Introduction
The Treaty of Rome was the founding treaty of the European Economic Community (EEC), which later became the EU. Also known as the Treaty of the European Community (TEC), all the subsequent European treaties have built upon or amended the Treaty of Rome and its provisions still form the majority of EU treaty law. The treaty focused overwhelmingly on economic co-operation, but it also set out a wider political vision for ‘an ever closer union’ to ‘eliminate the barriers which divide Europe’.

History
Signed in 1957 by the heads of government of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, West Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, the treaty was the result of eleven years of attempts to reconstruct the European continent after World War II. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) laid the ground for the EEC by opening the markets for those products between several countries in continental Europe. The Treaty of Rome adopted many of the institutional structures of the ECSC but set out to have far greater reach. It tried to combine federalist and intergovernmental ideas. The idea of a ‘United States of Europe’ had been posed by Sir Winston Churchill in 1946 and was driven forward by Jean Monnet during the 1950s. However, the Treaty of Rome, which set up the intergovernmental Council of Ministers, stopped far short of creating Monnet’s vision of a federal Europe. Until the treaty was amended in the 1980s, it was fundamentally an economic institution. Nevertheless, the supranational model of European integration on which it was based created the foundation for the development of the European Union in the 1990s.

What did the Treaty of Rome do?
At a practical level, the Treaty established four institutions – a Commission, a Council of Ministers, an European Parliament and a European Court of Justice. These were to be staffed by officials, ministers, judges and parliamentarians from member states. They were in charge of creating closer co-operation on a range of economic and trade issues from agriculture to overseas aid, commerce to taxation. Another treaty was signed at the same time as the Treaty establishing the European Community, which encouraged co-operation in the use of atomic energy, under an organisation called EURATOM, which was later absorbed into the structure of the European Community.

At a philosophical level, the treaty laid the foundation for ‘ever closer union’: establishing European government bodies, the freedom to move goods, capital and people, and the concept of cohesion – that member states should give economic support to each other to help all countries to grow at a similar rate.

Facts and figures
- The negotiations that led to the Treaty of Rome began at Messina, Italy in 1955. The Treaty was signed in Rome in March 1957 and came into force in January 1958
- The ECSC, forerunner of the EEC, was established under the Treaty of Paris (1951)
How does a General Election actually work?

The UK is a liberal democracy. This means that we democratically elect politicians, who represent our interests. It also involves that individual rights are protected.

The type of liberal democracy we have is a constitutional monarchy, where the powers of the monarch are limited by the terms and conditions put down in the constitution.

Parliamentary system

The UK has a parliamentary system of democratic governance. Unlike presidential and semi-presidential systems, there is an interconnection between the legislative (law-making) and executive (law-enforcing) branches of government in a parliamentary system. In the UK, this means that the executive (consisting of the Queen and the governments of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) is accountable to the legislature or Parliament (House of Commons, House of Lords and devolved Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland).

Appointed Prime Minister (or chancellor) as Head of Government and a monarch (or ceremonial president) as Head of State.

First-past-the-post

Members of Parliament in the House of Commons are elected using the first-past-the-post electoral system. Each of the 650 voting constituencies in the UK are represented by an MP. During the general and most local elections, the candidate with most of the votes becomes the local representative. Candidates campaign door-to-door, hold debates and publish manifestos (comparable to shopping list of what they are planning to do once they are in power). Eligible voters, about 46m in the UK, receive their polling card once they register online, or they can vote by post.

Party with most of the votes is invited by the Queen to form a government. If there is no clear winner, there is a hung Parliament. In this case, a minority or coalition government can be formed. A minority government does not have an overall majority in Parliament. A coalition government means that two or more political parties agree to share power in government. If that does not work out, new elections may be called.

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Treaty of Rome

Arguments about enlargement

For

- The Treaty of Rome was a ticket to greater economic growth because it started to break down the barriers to trade and investment that had existed in Europe since the 1930s.
- The Treaty enshrined the dream of a united Europe that would make it impossible for European countries to go to war again.
- The Treaty was an incredible feat of diplomacy that paved the way for European reconciliation and the spread of democracy.

Against

- The Treaty set out an impossible goal of creating a united Europe – ignoring the cultural and linguistic barriers that divide the continent.
- The Treaty was fundamentally confused: while at one level it aimed to promote economic co-operation, it tried to do this through an undemocratic and unnecessary political apparatus.
- The institutions that were created are distant and unfamiliar. In their original form they allowed many decisions to be made behind closed doors thus discouraging open debate and participation.

“We can never sufficiently emphasise that the six Community countries are the forerunners of a broader, united Europe…”

Jean Monnet

“Europe will not be built in a day, nor to an overall design; it will be built through practical achievements that first establish a sense of common achievement..”

Angela Merkel, German Chancellor

Technical Terms

- **Supranational**: a form of organisation through which decisions are made by international institutions, not by individual states

Links