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# WORKSHOP

Maastricht and the future of  
Europe: Discovering the rights  
and obligations of European Citizenship

## CERV Programme · Network of Towns

### MEETING 1

Santiago de Compostela (Spain)  
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PROMOTER:



MUNICIPALITY OF MOLETAI  
(LITHUANIA)

HOST:



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## The influence of the Maastricht Treaty on today's Europe

The Treaty on European Union, commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty, signed at the end of the 20th century, marked a new impetus in the development of Europe. Enacted in 1992, the Treaty embodied the effort to create a closer union among European nations and states, demonstrating a commitment to establish a single currency union and pursue common foreign and security policies. It encouraged the convergence of European states by setting limits and criteria for key economic parameters (budget deficit up to 3% of GDP, debt could reach up to 60% of GDP, and it was essential to ensure stability in prices and long-term interest rates). Simultaneously, it was an attempt not only to confine the unification of European states merely to economics and a common market, but also to provide it with the form of a political union, enabling the strengthening of Europe.

Currently, European Union member states are primarily united by clear European values: democracy, the principle of the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms, cultural diversity, solidarity, and subsidiarity. Yet, in some countries there have been tensions with some of the values in recent years. This is illustrated by the example of Poland, where the former government legitimised initiatives that violated the principle of the rule of law, compromising the independence of the judiciary and freedom of the press. Similar precedents are also demonstrated by Hungary. The European Union itself has relatively weak instruments for preventing such cases unless the suspension of financial support to such states is considered.

European states are united by three main powers, three fundamental pillars. First and foremost, the Union aims to ensure the proper functioning of the European single market, sustainable economic development, high levels of employment, social protection, and gender equality. Secondly, a spirit of mutual solidarity underlies a unified foreign and security policy. Thirdly, cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs is pursued to guarantee citizens a high standard of freedom, security and justice.

The spirit and provisions of the Maastricht Treaty were developed in the Amsterdam (1999), Nice (2003) treaties, and the 2009 Lisbon Treaty represented a new version of those agreements, consolidating the most advanced ideas and mechanisms of European integration. Therefore, the Maastricht Treaty today stands as a symbolic document of European unity and integration.

The impact of this Treaty is well-illustrated by Lithuania's example. In 1995, our country submitted an official application for membership in the European Union, and, in 2003, the Accession Treaty was signed in Athens. In the spring of that year, a nationwide referendum was held with almost 2/3 of Lithuanian citizens exercising their voting rights, and 91% approving EU membership. After ratification by all member states, the Treaty came into force on May 1, 2004. Therefore, Lithuania had to undertake a decade of substantial work to meet the EU requirements in various areas ranging from the harmonization of legal norms to reforms in specific sectors. Today, we not only rejoice in the opportunities for democracy, freedom and rights but also clearly witness the progress of our country. Membership has strengthened our security, significantly contributed to economic modernization, the creation of a better investment environment and the renewal of infrastructure as a whole. It has also aided in the development of science and innovation, modern technologies and international exchanges. We are a full-fledged member of Western civilization and the European community of states. Together, we are much stronger.

The significance of this document and its impact on contemporary Europe becomes particularly evident in the context of current world wars, conflicts and global issues. How would the efforts of individual nations to assist Ukraine in its courageous struggle against Kremlin terrorism and territorial ambitions appear without a strong European Union and coordinated policies among its member states? How could we individually cope with the influx of refugees from third countries or Russia's energy terrorism? Being strong together, we understand that in the face of growing global challenges - from climate change to threats of terrorism - we must strive for even closer cooperation. The Maastricht Treaty outlined precisely such a perspective for Europe.



MUNICIPALITY OF  
MOLETAI (LITHUANIA)

The Treaty of Maastricht, marked a turning point in the European Union's integration process. While the treaty is often associated with the establishment of the Eurozone and the European Union, it brought several benefits to peripheric regions like Galicia in Spain. This article aims to shed light on the importance of the Treaty of Maastricht for such regions, specifically focusing on the aspects of free movement of people, opportunities to work and study abroad, as well as the significant financial investments received to modernize Galicia's economy and infrastructure.



ASOCIACIÓN JUVENIL  
TIRABOLEIROS  
ASOCIACIÓN  
TIRABOLEIROS (SPAIN)

## 1. Free Movement of People:

The Treaty of Maastricht emphasized the principle of free movement of people within the European Union. This has had a profound impact on peripheric regions like Galicia, allowing its residents to move freely and take advantage of opportunities in other EU countries. Galician students have been able to study at prestigious universities across Europe, enhancing their educational and cultural experiences. Meanwhile, workers from Galicia have found greater job mobility, enabling them to explore new employment prospects in different countries.

## 2. Opportunities to Work and Study Abroad:

One of the key provisions of the Treaty of Maastricht was the establishment of the European Employment Strategy, which aimed to promote employment and enhance job mobility across the European Union. This strategy has been beneficial for peripheric regions like Galicia, as it has opened up new opportunities for Galician workers to find employment abroad. EU-funded programs such as Erasmus+ have provided Galician students with invaluable opportunities to study in universities outside Spain, enabling them to gain international perspectives and skills.

## 3. Financial Investments for Modernization:

Peripheric regions often face challenges in terms of economic development and infrastructure. The Treaty of Maastricht recognized this and has played a significant role in supporting the modernization of Galicia's economy and infrastructure. Through European Structural and Investment Funds, Galicia has received substantial financial investments to improve its transportation networks, promote sustainable development, and enhance its competitive advantage in various sectors. These investments have created job opportunities, boosted innovation, and stimulated economic growth in Galicia, narrowing the gap between peripheric regions and more developed areas within the European Union.

## Conclusion:

The Treaty of Maastricht has been instrumental in empowering peripheric regions like Galicia through its provisions on free movement of people, opportunities to work and study abroad, and substantial financial investments. These aspects have contributed to Galicia's economic development, enhanced educational opportunities, and fostered a sense of European citizenship among its residents.

## The Impact of European Integration on Mezdra, Bulgaria: A Story of Youth Mobility and Rural Transformation

European integration has brought numerous transformative changes to Bulgaria, a country that joined the European Union in 2007. This article focuses on the town of Mezdra, situated in a rural area of Bulgaria, and highlights the significance of young people moving to study and work in Europe for both personal and regional development. By examining how this mobility has shaped Mezdra and surrounding rural areas over time, we can gain insights into the far-reaching impact of European integration on rural regions of Bulgaria.



MUNICIPALITY OF  
MEZDRA (BULGARIA)

### Youth Mobility and Educational Opportunities:

European integration has provided young people from Mezdra with unparalleled opportunities to study abroad. Through initiatives such as the Erasmus+ program, Bulgarian students have been able to broaden their horizons, gain international exposure, and acquire valuable skills and knowledge. Mezdra's youth has shown great eagerness to engage in educational exchange, embracing the chance to study in prestigious European universities. This exposure has not only enriched their academic experience but also fostered a cosmopolitan outlook, nurturing a new generation of global citizens in Mezdra.

### Work Opportunities and Economic Resilience:

Young professionals from Mezdra, encouraged by the opportunities offered by European integration, have sought employment across Europe. This trend of migration for work has had a profound impact on Mezdra and the surrounding rural areas. By working in more developed European countries, these individuals have gained valuable expertise and experience, which they often bring back to their hometown. The transfer of skills and knowledge has helped to diversify the local economy, introducing new industries and enhancing the entrepreneurial spirit among residents in Mezdra.

### Rural Revitalization and Infrastructure Development:

The influx of remittances from young people working abroad has proven vital for the economic revitalization of Mezdra and its rural environs. These remittances have boosted local economic activities, creating employment opportunities and generating demand for goods and services. Consequently, the town has witnessed improvements in its infrastructure, such as better roads, modernized public facilities, and upgraded utilities. Cultural Exchange and Social Cohesion:

European integration has also had a profound impact on Mezdra's cultural fabric and social cohesion. By interacting with diverse communities in Europe, young people from Mezdra have developed a richer understanding of different cultures and perspectives. Upon their return, they often contribute to community development by initiating cultural exchange programs, organizing events, and encouraging intercultural dialogue.

Think about the world 30 or so years ago. Europe seemed to be walking into its own golden age. The end of the cold war marked the opening of new markets. If only temporarily, it seemed that peace, continued development and stability could become a reality on the old continent. The climate was particularly ambitious and optimistic for all those who envisioned the world according to Western standards, the European Community as a global force with greater and stronger unifying tendencies.

On February 7 1992, the leaders of 12 countries gathered in Maastricht and signed a historic agreement. The countries that took this bold step were Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Britain, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Greece. Since then, the member states that have adopted the Treaty are 27, while the United Kingdom, which left the European Union, is not among the states participating in it.

The Agreement entered into force on 1 November 1993. The Maastricht Treaty is the cornerstone of the European vision. It is the founding Treaty of the Union. With Maastricht, important foundations were laid for unification. The Treaty introduced European citizenship, through which the free movement of citizens within the EU was enabled. A common foreign and security policy was established, with the aim of safeguarding common values of fundamental interests and of the Union's independence. With the new Treaty, close cooperation was now being developed in matters of justice and internal affairs, with the aim of safeguarding the security and protection of European citizens. Maastricht paved the way for the common monetary policy.

Hellas, by joining the European family, has reaped huge benefits in all areas and manifestations of human activity. The construction of infrastructure projects with the help of European funds, the creation of competitive companies with the prospect of withstanding international competition, the free movement of people and capital resulting in the rise of the country's standard of living, as well as the single currency that formed a huge internal market, contributed positively to travel and the development of tourism and trade. Also, the prevalence of democratic states, the securing of human rights, the limitation of national prejudices, the cultivation of friendly relations, opened the way for coexistence, cooperation and solidarity between the peoples of Europe. In addition, the formation and cultivation of European culture resulting from the exchange of experiences and from artistic institutions effectively contributes to the expansion of intellectual horizons. The preservation of the national identity and cultural physiognomy of each people is a great stake and a challenge, so that it protects and preserves its traditions, without risking cultural assimilation, offering its own stamp on European culture.

Today the European Union is faced with new complex challenges. The question emerges tortuously: "Where do we want to get to?" What kind of Europe do we want?" Hellas replies that it wishes for deeper European integration and continuity of the unification project, so that Europe can rise to the occasion.



MUNICIPALITY OF  
PILEIA-HORTIATISS

MUNICIPALITY OF  
PILEIA HORTIATISS  
(GREECE)

## The Treaty of Maastricht and its impact in Portugal

The Treaty of Maastricht, officially known as the Treaty on European Union, was signed on 7 November 1991 and entered into force on 1 November 1993. Portugal, along with other European countries, played an important role in the creation of the European Union (EU) through this treaty. The Maastricht Treaty introduced several changes that had an impact on Portugal's relationship with the EU, namely the creation of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), leading to the adoption of a single currency, the Euro. Portugal eventually joined the Eurozone and

adopted the Euro on 1 January 1999. It is clear to see in Portuguese society the impact this treaty has had on the lives of the Portuguese, as over the years it has made it possible to invest in new roads and railways, as well as in the modernisation of public and private institutions, considerably increasing the economic capacity of citizens and their well-being. We believe that there is still a long way to go to fulfil another of the treaty's fundamental pillars, namely strengthening political cooperation, since the Maastricht Treaty aimed to strengthen political cooperation between EU member states. This objective included the development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the creation of a Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) pillar, thus promoting greater collaboration between EU countries in areas such as foreign policy, defence and justice.

The economic impacts of Portugal's accession to the Eurozone were multifaceted. The adoption of the Euro not only facilitated smoother trade and investment within the EU but also bolstered Portugal's financial stability. However, it was not without challenges, as adapting to a common currency required adjustments in fiscal policies and economic structures. Despite initial hurdles, Portugal's integration into the Eurozone contributed to enhanced economic resilience and a more competitive market environment.

Furthermore, the Maastricht Treaty played a pivotal role in shaping Portugal's stance on issues of global significance. The establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) aimed to create a unified approach to international affairs among EU member states, including Portugal. This paved the way for collaborative efforts in addressing global challenges, fostering diplomatic ties, and promoting shared values on the world stage. Portugal's participation in the CFSP reflects a commitment to collective security and a cooperative approach to global problem-solving. The journey initiated by the Maastricht Treaty continues to shape Portugal's trajectory within the European Union, combining economic integration with a shared commitment to political collaboration on the global stage.



UNIÃO DE FREGUESIAS  
D FOZ DO SOUSA  
E COVELO (PORTUGAL)

# The Maastricht Treaty's Impact on the European Union Today

The Maastricht Treaty, signed on February 7, 1992, marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of the European Union (EU). Its significance extends beyond being a mere legal document; it laid the groundwork for the EU as we know it today.

This write-up explores the transformative impact of the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union, examining the key provisions that shaped the EU's trajectory and continue to influence its present-day structure and functions.



MUNICIPALITY OF  
SLIEMA (MALTA)

## 1. Creation of the European Union:

The Maastricht Treaty, formally known as the Treaty on European Union (TEU), was instrumental in transforming the European Community into the European Union. It introduced the concept of European citizenship, providing citizens of member states with additional rights, such as the right to move and reside freely within the EU.

## 2. Economic and Monetary Union (EMU):

One of the most impactful aspects of the Maastricht Treaty was the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union. The treaty laid the foundation for the euro, the single currency that became a symbol of European integration. The creation of the euro, fostering economic integration among member states, marked a significant step towards a more unified Europe.

## 3. Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP):

Maastricht expanded the EU's role beyond economic integration by introducing the Common Foreign and Security Policy. This aimed to enhance cooperation among member states in matters of foreign affairs and security. While challenges persist, the CFSP has enabled the EU to present a more unified front on the global stage.

## 4. Creation of the European Central Bank (ECB):

The Maastricht Treaty established the European Central Bank as the institution responsible for monetary policy within the eurozone. This move sought to ensure price stability and monetary control across the member states, reinforcing the economic dimension of European integration.

## 5. Expansion of EU Membership:

Maastricht paved the way for the enlargement of the EU. The treaty outlined the criteria for accession, providing a roadmap for prospective member states. Subsequent enlargements, including the most recent ones in 2004 and 2007, brought in new countries and diversified the EU, enriching its cultural, political, and economic landscape.

## 6. Citizens' Rights and Fundamental Freedoms:

The Maastricht Treaty reinforced the commitment to democratic principles and the protection of human rights. It emphasized the importance of fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law. These principles are integral to the EU's identity and continue to guide its actions in response to challenges within and beyond its borders.

In conclusion, the Maastricht Treaty has had a profound and lasting impact on the European Union. It laid the groundwork for a more integrated and politically cohesive Europe, shaping the EU's economic, political, and social dimensions. The creation of the euro, the expansion of the EU, and the establishment of institutions like the ECB and the CFSP are all legacies of Maastricht that continue to define the EU's role in the world today. As the EU faces new challenges and opportunities, understanding the significance of the Maastricht Treaty provides valuable insights into the union's journey and its ongoing pursuit of a more unified and prosperous future.



## The Maastricht Treaty in Sicily: the changes of being in the European Union

The Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), also known as the 'Treaty of Amsterdam', is an agreement, stipulated and signed in 1997 by the member states of the European Union, concerning the control of their respective public budget policies, in order to maintain the requirements of adhesion to the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union (Eurozone), i.e. to strengthen the path of monetary integration undertaken in 1992 with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.

The Stability and Growth Pact aims to ensure budgetary discipline of the Member States to avoid excessive deficits and thus contributes to monetary stability. The Member States coordinate their economic policies at European level.

Since 1999, Italy has formulated its internal stability pact by expressing the policy objectives for territorial entities and the corresponding results each year in different ways, mainly alternating between different configurations of financial balances and measures on expenditure and then returning to the same balances.

The definition of the rules of the internal stability pact takes place during the preparation and approval of the public finance manoeuvre, when the forecasts on public finance trends are analysed and the extent of the corrective measures to be implemented for the following year and their type are decided.

The Sicilian Region, pursuant to Article 10, paragraph 3, of Law 243 of 24 December 2012, as amended, initiates, the process of the agreements to be signed with the territorial entities of its territory in order to encourage investments to be made through borrowing or the use of the results of administration of previous years, modifying the objectives of local authorities set by the national legislature, subject to compliance with the balance referred to in Article 9, paragraph 1, of Law No. 243/2012, for each year of reference, of the total territorial entities of the region, including the same region, according to the implementation modalities governed by Prime Ministerial Decree No. 21 of 21 February 2017.



MUNICIPALITY OF  
GALLODORO  
(SICILY – ITALY)

Prof. Filippo Currenti  
Mayor of Gallodoro

## THE MEETING “30 years of Maastricht: reflections on the past, present and future of Europe”

The meeting initiated by this project provides an opportunity to reflect on the health of Europe and to examine these thirty years of Maastricht from a political, social and cultural perspective.

The Treaty laid the foundations for the single European currency, the euro, and established the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European System of Central Banks. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was launched and its objectives were laid down in Article 11: the development of democracy and human rights by expanding the space in which this takes place. The European Police Office, Europol, was also created, while in the field of justice and home affairs, new procedures were authorised concerning the access of citizens of third states to the Union and greater customs cooperation towards the outside world, with the strengthening of the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and serious crime.

Another important content: the Treaty introduced 'Citizenship of the European Union', i.e. recognising that anyone who holds the citizenship of a Member State is a citizen of the Union, strengthening among other things the right of establishment, movement and residence in the EU territory. The Treaty ensured an increase in the powers of the European Parliament, through the addition of the co-decision procedure: Parliament obtained the power to approve EU legislative acts together with the Council, later reinforced by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

A Committee of the Regions was created, composed of representatives of regional and local entities with consultative powers alongside the Commission and the Council in matters of regional interest. Various EU competences were also extended, such as the economic and social cohesion policy, which was enriched with an ad hoc fund to finance economic development projects in the most underdeveloped regions; in the field of social legislation, the qualified majority rule was adopted in the decision-making process, except for the most thorny issues. The same applies in the field of research, development and the environment. Consumer protection and the development of trans-European networks (transport, communications, energy) were also recognised as Community policy.

The Maastricht Treaty reaches its thirtieth anniversary and faces the challenge of reforming the Stability and Growth Pact.

A dossier that has always been at the centre of fierce clashes between member countries and is now vital for the economic future of the Union itself, scarred by the wounds left first by the sovereign debt crises and then, over the last three years, by a permanent state of emergency, which has passed from the Covid to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and on to the bloody conflict between Israel and Hamas. The Treaty was supposed to be the first step towards an economic, monetary and political union.

But which still struggles to come to fruition today, battered by multi-speed European integration, the often categorical rejection of a gradual cession of national sovereignty, and the cyclical blowing of the winds of Euroscepticism. Today, there is a clear need to become better acquainted with Europe's economic, cultural and social problems and to address the problems of Europe's citizens.

In Sardinia, an Italian island at the centre of the Mediterranean with an agricultural and pastoral vocation, we look with great concern at the problems of economic aid to the agricultural and pastoral world that the EU intends to reduce, at a time of unfavourable economic conditions.



ASSOCIAZIONE  
TUMBARINOS  
(SARDINIA - ITALY)

## MARTINIQUE, A FRENCH AND EUROPEAN ISLAND

With territories belonging to three member states (France, Spain, Portugal) located in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, South America, etc., the European Union is present in all four corners of the globe. These island territories, which include Martinique, are the European Union's outermost regions (ORs). The ORs provide the European Union with a presence in strategic geographical areas, and offer significant potential for research and innovation, particularly in the land and marine biodiversity and space sectors.

Because of the development difficulties caused by their remoteness, insularity, small size, relief and climate, the ORs benefit from a special status granted by the European Union. Martinique, a Caribbean island of 1,128 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 350,373, is a French overseas collectivity located almost 6,800 km from mainland France.

In 2022, its GDP per capita, close to that of Galicia in Spain, was 27,029 euros.

Since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, Martinique has been part of the EU, with its population enjoying European citizenship and the right to vote in European Parliament elections. It is also a member of the euro zone.

Since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, Martinique has benefited from special measures granted by the European Union to offset its structural difficulties. It benefits from derogations in the areas of regional aid (specific allocation to the outermost regions), agricultural aid (POSEI), taxation and trade (dock dues).

Martinique is also supported in its economic and social development by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Fund for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture (FEAMPA). European laws on health safety and environmental protection have also applied to Martinique since 1992.

In terms of education and culture, the Erasmus and Erasmus+ programs offer Martinique residents the opportunity to spend time abroad to enhance their skills, increase their employability and open up to Europe and the world, just like any other European citizen.

Through the INTERREG program, the European Union also supports cooperation between Martinique and other Caribbean countries, in the fields of economics, education and culture. This program enables Martinique to enhance the value of its territory by collaborating with the whole Caribbean, offering new opportunities for cooperation to students, artists and all citizens.

Over the past thirty years, the Maastricht Treaty has brought many changes to Martinique. The many accompanying measures and European funds have made it possible to finance infrastructures in the fields of health, education, culture, sport, transport and telecommunications, which have significantly improved the economy and the lives of the Martinican people.

However, some European laws and standards are difficult to accept, as they are considered unsuited to local realities and customs. Although Martinique is one of the best-developed outermost regions in the world, this Caribbean island still needs Europe's support to pursue its economic development and cope with the difficulties associated with its remoteness, aging population and natural hazards exacerbated by climate change.



Asociación "La Didine"



France

(Overseas)

ASSOCIACIÓN LA DIDINE  
(MARTINIQUE – FRANCE)

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