' and opened the way for significant progress in the area of police and judicial cooperation.

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Family photo, Lisbon, 23–24 March 2000

In March 2000, the extraordinary European Council of **Lisbon** put in place a strategy for improving the competitiveness of the European economy. With that objective, it provided among other things for the introduction of a new open method of coordination at all levels, 'coupled with a stronger guiding and coordination role for the European Council, to ensure more coherent strategic direction and effective monitoring of progress'. It was decided that every spring there would be a European Council meeting to follow up this subject.

From 1999, the European Council began a process of reform, with a view in particular to the enlargement of the Union. Thus, after debates on these subjects at the European Councils of **Helsinki** (December 1999), **Gothenburg** (June 2001) and **Barcelona** (March 2002), the **Seville** European Council of June 2002 gave 'its agreement to a series of specific measures applicable, without amendment of the treaties, to the organisation and functioning of the European Council [...] and of the Council' (⁸). These measures concerned the preparation, and conduct of and follow-up to the work of the European Council and its conclusions.

Declaration No 22 annexed to the Final Act of the Nice Treaty of 26 February 2001 provides that: 'As from 2002, one European Council meeting per Presidency will be held in Brussels. When the Union comprises 18 members, all European Council meetings will be held in Brussels.' The Treaty was concluded after four days of negotiations at the **Nice** European Council in December 2000 (⁹).

The **Laeken** declaration adopted by the European Council in December 2001 called for a Convention on the future of Europe to be convened. The draft 'constitutional treaty' submitted by the Convention to the President of the Council in July 2003 then formed the basis for the work of the IGC called in October 2003, and the Treaty was signed on 29 October 2004.

However, the Treaty's failure to achieve ratification in 2005 led the Heads of State or Government to adopt a declaration, at the **June 2005** (¹⁰) **European Council**, during the Luxembourgish Presidency, inaugurating a one-year reflection period. Responding to the **June 2006 European Council** under the Austrian Presidency, the Berlin Declaration adopted by the Heads of State or Government on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome set the 'aim of placing the European Union on a renewed common basis before

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(⁸)   Seville European Council, June 2002, Presidency conclusions.

(⁹)   The Nice European Council remains the longest in history so far.

(¹⁰)   The Thessaloniki European Council of June 2003 was the last held outside Brussels. All subsequent meetings will be identified by date and presidency rather than location.

the European Parliament elections in 2009'. The **June 2007 European Council** under the German Presidency agreed on the mandate of an IGC to be called in order to amend the existing treaties. The Treaty that emerged from this process was signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007.

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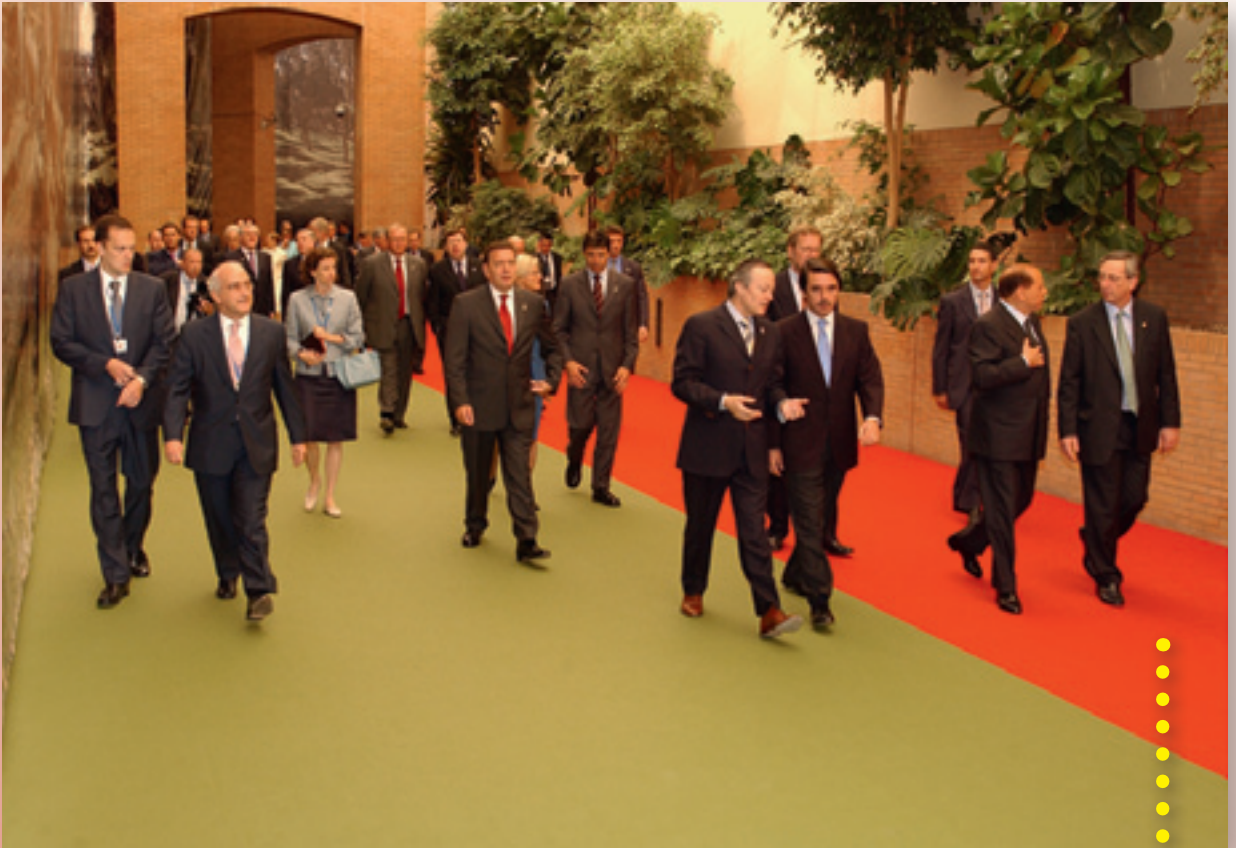
Seville European Council, 21 June 2002

The European Council becomes an institution

The Lisbon Treaty amending the existing treaties came into force on 1 December 2009. Among other things, it gives the European Council institution status, which means that it is subject to all the provisions applicable to the Union's institutions. For example, when it adopts binding legal acts, it has to comply with the legal basis provided by the Treaty and its acts can be the subject of actions before the Court of Justice. As the culmination of the process of abandoning the informal status of summits, the European Council as a new institution adopted its own rules of procedure on the day the Treaty entered into force [11].

The Treaty also provided for a stable Presidency for the European Council, including a President elected by its members for two and a half years, renewable once [12].

Since the Lisbon Treaty came into force, the European Council, under the Presidency of Herman Van Rompuy, its first elected President, has been the source of all the major decisions the Union has taken to address international and internal challenges in the economic, financial and monetary fields, in asylum and immigration, enlargement, development cooperation and international relations. It has therefore taken on the strategic role that was assigned to it by the Maastricht Treaty and confirmed by the Lisbon Treaty in the development of the Union.

[11]   See OJ L 315, 2.12.2009, p. 51.

[12]   Of the countries that acceded to the Union in 2004 and 2007, only the Heads of State or Government of Slovenia and of the Czech Republic held the Presidency of the European Council as representatives of their Member States.

THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

AN INSTITUTION AT THE SUMMIT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

2011

50 years of summit conferences: key steps

The press centre during a European Council meeting

Justus Lipsius building: the European Council's headquarters today

1 December 2009
the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force:
the European Council becomes an institution and its President is elected for two and a half years

President Herman Van Rompuy with Chancellor Angela Merkel, European Council, Brussels, 16–17 December 2010

2009

The European Council becomes an institution

"[...] The European Council shall provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and shall define the general political directions and priorities thereof. [...]

The European Council shall consist of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, together with its President and the President of the Commission. [...]" (Article 15 of the Treaty on European Union)

The European Council: the Treaty on European Union

Thessaloniki, 19–20 June 2003
the European Council meets for the last time in the country holding the rotating Presidency – since then it has met in Brussels

1 November 1993
the functions of the European Council are defined in the Treaty on European Union (Treaty of Maastricht)

Family photo, Thessaloniki, 19–20 June 2003

First European Council after the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht, Brussels, 10–11 December 1993

"The European Council shall provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and shall define the general political guidelines thereof. [...]» (Article D of the Treaty of Maastricht)

"[...] The European Council shall define the principles of and general guidelines for the common foreign and security policy. [...]" (Article J.8 of the Treaty of Maastricht)

1993

The European Council: the beginnings

1 July 1987
the European Council is included in the Single European Act

Dublin, 10–11 March 1975
first meeting of the European Council

First European Council after the entry into force of the Single European Act, Copenhagen, 4–5 December 1987

Family photo, Dublin, 10–11 March 1975

"[...] it was necessary to return to the sources of power in order first to complete the economic union [...] and then to seek the forms for a fuller, deeper union [...]"
Jean Monnet concluded his memoirs in 1976 with a chapter on the European Council.

1975

Summit conferences

Paris, 9–10 December 1974

Copenhagen, 14 and 15 December 1973
oil crisis

Paris, 19–20 October 1972
Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom take part

The Hague, 1–2 December 1969
political decision on the first enlargement

Rome, 29–30 May 1967
10 years of the Treaty of Rome

Bonn, 18 July 1961

1961

Paris, 10–11 February 1961

Work session, Paris, 9–10 December 1974

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer welcomes President Charles de Gaulle to the Bonn Summit, 18 July 1961

Paris, 9–10 December 1974
"The summit is dead, long live the European Council" (statement by President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, closing the summit)

Bonn, 18 July 1961
"The Heads of State or Government [...] have decided: [...] to hold at regular intervals meetings whose aim will be to compare their views, to concert their policies and to reach common positions in order to further the political union of Europe [...]" (summit press release)

Paris, 10–11 February 1961
"[...] It was the purpose of the conference to seek the methods by which closer political cooperation could be organized. [...]" (summit press release)

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HISTORICAL SERIES ❶

'The European Council — an institution at the summit of the European Union' poster, published to celebrate 50 years of meetings of the Heads of State or Government of the European Union.

Chronology of summit meetings and European Councils

Summit meetings

10–11 February 1961, Paris (Quai d'Orsay), chaired by Charles de Gaulle

18 July 1961, Bonn (Godesberger Redoute), chaired by Konrad Adenauer

29–30 May 1967, Rome (Capitol), chaired by Aldo Moro

1–2 December 1969, The Hague (Ridderzaal), chaired by Piet de Jong

19–20 October 1972, **Paris** (Centre des conférences internationales), chaired by Barend Blesheuvel

14–15 December 1973, Copenhagen (Bella Center), chaired by Anker Jørgensen

9–10 December 1974, Paris (Quai d'Orsay), chaired by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

European Councils

10–11 March 1975, Dublin (Dublin Castle), chaired by Liam Cosgrave

16–17 July 1975, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Aldo Moro

1–2 December 1975, Rome (Palazzo Barberini), chaired by Aldo Moro

1–2 April 1976, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Gaston Thorn

12–13 July 1976, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Joop den Uyl

29–30 November 1976, The Hague (Ridderzaal)**,** chaired by Joop den Uyl

25–26 March 1977, Rome (Palazzo Barberini), chaired by James Callaghan

29–30 June 1977, London (Lancaster House), chaired by James Callaghan

5–6 December 1977, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Léo Tindemans

7–8 April 1978, Copenhagen (Christiansborg), chaired by Anker Jørgensen

6–7 July 1978, Bremen (Rathaus), chaired by Helmut Schmidt

4–5 December 1978, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Helmut Schmidt

12–13 March 1979, Paris (International Conference Centre), chaired by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

21–22 June 1979, Strasbourg (Palais de l'Europe), chaired by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

29–30 November 1979, Dublin (Dublin Castle), chaired by Jack Lynch

27–28 April 1980, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Francesco Cossiga

12–13 June 1980, Venice (Fondazione Cini), chaired by Francesco Cossiga

1–2 December 1980, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Pierre Werner

23–24 March 1981, Maastricht (Stadhuis), chaired by Dries van Agt

29–30 June 1981, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Dries van Agt

26–27 November 1981, London (Lancaster House), chaired by Margaret Thatcher

29–30 March 1982, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Wilfried Martens

28–29 June 1982, Brussels (Palais d'Egmont), chaired by Wilfried Martens

3–4 December 1982, Copenhagen (Eigtveds Pakhus), chaired by Poul Schlüter

21–22 March 1983, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Helmut Kohl

17–19 June 1983, Stuttgart (Neues Schloss), chaired by Helmut Kohl

4–6 December 1983, Athens (Zappion), chaired by Andreas Papandreou

19–20 March 1984, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by François Mitterrand

25–26 June 1984, Fontainebleau (Château de Fontainebleau), chaired by François Mitterrand

3–4 December 1984, Dublin (Dublin Castle), chaired by Garret Fitzgerald

29–30 March 1985, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Bettino Craxi

28–29 June 1985, Milan (Castello Sforzesco), chaired by Bettino Craxi

2–3 December 1985, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Jacques Santer

26–27 June 1986, The Hague (Conference Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), chaired by Ruud Lubbers

5–6 December 1986, London (Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre), chaired by Margaret Thatcher

29–30 June 1987, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Wilfried Martens

4–5 December 1987, Copenhagen (Eigtveds Pakhus), chaired by Poul Schlüter

11–12 February 1988, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Helmut Kohl

27–28 June 1988, Hanover (Hannover Messe), chaired by Helmut Kohl

2–3 December 1988, Rhodes (Palati tou Megalou Magistrou), chaired by Andreas Papandreou

26–27 June 1989, Madrid (Palacio de Congresos de Madrid), chaired by Felipe González

8–9 December 1989, Strasbourg (Palais de la Musique et des Congrès), chaired by François Mitterrand

28 April 1990, Dublin (Dublin Castle), chaired by Charles Haughey (special European Council)

25–26 June 1990, Dublin (Dublin Castle), chaired by Charles Haughey

27–28 October 1990, Rome (Palazzo Madama), chaired by Giulio Andreotti

14–15 December 1990, Rome (Montecitorio), chaired by Giulio Andreotti

8 April 1991, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Jacques Santer (informal European Council)

28–29 June 1991, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Jacques Santer

9–10 December 1991, Maastricht (Provinciehuis), chaired by Ruud Lubbers

26–27 June 1992, Lisbon (Centro Cultural de Belém), chaired by Aníbal Cavaco Silva

16 October 1992, Birmingham (Birmingham ICC), chaired by John Major (special European Council)

11–12 December 1992, Edinburgh (Holyrood House), chaired by John Major

21–22 June 1993, Copenhagen (Bella Center), chaired by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen

29 October 1993, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Jean-Luc Dehaene

10–11 December 1993, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Jean-Luc Dehaene

24–25 June 1994, Corfu (Palaia Anaktora), chaired by Andreas Papandreou

15 July 1994, Brussels (Charlemagne Building), chaired by Helmut Kohl

9–10 December 1994, Essen (Messe Essen), chaired by Helmut Kohl

26–27 June 1995, Cannes (Palais des festivals), chaired by Jacques Chirac

22–23 September 1995, Majorca (Hotel Formentor), chaired by Felipe González
(informal European Council)

15–16 December 1995, Madrid (Palacio de Congresos de Madrid), chaired by Felipe González

29 March 1996, Turin (Lingotto), chaired by Lamberto Dini

21–22 June 1996, Florence (Fortezza da Basso/Exhibition Centre), chaired by Romano Prodi

5 October 1996, Dublin (Dublin Castle), chaired by John Bruton (special European Council)

13–14 December 1996, Dublin (Dublin Castle), chaired by John Bruton

23 May 1997, Noordwijk (Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin), chaired by Wim Kok (informal European Council)

16–17 June 1997, Amsterdam (Nederlandsche Bank), chaired by Wim Kok

20–21 November 1997, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Jean-Claude Juncker
(extraordinary European Council meeting on employment)

12–13 December 1997, Luxembourg (Kirchberg Conference Centre), chaired by Jean-Claude Juncker

15–16 June 1998, Cardiff (City Hall), chaired by Tony Blair

24–25 October 1998, Pörtschach (Parkhotel Pörtschach), chaired by Viktor Klima
(informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

11–12 Decembre 1998, Vienna (Hofburg), chaired by Viktor Klima

26 February 1999, Bonn (Gästehaus der Bundesregierung auf dem Petersberg), chaired by Gerhard Schröder
(informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

24–25 March 1999, Berlin (Hotel Intercontinental), chaired by Gerhard Schröder

14 April 1999, Brussels (Justus Lipsius Building), chaired by Gerhard Schröder
(informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

3–4 June 1999, Cologne (Der Gürzenich), chaired by Gerhard Schröder

15–16 October 1999, Tampere (Museokeskus Vapriikki), chaired by Paavo Lipponen

10–11 December 1999, Helsinki (Helsinki Fair Centre), chaired by Paavo Lipponen

23–24 March 2000, Lisbon (Feira Internacional de Lisboa), chaired by António Guterres

19–20 June 2000, Santa Maria Da Feira (Europarque Centro de Congressos), chaired by António Guterres

13–14 October 2000, Biarritz (Casino municipal de Biarritz), chaired by Jacques Chirac

7–11 December 2000, Nice (Centre des Congrès Acropolis), chaired by Jacques Chirac

23–24 March 2001, Stockholm (Stockholm Mässan), chaired by Göran Persson

15–16 June 2001, Gothenburg (Svenska Mässan — Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre),
chaired by Göran Persson

21 September 2001, Brussels (Justus Lipsius Building), chaired by Guy Verhofstadt
(extraordinary meeting of the European Council)

19 October 2001, Ghent (Sint Pietersabdij), chaired by Guy Verhofstadt
(informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

14–15 December 2001, Brussels (Château Royal de Laeken), chaired by Guy Verhofstadt

15–16 March 2002, Barcelona (Palau de Congressos de Catalunya), chaired by José María Aznar

21–22 June 2002, Seville (Palacio de Exposiciones y Congresos), chaired by José María Aznar

24–25 October 2002, Brussels (Justus Lipsius Building), chaired by Anders Fogh Rasmussen

12–13 December 2002, Copenhagen (Bella Center), chaired by Anders Fogh Rasmussen

17 February 2003, Brussels (Justus Lipsius Building), chaired by Costas Simitis
(extraordinary meeting of Heads of State or Government)

20–21 March 2003, Brussels (Justus Lipsius Building), chaired by Costas Simitis

16 April 2003, Athens (Zappeion Hall), chaired by Costas Simitis
(informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

19–20 June 2003, Thessaloniki ([13]) (Porto Carras), chaired by Costas Simitis

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([13])   Last European Council held outside Brussels.

16–17 October 2003, Brussels ([14]) (Justus Lipsius Building), chaired by Silvio Berlusconi

12–13 December 2003, chaired by Silvio Berlusconi

25–26 March 2004, chaired by Bertie Ahern

17–18 June 2004, chaired by Bertie Ahern

4–5 November 2004, chaired by Jan Peter Balkenende

16–17 December 2004, chaired by Jan Peter Balkenende

22–23 March 2005, chaired by Jean-Claude Juncker

16–17 June 2005, chaired by Jean-Claude Juncker

15–16 December 2005, chaired by Tony Blair

23–24 March 2006, chaired by Wolfgang Schüssel

15–16 June 2006, chaired by Wolfgang Schüssel

14–15 December 2006, chaired by Matti Vanhanen

8–9 March 2007, chaired by Angela Merkel

21–22 June 2007, chaired by Angela Merkel

14 December 2007, chaired by José Sócrates

13–14 March 2008, chaired by Janez Janša

19–20 June 2008, chaired by Janez Janša

1 September 2008, chaired by Nicolas Sarkozy (extraordinary European Council)

15–16 October 2008, chaired by Nicolas Sarkozy

7 November 2008, chaired by Nicolas Sarkozy (informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

10–11 December 2008, chaired by Nicolas Sarkozy

1 March 2009, chaired by Mirek Topolánek (informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

19–20 March 2009, chaired by Mirek Topolánek

18–19 June 2009, chaired by Jan Fischer

17 September 2009, chaired by Fredrik Reinfeldt (informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

29–30 October 2009, chaired by Fredrik Reinfeldt

19 November 2009, chaired by Fredrik Reinfeldt (informal meeting of Heads of State or Government)

([14])   From this time on, the meetings of the European Council always take place in Brussels, in the Justus Lipsius Building.

After Lisbon (1 December 2009)

10–11 December 2009, chaired by Fredrik Reinfeldt, last meeting chaired by rotating Council Presidency

11 February 2010, Brussels, Bibliothèque Solvay, chaired by Herman Van Rompuy ([15]) (informal European Council)

25–26 March 2010, Brussels (Justus Lipsius Building), first formal meeting of the European Council chaired by Herman Van Rompuy

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([15])   First President of the European Council, elected on 1 December 2009 for a term of two and a half years, renewable once (Article 15(5) TEU).

For further information

Publications and online resources
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http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions

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Rules of Procedure of the European Council — Rules of Procedure of the Council, 2009, 46 pages
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